

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF USING STORIES AND ICT TO TEACH ENGLISH TO THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLD SPANISH CHILDREN: MOTIVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This work presents the results of a study involving 3-4 year-old English language learners enrolled in a course where electronic stories were used. The study aimed to explore two main areas: 1. teachers and children use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the language classroom and 2. the influence of electronic stories on the development of emergent literacy skills. Results of the study showed that teachers found the use of ICT a positive strategy to enhance young children's learning environment, but also that implementing ICT-based projects in the young learner classroom necessarily raises issues of school's provision for training and technical support, as well as considerations of teacher:child ratios. From the children's perspective, an evaluation of the lesson via a survey adapted for the age of the participants showed positive reactions to the inclusion of ICT in the English lesson.

With regards to development of literacy skills, analysis of children's retellings showed varied changes throughout the duration of the course. Whilst some changes were incremental others remained unchanged and one case showed decreased progression. Further investigation is suggested to study the reasons that might provide insight into why the children developed understanding of story structure in such high variations.

The study showed how the young learner English curriculum could consider children's development of emergent literacy skills as a result of learning English via electronic stories. Furthermore, it showed how ICT integrated in the foreign language curriculum can motivate young children and provide meaning to the activity of learning English at a time when the mother tongue is still developing.

Keywords: CD-ROM stories, ICT in preschool settings, CALL, emergent literacy.

1 INTRODUCTION

The fact that children are being taught English at ages younger than ever brings about changes to language curriculum design; to training provision; to language teaching methodologies and possibly to children's L1 development as a result of learning a foreign language from an early age. Practitioners face the challenge of finding methods of instruction that can cater for the needs of the new group of young learners and of developing strategies to integrate the methods into the curriculum.

In addition, the increasing inclusion of technology in the preschool classroom is also reshaping the learning environments of the very young. Research has shown the potential of ICT to enhance the learning opportunities that young children have during their preschool education. One way to exploit the potential of ICT is by integrating technology into the curricula and everyday classroom activities. For instance, using technology to support school projects like creating stories, using drawing software to decorate a story, using digital cameras to illustrate a science project or using a text processor to write sentences and practice punctuation rules.

This study took place in Spain during a summer camp English course. The two main objectives of the project were to explore whether language lessons based on CD-ROM stories and the storytelling approach would lead to the development of emergent literacy skills of young children and the views of the teachers on the inclusion of ICT in the preschool classroom. This paper presents the overall results of the study with respect to the children's attitudes towards the lesson, the stories and the technology and the teachers' views on the use of technology for the purpose of teaching a language to very young children using technology and CD-ROM stories.

1.1 ICT and the very young

ICT has the potential to "enrich the learning environment[s]" [1] and enhance the learning opportunities of students in classroom settings. Authors and researchers who support the use of ICT in particular with young children believe in the potential of technology to support children's learning [2]. Language and literacy development, mathematical thinking and social development are areas that have been widely researched and where technology has provided enhancement of learning opportunities for the young [3]. Research that has looked at the educational benefits of ICT to very young children suggests that technology has the potential of motivating children's attitudes towards learning [4] and turning learning experiences into more meaningful, entertaining, and motivational practices [5]. In addition, the learning of abstract concepts [6,2] can be supported by technology. Children's interaction with technology, whether represented as a traditional PC interface or "smart" digital toys, evidences the ability of children to exploit technology for leisure or as a tool to solve a problem [7]. Other knowledge areas like literacy or language can also benefit from the use of technology like TV and video [8,9,10] or computers and software designed to support children's literacy development [11,12,13,14] and language learning [15,16]. It can then be concluded that ICT has the potential to empower children to become active participants in their own learning while enabling them to control the learning process [17].

1.2 ICT and emergent literacy development

For the emergent literacy approach, literacy development does not begin when children start receiving formal literacy instruction in school nor do children go through a pre-literacy stage in the path to literacy development [18]. In this sense, emergent literacy "signalled a break with the theoretical concept of reading readiness particularly with the notions that young children needed to be taught a series of prerequisite skills prior to reading [...]" [19]. Situations that foster literacy development take place during activities in school or home while reading to children. These situations generate opportunities for children to interact with print and language [20] and take place when there is not an overt intention of teaching conventional components of literacy (e.g. letter recognition or phonemic awareness). In situations like these, reading is perceived in a non-conventional way in the sense that children's interpretation of the illustrations found in a picture storybook and their attempts to tell the story are seen as "reading" [21]. Whitehurst and Lonigan [22] and Yaden et al. [23] write that the abilities, knowledge, and attitudes that very young children use in such reading attempts including learning how to correctly hold and turn pages of books, telling a story from a book while pretending to read it, constructing a narrative, and using invented spelling [24,25,26], eventually grow into conventional literacy.

