Using Storytelling to Facilitate L2 Vocabulary Learning and Retention: A Case Study of a Secondary School in Thailand
การใช้เทคนิคการสอนโดยการเล่านิทานเพื่อช่วยการเรียนรู้และการจดจำคำศัพท์ในภาษาที่สองกรณีศึกษาของโรงเรียนมัธยมศึกษาในประเทศไทย

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Abstract

This paper investigates whether vocabulary teaching through storytelling technique is more effective than the rote-learning conventional method. The sample group was 79 Thai EFL students in Grade 7 at a secondary school who studied 20 new

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vocabulary items from four stories within twelve classroom hours. The students were divided into the storytelling and the conventional groups. They took a pretest and a posttest of 20 vocabulary items, which were of the same set, before and after the course of the learning respectively. Then they took a delayed posttest two weeks after the first one. Statistical results indicated that both methods could significantly increase the students' vocabulary knowledge ($p < 0.001$). However, the storytelling group outperformed the conventional group on the posttest ($p < 0.001$). Results also indicated that the storytelling group could retain the learned words well ($p < 0.001$) while the conventional group remembered less ($p < 0.05$).

บทคัดย่อ

　　　　งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาว่าเทคนิคการสอนโดยการเล่านิทาน (storytelling technique)　มีประสิทธิภาพในการสอนคำศัพท์ดีกว่าการสอนแบบท่องจำ (conventional method)　หรือไม่ กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใช้ในการวิจัยครั้งนี้เป็นนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 1　จำนวน 79 คน ซึ่งได้เรียนรู้คำศัพท์ใหม่ 20 คำ จากนิทาน 4 เรื่อง โดยใช้เวลาเรียน 12 ชั่วโมง กลุ่มตัวอย่างถูกแบ่งเป็น 2 กลุ่ม ได้แก่ กลุ่มที่เรียนด้วยเทคนิคการสอนโดยการเล่านิทาน และกลุ่มที่เรียนแบบท่องจำ กลุ่มตัวอย่างทำแบบทดสอบก่อนเรียน (pretest)　และแบบทดสอบหลังเรียน (posttest)　ซึ่งเป็นชุดเดียวกันจำนวน 20　คำศัพท์ และได้ทำการทดสอบหลังเรียนอีกครั้ง (delayed　posttest)หลังการทำแบบทดสอบหลังเรียน (posttest) ครั้งแรก 2 สัปดาห์ ผลทางสถิติแสดงให้เห็นว่าทั้งสองวิธีการสามารถเพิ่มพูนความรู้ด้านคำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษได้อย่างมีนัยสำคัญ ($p < 0.001$)　แต่กลุ่มที่เรียนด้วยเทคนิคการสอนโดยการเล่านิทานทำคะแนนสอบได้ดีกว่ากลุ่มที่เรียนแบบท่องจำในการสอบหลังเรียนครั้งที่ 1　($p < 0.001$) อย่างมีนัยสำคัญ ส่วนในด้านการจดจำ　ผลทางสถิติแสดงให้เห็นว่ากลุ่มที่เรียนด้วยเทคนิคการสอนโดยการเล่านิทานสามารถจดจำคำศัพท์ได้ดี ($p < 0.001$)　ในขณะที่กลุ่มที่เรียนแบบท่องจำจดจำคำศัพท์ได้น้อยลง ($p < 0.05$)

คำสำคัญ:การสอนคำศัพท์　เทคนิคการสอนโดยการเล่านิทาน (storytelling technique)　การสอนแบบท่องจำ (conventional method)　ภาษาไทย

1.   Introduction

Word acquisition is the first thing and the most essential component for language learning. The more vocabulary L2 learners have, the more command of the language they have and the better they will understand L2 texts (Huckin, 1986; and Nation, 2001). However, with insufficient L2 knowledge, L2 learners across the globe often have difficulties with understanding L2 reading texts, and EFL Thai students are not an exception.

Thai students study English as a foreign language. In Thai land, students seem to get exposed to and use English only in the formal classroom, where they study it for quizzes and exams. When they have troubles with comprehending an English text, the teachers generally encourage them to use a bilingual dictionary and discuss the meanings of words. This is, however, considered to be the conventional way of teaching vocabulary. Frequently, learners forget words that they do not use often.

