

## THE EFFECT OF STORYTELLING ON DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF EFL FEMALE STUDENTS AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS IT

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this experimental study was to investigate the effect of storytelling on developing communication skills of English as Foreign Language (EFL) female students and their attitude towards it. The study sample contained 46 students. The sample was divided into two groups, the experimental and the control group and each group consisted of 23 students during the second semester of 1437/2016 academic year. The study instruments were composed by the researcher and included a) written communication skills test, b) oral and interpersonal communication rubric, c) students attitudes towards using storytelling to develop communication skills questionnaire. The results of the Independent Sample Test revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of developing their written communication skills in the achievement post-test in favor of the experimental group. The results of the rubric indicated that the use of storytelling to develop the oral and interpersonal communication skills proficiency of English Majors at Taibah University presented "beyond expectations" outcomes. Moreover, the results of students' attitudes towards using storytelling to develop written, oral and interpersonal communication skills proficiency of the English Majors at Taibah University questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. Recommendations based on these findings include: a) Introducing communication skills courses in university level is preferable as they qualify students for successful careers and enable them to reach their life goals. b) Communication skills courses are beneficial for all majors, it is highly recommended to include them in the preparatory term. c) Storytelling can reveal students hidden talents whether in writing, performing or graphic designing. d) Storytelling courses in higher education motivate and encourage reluctant students to listen, speak, read and write more English. e) Stories lighten the mood and make studying less mandatory. f) Instant instructor's feedback keeps the learning process streaming throughout the day.*

**Keywords:** Storytelling, Communication Skills, EFL, Attitude

### INTRODUCTION

The last few decades have witnessed how fast the world has evolved into a global village thus effectuating the need to deeper and faster communication with others. The call to cross geographical boundaries and break language barriers is increasing more and more each day. It's a well-known fact that the English language is one of the fastest growing languages in the world. It is the language of the past, the present and the future and it is critically used in education, economics, medicine, and all other aspects of life. Therefore, there is an enormous global demand for easier learning of this leading language.

Previously, the primary purpose of learning and teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) was to develop the linguistic competence and master language structure. In the recent

decades of communication advancements English plays a more crucial role therefore, the goal of language teaching has shifted from the mastery of structure to language competency solemnly for the purpose of communication (Alemi et al., 2012). Communication is definitely becoming the ultimate goal of learning any foreign language. Language is the medium by which education is chiefly delivered. It is crucial to various social relationships among learners and therefore, it forms an important part of students' personal, social and emotional development (Delamain and Spring, 2013). As the big society of the whole world has shifted into the information age, the focus of education and instruction is also shifting to an entirely new and advanced prospect so as to meet the needs of today's learners and develop the skills necessary for them to succeed in their future careers and in life (Andrews et al., 2010).

In Saudi Arabia, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL); which means that it is not the language used by Saudis for communication and students do not have immediate access to it outside the classroom context. Unless the students are living and are immersed in an English-speaking environment, the real indulgence and use of English is minimal. In this respect, language use refers to using the English language for meaningful communication (Leiva, 2012). The best way to learn a foreign language is the constant involvement in real situations so as to communicate (Garcia et al., 2011). EFL learners usually lack authentic language communication environment and opportunities to use it. However, learning English can be challenging and time-consuming, but it is the teachers, their personal beliefs and principles, who largely determine the success of a language program. The teacher orientation process can play a crucial role in influencing their attitudes towards the program as well as increasing the teacher's performance (Cote et al, 2013). As stated by Atta-Alla (2012), the integration of language skills is best accomplished by engaging students in practicing communicative language learning activities. Participation in such activities promotes language integration. Students' communicative skills are improved by interacting with each other in a meaningful way. 'Language and Communication Approach' enhances the students' communicative skills. However, being submerged in an authentic environment and being able to cooperate with classmates is not enough to learn a new foreign language. In education, the instructional design that ensures particular learning outcomes is very substantial (Garcia et al., 2011).

Lectures and rote memorization often encouraged by instructor convenience are inappropriate for training lifelong learners. The hallmark of active learning is that knowledge acquisition occurs rapidly; it can be utilized and gained quickly because experimenting with the language stimulates further learning. As most societies need to educate their members in more crucial areas are further required to maintain and advance the learning. Thus the urge to think critically about possible modes of instruction arise, and also to bring greater efficacy in teaching and training activities (Andrews et al., 2010). One of the key roles of a teacher is to ensure that students are constantly consolidating previous learning as well as introducing new materials (Bozen, 2011), and using innovative instructional strategies. Paradoxically, classical education has counted more on the instructor's verbal delivery of content rather than the students' participation to deliver knowledge and develop academic and cognitive skills. That puts a huge strain on the learner's ability to process information, develop their thinking skills and transmit their ideas to others. And that needs a proficient level of communication skills. So, students have an extremely low level of effective language and communication skills. They find it difficult to adapt to the new language and understand it. They are so limited which results in teacher/student frustration (Nash et al., 2011). The researcher has noticed the same dilemma in Saudi classrooms. In the 1930s, John Dewey promoted the centrality of action and reflection in the learning process. That highly defied the classical models of passive learning. The focus was on students to collect knowledge then put this

knowledge to use. In addition, Howard Gardner developed this vigorous idea of multiple intelligences to enlighten and improve school-based-learning ways. There is powerful evidence that instructional situation gives opportunities for students to enhance their areas of strengths (Nash et al., 2011).

Currently, the focus in the EFL classrooms has shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered instruction. Along with this shift, language instructors have used several resources to provide their students with the knowledge and skills that enable them to be independent learners (Abdel-Hack and Helwa,2014). Teachers need to adopt innovative instructional strategies to achieve the maximum learning outcomes. Instruction is defined as the purposeful teaching of knowledge, skills or attitudes. An instructional strategy is generally defined as an approach to teaching (based on research and well- documented practice) and designed to ensure that knowledge, skills and attitudes are learned by the intended audience (Andrews et al., 2010). Classroom communication skills are among the most substantial skills needed in education. Thus, improving these skills is an urgent need. In order to survive in today's competitive world, students need to communicate purposefully in English.

Effective communication is simply transferring messages to others clearly and unambiguously with as little distortion as possible. For a prosperous life in any domain, communication skills are fundamentally prominent (Reddy and Gopi, 2013). Communication is not just a skill or tool only owned by the wise or intelligent, it is available to all of those who are willing to develop and nurture it (Baker, 2011). Communication skills need constant progression and nourishment. Although a considerable attention has been given to teaching and learning the English language, a little interest has been assigned to communication skills contributions in the educational field. Broadly speaking, flowing communication should become habitual to produce well-qualified, competent and proficient individuals with positive outlook and attitudes, ready to conquer the job market and life.

Attitudes are acquired by learning and can be changed via persuasion in various ways. Attitudes formation molds the experiences of the individual with an object, subject or person. Although attitude changes progressively students continually form new attitudes and alter old ones when new information and new experiences emerge. According to Akinbobola, (2009) attitudes can be defined as “an internal state that influences the actions of an individual.” He considers attitude as the main factor in subject choice. Attitudes are intellectual and balanced state of readiness, shaped by experience, exerting a dynamic effect on the individual's responses to all related objects and situations. Instructors have the opportunity of constructing lessons cooperatively, competitively or individualistically and the decisions they make can affect students' interactions with others knowledge, and attitudes.

Akinbobola, (2009) also states that in the teaching/learning processes, an opportunity emerges when the instructor addresses students directly or in small groups. Instructors ask questions to direct students or clarify a notion. In addition, a natural orientation of professionally socializing with students is created by strategies like problem-solving, classroom activities and attitudes, which influence student performance. When students succeed, they view the subject matter positively because their self-esteem is enhanced. This originates a positive cycle of good performance. Higher self-esteem leads to higher interest in the subject and higher achievement. The attitude of students plays a major role in any satisfactory exposition of different levels of achievement shown by students in their school subjects. Some scholars reported that there is a positive correlation between attitudes and performance in many subjects. That too applies to language learning. Cooperative learning practices promote positive attitudes toward the instructional experience than competitive or

individualistic methodologies. Storytelling offers many opportunities to cooperate socialize and communicate productively.

One of the exceedingly effective instructional strategies to develop communication skills and nourish positive attitudes is storytelling. Storytelling is the most ancient form of human expression (Menezes, 2012). Storytelling has always been conceived as the spine of primeval instruction. It has been a part of instruction throughout recorded times and it has a history as long as the spoken word has been traced. Likewise, it will continue to evolve through time. Besides, storytelling is considered to be the oldest form of entertainment as well a useful communication tool. Storytelling began with the advent of civilization. Before that time, storytelling was the primary source of literary instructional entertainment. In addition to its entertainment benefit, some storytelling advocates believe that it has a great potential as an educational tool. The role of storytelling in the foreign language classroom has captured the attention of many teachers and scholars. However, its validity as an equal element to language learning has always been ignored (Al Mansour and Al Sharman, 2010). Storytelling has become quite popular these days. Even though it has existed for centuries, it has been revived and became a way to address old and well-known communication activities that occur. (Sorensen, 2004). Storytelling has been proposed as a key teaching strategy for achievement of the goals of education for sustainable future (UNESCO 2012)

Storytelling as an instructional medium is broadly used in today's education and training of all types, such as dentistry, military, aviation, general medicine, law and business depends substantially on storytelling as a strategy for teaching key principles of their rules and regulations. Storytelling is also used to build analytical abilities in students and trainees (Andrews et al., 2009). Courses on digital storytelling are taught in communication and creative writing programs at a number of universities (McLellan, 2006). There are also storytelling Master degree programs in a number of the prestigious universities around the world such as East Tennessee State University.

The widespread and pervasive use of storytelling is outstanding. The universality and versatility of storytelling make it an excellent instructional strategy candidate to develop communication skills. Storytelling is not limited to just transferring knowledge and understanding; it also plays a vital role in motivating, engaging and interacting with learners. Storytelling renovates the whole teaching/learning experience. It serves to organize, encode, archive and store experience as well as make it more readily available for retrieval in authentic, contextual and usable forms (Gottschall, 2012). Stories educate, clarify, enlighten and inspire. They give comfort and leisure and stimulate the brain. Storytelling is also a folk art that can't be manipulated, intellectualized or mass-produced (Duimovic, 2006). 'Mirror Neurons' are an important component of effective storytelling. They generate a particular experience or action in human brains just from observing it in another person. When people read a great novel or watch an engaging movie, their brains sync with the story, causing them to experience the fear, sadness and joy as if they were their own (Klein et al., 2013).

As Clay (2007) believes, instructors tell stories to increase students involvement and retention in the classroom, examine empirical activities, clarify, interpret and illuminate critical concepts, help learners shape their experience, establish commitment to an organization or a vision, help teamwork, collaborate and build deeper intrapersonal awareness for personal growth and effectiveness. Storytelling is magical and mystical. It promotes cross-cultural awareness as well. Storytelling is a means of storing and teaching knowledge gained by previous generations. It offers a wonderful way for students who are new to a language to develop their vocabulary and comprehension. It is a remarkable tool that

helps scaffold language for those students who are learning English. It will develop the teacher's efforts with students'.

Students with a wide range of learning needs, respond enthusiastically to storytelling. There is something about the structure of a story that allows it to enter the mind easily than ordinary talk (MacDonald et al., 2013) Teaching by the art of storytelling activates listening in a linear, flowing manner. Listening is crucial for the growth and development of most human beings. Previous studies show that 85 percent of what humans know is learned through listening. Stories bring positive energy into classrooms. They can be processed effectively with the least effort and high recall as they offer suspense that leave them wanting for more (Huckins, 2011)

When choosing activities to use, it is important to consider the capabilities of the students very carefully and pitch the tasks at a level compatible with the students (Bozen, 2011). Storytelling helps teachers to detect the suitable activities. As Egan stated "the power of stories is their dual task." They are very efficient in communicating information in a memorable form, and they can relate to the listener's feelings about them (MacDonald et al., 2013). A story's function in human life extends far beyond ordinary novels or films. Story and a variety of story like activities dominate human life (Gottschall, 2012). Stories can change beliefs and personalities and can hold the attention of a crowd. Stories change lives, the more people drawn into the heart the story, the more impact the story will have on their life. (Walsh, 2003)

Storytelling is an especially useful way to fasten information in memory. All curricula should be based on storytelling according to Egan (MacDonald et al., 2013). Listening to stories in class is a social experience. A feeling of unity, a shared laughter, sadness, excitement and anticipation is provoked by stories in the classroom and this promotes social and emotional development. Team-spirit and collaboration are also boosted through the follow-up stories activities. Storytelling in the language classrooms creates a friendly and joyful atmosphere where both the instructor and students enjoy working together. With their fun, challenging and motivating nature stories can help develop positive attitudes and create a desire to continue learning (Yildirimand Torun, 2014). Storytelling appears to be useful for students developing English proficiency (Uchiyama, 2011)

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of storytelling as a universal method of teaching. In many cases, storytelling is very effective by its use of archetypes which involve reasoning by analogy. The analogical reasoning involves creating a mental structural alignment process or mapping of relationship from one domain to another, and it is the very core of cognition. Analogical reasoning seems to be one of the essential thinking skills human have (Andrews et al., 2010)

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The researcher has noticed, throughout the years of her teaching experience in various Saudi schools, the lack of use of effective communicative skills in classrooms, even though students are well equipped with an amount of vocabulary and some grammatical rules and basic sentence formation guidelines. Unfortunately, they don't put them into correct use. Their ability to read and speak fluently and flawlessly is severely limited. The potentiality of listening and comprehending is immeasurable. A lot of parents have spoken to the researcher and expressed their concerns about the need for what they call 'conversation course,' where in fact, 'communication skills course' is what they require. Poor language and communication skills have had a profoundly negative effect on the life and chances of young people.

Most Saudi students at university level lack the proper basic communication skills. They are unwilling to participate in a conversation or write their reflections. They fear being mocked. To them, speaking or reading aloud is an unfavorable and a heavy task. Their social intelligence is quite low and this demolishes their communication skills. They need to express themselves vocally during real life or online job interviews and listen carefully and comprehend what has been said to them. They also have to have control their body language so as not to send the wrong message to the interviewer. They need to write correct English when they apply for a job application or when submitting a CV, or simply when they are posting their ideas and thoughts on social media. Communication skills are not just learning skills as a matter of fact, they are major life skills. Teaching communication skills is not just coaching students; in fact, it is about “educating them more broadly for life beyond college and establishing inner inquisitive curiosity that will serve them throughout their lives (Duck and McMahan, 2012). Communication skills contribute significantly toward positioning them as global citizens. Teachers are also affected by the lack of communication skills in class. Classroom teacher's anxiety has increased because of students’ limited communication skills in English.

Storytelling not only provides language development to students but also works as scaffolding for teachers (Uchuyama, 2011). Engaging in storytelling activities is a way to encourage even the most reluctant reader or writer. This pedagogical strategy improves students' willingness to talk and interact with others. In fact, some researchers have found that the weakest readers and writers are often the most skilled at storytelling (Miller and Pennycuff, 2008). Storytelling is a slowly learned process; it takes time but the novice and the expert storyteller can both experience success on different levels (Dumovic, 2006).

In response to this problem, this study was proposed to investigate the effectiveness of using storytelling strategy on developing EFL female English Majors' language communication skills. In addition, this research, aspired to explore the attitudes of female English Majors towards using this strategy to enhance their communication skills.

## **PURPOSES OF THE STUDY**

The study attempted to:

1. Explore the effects of using Storytelling strategy on developing English Majors' at Taibah University, Language and Translation Department communication skills.
2. Investigate English Majors' English Majors' at Taibah University, Language and Translation Department attitudes towards using this strategy.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The significance of the study attempted to:

1. Investigate the effectiveness of using storytelling in enhancing communication skills of English Majors at English Majors' at Taibah University, Language and Translation Department.
2. Provide a new perspective in TEFL through the use of storytelling in developing communication skills.
3. Evolve the communication skills of English Majors at Taibah University.
4. Provide EFL teachers with a variety of solutions that will help in improving English Majors' oral and written communication skills.

5. Direct the attention of EFL educators to the importance of adopting a new strategy. In this case, 'storytelling' that has proven to be effective in developing communication skills as mentioned in earlier.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study sought to find answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent are there statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of developing their written communication skills proficiency?
2. To what extent does the use of storytelling affect developing oral and interpersonal communication skills proficiency of English Majors at Taibah University?
3. To what extent does the use of storytelling to develop the communication skills proficiency affect the attitudes of English Majors at Taibah University?

## **RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

Based on the research questions, the following hypothesis was formulated:

1. There are statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of developing their oral, written and interpersonal communication skills proficiency after applying storytelling strategy in favor of the experimental group.