The number of CD-ROM stories available for personal computers, electronic readers and recently, touch screen devices are evidence of the interest that researchers and educators have on this technology to encourage reading proficiency from young ages. Those stories that exploit features of multimedia technology have shown to support children's development of emergent literacy skills in their mother tongue including language acquisition, story comprehension and story construction [12,27,28,29,30].

In a study to compare the impact of electronic text and printed text on reading comprehension and retelling of third-grade students, Matthew [31] found the students who read the CD-ROM storybooks scoring significantly higher on retellings than the students in the print-read group. These results suggest that features from the electronic version of the story (animation, dictionary support, and sound effects) could have been supportive to reading comprehension and consequently to enhancement of retellings. In a similar comparative study of stories delivered in different media, L. Miller et al. [32] also found CD-ROM readings advantageous compared to traditional print storybook readings. Other studies have not compared stories delivered in different formats. Instead, they have focused on the support that assistance features (dictionary, pronunciation) or multimedia features (hotspots, music, zooming) of story software offer to children's development of early literacy [20,33,34,35]. Talley [20] studied the effects of the IBM CD-ROM story "Stories and More" on 73 children of diverse language backgrounds enrolled in a Head Start program. All the children were aged 4-years-old at the beginning of the study. In a 12-day intervention, children in one of two conditions (well-read-to at home and not-well-read-to at home) spent an average of 15 minutes per day working individually with the computer stories. After the intervention period, post-test results showed significant improvement in children's emergent literacy levels (concepts about print and print awareness). Her findings suggest that "exposure to CD-ROM storybooks is valuable for even the youngest students, helping pre-readers to develop an understanding of story structure and sequence" [36].

1.3 This study

Encouraged by the empirical evidence regarding the impact that the use of electronic stories has in the literacy development of preschoolers, this project was designed as a technological intervention to study the role of CD-ROM stories and storytelling applications delivered via a computer in the development of emergent literacy skills of Spanish-speaking children. A total of ten preschool children aged between 3 and 4 years old participated in the study. The teachers who delivered the course were interviewed before and after the implementation of the intervention lessons prepared with the CD-ROM stories. The children participated in a total of 12 lessons spread out in three weeks and worked with three traditional stories from the series of Inside Stories (McGraw-Hill TM).

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 The Children

Eight preschool children aged between 3 and 4 years old attended a total of twelve English lessons prepared in advance and piloted in a preschool in the UK with children learning English as a second language. The children in the study were invited to take part of the ICT-within the lesson and they were allowed to refuse participation, in that way giving them the choice to withdraw from the study if they decided to. Because of the children's age, consent to participate was obtained through the children's teacher, the school's head teacher and the parents but it was decided to grant the children the autonomy to be part of the tasks within lesson to enhance ethical practices adopted during the study to protect the participant children.

2.2 The Teachers

Three teachers participated in the study, two of them in the classroom in charge of delivering the English lessons and the school's head teacher, who also participated in the study, liaising with the parents and providing feedback from their own observations of the work conducted in the classroom.

Isabel was the teacher responsible for creating the lessons based on the CD-ROM stories. She had experience working with preschool and primary level children. She was interviewed before the work with the children started and after the first two intervention lessons.

Teresa was the in charge of the English course. During the summer camp At the time of the study, Teresa had almost no experience working with very young children though she had experience in the Granja Escuela school programme of Spain, a project where children of all school levels can gain hands-on experience on topics related to the curriculum, such as farm, science or art projects. Teresa was in charge of teaching the lessons. She was interviewed twice, before the implementation of the intervention lessons and the second time at the end of the course. Conversations that took place after each intervention lesson were recorded. These were used to discuss and reflect on the tasks conducted during the lesson, the story, the children's reactions, and so forth.

Cristina, the school's head teacher, authorized my work in the school and was the contact with the parents throughout the summer camp. She was interviewed twice as well, around the same time than the course teachers.