To help L2 learners increase their vocabulary knowledge and enhance their ability to read, a language teaching technique highly recommended recently is storytelling. This technique is found to motivate students in formal classroom settings to be active learners in telling, writing, reading and listening to stories, and enhancing all of those language skills (e.g. Atta-Alla, 2012; Davies, 2007; Haven, 2000; and Tsou, Wang &Tzeng, 2004). This is probably because when learning through telling stories, "Factual and conceptual information is learnt faster and better, and will be remembered longer, recalled more readily, applied more accurately" (Haven, 2000: 75). In fact, storytelling is a good linguistic activity because it allows individual learners to put what they learn into practice, sharing their personal understanding with others (Egan, 1995, 1999). As discussed above, the storytelling technique may,

thus, motivate learners to learn more actively, and provide promising results, which may make this teaching technique more helpful for L2 learners than the rote-learning conventional method.

Although storytelling is a success in several EFL/ESL contexts, it may not be successful with Thai learners in the rural region who do not use English in everyday life and who tend to be shy and not confident to speak English with their Thai peers. Thus, this paper investigates to what extent storytelling can facilitate Thai EFL students to learn and retain vocabulary knowledge in comparison to the conventional method.

2.   Literature Review

2.1 Communicative Language Teaching and Vocabulary Learning

It is evident that the conventional method yields unsatisfactory learning outcome in that it could not enable L2 learners to succeed in mastering all the four language skills, i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking. According to Johnson and Morrow (1981: 1), learners who learned in the conventional method turned out to be almost "structurally competent but communicatively incompetent". In point of fact, Dujmović (2006) points out that children do not learn their mother tongue through sitting at the desk, learning language structures through drills in isolated context and taking pencil and paper tasks and tests individually. In contrast, they learn it by making interactions and manipulating language in meaningful context with their peers (and, of course, with language users in the community). He makes a good point that

"If fragmented skill lessons, workbooks, and endless worksheets are not the best way for L1 learners to develop their language and master the art of reading and writing, they must be much less appropriate for young foreign language learners who need to learn a whole new language (ibid 75)."

As such, the traditional way of learning may not even work with adolescent or adult foreign language learners. Because of this, linguists and language teachers looked for a more promising alternative way of teaching a language. In 1970s, the communicative language teaching (CLT) was introduced as a new approach (Nunan, 1995), which encompasses (more) authentic language use and communicative activities where students are engaged in real communication or simulations with one another.

In its early days of development, communicative language teaching (CLT) did not pay much attention to grammar, as some linguists argued that it was unnecessary to teach grammar rules because as learners focused on meaning or communication, grammar knowledge would automatically develop. However, this idea was challenged, and in 1980s CLT was defined as a teaching method which emphasizes language functions as well as language structures (Littlewood, 1981). In principle, CLT focuses on communication, and its goal is to enable learners to understand and produce the target language appropriately, and mistakes and errors are viewed as part of the learning process (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Ladousse (1983, 1987) and Rinvolucri (1984) contend that communicative activities can promote vocabulary learning. During group activities, e.g. role-plays, simulations and group work, learners take turns to be listeners and speakers. They can help each other clarify and negotiate the meaning of unfamiliar words. They are required to actively participate in the activities and use the words in contexts repeatedly, which, in turn, can help them remember newly

learned words well. Moreover, group-based interaction provides an environment in which learners who make mistakes will not feel embarrassed in front of the class and the teacher.

2.2 Storytelling and Vocabulary Teaching

Storytelling is an oral practice in which language and gestures are performed to narrate connected events (Champion, 2003). Humans have been telling stories as a powerful way of communication, sharing experiences, expressing their social and emotional values, imparting literary and cultural heritage, etc. (Barreras Gómez, 2010). Storytelling, in fact, offers a good learning environment for listening, talking, reading, writing, among other activities (Barreras Gómez, 2010).

Storytelling as a language teaching technique shares three key characteristics with CLT. First, the goal of storytelling is getting the meaning across or communication, which is in the same as L1 acquisition. Second, both are central to collaborative and interactive learning. Third and last, with the two characteristics aforementioned, CLT and storytelling encourage learners to produce language output, either written or spoken, through sharing meaningful, real-life experiences or sequential connected events.