## **DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study was delimited to:

1. The population of the study that consisted of a sample of English Major Students at Taibah University Language and Translation Department.
2. Two groups: experimental and control groups at Taibah University Language and Translation Department Level 6 in Al-Madina Al- Monawara , Saudi Arabia .
3. The 2nd academic semester of 2016.
4. Using storytelling as an instructional strategy in Drama Course.
5. Developing Communication skills proficiency of English Major Level 6.
6. The attitudes of English Majors' at Taibah University, Language and Translation Department Level 6 towards using storytelling to develop their communication skills.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Storytelling**

Storytelling is a mystical and magical art form with a powerful communicative ability. It is an ancient legacy that dates back ever since humans existed (Atta-Alla, 2012). It is one of the oldest forms of entertainment. It is a useful communication tool that provides a method to transfer knowledge/rituals and cultural folklore and practices (Sorensen, 2004). Storytelling is an art and a strategy for teaching foreign languages if it is utilized wisely. According to Roney (1996) storytelling is co-creative and interactive. It is one of the most magnificent forms of art/communication known to humans. It holds the potential of being a highly

effective educational tool. According to Miller and Pennycuff (2008), using storytelling in the classroom is a way of addressing literacy deficiency by developing oral language, reading comprehension and writing. Owing to the fact of the interconnected nature of the processes involved in reading and writing, storytelling is a primary pedagogical strategy that can be woven into instruction to increase students' competencies in all areas. Besides developing the academic performance of the students in the areas of reading and writing, storytelling also has the ability to introduce arts in education and motivate students to relate it to learning. As Roney (1996) claims, storytelling should not be seen as a cure-all solution for what deforms literacy programs in school. Indeed, it is only one of many strategies that can be utilized to help students become proficient and confident readers and writers. Yet it is an incredibly powerful tool. Its impact emerges from its deep-rooted nature as an interactive, instant, co-creative, personal and a whole means of communication. Storytelling has stood the test of time and up to this date stories still charm and inspire humanity. All that and more inspired the researcher to carry on with this enriching experiment.

### ***Definitions of Storytelling***

Storytelling or "oral literature" is artlessly defined as a story narration which means "the act or the process of telling or writing a story." (Oxford advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2016). It is also defined as telling a story publicly without the help of a written text, exclusively from the memory (Sorensen, 2004). In the opinion of Dujmovic, (2006) storytelling is the art of narrating a story from memory rather than reading it. As Gallets (2005) believes, storytelling is the oral presentation of a story from memory by an individual to a person or group of people. Sound effects, motions and props can also be used to enhance the delivery of the oral story presentation.

Roney (1996) defines storytelling as the process when people use speech, story structure and mental imagery to communicate with the audience who also use mental imagery to communicate back with the teller mainly through body language and facial expression in a continuous communication cycle. Storytelling also defined as an oral activity where language and gestures are used colorfully to extemporize scenes in a sequence.

Storytelling can be described as a process of connecting a chain of events and present them in the form of a story (Jupit et al., 2012). Usually, storytelling is an interactive art performance in which teller and audience can directly interact with each other. Storytelling can be personal and interpretive. Storytelling is defined as a humanistic model of communication where people break down complex knowledge into narratives that are shared amongst all cultures, particularly ancient cultures. However technology has impacted upon this tradition. In the current study, storytelling is simply defined as telling and writing stories.

### ***The Components of Storytelling***

Storytelling involves two elements: selection and delivery as stated by Dujmovic (2006). A number of EFL teachers are interested in storytelling as teaching materials. A wise storyteller chooses proper stories and must be a good performer, for the delivery is very essential and needs both planning and performance. VanDecarr (2013) states that "a story is a powerful tool." It can certainly be that because humans live by stories. Stories change minds and lives. All cultures have passed on various stories through verbal tradition. Stories have always been an important legacy for humanness. Some stories were told solemnly for fun and amusement while others were used to pass on ancestors' history. Stories were employed to teach lessons and convey morals and beliefs. Martínez (2007) reported the findings of a comprehensive case study of teaching by stories. Favorable results were observed following the conclusion that using stories can be a great tool to reach the curriculum goals. Stories were used to



trigger excitement and increase motivation and anticipation among students during the experience; they took part in exercises and fulfilled all the assigned expectations, as each student created their mini story book to take home and read to their family.

Stories have considerable sufficient advantages for social and emotional development. A story session is a relaxed happy time to share feelings and insights. A comfortable relationship between storyteller and listener is established. Mutual confidence and respect are shared. Stories are encouraging, joyous and help in developing positive attitudes towards the foreign language and language learning in general. Stories inspire students to continue learning. As they encourage the listener to actively use their imagination to locate themselves within the story content. Students become personally engaged in a story as they get accustomed to the characters and try to formulate the story into words as they write. This out of the world experience helps to develop their creative abilities. Listening to stories in class is also a social experience. Reading and writing are usually individual activities. Whereas storytelling creates a shared response of laughter, sadness, thrills and anticipation that are delightful and help to boost students' confidence and encourage social and emotional development (Dujmovic, 2006). In a study conducted by Vitali (2016), about teaching with stories as the content and context for learning with a diverse classroom population, the findings showed that using students' authentic family stories as the content and context of teaching and learning brought awareness of respect for oral language in relationship to literate language and explored how to balance both, perspectives in school as prospective teachers.

Moreover, Green (2006) claims that knowledge is composed of stories. Jupit et al., (2012) conducted a study about storytelling and narrative methods with localized content to preserve knowledge. The results showed that the traditional method of passing down knowledge from one generation to the next through storytelling could be enhanced in a more engaging ways using ubiquitous mobiles and computer technologies. The successful application of interactive narrative in games would be essential to engage students and sustain their participation especially in teaching and distributing knowledge on a cross-cultural awareness platform.

When students hear or read stories, they form their own perspectives and compare them to those of others. They make comparative analysis. After a story is told, enjoyed and understood multiple listening, speaking, reading and writing occasions arise (Atta-Alla, 2012). In a study conducted by him about integrating language skills through storytelling, the test results proved the effectiveness of using storytelling in combining the four language skills and enhancing the language proficiency level of adult English language learners. Storytelling was utilized to improve adult language learners' proficiency. Forty adult English language learners volunteered in his study.

Stories are comprehended rapidly, perfectly kept in mind and easily transferred. In a study about using storytelling strategies to improve student comprehension in online classes conducted by Powell and Murray (2012), they reported that when the material is presented in a story format rather than traditional text book format used in rote learning, student comprehension of complicated theories and concepts improved as well as their grades.

Miller and Pennycuff, (2008) mentioned that storytelling supports the development of a sense of story by combining the use of the main story elements. These elements include point of view, plot, style, characters, setting and theme. Another study classifies story elements to eight: setting, characters, the narrator, events, temporal relations, casual relations, audience and theme. The setting is the external details in the story. Characters are of vital importance to a story. It is often the main characters who play major roles in the events. Characters can

be human, non-human or inanimate objects. Some critics are more concerned with the behaviors or mental traits of characters whether they are flat or round. A flat character in a story is easily obtained by readers. A round character is complex. Usually, complex characters cause conflicts in a story (Yang, 2011). A story should contain at least two events: major and minor events or satellites. The satellites do not affect the primary story line. Temporal and causal connection between events is which events happen first and which happens next. Which event is the cause and which one is the effect? The theme is the last element of a story that outlines the general idea. The storyteller keeps the major theme throughout the narration. Moreover, stories are cosmopolitan. They bridge the cultural, linguistic and age-related gaps and are gender neutral. Lenox (2000) studied storytelling for young children in a multicultural world. She found that storytelling is a powerful tool to promote an understanding of self and others in a world that is increasingly becoming multicultural and multiracial.

Stories reflect nations. Humans think in a narrative structure. They recall facts and statistics a lot better if they are presented in the form of a story. Stories have the ability to create a visual image in students mind, this is achieved by the use of their imagination to visualize that particular time and space. So listeners are in a two-dimensional sphere, audio from the verbal delivery of the story and visual creation by the use of their imagination in locating themselves in that time and place .Stories also shape lives. Holtz and Daigneault (2011), claim that a story is the outcome of a pleasant moment. Humans need to express their experiences, attitudes, gratitude and emotions. Telling stories is a beautiful human experience that enables learners to accept themselves and others; it also creates a link between the real and fictitious world. Stories help to understand the world as humans all are composed of a series of stories interwoven to create life: stories about them, their families, companions and colleagues, community and their historical backgrounds. Stories are splendid and promising. They capture the learners' full attention and convey a particular message as simple as it can be (Karlsson, 2012).

It is very obvious that most stories have great charm. In public presentation, stories are what people aspire (VanDecarr, 2013). Technology has transformed the delivery of stories. Human share their personal stories through emails, phone conversations and instant texting on a daily basis. Personal stories are the core of people's life. The human brain is a massive narrative device. It runs on stories and lives by them. Stories are interactive thus humans interact easily when they tell a story whether vocally or bodily. In a study about user-defined body gestures for an interactive storytelling scenario conducted by Kistler and André (2013); they listed a user-defined gesture set for an interactive storytelling scenario where twenty two participants performed 251 gestures while rehearsing the story script with real interaction disabled but, with hints of what set of actions was currently requested by the application.

Teacher should carefully select the stories they want to tell. The teachers' choices for stories are countless. They have a variety of options to choose from; personal anecdotes, classical fairy tales, or other stories resources. When choosing a story some major elements of effective stories must be taken into consideration: 1. Effective stories are context –specific: stories are linked to the curriculum and cultural context so students can relate to it. 2. Effective stories are level-appropriate: they should match students' level of understanding. 3. Effective stories are told by admired role models: usually teachers with perfect pronunciation and a wide grasp of knowledge. 4. Effective stories have drama: to anticipate students, trigger their minds and capture their full attention. 5. Effective stories have high learning value: they should stimulate learning and change their behavior (Ready,2002)

There are many reasonable grounds why instructors aspire to tell stories in classes. Stories give students the opportunity to listen to language in a whole context. Stories also introduce new vocabulary, idioms and expressions all assembled within a rich context. Equally important, stories can have a profound influence on students' knowledge formation and self-recognition. Stories of local nature delivered in a foreign language allow the children to develop an understanding of the context words that are used. Stories also have the power to reach deep within students' heart and soul. Stories go far beyond language learning. Students display a change in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors after hearing stories. This huge impact capitalizes the valuable language learning experience. As Dujmovic (2005) investigated storytelling as a method of teaching thoroughly, he emphasized that stories instruct, clarify, illuminate, and inspire. They give joy and leisure to the tedious classrooms and stimulate the mind. They motivate both teachers and students. Stories are used in a positive scholastic setting, i.e., no grades, no failures, no textbooks, no notepads, no dictionaries, no costly audiovisual equipment nothing coming between the listener and the teller.

When delivering a story, the teacher adjusts the story according to the learners' interests, needs and level of language proficiency by adopting adequate books and by adapting the language while telling the story or reading it. The stories are contextually whole and meaningful. They attain an original source of comprehensive English language information (Atta-Alla, 2012). Students enjoy listening to stories over and over again. The repetition allows certain language expressions to be obtained while others are being reinforced. Many stories also contain natural repetitions of key vocabulary and structure. This helps students to recall specific details, so they can progressively learn to anticipate what is going to happen next in the story. Repetition also motivates participation in the narrative. Tracking meaning and predicting language are another set of essential skills in language learning (Dujmovic, 2006).

Engaging students in storytelling activities motivates even the most reluctant reader or writer. The human aspect in storytelling directed the researchers to take its educational elements into consideration (Miller and Pennycuff, 2008). In storytelling, the interaction is personal, enchanting, instant and the words are not memorized. They are regenerated through automatic and dynamic performance, assisted by audience involvement and interaction (Karlsson, 2012). Furthermore, storytelling is an efficient teaching strategy for non-native instructors. According to Lockett's (2001) research about using storytelling to facilitate leaning English as a foreign language, he demonstrated that using stories helps in developing oral comprehension, conversational speaking and a basic understanding of English. He believed that storytelling is a natural way to introduce English as Foreign Language.

### ***The Approaches of Storytelling***

There are many approaches to using storytelling in education, medicine, journalism or entertainment. In this study, the focus is only on writing stories and narrating/presenting them orally. Storytelling when planned adequately, can serve as an efficient strategy for developing literacy and reading comprehension. Storytelling captures the attention of students, thus promotes the sense of story by interaction. Enabling students to tell their stories orally and later sharing it in a written form makes them understand their audience; the classmates. The students can then decide what style of language to use in order to impress the audience. Storytelling can be used in various ways to involve students in writing tasks, the National Council of Teachers of English states that "the comfort of the oral tale can be the path to reach the written one." There are two major areas that storytelling influences and improves students writing: use of language and audience recognition. The use of language in writing handles vocabulary and story framework. The audience is whom the writer is addressing

(Miller and Pennycuff, 2008). Storytelling provides students with many occasions to write and also scaffolds on what they can write their stories. Students can be motivated to improvise their own story endings. They can keep the same characters and setting and alter the conflicts in the story ( Lockett ,2011) .

Cody and Wagner (2012), assert that storytelling helps students to be better writers by modeling how language works and how stories are composed. An experience was run by them in a quest to answer the question: does oral storytelling help first graders become better writers? The storytelling task was practiced every morning for approximately fifteen minutes for almost four months before writer's workshop. The results showed that oral storytelling developed students' writing in the areas of organization, style and content.

Karlsson (2012) believes that it is very crucial to introduce story elements to students before story process writing. First, before performing the main writing task, instructors need to explain that stories have three main parts, the beginning, middle and end. They also need to give tips and hints about writing a good story. These include characters, settings, plot and solution or conclusion. They can add a theme as well. With process writing, students usually work through stages (1) Planning: students generate ideas for their story. (2) Drafting: they write a rough draft. (3) Rereading: they examine their work and share it with classmate or group members.

(4) Correcting: some points based on feedback. (5) Sharing: is the final step in the writing process when the work is in its final format and the student share with the whole class. As Sanchez (2014) claims that storytelling boosts writing skills by motivating students to write their own stories and their thoughts about stories they have already read, heard or seen.

When narrating stories, students learn to apply structures and give shape to their experience. As it is a worldly known fact that storytelling is an originative art form that has been entertaining and informative across nations and civilizations dating back to the origin of the human race. Storytelling or oral literature reveals the life and the mysteries of the world and universe (Rokni and Qarajeh, 2014). As Chou (2014) believes that storytelling plays a crucial role in learners' language learning acquisition as well as moral education. According to Roney (1996), storytelling is both an art form and means of communications. As an art, storytelling enhances creativity. This creativity is shared between the storyteller and audience. The storyteller composes the storyline and delivers it orally to the audience. Then they create their own mental images and send them back to the storyteller through their reactions to the storyline. This feedback in the form of reaction, impacts upon the storyteller's choice of words, the plot progression and delivery style. This co-creative two-way storyteller and audience connection continues through the entire story session. That makes storytelling an act of communication. In addition, delivering stories allows instructors to introduce and review new vocabulary and sentence structures by exposing the students to language in various, unforgettable and familiar contexts that will enrich their thinking and gradually enter their own speech.

As for students, listening to stories develops students listening and concentrating skills via: 1. Visual Clues. 2. Their prior knowledge of language structure. 3. Their general knowledge. This allows them to understand the entire meaning of a story and relate to their own personal experience (Dujmovic, 2006). In Iceland, Karlsson (2012) investigated storytelling as a teaching strategy in the English language classroom. He reported that storytelling could be adapted in the English language class in lower secondary school in Iceland to improve communicative language teaching and to develop speaking and writing skills. He also found that storytelling enhanced learning in a more natural, meaningful and interactive context, encouraging students to relate to their learning and giving the opportunity for them to use

English in the classroom to express themselves properly and according to the situation. Most of all, storytelling boosted students' self-esteem, made them confront challenges and explored their inner imaginative and creative side.

Camarillo, et al., (2008) specify that in the oral interaction, storytelling includes the storyteller and the audience. The storyteller shapes the experience, while the audience understands the message and creates individualistic mental images from the words heard and the gestures seen. As the audience becomes co-creator of the art. Storytellers sometimes interact with their audience, adapting their words to suit the listeners and the situation.

Moreover, personal storytelling creates a self-concept and identity affirmation (Atta-Alla, 2012). Storytelling develops oral interaction as Sanchez (2014) states that people often confuse speaking and oral interaction. Oral interaction is being able to carry on with a conversation. Storytelling enhances the development of this skill. After telling a story, instructors usually ask students various questions about it. When students answer they start establishing communication with the instructor. While performing various storytelling activities students also interact with each other to solve any uncertainty that occurs. This might also take the form of group activities as they communicate with the instructor. Some teachers believe that anyone who can speak can tell a story. Oral storytelling is indeed a natural path to writing. Storytelling is an instinctive skill. Instructors can mold and nourish it in their students. Students can orally practice their stories before writing them. Consequently, the comfort of an oral story could be the path to the written one. Collins and Ruhl (2007) investigated speaking and listening skills through storytelling, talking journals, and active listening. They found that using storytelling, story maps, talking journals, and active listening led to the development in speaking and listening skills and substantially encouraged student autonomy.

### ***The Importance of Storytelling***

Storytelling is a global art. It is probably the most predominant form of speech (Atta-Alla, 2012). Storytelling is a pre historic concept (Sorensen, 2004). Records of storytelling show that it has existed in many ancient civilization and languages, like Sanskrit, old German, Latin, Chinese, Greek, old Slavonic and Icelandic. Not to mention Arabic epics of course. Storytelling was a popular art form in the Arab culture, (Skeiker, 2010) and continues to be. Storytelling has always been tremendously popular. Over the past two decades, the interest in studying storytelling has grown enormously. The benefits of storytelling in pop culture are evidenced by the increasing number of stories (VanDecarr, 2013). Storytelling is a creative art that entertained humans over centuries and across cultures and its educational traits continues to serve teachers. The art of telling stories supplies a versatile tool for teaching a language. It makes students' minds more creative and provides the environments for language learning which is an experience and can be used with groups as well as individuals. Storytelling is regarded as an effective and alternative tool. It has a cross-cultural understanding role (Rokni and Qarajeh , 2014).

Storytelling is fundamental in instruction and foreign language education (Atta-Alla, 2012). Studies show that storytelling has contributed significantly to the development of speaking and listening skills and in establishing students' confidence so that they can compose a story and experience with the language. Sanchez (2014) investigated developing linguistic skills through storytelling in the EFL classroom. The results showed that storytelling helped in improving the five linguistic skills in elementary EFL classes. These skills include listening, speaking, reading, writing and oral interaction. Karlsson (2012) also believes that storytelling is characterized as powerful, motivating and efficient. He states that "actual and fictitious information is quickly learnt, retained, instantly recalled and accurately applied when

delivered in the form of a well-told story. Storytelling can include different sorts of materials, such as computerized materials, musical instruments, the internet, costumes, real objects, pictures decorations, not to mention school textbooks.