2.3 Materials & Methods

2.3.1 *The stories*

In this study CD-ROM stories were traditional versions of Goldilocks and The Three Bears, The Gingerbread Man, and Three Billy Goats Gruff. Goldilocks was the only story familiar to the children and this factor was one of the considerations for selection. The familiarity of the story was used to introduce the children to the intervention lesson, where they worked with the computer in the classroom and used different software for the lesson tasks. Since the story was known to them, it was possible to focus the children's attention to the structure of the lesson and the technologies used and decreasing the demands required to understanding the story of the English lesson. All the stories had a three-moment repetition pattern which has been seen as a narrative feature that supports comprehension. Goldilocks was the first story used during the course, followed by the Gingerbread Man and the Three Billy Goats Gruff.

2.3.2 The lessons

A typical lesson was structured in 4 different stages of varied length. Each lesson included:

- Whole class storytelling. This activity consisted of having the children watch the story from beginning to end. After the story, the children would respond to some comprehension questions related to the story. The interactions of the children and teacher that took place before, during, and after the story were audio taped and field notes were taken. This activity was the starting task of each intervention lesson. The children were given the instruction that after the story there would be tasks related to the story including games, puppets, comprehension question sessions, pictures and/or working on the computer with the researcher.
- Song time related to the story.
- Whole class vocabulary activity which made use of paper puppets or included colouring pictures and games.
- Whole class craft activity ran in parallel to an Individual computer task with one or two children at a time. During the individual tasks children were asked to retell the story.

2.3.3 The tasks

ICT-task: whole-class storytelling

In the whole class stage of the lesson, the children sat in a semi-circle around two small desks where the computer and speakers were set. This activity consisted of having the children watch the story from beginning to end. After the story, the children would respond to some comprehension questions related to the story. All these tasks were audio recorded and transcriptions made. The transcripts were compared with observation notes and these data in collation was used to analyse children's reactions and input during the lesson.



Fig. 1 Classroom layout for the storytelling sessions

ICT-task: sequencing and retelling the stories

Sequencing and retelling tasks consisted of asking the children to order four pictures from the story used in the week. This task took place after the children had participated in the whole class storytelling at least two times. The pictures used in this task belonged to the story and were part of an activity included in the software. Retelling tasks were audio recorded and also transcriptions were made. Data from the transcripts was the source for the narrative analysis conducted which was used to measure development of children's retellings throughout the duration of the course.

ICT-task: drawing a character. The software used to complete this task was 2Create a Story (2Simple Software TM) and was chosen on the basis of the appropriateness of the interface to allow children to draw in a similar way as paper-drawing, with the mouse and 'crayons'. This software was tried in pilot sessions with children of the same age prior to the field work of the study and was found that young children could handle software interface with ease.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Children's emergent literacy skills: quantitative perspective

Children's story retellings were audio taped and transcribed for analysis under the Narrative Scoring Scheme [37]. This scheme evaluates young children's narratives extending the Story Grammars approach [38] by categorizing narratives in seven components: Introduction, Character Development, Mental States, Referencing, Conflict resolution, Cohesion, and Conclusion. Four independent reviewers evaluated and scored the story transcriptions and the scores were averaged in order to establish a week-to-week comparison. The analysis of children's narratives based on the scores showed changes in the use of story grammar elements between narratives.

Table 1. NSS results for the children's retellings over three weeks

	Introduction			Character Development			Mental States			Referencing			Conflict Resolution			Cohesion			Conclusion		
	Wk1: G3Bs	Wk2: TGM	Wk3: 3BGG	G3Bs	TGM	3BGG	G3Bs	TGM	3BGG	G3Bs	TGM	3BGG	G3Bs	TGM	3BGG	G3Bs	TGM	3BGG	G3Bs	TGM	3BGG
Enrique	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	
Isolda	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	0	1	2	0	2	1	0	1
Ana	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	1
Angel	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	3	1
Pablo	0	1	NC	1	1	NC	1	1	NC	1	1	NC	1	1	NC	1	1	NC	1	1	NC
Manuel	NC	1	0	NC	2	0	NC	0	0	NC	3	0	NC	0	0	NC	2	0	NC	1	0
Diego	0	NC	1	0	NC	1	0	NC	1	1	NC	1	0	NC	0	0	NC	1	0	NC	1
Elena	1	0	NC	1	3	NC	0	3	NC	4	4	NC	1	3	NC	2	3	NC	2	4	NC