With regard to language teaching, storytelling has provided a lot of contribution to improve language skills. Isbell et al (2004) assert that storytelling can be used as a powerful teaching tool for teaching and learning because it can draw learners' attention, which allows what is taught to be imparted to learners more easily. Regarding vocabulary learning, with storytelling technique, they maintain that "words are not memorized, but are recreated through spontaneous, energetic performance, assisted by audience participation and interaction" (p. 158).

In more detail, storytelling requires all the four language skills and vocabulary knowledge, and learners are encouraged or forced to perform these skills as well as using the words in the story repeatedly (Lattimore, 1996). It also allows learners to appreciate language learning, as it provides language input necessary for producing language output (Shepard, 1996). Being equipped with the given words ready for them to use, learners may be more active in learning and practice using oral language and enrich their vocabulary by talking and telling stories (Shepard, 1996). In storytelling, they try to communicate, comprehend and negotiate meaning through exchanging and clarifying the information (Isbell, 2002). They pay attention to the story and use the context to capture the meaning. The sentences in the story provide good examples of how the target words are used in context (Lattimore, 1996). Then, to report the story, learners have to recall or revisit it and refine their comprehension of the words (Lattimore, 1996; McGee &Richgels, 2000; and Shepard, 1996). Telling stories increases opportunity for learners to develop continuity in language learning, and reinforces the key vocabulary and structures (Ellis & Brewster, 1991). As storytelling makes them to put events in sequence, it helps increase their ability to organize their thoughts and ideas (Lattimore, 1996; McGee &Richgels, 2000; and Shepard, 1996).

Although the storytelling technique has a lot of advantages as discussed above, there are some precautions when considering using it in the class. Writght (1995) has pointed out that students with limited words usually do not pay attention and rather keep silent in a big class. Moreover, students cannot remember a long story. Phillips (1993) claims that using storytelling can be very difficult because authentic materials are full of colloquial words, e.g. idioms, which are difficult for non-native speakers to understand. Therefore, teachers should be aware of and avoid these problems.

It is necessary to present storytelling in a friendly way and provide some help, e.g. giving learners unfamiliar words to be found in the story and their meaning.

In conclusion, with some precautions in mind, storytelling as a communicative task can enhance the development of various language skills and vocabulary knowledge. This is because when learners are completing a storytelling task, they are discussing the topic, reaching clarity and refinement of the language input. All of these activities prompt learners to undergo some important processes underlying second language acquisition. These processes are negotiation of meaning of unfamiliar words, reconstruction of phrases and sentences, and making language output (the output hypothesis).

2.3 Key Processes Underlying Vocabulary Acquisition

2.3.1 Negotiation

Negotiation can be defined as a process which eases second language acquisition when learners put effort to understand and convey meaning in the target language (Foster &Ohta, 2005). That is, learners talk to clarify and refine what is not clear to them in order to understand the meaning of the word in question. Negotiation of meaning can be used to convey and discuss information between learners and their peers. Learners have opportunity to clarify the input which, in turn, promotes comprehension and at the same time provides them with opportunity to use newly learned words. Moreover, negotiation can help learners work with others in groups and demonstrate gains in receptive knowledge. Group work helps promote learning dynamics and the results are better understanding of the input. It is a factor which significantly encourages language production. Lee (2004) suggests that negotiation of meaning in communication provides

comprehensible input and helps learners to internalize L2 forms and structures. Additionally, Pica and Doughty (1985, cited in Lee 2004) have found that group work is a useful activity because it develops L2 fluency and facilitates a greater number of words produced by an individual learner.