As per Deacon and Murphey (2001) storytelling stimulates students' narrative brains in the foreign languages learning process. Tools such as summarizing, shadowing, retelling, action logging, news lettering and journal writing maximize student understanding and empathy. These strengthening activities allow students to respond profoundly to stories and experience change in their attitudes and perceptions. This leads to active interaction in and out of the classroom. Szwaj and Rejniewicz (2012) declared in the Creativity in Language Learning (CiLL) EU project manual that storytelling is a very rewarding language learning strategy as it introduces the language meaningfully in a combination of all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Storytelling has a powerful effect on students. It establishes positive rapport between the instructor and the student and between classmates. Storytelling is an audio-vocal activity. The storyteller tells the story and the audience listens to it. Nevertheless, when it comes to foreign language learning, storytelling becomes a complicated activity that functions on many levels of conscious and sub-conscious knowledge and involves a set of communication skills resulting in the personalization of language content and an impactful long-term learning.

Adult learners can make use of storytelling in multiple ways. Using storytelling English as Second Language (ESL) and English as Foreign Language (EFL) context improves students' proficiency in the four language skills. Numerous language instructors believe that storytelling is the cornerstone of their instruction profession. They use stories to develop students' abilities to acquire and integrate the four language arts awareness. Involving the use of storytelling shows that promote language skills, develop language proficiency, improve students' listening comprehension, and reading comprehension, builds vocabulary, enhances grammar learning, develops students literacy and oral language skills, enriches students' learning experience, stimulates students to voice their ideas and thoughts, empowers students' critical and visual thinking, improves social interaction and language outcomes. Wallin (2015) conducted a study of storytelling and language development. Results showed that using storytelling for language development is beneficial and rewarding for both students and teachers.

Storytelling promotes cross-cultural awareness according to Jupit et al., (2012). Storytelling is very impactful in fostering the diversity of students of different cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds in the classroom. It develops global networking by raising the awareness and understanding of cultural variations (Atta-Alla, 2012). As Sorensen (2004) conducted a comprehensive study about contemporary storytelling: a discussion of the function of stories in society, she found that storytelling is a powerful tool of persuasion as stories have a quality that makes information more credible and retainable than pure facts and codes. Miller and Pennycuff (2008) explain that this strategy utilizes the language social component. Researchers have discovered that literacy instruction is most efficient when developed through social interaction and participation with others. Whereas Atta-Alla (2012) states that storytelling creates a positive, collaborative and supportive classroom environment where students improve listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. This increases the understanding of the story in a social context. Students learn the social aspects of language through observation and collaboration in storytelling. Chou (2014) conducted a study of situated learning: learn to tell English stories. The results showed that by using situated learning as a theoretical framework, students acquired interactional competence in the practice of storytelling. Their language proficiency and confidence increased and they mastered the interactional architecture of practicing storytelling.

Storytelling can serve as a highly functional strategy for enhancing literacy and reading comprehension skills. As it captures the attention of students and boosts the development of the sense of the story in the storyteller. Comprehension, critical listening and thinking skills are also developed by integrating storytelling with questioning, imagery, inference and retelling. In Craig et al., (2001) research paper about storytelling addressing the literacy needs of diverse learners, they highlight how storytelling helps students to use different literacy experiences to attain the skills necessary for school success and how it offers a substantial opportunity to learn more about the narrative style and story grammar. By telling stories and motivating students to do the same, instructors can help them to participate and value unique styles and points of view and cross over to the written word as well .

Educators need to find ways to put back ‘art’ into teaching to connect to all students (Miller and Pennycuff, 2008). The advantages of using storytelling in the classroom ensure a means of limiting students’ affective filter, promoting imagination and boosting collaboration and enhancing their listening skills and verbal proficiency. Storytelling has proven to be an effective way to teach, learn and transfer knowledge. It has evolved from oral dissemination to written media and it has naturally progressed to interactive media implemented in a various digital environments (Jupit et al., 2012). Bruhn and Henry (2013) conducted a case study about tackling the challenge of mobile devices use in the classroom: using boundary-free storytelling to inspire students’ professional growth. They reported that mobile devices supported students ability to tell a story in any way they see fit be it text, photos, videos or all of the above and provided a list of the shortcomings they need to overcome before stepping inside the world of communications.

Storytelling boosts students’ observation and interaction with the teacher. They watch the storyteller use intonation and facial expressions so that the audience participates. When students retell stories, they increasingly develop their comprehension skills by linking stories with expression. They also establish an interactive relationship between language instructors and students. These characteristics and more permit storytelling to captivate the audience. Isbell et al., (2004) conducted a study about the effect of storytelling and story reading on the oral language complexity and story comprehension for young learners. The results indicated that the two groups of young learners demonstrated improved results in story-comprehension and story-retelling after using storytelling strategy. Learners in the story reading group witnessed some improvement in their language complexity. Dujmovic and Bancic (2014) state that storytelling is a practical and powerful tool. Scholars have pointed out and tested storytelling as an effective teaching strategy for improving motivation and developing students’ learning performance. It boosts memory via recalling the necessary learning and helps interaction among them.

Burne (2004) states that it can be argued that the most critical language skills, such as the traditional categories of listening, speaking, reading and writing can be taught and practiced effectively through the use of storytelling. The stories provide the teacher with a medium in which to present new language items, be they lexical or grammatical, while at the same time offering learners a large narrative framework to remember the structure Dolzhykova (2014) carried out a study on how teaching English through storytelling to young learners; Ukrainian and Norwegian experiences. The findings proved that using storytelling as an educational tool in teaching English to young learners in Ukraine and Norway is an efficient mechanism. Teachers generally had positive attitudes towards it.

As Gill (2011) declares storytelling has been part of human communication for millenniums, it has the ability to transcend age groups, cultures and genders. The use of storytelling has a high social effect that brings people both physically and psychologically closer. Mokhtar et

al., (2010) conducted a study on the effectiveness of storytelling in enhancing communicative skills. The findings of the study were as follows: students progressed in particular language skills such as vocabulary, comprehension, sequencing, and story recall through the use of storytelling. They also experienced some advancement in their communicative skills in areas like transmitting information and using non-verbal language.

Storytelling is both a life experience as well as a linguistic experience. It has the potential of reaching deep within the students something that regular teaching approaches may not carry out. The story reflects an image of the world around and composes a visionary of its own, meeting students psychological, sentimental, cognitive, and educational needs. Storytelling is a rich teaching resource that can get into learners emotional and affective domains as they favor storytelling to other types of resources. Instructors can take advantage of this to solve some difficulties in language learning or develop students' level in some aspects of language, especially vocabulary. In a study conducted by Abdulla (2012) titled 'The effect of storytelling on vocabulary acquisition,' the findings showed that using storytelling had a major role in developing and retrieving the vocabulary of thirty Iraqi EFL students.

Storytelling triggers learners' narrative minds in favor of language learning. The universality of the story makes of it a material that can be used in any community and in any language, expediting Second Language/Foreign Language acquisition if presented in a proper way. Stories emotionally affect students, causing interaction that profoundly results in changes in their beliefs and attitudes. This leads to active participation and language practice, especially in the field of vocabulary acquisition (Rafik, 2005). In a study concerning storytelling as a teaching method in ESL classrooms conducted by Yang (2011) that was based on classroom observations the results emphasized that storytelling is a novel teaching strategy and can be used in ESL classes too.

Storytelling has the characteristics needed to improve reading because it is an activity most of the student and some of the teachers favor. It doesn't require a lot of time of planning, too. Camarillo et al., (2008) conducted a study that examined whether storytelling improves young learners reading. Their findings indicated that students developed their likes towards reading and they demonstrated good behavior, collaboration, motivation and positive attitudes during storytelling activities. They also developed a remarkable preference for reading.

Storytelling has an impact on silent reading as well. Storytelling successfully brings the pupils to the stage of enthusiastic independent reading. It requires a substantial amount of time for story listeners to become readers. Research findings from a study of sustained silent reading in foreign language acquisition carried out by Lee (2011) show that storytelling is a substantial initiative. It is the path to independent reading and extensive reading. It is the most enjoyable and a powerful means for extended language acquisition. Extensive reading in the form of in-class sustained silent reading is the most crucial element for enhancing students' academic language and written one. There is a progressive path for EFL acquisition that highly harmonizes with first language progression.

Storytelling has a lot in common with reading aloud. Al- Mansour and Al-Shorman (2011) state that one of the reasons for using the strategy of storytelling aloud in the classroom is that it enables language styles formation. Students usually imitate the sentence structure and the sounds they hear. Researchers unanimously agree that reading aloud to students of all ability levels and ages motivates. They believe that stories give students opportunities to listen to language in full context. Stories also present new vocabulary and language forms with vibrant networks of associations. Moreover, stories can have a deep impact on students' knowledge and self-formation. A study conducted by them looked at the effects of teacher's



storytelling aloud on the reading comprehension of Saudi elementary stage students. Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2011) reported that when using storytelling aloud on reading comprehension of Saudi elementary stage students, the experimental group outperformed the control group on the measure. The study also demonstrated that teacher reading aloud may have significantly positive effect on students' reading comprehension.

Storytelling improves listening skills, literacy competence, and vocabulary knowledge, in EFL storytelling is very impactful and beneficial way to develop vocabulary acquisition. Storytelling stimulates students' motivation and attention that corresponds with a study conducted by Rafik (2005) titled 'Storytelling and Vocabulary Acquisition at the Elementary Level.' The results in the pre-test and the post-test underlined the effect of the material presented to them: stories. Students gained lots of vocabulary through reading stories for class and for pleasure as well.

Storytelling also allows students to think through their past and present life. In fact, storytelling supporters believe that it is a strategy that helps students in making sense of the "complex and unordered world of experience." Storytelling connects past, present and the future generations to shape morals and beliefs. Miller (2009) states storytelling introduces students to the initial phase of communication and literacy and helps them to "share experience and emotions in an interactive and entertaining way."

Storytelling is essential to improving listening, speaking, reading comprehension and writing in EFL classrooms. In a study of the effectiveness of storytelling-based instruction to enhance English listening and speaking skills of sixth grade students in Taiwan by Jenprai, (2013) the results indicated that students' English listening and speaking ability taught by storytelling-based instruction was significantly higher than the other students taught through regular instruction. It also highlighted that learners' attitudes towards English lessons after learning through storytelling-based instruction were highly positive.

Storytelling is regarded as a comprehensive mechanism, because speakers use their background knowledge and linguistic knowledge to create a meaningful message to the intended audience in all cases. Speakers activate relevant schemata from a particular context to transfer the message to the targeted audience (Rokni and Qarajeh, 2014). Storytelling is a useful conversational skill for students. This 'Narrative approach' to language learning enables humans to use stories to regulate past experiences. Stories also have a natural appeal. Storytelling is an effective strategy for students to access the target language input in an enthralling context. (Collins and Ruhl, 2007). According to Nicholes (2012), preliminary study of accuracy development through computerized storytelling on student-generated computer-assisted language learning (CALL) results proved that after utilizing contextualized tenses videos, students were able to write stories using the target tenses and blending images of presentation software. This preliminary study explored how student-generated computer-assisted language learning (CALL) materials benefitted students to acquire the correct verb tenses.

Storytelling develops positive attitudes towards the foreign language and language learning and creates willingness to continue learning. According to Dujmovic and Bancic (2014), students become personally involved in the story as they describe the characters and formulate their own version of the story script. The students always look for the explanation so that they can understand the story, relate to it, create a connection to it, and thereby improve their understanding ability. Uchiyama (2011) conducted a study about reading versus telling stories in the development of English vocabulary and comprehension in young second language learners in Japan. The results showed that storytelling developed language

and worked as scaffolding for teachers. Both of them had highly positive attitudes towards this teaching strategy.

In an instructional context, Karlsson (2012), states that storytelling allows language students to use their Multiple Intelligences as solid foundation to learn. They construct their individual strengths in order to combine the different intelligences in storytelling and to expand and deepen their language learning. Furthermore, he believes that one of many storytelling characteristics as a teaching strategy is learners' autonomy which is a method that allows students to take full charge of their own learning. Thus, storytelling restructures the roles of students and instructors. In storytelling as in learners' autonomy, after the instructor provides all of the required learning conditions and inputs through prompts, introduction, reminders and outlines, the students work independently, team-up with peers or group members to compose a story that captivates their audience. Students, therefore, understand that the instructor serves as a facilitator who guides them. Ultimately, storytelling is learner-centered, not teacher-centered.

Stories, multiple intelligences and individual learning styles have a lot in common. Stories are defined as multimodal entities which can cater to linguistic, visual-spatial, musical, sequential or logical, kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. Stories allow students to create movement, drama and dance, to concentrate on pictures and art, to listen to music and sing along. Stories permit learners to focus on interpersonal environments, solving problems, setting goals or expressing emotion. Stories also provide possibilities for curriculum development, while expanding learners' knowledge on a particular theme. They can also provide opportunities for assessment of the learning process and learning outcomes. In a study conducted by Azizah et al., (2011), Multiple Intelligences ensured usability of digital storytelling for preschool children who were examined. The results showed that preschool digital storytelling teaching was able to grab children's interest and engaged them during the learning process. Dujmović and Bančić (2014) discussion paper of computer-aided storytelling in the EFL classroom highlighted the most significant benefits and practical uses of computer-aided storytelling in EFL classrooms.

Rokni and Qarajeh (2014) state that research proves that storytelling improves students speaking skills, communication skills, language knowledge, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation accent etc. Storytelling, as an instructional tool and process, enhances the development of language proficiency. It also fosters some essential competencies of lifelong learning such as learning to learn, interpersonal and intercultural competence as well as cultural awareness and expression Oduolowu and Oluwakemi (2014) conducted a study investigating the effect of storytelling on listening skills of primary one pupil in Ibadan north local government area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The results of pre and post-test showed a remarkable and significant major effect of the treatment on the listening skills of primary one students that used storytelling strategy.

A claim made by Mokhtar et al., (2011) is that stories are entertaining and inspiring, thus attracting listeners and boosting communication. As storytellers, students have the opportunity to do it all: read, write, listen, and speak. The comfortable and lively environment formed by stories motivates the students to speak and converse with each other. They enjoy experimenting vocally, with facial expressions, sentiments, and gestures that formulate the perfect story. As they present their story, the art of listening becomes a two-way street. By using good eye contact and body language these storytellers interact with their audience. As students tell and listen to a story, they get caught up in the story and forget about themselves and their anxiety. They become more self-confident and express themselves creatively. The activities and skills that they learn will be used across the curriculum and throughout life.

McLellan (2007) examined digital storytelling in higher education. She investigated the origins and practices of digital storytelling and highlighted a range of applications in higher education. Her remarks proved that digital storytelling is a promising instructional strategy as well as a growing field of study in higher education. However, the potential for digital storytelling extends far beyond the areas of communication and media studies.

As Lockett (2011) states, a large amount of research has been done investigating the effects of storytelling in education. Storytelling has verifiable, measurable, positive and a unique value in instruction. Stories enhance recall, retention, and implementation of concepts in new situations. Storytelling elevates enthusiasm for learning new subject matter. The thrills of storytelling make reading and learning joyous and instill a sense of wonderment about life and learning. Listening to stories improves comprehension as well. Studies show that reading aloud and storytelling to students for a minimum of 15 minutes each day can help at-risk students make progress in reading comprehension, listening comprehension and in mathematics applications. In a study by Brune (2004) titled 'Total Physical Response Storytelling an Analysis and Application' (TPRS), the findings supported the fact that TPRS synthesized a long tradition of foreign language teaching methodologies, linguistic research and the art of storytelling to create an innovative, effective and fun way of learning a new language. In many cases, it has been demonstrated that TPRS corresponds with current trends in language pedagogy, linguistics and folklore research without necessarily realizing or acknowledging these important connections.

Storytelling helps students to become active listeners. Humans need to communicate. Personal experiences make storytelling a natural way to design lessons that help students improve their English language skills. Conversational storytelling is a delightful experience for both the instructor and the learners once they get into it. Raising awareness of the generic characteristics of conversational storytelling enables learners to share their own stories with their classmates. Different techniques add more benefits to stories and promote greater fluency, retelling activities and exercises that extend to using adjectives, idiomatic expressions, and direct speech. In addition, active listening creates a real interactive environment that enhances the development of higher-order language skills. The ability to tell a personal anecdote in English, then sharing it with others and to react positively to other people's stories is a great social asset. Abdel-Hack and Helwa (2014) investigated using digital storytelling and weblogs instruction to enhance EFL narrative writing and critical thinking skills among EFL majors at the faculty of education in Benha, Egypt. They reported that digital storytelling and weblogs were appropriate tools for increasing EFL Majors knowledge of English. Digital storytelling and weblogs were also a tool for boosting students' motivation to improve and practice their EFL writing and critical thinking skills.

On the other hand, storytelling directly develops student's listening skills, reading skills and comprehension. It is a unique teaching strategy that has an extraordinary capability of enhancing different skills at once (Sanchez, 2014). In a study conducted by Gallets (2005) about storytelling and story reading: 'A Comparison of the Effects on Children's Memory and Story Comprehension.' he reported that story reading and storytelling assisted children learning. He also concluded that children who listened to stories tended to retain more information that is delivered orally through the method of storytelling.

