

UDC 372.8
SCSTI 16.01.45

THE ADVANTAGES OF «STORYLINE» METHOD IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

S.A. Shtro¹

¹*Country Camp school, Springe, Niedersachsen*

O.G. Shtro²

²*NKSU named after M. Kozybaev, Petropavlovsk, Kazakhstan*

Abstract

It is very important to immerse students into a communication environment created by application of well-balanced methods that produce good results in training foreign languages. One of such well-proven approaches is the so-called «Storylin» method. Its wide application in European schools has found a tangible effect in teaching various subjects and, in particular, foreign languages. It allows organizing very interesting and creative lessons and also helps to manage acquiring rather extensive material and to inspire students for independent work. Now its application in university practice seems to be reflected in teaching foreign languages in non-linguistic specialties in our higher school as well. At this moment when linear level learning of foreign language is successfully introduced, this technique is rather suitable for FL training, as it provides favorable environment for communication in a non-native language. This article presents a wide variety of class conduction ways on the ground of «Storyline» method, and also gives an experimental example of Storytelling based on the famous fairy tale «Gingerbread» supplied with possible versions of dialogue sequel topics.

Key words: Storyline, Storytelling, key questions, communicational environment, body language, contextual translation, gapped story, sequel dialogue, teacher's rope.

ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА МЕТОДА «STORYLINE» В ОБУЧЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННЫМ ЯЗЫКАМ

Штро С.А.¹

¹*Загородный лагерь-школа, Шпринге, Нижняя Саксония*

Штро О.Г.²

²*СКГУ им. М. Козыбаева, Петропавловск, Казахстан*

Аннотация

При обучении иностранным языкам очень важно погружение в среду общения, созданную при помощи сбалансированного применения методов, дающих видимые результаты. Одним из таких хорошо зарекомендовавших себя методов является так называемый метод «Storyline». Его широкое применение в европейских школах обнаружило ощутимый эффект в результативности преподавания различных предметов и, в частности, иностранных языков. Он позволяет интересно и креативно организовать занятия, а также помогает успеть охватить достаточно обширный материал и воодушевить обучающихся на самостоятельную работу. Сейчас его применение в вузовской практике начинает находить отражение в обучении иностранным языкам на неязыковых специальностях высшей школы и у нас. В настоящий момент, когда успешно внедряется линейное уровневое обучение, он уместно вписывается в обучение ИЯ, обеспечивая благоприятную среду общения на неродном языке. В настоящей статье рассматривается широкое многообразие форм организации занятий по методике «Storyline», а также приводится экспериментальный пример Storytelling на основе известной сказки «Gingerbread» с возможными вариантами тематики диалоговых сиквелов.

Ключевые слова: сюжетная линия, повествование, ключевые вопросы, коммуникативная среда, язык тела, контекстный перевод, история с пробелами, продолжение диалога, поддержка учителя.

**ШЕТЕЛ ТІЛДЕРІН ОҚЫТУДАҒЫ «STORYLINE» ӘДІСІНІҢ
АРТЫҚШЫЛЫҚТАРЫ****С.А. Штро¹***¹Сыртындағы мектеп-лагерь, Шпринге, Төменгі Саксония***О.Г. Штро²***²М. Қозыбаев атындағы СҚМУ, Петропавл, Қазақстан***Андатпа**

Шет тілдерін оқытуда жақсы нәтиже беретін әдістерді теңдестірілген қолдану арқылы жасалған қарым-қатынас ортасына батыру өте маңызды. Жақсы дамыған әдістердің бірі – «Storyline» әдісі. Оның еуропалық мектептерде кеңінен қолданылуы түрлі пәндерді, атап айтқанда шет тілдерін оқытудың нәтижелілігіне айтарлықтай әсер етті. Ол сабақты қызықты және креативті ұйымдастыруға мүмкіндік береді, сондай-ақ жеткілікті көлемді материалды қамтып үлгеруге және білім алушыларды өз бетінше жұмысқа жігерлендіруге көмектеседі. Қазір оны жоғары оқу орнында қолдану жоғары мектептің тілдік емес мамандықтарында шетел тілдерін оқытудан көрініс табады. Қазіргі кезде желілік деңгейлік оқыту сәтті енгізілгенде, ол ана тілінде қарым-қатынас жасаудың қолайлы ортасын қамтамасыз ете отырып, шет тілін оқуына орынды және сай келеді. Осы мақалада «Storyline» әдістемесі бойынша сабақтарды ұйымдастыру формаларының кең алуан түрлілігі қарастырылады, сондай-ақ белгілі «Gingerbread» ертегісінің негізінде диалогтық сиквел тақырыптарының ықтимал нұсқаларымен Storytelling эксперименттік үлгісі келтіріледі.