2.3.2 Reconstruction

Reconstruction refers to an activity in which students first read or listen to a story given by the teacher, then reconstruct or retell it, either in written or spoken mode (Thornburry, 1997). In retelling the story, learners have to reconstruct sentences or strings of words, which prompt them to use words in the story repeatedly. During the reconstruction process, students are supposed to use all of their linguistic knowledge and often encounter problems with the target features. As a result, students have to revisit the story, and inevitably pay attention to form, which activates the bottom-up processes, which expectedly triggers noticing, a process that makes learners recognize some of their linguistic problems (Marton1988). Swain and Lapkin (1995) argue that an activity that prompts L2 learners to produce the target language may provoke them to discover their linguistic mistake, i.e. the mismatches between the learners' version and the accurate version in the story. Through the processes of the noticing and correcting mistakes or mismatches, theoretically, language input may be converted to language intake. This is expected to help restructure learners' interlanguage towards mastery of the target language. With regards to vocabulary acquisition, learners may notice the words for use later, the meaning of the words, the mismatches, and how the words are used in a particular context.

2.3.3 Output Hypothesis

The Output Hypothesis is essential for second language learning in that it is a mechanism to promote SLA, helping

the learners move from semantic processing, involving words and their meaning for comprehension, to more syntactic processing, involving grammar rules and accuracy (Lee, 2004). The output hypothesis holds that forced language production may enhance second language acquisition (Swain, 1985). Swain emphasizes that simply making language output is not adequate, the quality of the 'forced' language output is necessary, explaining that making language output may assist language learning in four ways as discussed below.

First, it increases chances learners practice in the target language meaningfully; however, this promotes automaticity or fluency rather than accuracy. Second, language production may push learners to move from semantic processing to syntactic processing. This is because, in general, to comprehend utterances, vocabulary or semantic information with some extra-linguistic information is focused, not grammar or syntactic information (Krashen, 1982). Thus, if the knowledge of that particular grammatical form is not important to comprehend the utterance, learners tend to overlook the syntactic information and pay attention to words and their meanings. However, when producing language output, either spoken or written, not only the semantic information but also the syntactic information is required. Hence, learners are forced to realize the grammatical knowledge they do not have or partially have. According to Swain, learning will take place only when learners can notice what they do not know or do not know adequately, and learn from the relevant input. Third, producing language output allows learners to test their hypothesis about the language forms they use. Fourth and last, having put their hypothesis to test, they then receive feedback to check whether what they understand is acceptable and to correct their

ungrammatical or unnatural language with well-formed forms. Feedback can come in many forms, e.g. confirmation checks, clarification requests, or direct and indirect corrections. It is learning from feedback which leads learners to 'reprocess' their language output, by modifying or correcting it.

All in all, output is the production of input which is dependent on the appropriate way that a person puts that input into action. Through language output production, a network of competence will build and grow stronger, as well as comprehension and production of language. According to Long and Porter (1985), group work encourages interaction and helps increase the amount of language output and negotiation of meaning better than teacher-fronted whole class activity does. Negotiation of meaning brings about modified output (Pica et al., 1989), and, as discussed earlier, storytelling is a group-work activity which is expected to generate interaction and encourage learners to produce language output.

2.4 Previous Studies on Using Storytelling in Language Teaching.

A number of studies undertaken overseas indicate that storytelling as a teaching tool can motivate L2 learners of different first language backgrounds to actively learn vocabulary and help them gain vocabulary knowledge. Not until recent years, storytelling has been used to teach vocabulary to Thai EFL students in formal classroom settings, and the learning results seem promising.

Chanphet (2004) conducted a study on vocabulary learning with 30 grade 9 Thai students to investigate whether vocabulary reinforcement techniques through storytelling could promote word learning, using the seven Aesop's' fables in 14 periods. The students learned the necessary words, predicted what was going on in the story, put the pictures in order, listened to the story and finished

the incomplete (same) story, and finally did gap-filling exercises where they were required to complete sentences. The results indicated that the students obtained significantly higher scores on the posttest than on the pretest. Chanphet concluded that vocabulary reinforcement technique through storytelling effectively help students learn vocabulary well.

Kuntung (2007) examined vocabulary learning through storytelling with 39 Thai Mattayom1 (grade 7) students. The purpose was to investigate whether storytelling is effective for vocabulary learning, using eight Aesop's' fables in eight weeks. The results showed that storytelling improved the students' vocabulary learning in four aspects: pronunciation, spelling, meaning, and parts of speech. Furthermore, she concluded that the storytelling technique was appropriate to teach English vocabulary to Thai students.