Storytelling can be used as a remedial program for underachiever language students. Professor Lee (2012) investigated storytelling supported by technology: an alternative for EFL children with learning difficulties. The results showed that technology improved the conditions of storytelling and helped to boost the learning attitude and motivation of twenty

Taiwanese EFL children with learning difficulty, using PowerPoint designs and an online recording system 'Voice Thread' their attitude and motivation did improve noticeably.

Yıldırım and Torun (2014) believe that using animated stories develops language learning in many ways. Animated stories provide great visual support and extra audio stimuli. In addition, these stories could be more powerful than a written text or a story told by a non-native speaker teacher especially when they are dubbed by native speakers as they provide learners with an authentic pronunciation and intonation patterns of the foreign language. Using animated stories to contextualize the teaching to young learners offers spectacular potentials as they are supported with a variety of interactive, meaningful tasks and activities. They also contribute to further positive attitudes towards learning English. The findings of Yıldırım and Torun's study (2014) are highly supportive of this notion. They explored the value of animated stories with young English language learner and reported that students developed positive attitudes towards learning English with animated stories. The study also showed that students' concerns related to learning English were reduced via such instruction. The findings implied that the use of animated stories offered teachers opportunities to present and recycle vocabulary, grammar, and functions of the target language in context through combining many activities related to the story theme. They concluded that animated stories served as an essential tool to contextualize the target items of language in natural and meaningful ways with their strong text structures and the audio-visual stimuli they provided as well.

Digital storytelling is a promising instructional strategy as well as a growing study domain in higher education as McLellan (2006) claims. Courses on digital storytelling are offered in communication and creative writing programs at many universities. Nevertheless, digital storytelling likely extends far beyond the fields of communication and media studies to include history, business and leadership, knowledge management, community planning, and much more. Digital storytelling has also been used to help students prepare for college. Digital storytelling applications include personal stories, digital story archives, memorial stories, vocational stories, educational stories, and stories in medicine and health. This shows that digital storytelling is further more intimate and contributory, with less flamboyance, yet with an in-depth and lasting power. It seems to reach people more profoundly. Miller (2009) conducted a study about digital storytelling. She researched digital storytelling procedures, including the benefits students attain from storytelling and technology integration in addition to suggestions for classroom implementation. She also presented insights for maximum utilization of digital storytelling in the classroom.

Using storytelling and puppetry in the classroom has proved the theory in relation to the left and right brain hemisphere. Bognar (2009) states that the simultaneous application of both hemispheres of human brain notably intensifies the brain function capacity. Although this theory has not been fully confirmed by neuro-scientific studies, it has affected many changes in education. Consequently, listening to music while solving some intellectual assignments, writing mathematical tasks in colors, coloristic illustrations in study books, and using storytelling and puppetry have been all introduced in classrooms. Jansen (2005) who accepts the results of modern neuro-scientific studies as the foundation in his pedagogical endeavors, states that a neuroscientist would tell people to manipulate the appropriate emotions in the process of learning by using all available methods. Hereby, sentiments must be used as an element of learning and not as its supplement. He gives examples of the use of music, game, drama, storytelling, but also all sorts of other activities that vigorously stir emotions. The emotional side of learning is crucial in the interaction of feelings, activities and cognition. There is no such thing as a division between the brain and emotions; emotions, thoughts and learning are connected. The best way of the classroom practice is not the mere use of didactic

instruction. Exciting, enchanting and meaningful content is critically required. By using storytelling as an educational tool, students and professors are equally inspired with the multitude of various choices. It is essential to keep in mind that students are complicated beings, consequently, inspiration, encouragement, satisfaction and fascination must be integrated within meaningful and impactful information in the educational practice. Humans are more likely to remember information with emotional impact; therefore, listening to stories is almost as creative as storytelling. All humans have a unique experience with the story they hear as they create in their own imagination the characters, the story scenes, some values, wishes and marvels. Bogner (2009) evidentially supports these observations with a study conducted by him about storytelling and puppetry in higher education. The results showed that storytelling and puppetry are important and efficient for the classroom practice.

Transmedia storytelling is also greatly beneficial. Pietschmann et al., (2014) explains that Transmedia storytelling involves unfolding stories across multiple media platforms, with each text making a characteristic and beneficial contribution to the whole experience. Transmedia consumers are more involved in the story resulting in more engagement, intrinsic motivation, and media enjoyment. Many modern entertainment franchises have been created for cross-generational appeal, with media extensions specifically targeting all age audiences. Like those animation movies that are suitable for all family members regardless of age. That also can apply in the classroom context. The researcher has been using Transmedia storytelling and students show lots of enthusiasm about it .It helps them learn about new world cultures, new vocabulary and new dimensions. It also allows them to be critical and creative thinkers.

Ioannou-Georgiou and Verdugo (2011) see that stories are windows open to the world. They bring in views about different people, new countries and diverse cultural values. Stories help students show a curiosity about other cultures, far-off lands and ‘exotic’ peoples from other parts of the planet. Using stories in the classroom can prepare learners for openness, awareness, tolerance and acceptance towards other ways of understanding life. In this sense, learners can gain sensitive attitudes towards others which will make them better-prepared citizens for trans-national relationships. Costello (2015) believes that stories reflect the essence of human experience in all its diversity. Using texts like graphic novels, cartoons and comics in the classroom can do more than provide high-interest material to struggling readers. Storytelling is the nearest to walking in another’s shoes. It is seeing the world from someone else’s perspective. Storytelling is one effective way of ‘teaching tolerance’ every day. It enables students to confront and heal the wounds that divide humanity, to be willing to listen to stories that are different, and truly hear and believe them without judging or moralizing.

To summarize, storytelling is a valuable teaching and learning tool because it:(1) is a holistic approach to learning a language involving a number of significant competences for lifelong learning (2) offers meaningful context for learning (3) assists in sharing personal experiences (4) presents insight into cultures, values and beliefs (5) stimulates curiosity and encourages individual learning (6) integrates learning with enjoyment (Szwaj, and Rejniewicz, 2012)

### ***The Challenges of Using Storytelling***

Storytelling as a pedagogical strategy is not new or unique. It is one of the most attainable teaching tools available for all instructors, precisely language instructors. It is broadly used in language instruction. It is a special activity that may be reserved for special times or all times. It can be utilized in all learning levels and ages for various objectives, as Atta-Alla (2012) states. Apparently it would seem that storytelling is too perfect to have any disadvantages. Thus, some challenges may hinder the use of storytelling in the classroom context. Every

teacher is faced with the ultimate teaching challenge – the student who claims to have ‘nothing to write about.’ A simple story can serve to help in this situation as Lockett (2011) claims. From the researcher’s experience in the field of teaching and due to the restricted class time which is 45 minutes in schools, it is somehow difficult to integrate stories out of curriculum context because teachers have a fixed and planned schedule to stick to. Lack of tolerance in some societies makes some stories unacceptable, as they are seen as a bad influence. Students may harshly judge the characters or their choices and the outcomes if they do not empathize enough with them. Choice of stories can also affect the storytelling process. If the stories are not age appropriate or linguistically adequate to students’ level they will not serve the desired purposes. Delivering a story needs a well-practiced teacher with fluent language ability and a good command of using proper rhythm and intonation in order to capture students’ full attention. If the teacher does not meet all these requirements or at least half of them she/he may not be able to deliver the story properly and lose its value. Teacher’s enthusiasm towards the story may affect students as well. When a teacher conveys a message through a story she/he strongly believes in, it will get through to students directly. When a teacher is blunt or disinterested in a story it will negatively impact upon him/her and most importantly the student, leading to the students’ loss of attention. It is also generally accepted that getting today’s students to speak grammatically correct English is becoming increasingly more challenging. On many occasions, students do not have good role models at home or in the community where they can hear the language properly used. This goes for older learners as well as the young as Lockett (2011) explains.

### ***Storytelling Style and Assessment Techniques***

There are four major storytelling instructional styles according to Andrews et al., (2009); they collectively share a component that is stories. The four styles have distinctive definitions, purposes, uses of the story, and outcomes. Every style provides students with a temporally ordered sequence of information and utilizes an attention-focusing mechanism. These story types are described in details below:

1. **Case-Based Instruction:** Cases are stories that took place in the past. They are broadly used in contexts such as medical, law, and business schools. Case-based instruction resolves the problem and offers a solution, but the student is placed outside the story context. Students must figure out the main facts and events as they happened. Therefore, case studies have a historical nature. Because of that, cases do not allow students to change their outcomes or processes. To some extent, they must critically think and implement theories to the existing facts so that they form hypotheses about why the facts of the case happened. A key advantage of cases when compared to the other three types of stories is that they are imbued with authority which comes from the actual facts of the stories.
2. **Story-based instruction:** Settles the problem, the solution, and the student all within the context of the story frames. The storyteller controls all of the information received by the student. Stories can be either fictional or non-fictional. They attempt to emotionally immerse students in the story’s situation; deeper than any of the other three story types. For this reason, stories often told for entertainment’s sake, often without following an instructional objective. A story seeks to express a series of events that are not necessarily in a chronological order.
3. **Scenario-Based Instruction:** Scenarios state fixed solution criteria, but not fixed solutions. Students are situated in a place that allows them to interact with the scenario and create different outcomes depending on their decisions and actions.

They can be fictional or non-fictional. However, for purposes of instruction they often come from history. Many scenarios are taken from actual cases; they can be modified to suit the purpose of teaching and evaluation assessment. This ability to accurately measure learner responses in a scenario driven simulation, simulator, or instructional game makes scenarios effective area to try out new theories, methods and procedures for solving operational problems. Students can highly benefit from the experience. The main goal of scenario-driven instruction is to improve performance.

4. **Problem-Based Instruction:** Is possibly the most convenient method for teaching students how to best solve badly structured problems that do not have optimal solution criteria or parameters. Problem-based instruction allows students to take control of their own learning procedures and activities. It uses a problem (fictional or non-fictional) as a mechanism for conveying knowledge to students. The instruction usually occurs in a team setting, where each team member comes up with a collaborative solution. An important aspect is that while the instructor assists the learning process, each student and the learning team take full charge of defining a way to solve the problem and then applying facts and skills to reach a solution.

Stories used for instruction date back in history as far off as the spoken word. They will last whether theory bases for instructional storytelling are established or not. Likely, the use of instructional stories will remain whether empirical research emphasizes the domain or not. Constructing theories and empirical research contributions offer a better understanding of how to best compose and use such stories (Andrews et al., 2009)

As for assessing storytelling ,it can be divided into two assessments: (1) Written storytelling and it is assessed by a written exam. (2) Oral storytelling and it is evaluated by a carefully designed rubric to measure students' oral storytelling presentation.

### **Communication Skills**

The world is becoming an ever more interconnected community. Within this global village, people's need to communicate is growing rapidly. The mastery of foreign languages is an essential tool required for this communication. Over the last century, there have been a lot of discussions over what strategies provide the most effective and adequate means to help students in foreign language acquisition. These discussions have led to the development of a surprisingly vast and diverse array of teaching methods (Burne, 2004). Communication is one of the most important and often underutilized educational skills. For both students and instructors, communicating with purpose, candor, courage and sensitivity is a powerful skill. Teaching communication skills is not just about training students in discipline, it is also about educating them far beyond life after college and instilling within them inquisitive minds that will serve them all the way through their lives (Duck and McMahan, 2012). If communication skills are to have a crucial and significant influence on boosting student learning, then the goal of an institution of higher education must be to aid students in accomplishing analytical awareness and giving them the means to express it. The college should make consistent instructional standards and learning objectives available, but also merge them into communications course plans. (Bradford, 2011). In the 21st century, mastering basic skills in communication is fundamental for personal and professional growth and success. In a globalized context, students of English need a particular set of language skills for their success in education and career. The English language instructors have to give maximum attention to the English communication development with a goal of fulfilling job aspirations (Reddy and Gopi, 2013). According to Collins and Ruhl, (2007) instructors of

English communication at the university level have to encourage and provide training to students to practice a full range of language skills needed for communication, mainly oral communication. Students need to practice both: managing the give and take interaction in a conversation, producing and listening to extended speech with less interruption too. Bradford (2011) states that the written word is the technique by which people know what they know. It organizes thoughts. People strive to understand the rise of literacy both historically and logically, but history and logic are themselves the products of intellectuality. Allen (2013) believes that storytelling is the most captivating way to communicate an event and its impact Bradford (2011) reinforces that communication skills are paramount life skills. Skills of communication are related to professional success. Such skills can be developed and enhanced (Dixon and O'Hara, 2015). Digital communication skills are equally important. They matter considerably in academic life.

### ***Definitions of Communication Skills***

Communication is the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another, according to Lunenburg (2010). He also states that the word communication is derived from the Latin word 'communis,' which means common. The definition emphasizes the fact that common understanding must occur from the exchange of information Reddy and Gopi, (2013) believe that communication means the exchange of thoughts and ideas with the intention of conveying information. Effective communication is all about transferring messages to others clearly and unambiguously with minimum distortion. For a successful life in any field, communication skills are of primary importance. Rajadurai (2015) defines communication as the art and process of creating and sharing ideas. It is an act of sending and receiving intended messages. Abou Youssef (2005) mentions that Schramm states that communication can be viewed as a 'tool that differentiates human from other societies.' Berelson and Steiner define communication as the transference of information, ideas, emotions and skills through the use of symbols, words, pictures, figures, and graph. Rogers believes that, "Communication is the process of conveying ideas, information, and attitudes from the sender to a receiver for the important purposes." She continues, Kar defines communication as "all those planned or unplanned processes that enable a person to influence others behavior." Abou Youssef (2005) describes communications as "a process of transmitting ideas, information, and attitudes by the use of symbols, words, pictures, figures from the sender to a receiver, for influential intentions." So communication is considered as a process by which message senders and receivers interact in a given social context. Whereas Grant (2012) believes that communication is the thread that holds all the essential leadership skills together.

Murray (2010) describes communication skills as being composed of four elements:

Grammatical competence (concerned with the well-formedness of language), sociolinguistic competence (the ability to be appropriate with language), discourse competence (knowledge of the connections between utterances in a text to form a meaningful whole), and strategic competence (the ability to compensate for imperfect language knowledge). Proficiency in language involves grammar and syntax, general listening skills, vocabulary development, general reading and writing skills, the development of communication strategies and the pragmatics of communication and associated concerns with implication and inference. Communication skills, both written and oral, are the most important quality employers seek in the 'ideal job candidate.' Scholars reported five communication skills that all college students should master before and during college which are reading, writing, writing Email, speaking, and listening. These essential communication skills create opportunities for success in any profession. Bradford (2011) lists the key 21st century skills as "communication,



collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, innovation, and information, media, and technology literacy.” According to the members of Griffith Graduate Project (2004), communication skills include a combination of verbal, interpersonal and physical strategies needed to interact confidently and efficiently with a variety of audiences. A skillful communicator uses a number of different means (e.g., graphical, visual, statistical, audio-visual and technological) to get the point through.

### ***The Elements of Communication***

Communication is a two-way process. Lunenburg (2010) identifies the elements of communication as the sender, the encoding, the message, the medium, the decoding, the receiver, and the feedback. The sender initiates the communication. The sender encodes the idea by carefully selecting words, symbols, or gestures to compose a message. The message is the outcome of the encoding, and it takes the form of verbal, nonverbal, or written language. The message is sent through a medium or channel, which is the carrier of the communication. The medium can be a face-to-face conversation, telephone call, e-mail, or written report. The receiver decodes the received message into meaningful information. Noise is anything that distracts the message. Different perceptions of the message, language barriers, interruptions, emotions, and attitudes are examples of noise. Finally, feedback occurs when the receiver responds to the sender's message and returns the message to the sender. Feedback allows the sender to determine if the message has been received and understood or not. The elements in the communication process determine the quality of communication. A problem in any one of these elements can reduce communication effectiveness. Bradford (2011) investigated communication skills as the SACS-QEP (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools- Quality Enhancement Plan). He recommended the college to develop communication course plans and special strategies to integrate effective writing into non-English courses to support writing in the curriculum. These two encompassing steps were part and parcel of recommending communication skills to be Brevard Community College's Quality Enhancement Plan.

### ***The Forms of Communication Skills***

Communication is traditionally known to be verbal or non-verbal. According to Deakin University's Graduate Learning Outcomes (2016), there are many types of communication skills students need to take into consideration when engaged in a communicative interaction. Some of these forms include; the aim of the communication, level of formality, consideration of audiences' previous knowledge, cultural aspects etc. Some elements are specified as oral, written and interpersonal communication are listed below:

1. Oral communication that includes: empathy, use of visual aids in a presentation, the amount of information in visual aids, revision of handouts, feedback from the audience, engagement with the audience, responses to questions from the audience, voice adjustment, tone of voice, eye contact, presenter's posture in the room .
2. Written communication includes: text type (e.g. report, essay, reflective piece, story etc. proper length of document, structuring of the argument, adequate level of detail within document (e.g. presentation of supporting evidence, referencing system) ratio of white: black space (i.e., avoid long chunks of dense text) font style/size adherence to reference.
3. Interpersonal communication includes: emotional intelligence, body language, posture, sensitivity to the audience demonstrated through appropriate behavior and active listening.

Abou Youssef (2005) states that there are many categorizations of forms of communication. The two main forms of communication are verbal and non-verbal communication:

1. Verbal Communication includes: meetings, presentations and lectures, workshops and conversations along with:
  - a) Oral Communication such as: monologue, dialogue, discussions and telephone calls.
  - b) Visual Communication such as: maps, graphic, traffic signals, advertisement ...etc.
  - c) Written Communication such as: memos, letters reports, papers and stories.
  - d) Electronic Communication such as interacting with a computer, modem, telephone fax, E-mail
- 2- Non-verbal communication: Such as body movement facial expression and voice ...etc.