Looking at the results from the analysis of retellings of the whole class (See Table 1), it can be seen that two out of eight of the participant children improved their scores in the elements of introduction, character development and mental states, which account to three of the seven elements of the NSS criteria during their retellings. Three children improved referencing and conclusion criteria. Additionally, five children in the class improved their retellings in the cohesion and conflict resolution elements. These improvements could be interpreted as emergent literacy development because of the changes in retellings' construction observed over time [20]. These changes are reflected in the way that the characters were presented, how the children justified the protagonists' actions and the endings of the stories. For instance, whereas Pablo's retelling of Goldilocks did not contain any reference to the characters of the story, his story of the Gingerbread contained the introduction to at least the story's main character. Pablo started his story of Goldilocks with the phrase "*Esta cogiendo tomates*" ([She] is picking tomatoes) making reference to a part of the story where Goldilocks is shown in the forest near some rose bushes. As can be observed, in the sentence in Spanish the subject is omitted and although grammatically this is correct, there was no previous reference to the character of Goldilocks. Hence this retelling yielded the lowest score in the NSS criteria of character development. In contrast, Pablo started the Gingerbread Man making a full reference to the main character in the sentence "*El Pastelito se fue*" (The Cupcake Man left) making use of the full name of the character in the introductory sentence of the story. Diego and Elena included in their second or third retellings elements related to characters' feelings or emotions, accounting for the criterion of Mental states. For example, Elena explained that the Gingerbread Man got scared and that is why he started to run. Diego, about the Billy Goats, added that the sheep (Diego referred to the characters in this story as sheep or goat) tried the grass and thought it was tasteless. Diego and Elena also concluded their stories with more elements in their second and third retelling. Elena was one child who understood that the Fox had eaten the Gingerbread Man, using the animations as support. When reaching the end of the story she was laughing and enjoying the end. Her account of how the story finished is shown in the following extract:

El y despues llego llego a aqui se lo encontraron iba corriendo todavia y y y despues vino el zorro y se ponio [puso] encima del zorro y y y se lo comio el zorro y se see se lo comio y decia slurp!

El and then it got it got h here [they] found him [it] was running still and and and then [it] \putted" [climbed] on top of the Fox and and and [it] the Fox ate it and it ate it and [it] said slurp!

In general, all children scored higher in the cohesion criterion because their retellings were better constructed from the second week of the course. Children included connectives and made references to sequenced actions in the stories of Wk2 and Wk3. Many conditions might have influenced this result, including the time it took the children to get used to work with ICT-stories, with the computer and with me. However, I must emphasise that under the emergent literacy approach such adaptation is part of developing literacy-oriented behaviours, which was ultimately the main goal of this study, that is, to see whether children immersed in a course using ICT-stories would develop skills related to understanding and construction of stories. It follows then that if the improvements in retellings were due to the children getting used to the work scheme and the work with stories, their use influenced the development of literacy skills.

3.2 Children’s emergent literacy skills: qualitative perspective or “Did I like ICT to learn English?”

Results of this study were drawn from collecting data and analysing it from a mixed method perspective. The qualitative analysis of the children’s retellings included data from observations, teacher’s interviews, children’s materials produced during tasks, and children’s opinions on the lesson as shown in the survey conducted with them, which included scale items and asked about all the elements of the lesson, using pictures to aid understanding of the questions. The survey was guided by the teacher and the children pasted the corresponding picture of the element under analysis in the column of their choice on their own. Two cases are included here to illustrate the qualitative analysis of the children’s work, retellings and attitudes observed during the intervention lessons.

3.2.1 Enrique: *Y despues ... el Pastelito. "And then, and then, and then ... the little cupcake man"*

Enrique participated actively during the whole-class storytelling sessions. He made use of the animations in the story of the Gingerbread Man to construct the meaning of this story (See Table 2). Repetition of the story supported the story comprehension (namely, that in the second viewing he understood that the Gingerbread Man was eaten); and According to Teresa, Enrique behaved better during the computer work than during other tasks.

Table 2. Enrique’s retellings of the stories analysed under Story grammar (Stein and Glein)

	Setting	Catalyst	Internal response	Consequence	Problem resolution
Goldilocks and the Three Bears		and then she was sleeping		that the bear arrived to his house and	and then she woke up then it happened that the girl ran away to the street
The Gingerbread Man	and then she was making it [the Gingerbread Man]	and then well he stood up and left running	and then he couldn't run {and the Fox had to eat it	and then the mother was running and then the girl and the boy got there	and then the Fox came and he had to eat it [the Gingerbread Man]
Three Billy Goats Gruff	that the other day that the man [the Troll] crossed and then	he [the Goat] wanted to cross that he wanted that his friend was over there [pointing at the other side of the bridge]	he [the Goat] believed that the purple Man, the Troll was bad	and then he threw him in the water	