Findings from a number of previous studies conducted with L2 learners of different L1 backgrounds, including Thai, reviewed above indicate that the storytelling technique can encourage and enhance L2 learners to gain vocabulary knowledge. However, previous studies seem to neglect to examine its effectiveness on vocabulary retention. Therefore, this study investigates the effectiveness of the storytelling technique in improving adolescent L2 learners' vocabulary learning and retention in comparison to the conventional method.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

The participants in the study were students from two M. 1 classes at a secondary school in Amnatcharoen, Thailand. They were studying English during their first semester of the

2009academic year. One class (41 students) was taught using storytelling technique while the other (41 students) received the conventional method. After the screening procedure, using the pretest to select purposive participants, only the students who could not provide the meaning of the words in the pretest were chosen for data collection. As a result, there were 40 student participants in the conventional classroom, hereafter the conventional group, and 39 in the storytelling classroom, hereafter the storytelling group.

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 Pretest and posttests

The pretest and the posttests, i.e. immediate and delayed posttests, were of the same set of test, consisting of 20 vocabulary items (See Appendix A) selected from 40 words in the basic educational curriculum B.D. 2544 (A.D. 2001). A pilot study was designed and launched to determine the words which were unfamiliar or unknown to the students to be used in the actual study. In the pilot study, the students were required to give the meanings of 40 words in Thai, then only 20 unfamiliar words were selected to be included in the pretest and posttest for the actual study. These words were common nouns, verbs, adjective, adverbs of degree, e.g. basket, market, pole, look, keep, thin, hungry, very, etc. (except one word, opposite, which is a preposition). The selected words were then used to invent four stories used as learning material in the study.

3.2.2 The Four stories

The stories consisted of 100-164 words in a story. They were two narratives and two expositions. Although storytelling activities basically involve narratives, which describe past time situations, the present study included two expositions, presenting factual information about an event and a place in the present time,

as the focus was on using vocabulary in context, not genre difference, which did not serve the purpose of the present study. Both the conventional group and the storytelling group were exposed to these same four stories of every day-life situations, e.g. The Lost Basket and The Friday Fair. The texts described past and present situations and therefore contained past tense and present tense forms of verbs. The researcher also explained the uses of both past and present tense forms. The task at the end of each story contained 10 questions for reading comprehension for both groups.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

The course of data collection was 15 sessions, 50 minutes per session per day, and three days per week. Three periods were allocated for the pretest, the immediate posttest and the delayed posttest, and the other twelve periods were for learning activities. The pretest was distributed to all participants prior to instruction, the immediate posttest after the instruction, and the delayed posttest two weeks after the first one to check students' retention of the learned words. The students were separated into two groups: the conventional group and the storytelling group. The conventional group learned the given vocabulary items in the conventional way, i.e. listening to the story on the tape read by a native speaker, looking up for meanings in dictionaries or asking the teacher, then reading and doing a reading comprehension task individually, followed by teacher feedback. In contrast, the storytelling group learned the vocabulary items through storytelling technique, requiring them to discuss and orally reconstruct the story before writing it up.

3.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and two-tailed paired and independent t-tests, were used on the pretest, immediate posttest and delayed posttest scores for both groups to determine the effectiveness of each teaching method in improving the students' vocabulary knowledge and retention of the learned vocabulary knowledge.

4. Results

Since only the students from the two groups who scored 0 on the pretest were chosen to be the research participants, there was no significant difference in the pretest scores for both groups. After twelve hours of instructions, the two groups completed the immediate posttest. Table 1 presents the results of the paired t-tests conducted on each group's pretest and posttest mean scores to determine whether the storytelling technique and the conventional method could enable the students to learn the given vocabulary items.

Table 1 Comparison of increase in posttest mean scores between the two groups

Measure by group	N	M	SD	T-Value	P-Value (t-test) (2-tailed)
Conventional	40	10.48 (52.40%)	2.35	-38.97	0.000*
Storytelling	39	14.77 (73.85%)	2.37	-28.15	0.000*

*p <0.001

According to Table 1, the mean score of the conventional group is 10.48/20, or 52.40%, and that of the storytelling group is 14.77/20, or 73.85%. The results from the paired t-tests on the pretest and posttest mean scores of both the storytelling group and the conventional group indicate that both teaching methods could help the students to learn new words at p <0.001 (t = -38.97, p = 0.000 for the storytelling group, and t = -28.15, p = 0.000 for the conventional group).