### ***Communication Skills Styles***

Each student has a unique style of communicating. Some students are talkative and extroverted while others are quiet and introverted. Some are outspoken while others are reserved. Some are formal and direct while others are informal and conservative. These different styles of communication influence students in the classrooms. Communication style refers to the choices students make when interacting with others. It consists of two basic dimensions: the assertiveness and the emotiveness levels of their communication. Besides, students use various styles depending on who they are communicating with (McPhee, 2010). In a study conducted by Reddy and Gopi (2013) the role of English language teacher in developing communication skills among the students of engineering and technology department was investigated. They reported that communication skills among students developed by strict training programs and lots of practice exercises.

McPhee (2010) also mentions that several models define the ways human communicate. Dr. Eileen Russo's model is one of the functional ones. It shows that there are two different dimensions in communication styles: the level of expressiveness and the level of assertiveness. The assertive communication styles direct others while the less assertive styles seek directions and advice. The essential characteristics of each communication style as follows:

- Low Expressiveness + High Assertiveness = Direct
- Low Expressiveness + Low Assertiveness = Systematic
- High Expressiveness + High Assertiveness = Spirited
- High Expressiveness + Low Assertiveness = Considerate

### ***The Communication Styles Matrix Detailed***

McPhee (2010) classifies communication styles as:

1. *Direct Communication Style*: Students with the direct communication style are highly assertive and not expressive. They lead and direct others instead of asking others directions, and they do not easily display emotions during communications. They are hard, fast workers and usually list few questions. These students need to be very cautious to avoid appearing dictatorial. They focus on outcomes rather than emotions. They speak their minds but not expected to talk about their personal lives. They don't give up in

conflicts. Their method of expressing their opinion(s) might be viewed as aggressive rather than assertive. Students of this style can make use of some listening skills practice.

2. *Spirited Communication Style*: Students with the spirited communication style are very interested in the ‘whole issue.’ They are the dreamers, the inventors, and the innovators of the group. Their communication is full of grand and extravagant ideas that tend to be very convincing. Students with the spirited communication style prefer to materialize ideas, brainstorm, and discuss the “issue” as long as they get to do a lot of discussions! They have difficulty sticking to an agenda or to one topic. However, they are not always good at underlying the details or the exact steps in a procedure. They like to add anecdotes into their speeches to support a point. Their written and verbal communications are dramatic. While they can be very entertaining, getting them to communicate clearly on specific topics needs the assistance of someone else to guide them through a conversation and keep them on track.

3. *Systematic Communication Style*: Students with a systematic communication style focus on facts and details rather than opinions and possibilities. They appreciate facts and analysis rather than ideas that have not yet been proved useful. Communication with physical evidence is best for systematic learners. They are uncomfortable expressing their feelings and tend to avoid confrontation. They are slower to respond, as they are probably analyzing the situation and constructing a logical, well thought-out response. Charts, graphs and trends are all useful tools for communicating with them. The more information given to them, the happier they are as long as the information is relevant to the current discussion or to the background information.

4. *Considerate Communication Style*: Students with the considerate communication style are very thoughtful and concerned about others’ feelings. They want to delight them and to be included in their peer group. They enjoy working, helping, and connecting with others on a personal level. If there is conflict in a group, they are the ones to mediate it. They want everyone to have the chance to speak their minds, have their turns, and receive recognition for their contribution. They are natural trainers and counselors. They enjoy listening to and helping others to succeed. They encourage group collaboration and communication, though they are not always inclined to speak their minds. They may be reluctant to share an opposing opinion, even if it is valuable information, because they are concerned about keeping the peace and being liked. They are also inclined to take direct communication as a personal matter.

As per Gates (2014), he classifies communication styles as follows:

1. *Analytical Style*: They need all the facts and tend to analyze them. They communicate in a rational way, a special attention is given to detail and facts, but they might over analyze. When speaking to them it is better to speak with logic and solid facts.

2. *Visionary Style*: They are opportunistic, risk takers and prefer to discuss new ideas. They call for change and thinking outside the box, but they might be too general and do not stick to the issue at hand. When talking to them it is preferable to discuss the future and the big picture keeping in mind not be too inflexible and make sure there is some room for new ideas.

3. *Methodical Style*: They seek order and structure when they communicate. They do well in finishing the points of discussion, but they do not favor the change to the structure of communication. When talking to them it is best to be organized and discuss each point to conclude and stick to an agenda.

4. *Connected Style*: They pay a lot of attention to relationships and they prefer sharing emotions and feelings. They focus on people, but they might steer away from the objective facts and process. When talking to them it is desirable to be sensitive, converse about people, be supportive and keep good eye contact.

### ***Communication Skills Behaviors***

Communication behaviors are simply the psychological conduct that influences learners' expression. Gates (2014) classifies communication behaviors as follows:

1. *Competing Behavior*: Students normally demand to know the direction. This behavior is good when they are being directed or if quick decisions need to be made.
2. *Collaborating Behavior*: Students generally take their own views and that of the others into consideration, whether they are important or not. This behavior is useful when they need to get to a mutually acceptable agreement.
3. *Avoiding Behavior*: Students regularly prefer not to give or hear opinions as they concerned with other issues. This behavior is proper when the issue is not important or trivial.
4. *Accommodating Behavior*: Students typically pay more attention to the view or issues of others and less on their own. This behavior is good when the issue is important to others.

To actually become productive in class, jobs or day-to-day communication with others, humans must respect that they are all unique; with different delivery and receptive styles of communication and that they can never and will never be the same. This acceptance is the first step to a journey of improved communication. Staying the same will produce the same or worst results. Focusing on communication and developing it will be a lifelong advantage (Gates, 2014). In a study conducted by Kunta (2015) investigating teaching through the oral delivery of stories, found that literary pieces especially stories were more attractive and fascinating than other teaching materials and allowed a number of language learning activities like productive and receptive skills. Stories had also facilitated language teaching and learning a better way than ever.

### ***The Approaches of Communication Skills***

There are many approaches of communication skills in education, journalism, business, medicine and entertainment. In this study, the focus is primarily on written communication skills, oral communication skills and interpersonal communication skills. Oral or verbal communication takes place by means of talks, dialogues, conversations, speeches, meetings, storytelling etc. Whereas written communication takes place through letters, memos, emails, faxes, notices, circulars, reports, brochures, books, agenda, stories, discourse through many types of mechanisms, general conversation, public speeches, debates, and meetings and anywhere there is interaction with more than one party constitutes communication. Non-verbal communication, on the other hand, takes place through body language and tone of voice and symbolic gestures that relate to how people feel when expressing or receiving information. In addition to these methods, communication takes place through the methods such as visual, audiovisual and electronic means. Silence is also considered as one of the means of communication (Rajadurai, 2015). According to the members of Griffith Graduate Project (2004) effective oral communication skills help students to develop their own academic performance; increase and expand their employment options; enhance their subsequent professional competence and improve their own personal effectiveness. Rajadurai (2015) explains that written communication is another powerful communication. It plays a

significant role in day to day life and in education or business activities. Although, it is generally related to writing letters, memos, diaries, casual notes written on greeting cards etc., recently due to the development of advanced technology, it has been extended to writing faxes, emails and web page, and social media. Studies reveal that average student spends 9% of his/her time on written communication. As for non-verbal communication, body language is mainly an important aspect of non- verbal communication. Non-verbal communication such as body language and tone of voice can communicate more messages as effectively as spoken or written words. Students rely heavily on non-verbal communication than verbal communication. It is said that a non-verbal communication represents two-thirds of all communications. According to Rajadurai, (2015) the major components of body language people use for expressing their ideas as follows:

1. *Facial Expressions and Eye Contact:* Face can reveal the emotional feelings of people such as happiness, sadness, hatred, disgust, anger, fear, etc. For example, a student's confused state of mind in a classroom can indicate that he/she needs further explanation while a smile or nodding may suggest that explanation will not be necessary. Eye contact is also very crucial for legal and business dealings, interviews, presentation skills, storytelling and face- to -face conversations, as it indicates the involvement with the speaker. It also helps to regulate conversational interactions, but it may vary depending on what the people discuss and the type of personal relation between them. Whereas, a lack of eye contact can imply detachment, nervousness or that the person is hiding something important.

2. *Personal Space and Distance:* For effective communication with individuals of a different culture or people of their own culture, they should be aware of personal space around them. According to the accepted space to meet with the norm of the communication process, the public space between the diplomats or VIP's and reporters at a press conference or in a lecture room between a professor and students should be 12 to 25 feet distance. The social space among business dealers ranges from 4 to 12 feet. Among family members, friends and relatives, the personal space between people ranges from 2 to 4 feet. However, space is guided by formal or informal relations of those involved in communications. Intimate space ranging from one foot is maintained among family members and friends as the relationship may involve closer in touching and embracing. The accepted boundaries depend on various factors such as culture, personality, age, gender, status, and dominance. Basically, women tend to have closer distance than men, especially with other women. Similarly, the extroverts prefer to have closer distance than introverts.

3. *Personal Appearance:* Also plays a significant degree of contribution in determining the effectiveness of the message conveyed, received, interpreted and understood. According to research, 'the more attractively the person presents themselves, the more advantages they will have in most aspects of their life'. Non – verbal communication as the tone of voice and body language convey more message than words that are spoken. For example, a tone of voice constitutes 35 – 40 percent of the message people send. Tone means the sound level of utterance, type of emotion and the emphasis made on uttered words.

### ***The Importance of Communication Skills***

Communication is an ever evolving art. From the ancient cavemen's paintings and sagas passed on by word of mouth, to printed media, computing, and social media, the way humans communicate has been in an ongoing state of flux, tightly intertwined with innovations in the communication technology (Babacock and Parker, 2014). In a study conducted by Kumar, (2015) which explored 'activating the communication: the role of computers e-books and the

internet in the context of second language learning.’ The findings showed that computer-assisted language learning ‘CALL’ served as an innovative way and means of enriching the learning experiences, as a medium of global communication and a source of limitless and authentic materials.

Bradford (2011) believes that educating students to acquire multiple skills in communication is a constant requirement, especially in the 21st century. The ability to learn, analyze, and decide in an information-rich society is very critical due to the multitude resources. College communication skills are the primary methodologies that enable a student to know how information is created, composed and processed whether it is written or spoken, in any number of informational media sources. Therefore, the learner must be able to ‘collect, evaluate, and use it effectively.’ Moreover, it has been argued that information ‘fluency’ is vital for academic success, professional success, and continued success all of that contributes to the lifelong learning processes. Writing skills were one of the five most highly rated skills employers seek require in their employees. The teaching of communication as an outcome, along with expert content, is essential as it qualifies students to communicate more effectively through their assessment, enter into dialogue with peers and academics, formulate questions to further their learning etc. It is also fundamental to prepare students for various professional environments and enhance skills that are important for graduates, and required by employers (Deakin University, 2016). Communication skills have a significant role not just in the education field. In a study conducted by Rajadurai (2015) effective communication skills in English for tourism professionals were examined. The results highlighted the importance of communication skills in English to meet the requirements of the tourism industry.

### ***The Barriers of Communication Skills***

In general, the initial step in unraveling the complexity of communication is the understanding of communication basic processes. Only then a researcher identifies where possible problems arise and explores skills for developing communication and managing such malfunctions. There are four main types of barriers. According to Lunenburg, (2010) these barriers are:

1. *Process Barriers*: Every step in the communication process is essential for efficient and good communication. Blocked steps become barriers. For example barriers can block the transfer of understanding between the sender and the receiver.
2. *Physical Barriers*: Any number of physical distractions can hinder the effectiveness of communication, including a telephone call, drop-in visitors, and distances between people, walls, and static on the radio.
3. *Semantic Barriers*: The chosen words, how they are used, and the meaning attached to them cause many communication barriers. The problem is semantic, or the meaning of the words.
4. *Psychosocial Barriers*: Three important concepts are associated with psychological and social barriers: fields of experience, filtering, and psychological distance. Fields of experience include people's backgrounds, perceptions, values, biases, needs, and expectations. Filtering is caused by the needs and interests that guide listening abilities. Psychosocial barriers often involve a psychological distance between students that is similar to actual physical distance.

A study by Lunenburg (2010) investigated communication: the process, barriers, and improving effectiveness were researched and described thoroughly. They study findings showed that schools must develop an awareness of the importance of sender's and receiver's

responsibilities and involvement in active listening skills to improve the effectiveness of communications.

### ***Assessment Techniques of Communication Skills***

According to Deakin University's eight Graduate Learning Outcomes (2016), assessing communication skills can be subjective and might lead students to feel that they are being evaluated unequally. Rubrics are used to make the assessment more objective and enable the academic to impartially compare communication skills.

### **Students' Attitudes**

The concept "attitude" has been frequently studied in social science (Chaiklin, 2011). Adult educators are interested in changing or reinforcing attitudes (Culbertson, 1968). Attitudes have been considered as a central concept of social psychology for a long time. In fact, early writers defined social psychology as the scientific study of attitudes (Schwarz and Bohner, 2001). To some researchers, attitudes are believed to be exciting and mysterious. They function as a shield or as a weapon. Having a certain attitude in life is important to students so as to help them live harmoniously and to better understand their surroundings. Attitudes play a key role in defining a student's personality. Because they affect the way students conceive, act and react towards other students, objects or events that they encounter. In addition, attitudes have an impact on students' social interactions. It is very fundamental to know what an attitude is, how it is developed and its effect on students (Zainal Abidin et al., 2011)

### ***Definition of Attitude***

According to Chaiklin, (2011), there is no universally accepted convention where definition and measurement are integrated. The initial descriptions were broad and included cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioral components. Previously, an attitude was viewed as a conscious and neural state of readiness, regulated through experience, utilizing an instructive and dynamic impact upon the individual's response to all related objects and situations. A decade later, attitudes were perceived as a stable organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes regarding some aspects of the individual's world. These definitions emphasized the enduring nature of attitudes and their close relationship to individuals' behavior. Some sociologists and psychologists outlined attitudes simply in terms of the probability of a person showing a fixed behavior in a fixed situation. In subsequent decades, the attitude concept lost much of its broadness and was highly reduced to its evaluative component. As Daryl Bem sums it up "attitudes are likes and dislikes" (Schwarz and Bohner, 2001). A psychological definition of attitude determines a verbal expression as behavior. Those who use a psychological definition of attitude attempt to reduce prejudice and discrimination by changing attitudes. A sociological definition of attitude looks at verbal expression as an intention to act. That is familiar to the sociological definition that specifies attitude is a "mental status concerning a fact or state and the feeling or emotion towards them" (Chaiklin, 2011).

Attitudes are evaluative reactions to persons, objects, and events. That encompasses beliefs, positive and negative feelings about the attitude object. Attitude directs human experiences and determine the effects of experience on their behaviors .Attitudes can be interpreted as simply as an enduring organization of beliefs, feelings and behavioral tendencies towards considerably social objects, groups, events or symbols or a general feeling or evaluation (positive/ negative) about some person, object or issue. Consequently, attitudes are only relevant to socially significant objects (Zainal Abidin et al., 2011).

As per Abou Youssef (2005), the concept of ‘attitude’ has been defined with a great deal of ambiguity surrounds it. But, perhaps, the most agreeable definition is that of Rokeach who defined it as “a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner.” Concisely an attitude is a positive or negative evaluations or feelings that students have towards other students, objects, issues or events. Attitudes are composed of the general way students feel towards socially significant objects and most attitudes are lasting (Zainal Abidin et al., 2011).

### ***Factors of Attitude***

Definitions of attitude specify at least five factors as Abou Youssef (2005) claims:

1. An attitude is relatively lasting over time: The concept of attitude is limited to constant and lasting arrangements of readiness around a central belief. Attitudes are molded by past experiences and are learned responses to particular objects, things or processes.
2. An Attitude is an arrangement of beliefs: It represents a combination of beliefs. A belief is any suggestion, conscious or unconscious conclusions. Each belief has two components: a cognitive component (person’s knowledge), and an affective component (leads to some action when activated).
3. An attitude is restricted to an object or a situation: An attitude object may be concrete or abstract while an attitude situation is a dynamic event when a person organizes a set of connected behavior beliefs.
4. An attitude is a set of interrelated willingness to respond: a response may be either a verbal expression or a non-verbal behavior, an attitude is an “agenda for action” that specifies the person’s response to a given object within a given situation
5. An attitude leads to a favorable response: An attitude shows the person how to respond in a favorable manner to individuals or groups who agree or oppose with according to particular attitude.

AbouYoussef (2005) also argues that many people attempt to use the terms attitude and opinion interchangeably as if they have the exact meaning. An opinion is the explicit and public expression (verbal or non-verbal) whereas an attitude is an internal private expression of the individual. Thus, when measuring opinions, only a chain of guesses that lead to the internal attitude of the individual .As the world becoming an ever more interconnected community, within this global village, there is a growing need for humans to communicate. An essential tool that is required for this communication is foreign languages acquisition. In a study conducted by Elkılıç and Akça (2008) attitudes of students studying at Kafkas University in Kars, Turkey private primary EFL classroom towards storytelling and motivation were investigated. The results showed that both storytelling and grammar were conceived fascinating by the majority of students. Audio and visual teaching aids and comprehension questions made a considerable contribution towards simplifying stories. The participants showed various types of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation towards learning English.