Түйінді сөздер: сюжет желісі, әңгіме, негізгі сұрақтар, коммуникативтік орта, дене тілі, контекстік аударма, бос орын тарихы, диалогты жалғастыру, мұғалімнің қолдауы.

Introduction

In the course of the current situation taking place in the world due to the globalization, we observe the phenomenon of multilingualism in many countries including Germany and Kazakhstan. These processes also define a special approaching to educational strategies for language teaching. For students in this case, it will be very important to dive into the environment of communication in their non-native languages, created by a balanced application of effective methods that give tangible results. In this regard, one of such well-proven techniques is considered to be a so-called «Storyline». It is quite widely used in schools in western countries such as the United States, the Netherlands, Germany, Greece, Denmark, Iceland, Hong Kong, Thailand, the Scandinavian countries and, of course, Scotland, where it was first developed in 1965. We would like this method to find a proper application in Kazakhstan, as it allows to conduct effective, interesting and creative classes, and also helps to cover rather extensive material and inspire students to work independently. Let's examine «Storyline» taking into consideration synchronic and diachronic aspects of the item and how it can be used in training foreign language communication in higher school.

First «Storyline» was developed in Scotland on the constructivist approach in 70s-80s of the previous century by a group of lecturers from Jordanhill College (Glasgow). In 1970s Sally Harkness took an active part in developing this method, she published a number of manuals for teachers, which helped them to use «Storyline» in their classes. According to S. Harkness's theory and practice «Storyline»-based learning is very effective and interesting. She proved the method can positively influence the speech skills and literacy [1]. Another scientist, Professor Steve Bell (S. Bell), also made an invaluable contribution to this method improvement. And both are still engaged into its development. The goal of «Storyline» is inspiring students to obtain new knowledge from the external world by their inner world expression and creativity application. The task of the tutor is to teach students to think and solve problems inventively. Another task of his is making students generate and develop new

ideas on the ground of existing knowledge. According to the researchers of this method, the main distinctive feature of «Storyline» is that the students and their interests (not plans and their objectives) seem to be in the focus of training [1].

This technique is based on storytelling and involving into the storytelling. According to it training begins with a story and seems to be considered in general as certain stages by strengthening connections in time, space and characters.

There are four basic elements in Storyline established by S. Bell:

1. Place of learning process in a detailed time zone and sequence.
2. Characters are used in the process.
3. An event or events is/are selected to be worked on.
4. These provide real problems to the students for solving [1].

As S. Harkness defines storyline process is planned in six dimensions including:

- story sections;
- key questions;
- student activities;
- classroom organization;
- sources;
- results;
- evaluation opportunities [1].

J. Creswell considers that the most important element of these six ones is Key questions. They are to put by the teacher at the very beginning of the lesson and to define the general direction of all students' activities. In the course of the story they create their own characters under the teacher's guidance as well as surrounding where action takes place. So everyone manages to demonstrate his or her own identity and feelings. Control of the training achievements is provided by the students themselves together with teacher. Students can come to decision and research making in team [2]. In this connection it should be said that «Storyline» maintains the transparent informative, respectful, and student/child friendly environment supported by students' active participation in the whole process.

J. Creswell also describes six principles of «Storyline». They are the principle of story, the principle of anticipation, the principle of the teacher's rope, the principle of ownership, the principle of context, and the structure-before-activity principle [2]. Up to them the teacher creates the environment for students in order to provide their ideas helping them to express their thoughts. With this technique teacher can organize a team-based work as well as an individual one. It is established on the basis of the students' knowledge and stimulates their interest and curiosity, constantly enlarging the awareness as they live in the story development process. The evaluation section provides the feedback at the end of the storytelling. It also provides the planning «meaningful lessons that promote language learning and help students develop learning strategies and critical thinking skills» [3].

We are going to present here a piece of experiment put by us in class earlier. Before the experiment described in this article students have already had a certain experience in storytelling (Storyline). For example, they are constantly involved into communicational environment, in which they play a role of some personage: e.g. presenting a topic «family» they seem to be members of a big family (father, mother, children, aunts, uncles etc.). Continuing with topic «housing» all of them describe their rooms in a big imaginable house of their own as well as with topics «appearance», «everyday routine», «travelling», «free time activities» etc. they describe appropriate situations. From topic to topic they are «a mom», «a dad» or anybody else, but in every new situation they ought to mobilize all their fantasy and

creativity in order to invent a new story. Normally they also have a good team-based work experience, as they start first with discussing all details together to work out a general strategy of each new story. The support of the teacher provides their correct use of lexical and grammar material, speech patterns, etc. Of course they are given many different texts, a lot of structured illustrative material and exercises to have the ground for each topical presentation of different kinds and forms. To maintain students' interest, enable their literacy and for better achievements they are provided by set of tasks of following activities:

Activities before and during listening (reading) story.