Next, to find out whether one of these methods significantly outperformed the other, an independent t-test was performed on the immediate posttest scores by the two groups and the results are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Comparison of mean scores of the immediate posttest by the two groups

Measure by group	N	M	SD	T-value	P-value (t-test)
Conventional	40	10.48 (52.40%)	2.35	-8.09	0.000*
Storytelling	39	14.77 (73.85%)	2.37		

*$p < 0.001$

Table 2 shows the results from the immediate posttest obtained from the two groups after the 12-hour sap. It is clear that the storytelling group significantly surpassed the conventional group at $p < 0.001$ (t = -8.09, p = 0.000). This is seen by examining the mean scores in Table 2 out of a possible 20 points, the students in the storytelling group earned an average of 14.77 points, or 74%, whereas the conventional group earned 10.48 points, or 52%.

To determine the retention effect of both teaching methods, paired t-tests were conducted on each group's mean score difference between those from the immediate and the delayed posttests. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Mean score differences between immediate and delayed posttests by the two groups

Measure by group	N	Posttest1 M	Posttest 2 M	Gain/Loss of mean score	T-value	P-value (t-test)
Conventional	40	10.48 (52.40%)	9.45 (47.25%)	-1.03 (9.82%)	3.27	0.002*
Storytelling	39	14.77 (73.85%)	15.82 (79.10%)	1.05 (7.11%)	-4.84	0.000* *

*p<0.01, **p<0.001

According to the results in Table 3, the storytelling group could retain the learned vocabulary knowledge at p <0.001 (t = -4.84, p = 0.000) whereas the conventional group showed a loss of the learned vocabulary knowledge at p <0.01 (t = 3.27, p = 0.002). When comparing the group mean scores from the immediate and delayed posttests, it was found that the storytelling group gained 7.12% while the conventional group lost 9.82%.

Therefore, it can be concluded that vocabulary reinforcement technique utilizing storytelling can help students learn and memorize words better than through the conventional method. The results of the study are discussed in the next section.

5. Discussion

The results of the study are discussed in order to answer the research question, "To what extent can storytelling facilitate Thai EFL students to learn and retain vocabulary knowledge in comparison to the conventional method?" Based on the statistical

results in section 4, the storytelling technique has been demonstrated to improve the students' performance on using the target vocabulary in their vocabulary learning tasks in that it helps the students match the spelling and meaning of a particular word in context and retain that knowledge gained in the training. The finding from the present study lends support to previous studies (e.g. Chanphet, 2004; and Kuntung, 2007) showing that storytelling technique effectively helps learners gain vocabulary knowledge. Explanations for findings are discussed below.

Because storytelling is a fundamental source which conveys events, words, images, and sound to share culture, entertainment and education, therefore, it is a natural way to learn a language (Barreras Gómez, 2010; and Dujmović, 2006). Storytelling creates and caters a good learning environment, allowing learners to listen, talk, read, write in the target language (Barreras Gómez, 2010). The context in the story facilitates learners to understand words' meanings and develop concepts about words (Lattimore, 1996; McGee & Richgels, 2000; Morrow, 2001; and Shepard, 1996). In telling the story, learners are forced to revisit the story, thus, recurrently notice how the words are used in context (Lattimore, 1996) and then use the key vocabulary and structures in the story, which helps improve their understanding of the words (Ellis & Brewster, 1991; Lattimore, 1996; McGee &Richgels, 2000; and Shepard, 1996).

In more detail, storytelling helps learners to have opportunities to negotiate meaning. As discussed in section 2, when language learners are engaged in a communicative task, the context or the setting becomes meaningful, providing sufficient evidence to make a reasonable guess at the meaning of unfamiliar words. Learning words in such specific, meaningful setting and doing the actions or perceiving a particular experience help learners appropriately match the spelling and pronunciation with meaning. A

study by Kuntung (2007) supports this claim, reporting that storytelling activities improved her secondary school Thai EFL learners in terms of pronunciation, spelling, meaning and parts of speech.