### ***The Components of Attitude***

According to Zainal Abidin et al., (2011), the majority of psychologists approve that attitudes can be divided into different components. However, a lot of them confirm that the components of attitudes can be categorized according to the ABC model which is:



- (A) The Affective Component of the Attitude: It refers to how students feel about certain attitude objects. It includes positive and negative feelings towards the object.
- (B) The Behavioral Component: It indicates students' behavioral intentions, or how they act according to the attitude they have. It will determine how they act towards an attitude object.
- (C) The Cognitive Component: It points out to students' knowledge of the attitude object. In other words, it refers to what they know about the attitude object and the process that goes onto shaping and using an attitude. That includes thoughts and ideas about the attitude object. In a study conducted by Braunstein,(2006) adult ESL learners' attitudes toward 'Total Physical Response (TPR) Movement and drama (TPR storytelling) in the classroom were examined. The findings proved an overwhelmingly positive attitude toward these two methods, in spite of the fact that the students had more 'traditional' expectations of English class.

### ***Attitude Dimensions***

Culbertson (1968) explores this supposedly simple notion of attitude dimensions as follows:

1. How strongly the attitude holder feels about the object. A whole set of beliefs. Students may prefer a person, innovation or another object without qualification yet they may hold this view with little intensity or deep commitment.
2. How much information the attitude holder has to pack up and interpret his/her belief. Whether they can make distinctions or view the object from several points of views and perspectives.
3. How change resistant the attitude is. Strong attitudes are like blocks of granite that must be hit hard with persuasive communication to budge them.

Social scientists have tools to help measure all these aspects of attitudes. In a study conducted by Ahmed (2012) exploring students' attitudes towards instructors' using activities in EFL class the results indicated favorable results on the students' attitudes towards instructors using activities in EFL class. Findings also supported that instructors played a significant role in conveying knowledge using a variety of appealing instructional strategies and shaping students' attitudes positively towards EFL learning.

### ***Classic and Contemporary Attitude Formation Theories***

Attitudes do not appear out of nowhere because the attitudes that people possess are formed throughout their lives as Zainal Abidin et al., (2011) conclude. There are many ways in which attitudes can be shaped three of them are explored below:

1. *Socialization*: Attitudes can be formed through socialization since people interact with each other, they will be exposed to different types of attitudes. Parents play a key role in shaping the attitudes of children. They acquire their parents' attitudes indirectly through the process of socialization. Friends, teachers and acquaintances can also shape attitudes. Media plays a crucial role in shaping the attitudes of people as well.
2. *Experience*: People form attitudes through experiences with attitude objects when they make conclusions and generalizations based on their experience. A good experience with an attitude object will form a positive attitude towards it. However, encountering bad experience with an attitude object will probably have negative attitudes formation towards it.
3. *Learning*: Attitudes can be learned through different types of learning that include:

- a) **Classical Conditioning:** It is learning through association. It happens when a neural stimulus becomes associated with the response to another stimulus. This normally happens through repeated association.
- b) **Instrumental Conditioning:** It is learning through reward. In life, people are normally rewarded for displaying certain attitudes and sometimes punished for expressing other attitudes. Through instrumental conditioning, attitudes which are rewarded are strengthened and attitudes that are punished are weakened. The researcher has used this throughout the whole experiment.
- c) **Modeling:** or observational learning is another way in which students learn attitudes. Many psychologists believe that students learn attitudes by observing the attitudes of people around them. (Zainal Abidin et al., 2011).

### ***Measuring Attitudes***

As Abou Youssef (2005) explains that attitude assessment is a process that measures an individual's response to a set of social objects of situations. Each behavioral component in the attitude universe in response to a particular situation or object triggers the responses with a unique set of response categories, called items. The set of behavior including an attitude is called an attitude universe. There are several available approaches for measuring attitudes some of them are as mentioned below:

1. **Judgment Methods:** There are two primary characteristics of this approach. First, each item is scaled to give its degree of favorableness towards the issue. Second, the respondents must be scored on the basis according to their responses to the items.
2. **The Method of Summated Ratings:** Techniques similar to techniques used in the mental-testing field. In this approach, five divisions of responses are given for each item: strongly disapprove, disapprove etc with scores 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, accordingly. An individual's scale score is the sum of his scores on the items.
3. **Scalogram Analysis:** In 1944 Guttman suggested a non-metric method for scaling monotone attitude items. In his scale, the items have a special cumulative property.
4. **The Basic Idea of the Scalogram:** If that item can be arranged in an order so that an individual who agrees with, or responds positively to, any specific item also responds positively to all items of a lower value order.

In this study, a questionnaire is used to measure students' attitudes towards using storytelling to develop communication skills.

As Green (2004) claims once upon a time, long ago and far away, instructors did not use fancy PowerPoint presentations, projectors, smart boards or even chalkboards. They simply conveyed their knowledge by stories. The mystical and magical story effect has been renowned throughout the whole world for centuries, and still. Today, in Hollywood and beyond; storytelling is a multi-million dollar business. Stories are a natural mode of thinking. Stories serve multiple functions in the classroom, including sparking student interest, helping the flow of lectures, inspiring students, making material memorable, overcoming student resistance or anxiety, and building a healthy relationship between the instructor and the students, or among students and their peers. Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2011) state that storytelling began with the rise of civilization. Generations heard and experienced the influence of the word through oral expression. Oral interpretation gave way to the written word with cavemen engraving and stone tablets, as they became the means of conveying and

maintaining stories. By the end of the middle ages, printing press was invented then humans learned how to read the written word on a larger scale. Before to that time, storytelling was the main source of literary instruction and entertainment as well. Storytelling also fosters natural communication by enabling students to experience authentic language information. Storytelling in foreign language classrooms is a tremendous tool that can be uses for involving learners with language. Perhaps storytelling should be considered as a new mode of instructional input due to its integrative aspect regarding listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar.

Storytelling is used for entertainment and the delight of listening to a story is splendid. Humans are 'homo fabulens,' instinctively conditioned by the need of stories- telling and hearing them. Storytelling also gives a perfect context for integrating all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The occasion of listening to a story, often followed by a group discussion, sometimes it is an introduction to the reading text or may be brainstorming ideas for a written assignment. In other words, storytelling can act as a trigger to a personalized, meaningful language learning activity that integrates language practice with all four language skills. Storytelling, as a strategy, can be utilized to introduce a theme, topic and language structures. It can also be employed to explain a concept, idea, issue or simply to develop further understanding. Storytelling presents new structures in a meaningful context of practicing English (Szwaj and Rejniewicz, 2012). In Mokhtar et al., (2010) opinion, storytelling does not require any exceptional equipment beyond the imagination. The remarkable experience of listening and speaking creates artistic visionaries. As a learning tool, storytelling encourages students to explore their expressiveness and heightens students' ability to communicate and articulate thoughts and feelings clearly and precisely. The activities and the artistic experience of storytelling assist students in daily life skills too. The researcher strongly believes that storytelling change students' entire life perspectives, enhances their written, oral and interpersonal communication skills and boosts positive attitudes towards learning EFL as well.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The methodology of the current study includes research design, population and sample selection, research instruments construction, pilot study, and procedures used for data collection as well as data analysis. The study was aimed to improve students' communication skills via storytelling strategy. The research questions are:

1. To what extent are there statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of developing the proficiency of their communication skills?
2. To what extent does the use of storytelling affect developing the proficiency of oral and written communication skills for English Majors at Taibah University?
3. To what extent does the use of storytelling develop the proficiency of communication skills affect the attitudes of English Majors at Taibah University?

### **Research Design**

The present study used the experimental design to detect the effects of using storytelling strategy to develop written, oral and interpersonal communication skills of English Majors in Language and Translation Department Level 6 at Taibah University. Two Drama sections were selected to represent the experimental and the control groups. The whole experiment from beginning to the end lasted seven weeks.

## **Research Variables**

The study included three variables:

1. **The Independent Variable is:** the storytelling strategy.
2. **The Dependent Variable 1 is:** communication skills development.
3. **The Dependent Variable 2 is:** students' attitudes towards using the storytelling strategy.

## **Population and Sample Selection**

The current study was designed for developing the communication skills of EFL Female Students and enhancing their attitudes towards it through storytelling.

The population was all English Majors at Language and Translation Department at Taibah University. As for the sample, it contained 46 students. The experimental group and the control group both consisted equal number of students that is 23 in each group. The Deputy Head of the Language and Translation Department chose the Drama course because, according to her, the "drama course was the most relevant course to storytelling." This wise choice came after long years of experience in her associate professor position, and the researcher is very grateful for her help.

## **Instrumentation**

### ***Instruments of the Research:***

The researcher composed the following instruments so as to fulfill the purpose of the present research:-

1. Written communication skills test.
2. Oral and interpersonal communication rubric. .
3. Students attitudes towards using storytelling to develop communication skills questionnaire.

### ***Instruments for Collecting Qualitative Data***

#### ***Description of Students' Attitudes towards Using Storytelling Strategy to Enhance Communication Skills Questionnaire:***

The students' attitudes towards using storytelling strategy to enhance communication skills questionnaire was designed by the researcher and it consisted of: some demographic information, overall GPA, expected grade in Drama course, views about storytelling, views about storytelling activities, and four negative statements in addition to fifteen positive statements.(Appendix A\_2 ).

### ***Instruments for Collecting Quantitative Data***

#### ***The Written Communication Test***

The written test was composed by the researcher to improve students written communication skills (Appendix A). The test assesses the participants' written communication skills. The test consisted of five questions.

#### ***Timing of the Written Communication Skills Test***

The time of the written communication skills test was two hours (120 minutes) divided according to the test. The test consisted of five questions.

#### ***Piloting Written Communication Test***

The written communication test was applied to a pilot sample of (N=21) EFL English Major students in Language and Translation Department level 6 at Taibah University to examine the suitability and the simplicity\difficulty of the questions of the test for students in addition to the appropriateness of the time limit required for applying the tests.

**Table ( 1) Results of Ease , Difficulty and Discrimination Coefficients**

<i>No</i>	<i>Ease</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Discrimination</i>
1	0.61	0.39	0.33
2	0.50	0.50	0.25
3	0.61	0.39	0.33
4	0.70	0.30	0.56
5	0.39	0.61	0.92

*Scoring Written Communication Test*

The researcher corrected the written communication test; jury members suggested not using any answer key or rubrics since there were no unified or fixed answers for questions 1-3 and only one evaluator was needed which was the researcher herself.

*The Oral and Interpersonal Communication Rubric*

The oral and interpersonal communication skills rubric (Appendix A2 ) was prepared by the researcher to assess the development of the students’ oral and interpersonal communication skills . The rubrics consisted of nine criteria; with four scoring scales. It was applied to the study sample to measure their oral and interpersonal communication skills.

**Determining the Validity of the Research Instruments**

To establish the validity of the research instruments, the following two methods were used.

*Face Validity:*

To define the face validity, the written communication skills test, students’ attitudes questionnaire and the oral and interpersonal communication skills rubric were submitted to a local and an international jury panel of EFL staff members in Curricula and Teaching Methods (Appendix A\_3). In light of the jury’s feedback, the instruments were adequate for the students' level. The instruments had comprehensible instructions and are appropriate for measuring certain objectives. Therefore, they are verified to have face validity.

*Content Validity:*

Content validity required an intensive and systematic examination of the content of the instruments to calculate whether they contain a representative sample of the targeted behavior. They were developed based on a methodical and precise review of the literature and related previous studies. They represented the general form of the instruments, their items, and how they should be graded. The content of the instruments demonstrates the skills that are intended to be measured.

**Determining the Reliability of the Research Instruments**

The reliability of the instruments was measured by using the test-retest method. The instruments were run on a group of English Majors, at Taibah University Language and

Translation Department Level 6. After six weeks, the same groups were tested again. The Cronbach's alpha between the two examinations was (0.86) which is coefficient. This means instruments are reliable, intact and acceptable.

**Table 2. Reliability Coefficients Cronbach's Alpha:**

Coefficients Cronbach's	0.86
alpha	

***Description of Research Experiment:***

The program was based on different forms of storytelling; written, oral, video, audial and digital. The purpose of the program was to enhance communication skills of EFL English Majors at Taibah University Language and Translation Department Level 6 and provide them with the basic communication skills needed in their future career or education life. Its main aims were to achieve the following objectives:-

1. Explore the effects of using Storytelling strategy on developing English Majors' at Taibah University, Language and Translation Department communication skills.
2. Investigate the English Majors' English Majors' at Taibah University, Language and Translation Department attitudes towards using this strategy.

Additional goals emerged throughout the study such as:

1. Establish a good and healthy rapport between the researcher and students.
2. Provide a non-threatening atmosphere inside and outside the classroom.
3. Create influential public speakers
4. Promote interaction between the students and the researcher and the students and their peers.
5. Motivate students' participation in the activities and tasks by constant reinforcement.
6. Encourage students to speak and express their personal opinions
7. Motivate students to communicate verbally and non-verbally.
8. Build students self-confidence and enhance their self-esteem and self-recognition
9. Stimulate students to think outside of the box and imagine.
10. Promote critical thinking and creative thinking.
11. Improve speed reading and fluent speaking.
12. Create global citizens.
13. Promote global awareness and tolerance.
14. Inspire students to be fluent, presentable, and responsible individuals.

The current research followed the experimental research approach in the form of pre-test and post-test design with both quantitative and qualitative data analyses. The experiment began on 6th of March 2016 and lasted till the 24th of April 2016. Initially, a pilot test was carried out by the researcher on March the 6th for a group of 21 English Majors Students in the Language and Translation Department Level 6 at Taibah University to gather information before the actual study, pre-reveal deficiencies in the design of the proposed experiment

procedures, and examines the reliability of the test elements. The results indicated acceptable reliability for all components of the test. Then, a lecture was assigned for administering the pre-written achievement test for the experimental and control groups on March the 8th. The researcher conducted, corrected, and assessed the test.

Throughout the research experiment, the experimental group was introduced to four storytelling lectures enhanced with activities, assignments, training books, as well as constant and instant feedback from the researcher. The first lecture was an introduction to using storytelling as a teaching strategy in addition to introducing them to basic story elements. An audio story was played and students were asked various questions pertaining to it. Another video was assigned for them to write a story about as a home assignment along with an audio-visual video for practice. On the second lecture, the researcher used storytelling to explain the play “The life of Galileo” by Bertolt Brecht and showed students parts of the movie and discussed with them the main characters, moral lessons, and plot formalization. Students were also encouraged to give their opinion about the story. A short animated video was played and students were asked to individually write a story about it. Students were asked to read their stories aloud. Then, the researcher collected the stories and highlighted major and general mistakes. The researcher also shared with them some of her personal stories, orally. Another animated story video was assigned as a home assignment in addition, audio visual story videos for listening practice.

The same procedure was repeated during the following lectures. On the third lecture, the researcher used storytelling to introduce the play of “An Ideal Husband” by Oscar Wilde while students classified the main characters, moral lessons, plot construction and sharing their personal views about the play. An animated visual story video was also played for students. Afterward, they were asked to pair with a classmate and write a story. The researcher asked them to deliver their stories orally. Some of the students read the story from their notes while others told the story from their memory, the researcher and the classmates verbally corrected the stories. Another video was assigned for them to write a story about as a home assignment along with an audio visual-video for practicing. The researcher kept correcting and communicating with the students by email so as to give them her feedback and that encouraged student to exert more effort and helped to minimize their grammatical mistakes.

On the fourth lecture, the researcher introduced the play “Waiting for Godot” by Samuel Beckett. The main characters, moral lessons, plot formation and students thoughts were discussed. By then, they became more outspoken. Group work was assigned to write a story about an animated video they viewed. The researcher asked every group to choose a speaker to deliver their collaborated written story for the audience ‘the class.’ Some of the students read the story from their notes while other told the story from their memory. Then, the researcher asked students to tell the class a personal story. Each student that participated in the activity had to come on the stage and talk in front of the whole class and was expected to be asked questions. Students did very well and could handle all sorts of questions whether by the researcher or their classmates. There was applause for the good storytellers; students reacted by themselves whenever they were moved by a story or a storyteller. Then two story videos were assigned to choose from and write a story about, one video was quite easy while the other was difficult and more detailed. To the researcher surprise, the majority of students chose the difficult and more detailed video to write stories about. By then, their grammatical mistakes almost did not exist; they only had word choice mistakes. The researcher urged them to read more so they could get over this problem in the future. Students were also asked to prepare a story to tell orally in class and to look presentable to capture full audience attention, they were permitted to use props as well.

On the fifth lecture April the 20th, students looked their best and told fascinating stories; some of them were from different world cultures depending only on their memory. Some used background videos and props as the researcher assessed them by a rubric. The audience (classmates) applauded for the impressive stories. Throughout the experiment, the researcher encouraged students. She offered help and support. The high achievers were constantly rewarded. On the sixth and last lecture, post-written achievement test was carried out by the researcher for the experimental and control groups on April the 24th.

On the next day, April 25th, a questionnaire was conducted by the researcher to measure students' attitudes towards using storytelling to enhance their communication skills. Then as a reward, and to break the ice and monotony of classroom, the researcher played a movie for the students and they were allowed to bring food and beverages in class. After the film, students voiced their opinions about the characters, plot formation, and moral lessons.

This experiment was not all rainbows and butterflies. At first, the researcher encountered a great resistance from the students regarding home assignments. They opposed the idea of home assignments. Some of the students even supplied the researcher with fake email addresses. They only wanted classroom activities, but the researcher solved this problem by telling them a personal story about the benefits of home assignments and how they can strengthen their linguistic skills and how they could learn a lot from their mistakes and how beneficial instructor's immediate feedback is. The researcher also underlined how badly they needed to develop their written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills. Improving their communication skills will allow them to write a good job resume or fill out a job application and answer emails at work as well as how to make good first impressions in an interview. The researcher offered constant reinforcement for students who submit their assignment on time. That encouraged other students to work harder and created competition in the class even with those students who supplied fake email addresses; they apologized and gave the researcher their real email addresses, wrote amazing story assignments and did so well in the oral story presentation. In the end, students heartedly expressed their gratitude to the researcher for the experiment and for the efforts she exerted. Some students progressed noticeably during this experiment. Please see Appendix (B\_4) a detailed student progress report. Grammatical mistakes decreased evidently.