The tasks conducted on the computer (during retelling, sequencing of stories and drawing of characters) were strong motivators for Enrique during the English lessons. He showed interest and participated willingly in the tasks, demonstrating an increased motivation towards the lessons from the second week of the course. He showed delight in sharing with the group his "discovery" that the Gingerbread Man was eaten by the Fox. Enrique evaluated positively all the lesson tasks, reflecting his attitude towards the intervention (See Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 Enrique’s opinion on the lesson tasks and ICT

3.2.2 Angel: *Es que no me la se. "It's that I don't know it [the story]"*

Angel's behaviours during the lessons improved, as observed by Teresa, when the intervention lessons were introduced. He showed interest during the whole-class storytelling session, sometimes

laughing and, others, imitating the characters of the story; retelling scores for Angel improved in Week 2 and remained constant in Week 3 (See Table 3). The first improvement was not related to a better retelling, but to the fact that he was willing to provide a retelling at all, given that in the first retelling task, Angel said he was not familiar with the story of Goldilocks and therefore did not provide a retelling. Angel's comment was interesting as my field notes indicated that Teresa asked the children on the first day of the English course whether they knew the story and all, including Angel, said they knew it. Interestingly enough, his scores did not decrease between Week 2 and Week 3, which could indicate a level of interest over the stories that might have influenced his willingness to participate in the lesson tasks and, in particular, in the story retellings. Finally, Angel's explanation of the Gingerbread Man melting in the lake to justify its absence at the end of the story showed a degree of originality since none of the other children in the class made this deduction. This showed how Angel made use of previous knowledge to construct meaning from a story; Angel's best choice of stories contained male protagonists, suggesting that he probably identified with male characters. His unwillingness to retell the story of Goldilocks might have been more related to the fact that the story had a female protagonist than to his remembering the story or his understanding of the retelling task itself; and It was interesting to see that Angel responded to his survey independently from Pablo, an attitude that Teresa found to be positive given the strong relationship of the two boys. She congratulated him for expressing his views regardless of Pablo's opinions.

Table 3. Angel's retellings of the stories analysed under Story grammar (Stein and Glein)

	Setting	Catalyst	Internal response	Consequence	Problem resolution
Goldilocks and the Three Bears	there was a bear	It's that I don't know the story			
The Gingerbread Man	the Gingerbread Man	it runs [the Gingerbread Man]- the grandparents chase it - the cat chases it		it crosses the water - it gets wet	it melts
Three Billy Goats Gruff	that a goat came	that it didn't let it cross [the Troll didn't let the Goat cross the bridge]		the big Goat throws it into the water	

Angel was one of the two children who placed all tasks but one under the "I Hate" header as shown in Fig. 3, Pablo being the other boy. Like Pablo, Angel did not evaluate the computer task negatively. I found these results from the survey to mirror Angel's behaviour during the lessons. Angel participated in the lesson but got easily distracted, except on the computer tasks where he could stay sitting in his chair listening and participating throughout.

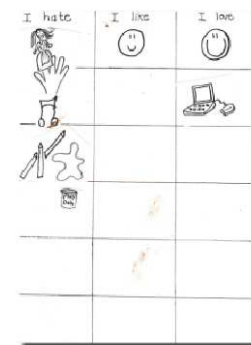


Fig. 3 Angel's opinion of the lesson tasks and ICT

3.2.3 Teachers said: views on the use of ICT in the preschool classroom

Regarding ICT as support for learning and development. Participant teachers expressed a positive opinion on the use of ICT in the English lesson. Taking advantage of children's natural attraction to technology, they thought that technology could be used to motivate children to learn languages and stimulate their imagination. The main factor that teachers identified for using ICT with very young children was the cost of the equipment. Teresa expressed the opinion that young children should not be left alone with technological devices and this condition raises the need that another teacher work with the children while they for instance work with a computer. This obstacle might present administrative issues to the school regarding staff provision and budget.

Regarding ICT use and professional development. Isabel and Teresa believed that the extent of use of ICT in young learner classrooms was related to the availability of time since planning projects that involved the use of technology in the classroom was time-consuming. Isabel also considered the lack of strategies for the use of ICT to be a major reason for its low exploitation in formal education contexts. At the same time, she believed that teachers were expected to use ICT but there was little support to that end. Cristina, in her role as head teacher of the school, also perceived that the use of ICT was expected from teachers and schools in general. She, however, believed that there was a need for teachers to develop their technological skills. In addition, Teresa was of the opinion that student teachers should be prepared for the use of technology from the time of their professional training.