In addition, the fact that storytelling activities required the students to first listen to the story, then read it, and then orally cited it, and finally wrote about it allowed them to be frequently exposed to the same set of vocabulary items in repetitive meaningful context. As Rinvolucri (1984) has pointed out, due to the recurrence of the meaningful context as learners are required to efficiently use the new vocabulary they have encountered in the activities, the ability of how new words are learned is likely to improve.

Furthermore, according to the output hypothesis, the fact that learners are encouraged to produce language output using the target vocabulary items pushes them to undergo two information processing phases, (1) decoding and understanding language input, where negotiation of meaning is recurrent and (2) encoding often through negotiation of meaning, and forming phrases or sentences as language output, frequently from resconstructing the language they have previously noticed in the language input. While making language output, learners are pushed to recall all the language knowledge, e.g. finding appropriate and necessary words in their lexicon, putting them in correct order to form a phrase or sentence and pronouncing the words correctly. Often, learners, especially those with low proficiency, have difficulties in expressing thoughts including the target words. Having gone through language difficulties, trails and errors in testing their hypotheses about the language with peers and the teacher, learners' language abilities and

skills will build and grow stronger, which, in turn, allow them to actively gain comprehension and produce more language output.

Besides the major findings discussed above, there are also observational findings worth discussing here. Prior to the experiment, it was questionable whether these Thai students would welcome the storytelling technique which requires them to speak in English with their Thai friends. However, from the researcher's observations, it was clearly seen that the students were active and tried to speak English with their peers to complete the task. In groups, they showed that they had learned with the others more successfully than their counterparts in the conventional group who did the tasks individually. With group activities, they could help their peers check whether they were using the right words to recite the story. This way, they helped each other understand, learn the vocabulary and meaning, as well as learn to use words in context. The strong students would help the weak students, and they both understood the meaning interaction of the texts. They had fun, felt happy, had an opportunity to share their experience with friends and were able to use the vocabulary in listening and speaking tasks with confidence although not correctly all the time. This study supports the theories of Lee (2004) which suggest that negotiation of meaning in communication provides comprehensible input and helps the students internalize L2 forms and structures. He also cited Pica and Doughty (1985) that group work is useful because it develops L2 fluency and creates a greater quantity of language learned by an individual student. Prior to the experiment, it was expected that these Thai students should have been unconfident and shy to speak English with their friends.

On the other hand, the students in the conventional group performed in the tasks differently from those in the storytelling group, i.e. they completed the tasks by themselves. That is, they

took the task without interaction, thus, missed the chance to clarify the input and produce language output as they mainly read and answered comprehension questions, usually in short sentence or phrases. Even though they also had the opportunity to produce language output, the process of their making output was not as powerful as the one with interaction and negotiation.

Furthermore, the students in the storytelling group showed interest in subsequent lessons after they had learned through the storytelling technique. From personal communications with the students, English became more meaningful to them. A student reported that before he learned English through this technique, he could simply make very short sentences and felt bored to learn English. But after having learned with the storytelling technique, he was able to make longer sentences and tell a story in English, which he was proud of. All in all, the students in the present study obviously welcomed and accepted the interactive, meaningful and enjoyable storytelling technique, which is confirmed by the fact that most of them scored higher on the delayed posttest than on the immediate one. Above all, it works to facilitate Thai EFL students to learn and remember new words well.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations for Teaching and Future Research

The present study has demonstrated that storytelling significantly enhanced the students' learning, understanding and retaining new vocabulary. In effect, this technique also appeared to improve their vocabulary pronunciation and spelling, and gave them confidence in using words. From the researcher's observation, they were highly motivated and had a positive attitude towards learning

and using English. Apparently, the students were enthusiastic to talk about the stories.

There are two limitations found during the experiment that need to be addressed to improve the implementation of the technique. The first limitation concerns the weak students who could not catch the words during the listening part, and could not pronounce and use the given words in the situations. This problem may be solved by grouping them up with strong students to do the activities so that the latter can help the former. The second limitation is the time. The students in the present study used a lot of time to prepare themselves to complete each activity, i.e. to negotiate and clarify the meaning of difficult words and to reconstruct the story in English. Therefore, the teacher should provide adequate time for students to do the activity comfortably.