### **List of Materials and Activities Used During the Training**

#### *1. List of Material Used During Training*

1. Story Videos.
2. Audial Stories.
3. Audio-Visual Stories.
4. Dr. Seuss' eBooks for speed reading practice for mobile phones, I-pads and laptops.
5. PowerPoint Presentations (Storytelling Strategy –Story elements -Life of Galileo- An Ideal Husband-Waiting for Godot)
6. Student progress report.

#### *2. List of Activities Addressed During Training:*

1. Individual story writing home assignments.
2. Individual story writing class activities.
3. Pair-work story writing activities.



3. Group-work story writing class activities.
4. Oral storytelling presentation.
5. Listening practice segments.
6. Classroom Oral discussion about stories, moral lessons and characters.
7. The Animation Movie. (Appendix B\_5)

**Data Collection**

Data was collected four times throughout the study via: (1) written communication achievement pre-test (2) written communication achievement post-test (3) oral and interpersonal communication skills rubric (4) students attitudes towards using storytelling to develop communication skills questionnaire.

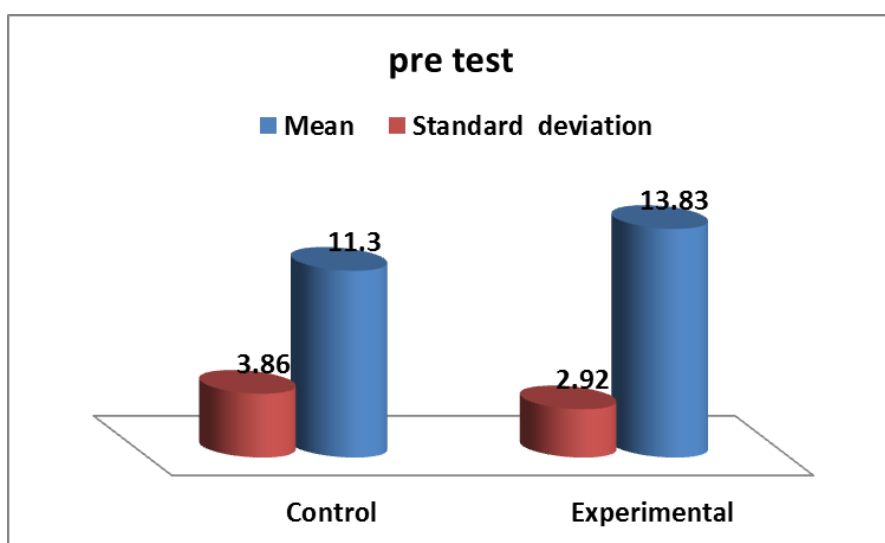
On March the 8th, the pre-written achievement test was conducted on the experimental and control groups to collect data and assess their performance. On the 20th of April, students were assessed by oral and interpersonal communication rubric. On the 24th of April, post-written achievement test was run on the experimental and control groups to collect data and assess the experimental group development. On the 25th of April, a questionnaire was conducted to measure students’ attitudes towards using storytelling to develop their communication skills.

**Data Analysis**

Responding to the research purposes, adequate statistical procedures were employed. Cronbach’s alpha was used to test the reliability coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) of the written communication achievement test. The results of the reliability coefficient indicated accepted values.

Moreover, analysis and comparison of the results of the pre-written communication achievement test shows that there were no significant differences between the experimental group (13.83) and the control group (11.30) regarding the total scores of the pre-written communication skills.

(that there were no significant differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of developing their written communication skills proficiency in the Pre-test.)



Figur 1. Mean and Standard Deviation both Groups’ Pre-test

**Table 3. Results of Independent Samples Pre-Test**

	<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>T-Test</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Pre Test	Experimental	23	13.83	2.92	2.102	44	0.08
	Control	23	11.30	3.86			

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This chapter presents the statistical analysis of the research results discussions and their possible interpretations. It includes the results of the written communication achievement test as well as the results of the oral and interpersonal communication skills rubric. In addition to that, a summary is provided regarding students’ attitudes towards using storytelling to develop their communication skills questionnaire. Data was collected from the responses to the pre/post written communication achievement test. The research hypothesis was tested using an Independent Sample T-Test. The hypothesis was tested at an alpha level of .05. Data will be presented as follows:

1. Results of the Independent Sample T-Test of the pre and post/written communication achievement test scores of both experimental and control groups.
2. Results of the oral and interpersonal communication skills rubric of the experimental group’s overall performance.
3. Results of the experimental group students’ attitudes towards using storytelling to develop their written, oral and interpersonal communication skills questionnaire.
4. Interpretation of the Independent Sample T-Test of the post/written communication achievement test scores of both experimental and control groups.
5. Interpretation of the oral and interpersonal communication skills rubric of the experimental group’s overall performance.
6. Interpretation of the experimental group students’ attitudes towards using storytelling to enhance their written, oral and interpersonal communication skills questionnaire.

**Results and Interpretations of Achievement on Written Communication Skills Test**

To answer the first question, “To what extent are there statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of developing students’ written communication skills proficiency?” The researcher used statistical reliability and test ease/difficulty and discrimination coefficients. After that, an independent sample T- test was calculated , there were noticeable significant differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of developing their communication skills proficiency in favor of the experimental group.

**Test Ease/Difficulty and Discrimination Coefficients**

**Table 1. Results of Ease /Difficulty and Discrimination Coefficients**

<i>No</i>	<i>Ease</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Discrimination</i>
1	0.61	0.39	0.33
2	0.50	0.50	0.25

No	Ease	Difficulty	Discrimination
3	0.61	0.39	0.33
4	0.70	0.30	0.56
5	0.39	0.61	0.92

*Statistical Reliability*

**Table 2. Reliability Coefficients Cronbach's Alpha:**

Coefficients Cronbach's alpha	0.86
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Evidenced by the results of the above table that all the reliability coefficients (0.86), this indicates that the test is characterized by high stability, which achieves the purposes of the study, statistical analysis and makes it intact and acceptable.

*Independent Sample T-Test (Pre-Test)*

**Table 3. Results of Independent Samples Pre-Test**

	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	T-Test	Df	Sig
Pre test	Experimental	23	13.83	2.92	2.102	44	0.08
	Control	23	11.30	3.86			

Results in the above table can be interpreted as follows:

The significant value (0.08) is greater than the level of significance (0.05), Therefore, "There are no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of developing their written communication skills in the achievement pre-test." This means that the two groups were equivalent before the beginning of the experiment.

*Independent Sample T-test (Post-Test)*

The significant differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of developing their written communication skills proficiency in the post-test are noted as follows:

**Table 4. Results of Independent Sample Post-Test**

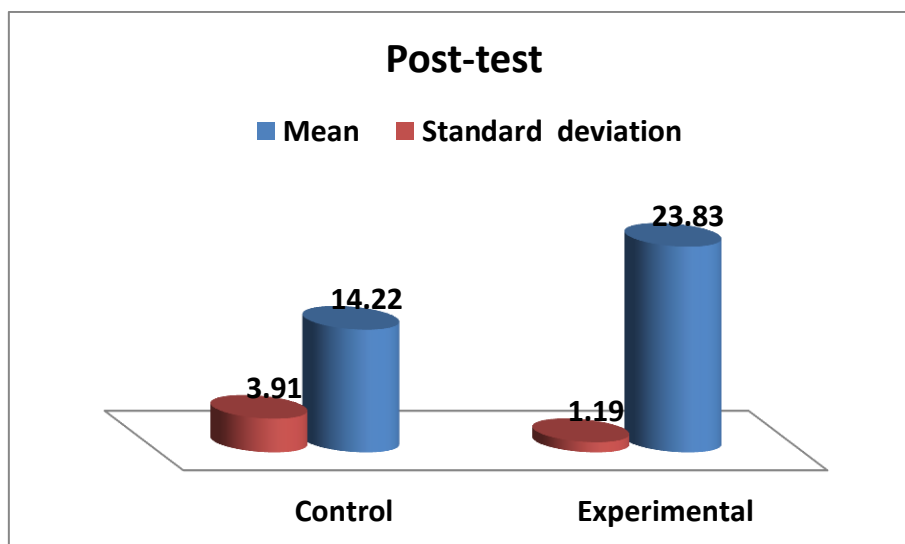
	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Test	Df	Sig
Post test	Experimental	23	23.83	1.19	11.28**	44	0.00
	Control	23	14.22	3.91			

Note: (\*\*) means there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.01) or less

Note: (\*) means there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.05) or less

The results in table above can be interpreted as follows:

The significant value (0.00) is less than the degree of significance (0.05), therefore, the study hypothesis is accepted, which states, "There are statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of developing their written communication skills proficiency in the post-test." This difference is in favor of the average grades of the experimental group students.



Figur 2. Mean and Standard deviation for Both Groups' Post Test

**Measure of the Effectiveness of the Experiment:**

To Measure the effectiveness of the experiment using Black Modified Gain Ratio is defined as:

$$\text{effectiveness} = \frac{Y-X}{T-X} + \frac{Y-X}{T} \text{ , Where:}$$

Y ≡ average grades students in the experimental group in the post application for testing.

X ≡ average grades students in the experimental group in the pre-application for testing.

T ≡ The total score for the test.

**Table 5. Result of Black Modified Gain Ratio**

Adminstration	The Mean of Experimental	Total Score of the Test	Modified Gain Ratio
Pre	13.83	25	1.30
Post	23.83	25	

From the above table:

The Modified Gain Ratio is (1.30). It is greater than the lower limit of Black (1.20), Therefore the experiment it is effectiveness.

**Results and Interpretations of Oral and Interpersonal Communication Rubric**

To answer the second question, "To what extent does the use of storytelling affect developing oral and interpersonal communication skills proficiency of the English Majors at Taibah University?" The researcher used frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation , for each of the criteria in rubric.

**Table 6. Rubric ‘s Frequencies / Percentages Mean and Standard Deviation**

No	Criteria	Frequencies & percentages					Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking	Interpretation
		p	x	E	ec	p				
1	CONTENT	21	2				3.91	0.29	4	Beyond Expectations
2	CLARITY/ AUDIBILITY	21	2				3.91	0.29	4	Beyond Expectations
3	PRONUNCIATION	21	2				3.91	0.29	4	Beyond Expectations
4	FLUENCY	14	8	1			3.57	0.59	9	Beyond Expectations
5	ACCURACY	19	4				3.83	0.39	8	Beyond Expectations
6	VOCABULARY	21	2				3.91	0.29	4	Beyond Expectations
7	USE OF LANGUAGE	23	-				4.00	0.00	1	Beyond Expectations
8	EYE CONTACT / BODY LANGAUGE	22	1				3.96	0.21	3	Beyond Expectations
9	RESPONSES	23	-				4.00	0.00	1	Beyond Expectations
	Overall Mean						3.89	0.14	-	Beyond Expectations

The results in the above table can be interpreted as follows:

The reached overall mean of all criteria (3.89) with a standard deviation of (0.14), and that means the use of storytelling to develop the oral and interpersonal communication skills proficiency of EFL female English Majors at Taibah University comes with a degree "beyond expectations."

**Table 7. Interpretation of the Rubric Mean Score**

Mean Score	Interpretation of the Mean Score
1.00 – 1.74	Does Not Meet Expectations
1.75 – 2.49	Partially Meets Expectations
2.50 – 3.24	Meets Expectations
3.25 – 4.00	Beyond Expectations

As presented in the table above the levels of the mean score were divided into four range. These ranges were described as follows:

- ❖ If the mean is within 1.00 – 1.74, the interpretation will be Does Not Meet Expectations.
- ❖ If the mean is within 1.75 – 2.49, the interpretation will be Partially Meets Expectations
- ❖ If the mean is within 2.50 – 3.24, the interpretation will be Meets Expectations.

- ❖ If the mean is within 3.25 – 4.00, the interpretation will be Beyond Expectations.

**Results and Interpretations of Students Attitudes toward Using Storytelling to Develop their Communication Skills Questionnaire**

The third question: “To what extent does the use of storytelling to develop the communication skills proficiency affects the attitudes of English Majors at Taibah University?” To answer the question, the researcher used frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation for each of the statement in questionnaire:

**Table 8. Frequencies and Percentages according to Demographic Information**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Answers</i>	<i>Frequencies</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
Age	19-22	19	82.6%
	23-25	4	17.4%
	Total	23	100%
Overall GPA	A+	9	39.1%
	A	10	43.5%
	B+	1	4.3%
	B	3	13.0%
	Total	23	100%
Expected Grade in Drama course	A	20	87.0%
	B	3	13.0%
	Total	23	100%
Storytelling in General	Very Exciting	10	43.5%
	Somewhat Exciting	13	56.5%
	Total	23	100%
Storytelling Activities	Very Difficult	1	4.3%
	Somewhat Difficult	3	13.0%
	Neither Difficult Nor Easy	12	52.2%
	Somewhat Easy	6	26.1%
	Very Easy	1	4.3%
	Total	23	100%