Regarding the intervention lessons. According to Teresa, the attitude of the children towards the English lessons improved after the implementation of lessons and the introduction of the CD-ROM stories and the work based on the storytelling approach, as evidenced by the children's increased interest on the tasks and their spontaneous use of vocabulary from the stories and their story retellings during playtime. Teresa found the children making spontaneous use of vocabulary from the stories during completion of non-ICT tasks. In addition, Isabel found the use of stories to be highly appropriate for meeting the children's learning needs, while Teresa described their use as fun and appropriate for children, considering their developmental needs. Teresa found the animations in the story to be supportive to children's understanding of stories and repeated viewings of the stories helped the children to understand more details of the stories and eliminated the need to tell the children the stories in Spanish.

4 DISCUSSION

For the English teaching practice, the study provided evidence that the use of ICT-stories enhanced the learning environment of the language lesson by increasing the motivation of children, observed in their level of participation and their response to the stories. Engagement of the children with the ICT-tasks and their level of comprehension of the stories provided evidence of the potential of this type of material for the language classroom. A further aspect regarding the use of ICT was the way in which it scaffolded comprehension. Animations and sounds helped the children to construct meaning from the stories and as a result, the language in which the stories were told did not produce any observable negative effects on the children.

Emergent literacy behaviours can be developed through exposure to ICT-stories and not as a function of the language of the story. One of the most interesting findings of the study suggest that children's literacy behaviours at a time when L1 is in-development were not language-bound, this is, children used L1's linguistic resources and narrative skills to construct their stories. Data showed how children used non-verbal cues such as animations and previous experience to understand the stories. Furthermore, the children in this study were able to retell in Spanish stories viewed in English without ever mentioning the language of the story as a problem in the construction of the retelling. Implications of this study for the emergent literacy approach are relevant considering that children could be developing behaviours towards literacy in the form of story grammar knowledge during foreign language lessons when ICT-stories are used. The use of ICT-stories in the development of emergent literacy has been studied in populations at risk for low socio-economical status (Korat & Shamir, 2008). Such populations can be at a disadvantage because access to books might be limited for economical reasons. In this study, exposure to foreign language stories might not be limited for economical reasons but due to context. The number of stories in a foreign language that children are exposed to might be limited because of the material available in the community. The use of ICT-stories in the language classroom can create the opportunities for children to be exposed to stories in the foreign language. In this study, children belong to a community that regard highly the development of literacy in Spanish. Parents encourage literacy practices. This study tried to explore potential benefits of exposing young children to foreign language stories with the purpose of learning if and how this could support the development of emergent literacy skills. The possibilities of children developing literacy skills during foreign language lessons could lead to a change of attitude towards allowing the children to be exposed for instance to foreign language texts. Currently, literature on EFL and young learners suggest that literacy development in English should be delayed in favour of the development of literacy in children's first language. Teachers are reluctant to develop literacy in the foreign language on the basis that exposing young learners to text in English at an age where Spanish is being developed could be confusing to the development of Spanish. This study suggests that instead of confusing them, children make use of skills to understand stories in Spanish to understand stories

heard in English. If children develop a set of literacy skills and use them regardless of the language, then there would be no reason to delay the development of literacy in L2. This however, requires further research through studies that look at the development of phonological systems in children learning two languages in foreign language contexts.

5 FUTURE WORK

After conducting this study, a number of questions arise and could constitute further lines of research in relation to the issues explored in this investigation. The first aspect that could be studied further is the influence that home environments have on the attitude of children towards learning English, which could lead to understanding their behaviour in the language classroom. Such understanding is valuable to learn the reasons underlying children's reactions towards a foreign language teaching approach. Like the case of this study, some of the children's reactions were connected to the perception of learning a foreign language prevalent in the community and not to the learning of a foreign language per se. Longitudinal studies can also be illuminating in the aspect of long-term effect in both L1 and English literacy development due to an intervention of the type conducted during this study. Studies in similar context with different languages or even more modern technologies like touch screen devices that deliver electronic stories, could be conducted as a form of replication of this study. Finally, research studies could be conducted in mainstream schooling in lieu of an intensive English course as was the case of my research. Such studies would provide insight into the effects of exposure to ICT-storytelling when language programmes are offered on a once a week basis.

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