As it was observed during the class, the students in the storytelling group were more active to complete the storytelling tasks in English and could improve not only their vocabulary knowledge, as well as other four basic language skills, as also reported by some previous studies, but also past tense form usage. The storytelling students showed better use of the past tense forms in their written tasks than those in the conventional group. Thus, further research may be conducted on using the storytelling technique to teach complicated grammatical features, for example, word order, and tense and aspect. Further research may also explore the effectiveness of the storytelling technique in comparison with other communicative activities which require students to have interaction in which students have more control over the task, e.g. role plays and simulations, thus requiring less time, than in the storytelling task.

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APPENDIX A

PRE-TEST / POSTTEST

Instructions: Give the meaning of the words below in Thai
**ให้นักเรียนเขียนบอกความหมายคำศัพท์ที่ให้ข้างล่างนี้เป็นภาษาไทย**

	Word/English	**Meaning/Thai**
	คำศัพท์	ความหมาย
	...bird.....	......นก.......
1.	cave (n.)	....
2.	keep (v.)	....
3.	pole (n.)	....
4.	sell (v.)	....
5.	near (adv.)	....
6.	floor (n.)	....
7.	found (v.)	....
8.	bought (v.)	....
9.	inside (adj.)	....
10.	locate (v.)	....
11.	village (n.)	....
12.	bargain (v.)	....
13.	carried (v.)	....
14.	cheaper (adj.)	....
15.	merchant (n.)	....
16.	opposite (prep.)	....
17.	peaceful (adj.)	....
18.	pet shop (n.)	....
19.	Buddha image (n.)	....
20.	home utensil (n.)	....

APPENDIX B: The Four Stories

The Lost Basket

One day, Kob walked to the market. The market was so noisy: she bought many fruits and put them in the basket. The fruits were mangos, bananas, papayas, and oranges. After that, she went into a pet shop.
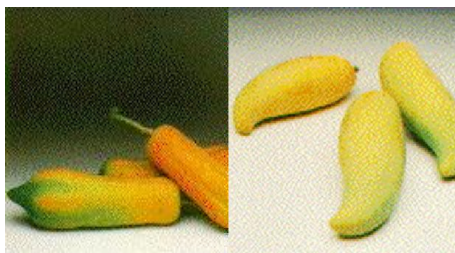
She walked around the pet shop. She saw little birds, little dogs, and many other animals. When she wanted to go home, she found that the basket was not there. She lost the basket. She didn't know what to do and was very sad.

Later, a woman walked to her. She carried the basket in her hand and said she took it because she thought it was her basket. Kob was very glad and walked back home happily.

A Parrot and A Dog

There was a young girl called Malee. She had a parrot and she loved it very much. She kept it in the house.

One day in the morning, Malee wanted some fruit for the parrot, so she walked to the market and bought some mangos and bananas. She put them in the basket and walked back home. On the way home, she saw a little dog. It was very thin and hungry. She carried the dog home.

When she came home, she said "Hi" to the bird on its pole. She put the dog on the floor and walked to the kitchen to find some food for the dog.

Then she walked back to the room and didn't see the parrot and the dog. They were not inside the house. She walked outside and looked for them. She saw the parrot in the mouth of the dog.

The Friday Fair

The Friday Fair is the market located on Arunprasert Road opposite Amnatcharoen Hospital. The merchants sell used things. They use their cars to carry their goods to sell there.

There are many things for sale for example: clothes, shoes and home utensils. Things here are cheaper than things at Wichitsin market or in the supermarkets.

To save your money, remember that you can bargain at the Friday Fair. Because everything there is very cheap, you may want to also buy things that you do not need. So, before you go there, make a list of the things you need and do not buy the things you do not need.

Poo Champa

There is a beautiful hill in TambonNamoma called Poo Champa. The hill has this name because there are a lot of Champa trees on the hill.

Every year, people come to the hill and grow Champa trees. There is a cave on the hill called "ThamPra". It is a holy place, and it is peaceful. There are a lot of Buddha images over there.

People like to go to Poo Champa. In April, they always go to bathe the Buddha images on Songkran Day. There is a small village near Poo Champa called Ban Poo Champa. There are some guesthouses for tourists at this village. The villagers are very friendly and always welcome tourists.