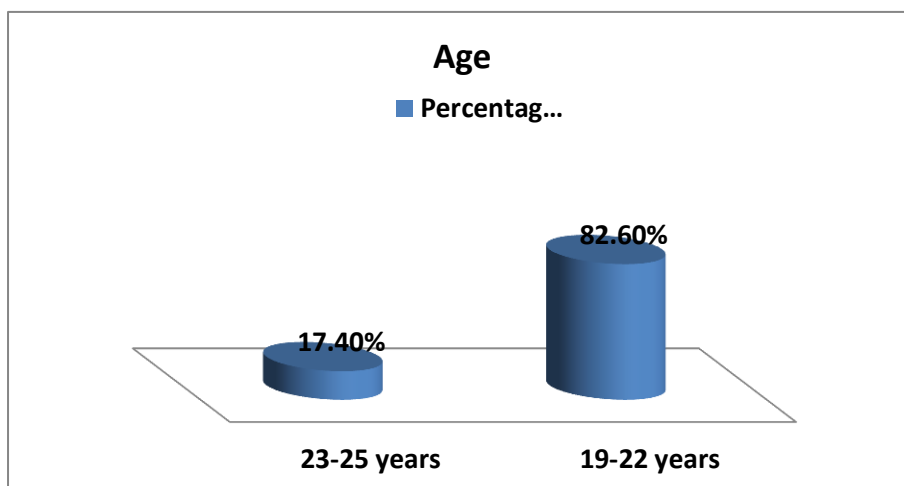


Figure 4: Student's Age Percentages

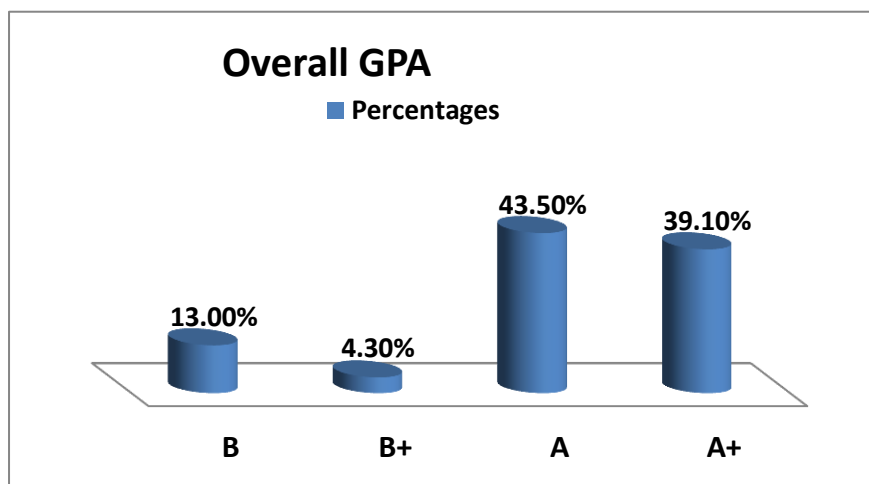


Figure 5: Students' Overall GPA Percentages

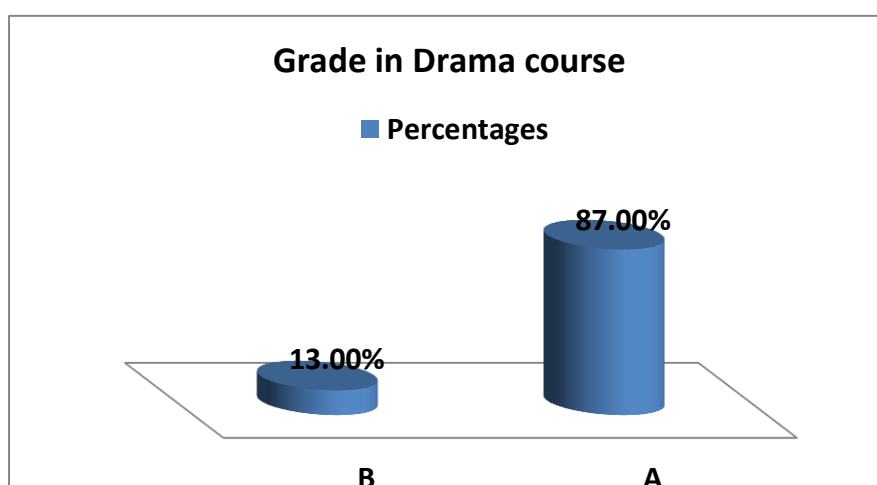


Figure 6: Students' Expected Grade in Drama Course Percentages

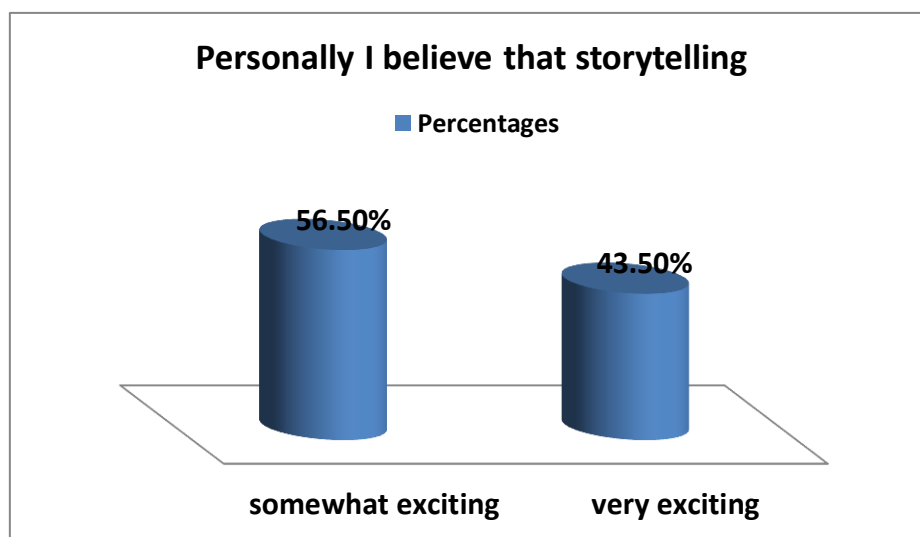


Figure 7: Students' Personal Beliefs about Storytelling Percentages

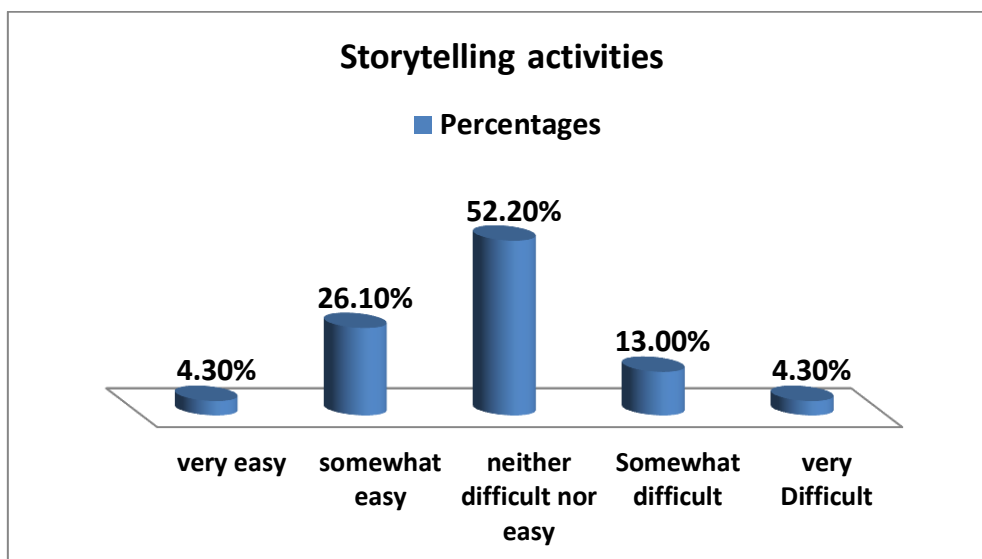


Figure 8: Storytelling Activities Ease and Difficulty Percentages

**Table 9. The interpretation of the Questionnaire Mean Score**

	<i>If Statement Positive</i>	<i>If Statement Negative</i>
Score Mean Score	Interpretation of the Mean Score	Interpretation of the Mean Score
1.00 – 1.79	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
1.80 – 2.59	Disagree	Agree
2.60 – 3.39	Neutral	Neutral
3.40 – 4.19	Agree	Disagree
4.20 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree



As presented in the above table the levels of the mean score were divided into five ranges. If statement were positive, the ranges are described as follows:

- ❖ If the mean is within 1.00 – 1.79, the interpretation will be Strongly disagree.
- ❖ If the mean is within 1.80 – 2.59, the interpretation will be Disagree.
- ❖ If the mean is within 2.60 – 3.39, the interpretation will be Neutral.
- ❖ If the mean is within 3.40 – 4.19, the interpretation will be Agree.
- ❖ If the mean is within 4.20 – 5.00, the interpretation will be Strongly agree.

As presented in table (9) the levels of the mean score were divided into five ranges. If the statement were negative, the ranges are described as follows:

- ❖ If the mean is within 1.00 – 1.79, the interpretation will be Strongly Agree.
- ❖ If the mean is within 1.80 – 2.59, the interpretation will be Agree.
- ❖ If the mean is within 2.60 – 3.39, the interpretation will be Neutral.
- ❖ If the mean is within 3.40 – 4.19, the interpretation will be Disagree.
- ❖ If the mean is within 4.20 – 5.00, the interpretation will be Strongly disagree.

### **Attitudes of study sample towards using storytelling to develop communication skills**

The results in following table 10 can be interpreted as follows:

The reached overall mean of all statements is (4.17) with a standard deviation of (0.26), and it means that the attitudes of the study sample towards using storytelling to develop communication skills questionnaire mainly “Agree.” To conclude, the degree of using storytelling to develop written, oral and interpersonal communication skills proficiency of the EFL female English Majors at Taibah University is (High). And the statements were arranged by the mean as the following:

- The statement No. (2) (There is nothing useful about storytelling) Ranked first with a mean (4.52) and standard deviation (0.51) which means that the attitudes of study sample toward of this statement “Strongly Disagree.”
- The statement No. (1) (I think that storytelling is a useful strategy) Ranked second with a mean (4.39) and standard deviation (0.50) which means that the attitudes of study sample toward of this statement “Strongly agree.”
- The statement No. (3) (Storytelling is a waste of time) Ranked third with a mean (4.35) and standard deviation (0.49) which means that the attitudes of study sample toward of this statement “Strongly Disagree.”
- The statement No. (5) (Using storytelling strategy is difficult) Ranked last with a mean (3.70) and standard deviation (0.77) which means that the attitudes of study sample toward of this statement “Disagree.”

**Table 10. Questionnaire’s Frequencies, Percentages, Mean and Standard Deviation**

No	Statement	Frequencies & Percentages					Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking	Interpretation
		SA	AG	UC	DA	SD				
2	There is nothing useful about storytelling.	-	-	-	11 47.8%	12 52.2%	4.52	0.51	1	Strongly Disagree
1	I think that storytelling is a useful strategy.	9 39.1%	14 60.9%	-	-	-	4.39	0.50	2	Strongly Agree
3	Storytelling is a waste of time.	-	-	-	15 65.2%	8 34.8%	4.35	0.49	3	Strongly Disagree
4	I believe storytelling strategy helps me to communicate in English.	8 34.8%	15 65.2%	-	-	-	4.35	0.49	3	Strongly Agree
6	After working with storytelling activity for a while, I felt better in using English.	6 26.1%	17 73.9%	-	-	-	4.26	0.45	5	Strongly Agree
13	I am excited about using storytelling.	6 26.1%	17 73.9%	-	-	-	4.26	0.45	5	Strongly Agree
17	Storytelling improved my writing skills.	6 26.1%	17 73.9%	-	-	-	4.26	0.45	5	Strongly Agree
9	I enjoyed doing storytelling activities.	5 21.7%	18 78.3%	-	-	-	4.22	0.42	8	Strongly Agree
14	Storytelling helped me learn new English vocabulary.	5 21.7%	18 78.3%	-	-	-	4.22	0.42	8	Strongly Agree
16	Storytelling improved my listening skills.	5 21.7%	18 78.3%	-	-	-	4.22	0.42	8	Strongly Agree
19	Storytelling enhanced my self-esteem.	5 21.7%	18 78.3%	-	-	-	4.22	0.42	8	Strongly Agree
11	When I tell stories, there are plenty of opportunities to express my opinions.	4 17.4%	19 82.6%	-	-	-	4.17	0.39	12	Agree

No	Statement	Frequencies & Percentages					Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking	Interpretation
		SA	AG	UC	DA	SD				
15	Storytelling gave me ideas about different world's cultures.	4 17.4%	19 82.6%	-	-	-	4.17	0.39	12	Agree
12	My communications skills improved by storytelling activities.	3 13%	20 87%	-	-	-	4.13	0.34	14	Agree
7	I am satisfied with my performance on storytelling tasks.	1 4.3%	22 95.7%	-	-	-	4.04	0.21	15	Agree
18	Storytelling needs a deep understanding of communication skills.	5 21.7%	14 60.9%	4 17.4%	-	-	4.04	0.64	16	Agree
8	I didn't try very hard in storytelling activities.	-	2 8.7%	1 4.3%	18 78.3%	2 8.7%	3.87	0.69	17	Disagree
10	Storytelling activities made group work enjoyable.	4 17.4%	13 56.5%	3 13%	3 13%	-	3.78	0.90	18	Agree
5	Using storytelling strategy is difficult.	-	2 8.7%	5 21.7%	14 60.9%	2 8.7%	3.70	0.77	19	Disagree
Overall Mean							4.17	0.26	-	Agree

*Where as SD: Strongly Disagree, DA:Disagree, UC: Uncertain, AG:Agree, SA: Strongly Agree*

## **Results Discussions**

In the light of the data analysis and its initial interpretations and results, the following analysis and conclusions can be stated according to (a) the review of literature; (b) the results from related studies; and (c) the researcher's personal observations during the research experiment period. The discussion and conclusions deal with learners' overall performance and their improvements regarding written, oral and interpersonal communication skills and their attitudes towards using storytelling as instruction strategy.

### *Discussion of Achievement on Written Communication Skills Test and Oral/Interpersonal Communication Skills Rubric*

The main purpose of this study is to improve students' communication skills through the use of storytelling. The program included a variety of tasks and activities for helping students to enhance written, oral and interpersonal communicative skills. The results of the study indicated that, the program proved to be statistically and educationally significant in improving students' communication skills. Therefore, the user-friendly characteristics of storytelling encourage students' self-expression in English. Storytelling is a powerful tool for English language learning particularly written, oral and interpersonal communication skills. In storytelling, the processes encourage students to write more freely. They are engaged in fluency work as well as accuracy work. In other words, they focus on vocabulary, structure and the writing in meaningful creative and imaginary stories in an authentic environment. Storytelling increases student interest, motivation and confidence in writing and speaking. Interestingly, students' awareness of an audience with oral storytelling, as they are publicly observed encouraged them to monitor their speaking and body gestures as well. These results are consistent with Karlsson (2012). He reported that storytelling could be adapted in the English language class in lower secondary school in Iceland to improve communicative language teaching and to develop speaking and writing skills. He also found that storytelling enhanced learning in a more natural, meaningful and interactive context, encouraging students to relate to their learning and giving the opportunity for them to use English in the classroom to express themselves properly, according to the situation. Above all, storytelling boosted students' self-esteem and made them face challenges and explored their inner imaginative and creative side.

The current study also corresponds with Collins and Ruhl (2007). They found that using storytelling, story maps, talking journals, and active listening led to the development in speaking and listening skills and encouraged greater student autonomy. This study also coordinates with Sanchez,(2014). The results showed that storytelling contributed in developing the five linguistic skills in EFL elementary classes. These skills include listening, speaking, reading, writing and oral interaction. The current study is also symmetrical with Mokhtar et al., (2010). The findings of the study were as follows: students showed progress in particular language skills such as vocabulary, comprehension, sequencing, and story recall through the use of storytelling. They also experienced some advancement in their communicative skills in areas like transmitting information and using non-verbal language. In addition, this study is harmonious with Atta-Alla's (2012) study as the test results proved the effectiveness of using storytelling in integrating the four language skills and enhancing the language proficiency level of adult English language learners. Storytelling was utilized to improve adult language learners' proficiency forty adult English language learners voluntarily participated in his study.

Storytelling also has great advantages for adult learners. They get to learn and use a lot of idioms and expressions rarely used in everyday life. They are introduced to new vocabulary and they can use it efficiently when writing stories. The present study also corresponds with

that of Bogner (2009). He highly supported these notions with a study conducted by him. The results showed that storytelling and puppetry important and efficient for the classroom practice. Likewise, this study coordinates with Abdulla (2012) study .The findings showed that using storytelling had a major role in developing and retrieving the vocabulary of thirty adult Iraqi EFL students.

#### *Discussion of Students Attitudes towards Using Storytelling to Develop their Communication Skills Questionnaire*

The promising results of the current study regarding EFL Female students' attitudes towards using storytelling to develop their communication skills were overwhelmingly positive. The result of the findings showed that storytelling strategy was the most effective in facilitating students' attitude towards developing their communication skills. Students showed good disposition toward using storytelling in its various facets as expressed previously. The findings correlate with those of Braunstein (2006) The findings showed altogether positive attitudes toward these two methods, despite the fact that the students had more 'traditional' expectations of English class. The present also corresponds with Elkılıç and Akça (2008) The results showed that both storytelling and grammar were perceived as very enjoyable by a majority of the participants. Audio and visual teaching aids and comprehension questions were found to make a substantial contribution towards facilitating understanding of the stories. The participants demonstrated various types of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation towards learning English. On the other hand, the current study contradicts with that of Kim and McGarry, (2014) .The results of the pre-treatment questionnaire showed that while participants' interest in storytelling was very low, their expectations of its effectiveness were relatively high. The results of the post-treatment questionnaire revealed that participants' attitudes slightly changed.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, 'storytelling' is a suitable tool for EFL female students for increasing their knowledge of English. Moreover, it was a means of boosting students' motivation to improve and practice their written, oral and communication skills. In this research, encouraging students to learn was defined as persuading students to participate in storytelling activities, by indulging more interesting stories, making them believe that they will be able to improve their written, oral and interpersonal skills through this strategy. Storytelling and communication skills are the dynamic duo for achieving high-performance goals in life skills in general.

#### **Summary of Research Findings**

The results of the current study can be summarized in the following points:

1. In terms of the research question and hypothesis concerning the differences between the experimental and control groups in terms of developing their written communication skills proficiency, they were found to be statistically significant.
2. Regarding the research question to what extent does the use of storytelling affect developing oral and interpersonal communication skills proficiency of the English Majors at Taibah University, it proved that they had performed beyond expectations.
3. Concerning the research question to what extent does the use of storytelling to develop the communication skills proficiency affect the attitudes of English Majors at Taibah University, they were favorably remarkable; students were quite motivated to use storytelling.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

Generally, the findings showed statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups regarding the overall performance in written communication achievement test, the effects of using storytelling were evident in the improvement of the written communication skills.

The effect of storytelling clearly manifested in the overall accomplishments in the oral and interpersonal communication skills. Students showed full self-confidence and they were monitored for every word they spoke and every gesture they made. The rubric assessment was beyond expectations. This proves that they had all that they needed to start and carry on with a meaningful and interesting conversation.

The mystical and magical appeal of stories motivated students towards acquiring new vocabulary, idioms and expressions. Stories made students think creatively and critically. Students were in a more relaxed and exciting atmosphere when telling stories. They even felt less anxious and expressed their feelings freely during the process. Storytelling also promoted cultural awareness and acceptance at the same time, creating global citizens who are more tolerant, less extreme and less prejudiced. Storytelling revealed talented future authors as well. Students' outlook on learning English and life in general has changed for the better.

### **Recommendations and Implications for Practice**

Based on the current research findings, a number of recommendations can be derived:

1. Introducing communication skills courses at the university level is highly preferable. These courses qualify students for successful careers in the future and facilitate in achieving their life goals.
2. Communication skills courses are beneficial for all majors not only English. So it is highly recommended to include them in the preparatory term.
3. Storytelling can reveal students hidden talents whether in writing, performing and graphic designing. It is a strategy that needs to be highly promoted in the teaching and learning process.
4. Adding storytelling course along with drama, novel and poetry in the higher education will motivate and encourage reluctant students to listen, speak, read and write more English.
5. Stories lighten the mood and makes studying less mandatory, so it is suitable to add more stories in the curriculum at all educational levels from primary to the higher education.
6. Instant instructor's feedback is very advantageous in this modern age of communication. It is extremely recommended. It keeps the learning process streaming throughout the day.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Based on the findings of the current study, the following areas for future research are suggested for research:

1. Storytelling was used to enhance written, oral and interpersonal communication skills in the current study. Thus, another research could be conducted to use storytelling to improve speaking skills.

2. As the focus on storytelling in this study, the theory of public narrative could also be used to develop interpersonal communication skills.
3. This study was limited to EFL female students and their attitudes about storytelling towards developing their communication skills, another study could investigate EFL female students and their perceptions towards integrating storytelling in language development.
4. Further study could be conducted to measure the storytelling and students anxiety in the classroom.
5. This study was delimited to higher education level; it could be conducted on secondary stage level as well.
6. Another idea for an innovative study about the effect of instructor instant feedback on developing students written communication skills.
7. A study about making digital stories to enhance students' oral communication skills could be very beneficial.
8. A research about the effect of visual storytelling on developing students' creative writing skills could be explored.
9. A comprehensive study about the effect of storytelling on students' critical thinking could be useful in the field of education.
10. A convention document could be addressed to use of storytelling to promote cross-cultural awareness and creating global citizens.
11. A comparative study about the use of storytelling and story reading to enhance EFL students' fluency in English.
12. A research could be conducted about the effectiveness of using storytelling and blogs to improve students writing skills.

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