- Simplifying the language (to sift unknown lexical material, to make it easily understood).
- Establishing and introducing new words (by illustrations, objects, gestures, body language, contextual translation).
- Pelmanism. A memory card game in which a pack of cards is spread out face down and players try to turn up pairs with the same symbol. (Multitran dictionary definition).
- Bingo. A lotto card game with 5 different new words which are given to every student, then the words are announced and students are to cross off every named word, the first who is lucky to be first to cross off all the words cries out «Bingo!».
- Repeat it if it is true. A student should repeat a statement, if it is true and if it is false, the student keeps silence.
- Word webs. Students make up associative array.
- Gapped story. Students are given the texts with gaps, sometimes they can be supplied by list of gapped words.
- Stopping and guessing. After stopping in some place of the story, students are to guess what will happen then.
- How would you feel? Students are to express, what they feel in the place of a main character.
- Jump up word card. Supplied by the cards with new words, students are to stand up each time when any new word sounds.

Activities after listening (reading) story:

- Comprehension questions. Students are to make up 5 questions and to put them each other in random rotating pairs.
- Cinquain. Write out several key words from the text on the board. Students are to write down the chain of a CINQUAIN:
 1. Noun.
 2. Adjective.
 3. Verb.
 4. Definition.
 5. The word expressing a sense (resuming).
- Muddled sentences or words:
 1. Choose the key sentences from the text.
 2. Write down the set of words from this sentences on the separate sheets of paper or on the blackboard (in random order).
 3. Students are to recollect the proper sequence of the sentences.
- Gap filling. Every student will have the same text, but with different gaps. They consult each other to make this task, work in team in order to fill in gaps.

- Find the mistakes. Students listen (read) to the story with plot mistakes. They are to correct them.
- Retelling the story. Students are shown illustrations to the story (on the screen or handmade). They are to retell the story consequently from picture to picture.
- Mime and guess. One team of students is to mime and gesture some episodes of the text, others are to guess the situation and retell it.
- Adding information to the story:
 1. Describe character's house.
 2. Describe character's day. Etc.
- Writing letters from one character to another. It may be a home task with using e-mail and discussion at the following lesson.

This set of tasks enables students to activate the affords in practicing language. Such exercises surround them with English speaking environment enhancing communicative competences. However, the culmination of our experiment presents a task when students think up the new continuations of a story. We can use for example very famous tales such as Ginger Bread, Three Little Piglets or others. There are many videos of these tales in the Internet to watch before performing sequel to some of them. After some video has been shown (maybe supplied by some traditional exercises (from the list above), it is followed by the task to dramatize a continuation of tale. There can be given various versions for every single pair or small team. The directions of versions are defined by the teacher himself.

Here is an example of Gingerbread storyline, which video is demonstrated to students, followed by some earlier described exercises and is continued in the form of sequel dialogue.

Task: Imagine that Gingerbread man became a human being and choose one of the following situations for dramatizing a dialogue. Try to give him the most bright and vivid personal features as a character of this situation. Use the words from the list below.

1. Gingerbread man wasn't eaten, became a human being and returned home to help about the house. Dramatize the dialogue between him, old man and woman.
2. Gingerbread man wasn't eaten, got acquainted with animals in the woods, finished the school there, became lord pf animals in the forest. Dramatize the dialogue between him, old man and woman.
3. Gingerbread man wasn't eaten; left for the big city entered the university and became a scientist. He invented cure for cancer and saved many people's lives. Dramatize the dialogue between neighbors of old man and woman, who learnt lately about this fact.
4. Gingerbread man wasn't eaten, left for the big city joint the Green Peace Organization and now is busy with protection of nature. Dramatize the dialogue between him, old man and woman.
5. Gingerbread man wasn't eaten; left for the big city became a famous pop musician and now is very popular among young people. Dramatize the dialogue between old man and woman, who learnt lately about this fact. Try to describe his new appearance.
6. Gingerbread man wasn't eaten; left for the big city became a football player and now is very popular among young people. Dramatize the dialogue between old man and woman, who learnt lately about this fact.
7. Gingerbread man wasn't eaten; left for the big city met a young pretty girl, fell in love with and got married. Now they have got a happy family with three children. Dramatize the dialogue between them, old man and woman.

8. Gingerbread man wasn't eaten; he left for the big city, joined the criminal gang and now is wanted by the police. Dramatize the dialogue between old man and woman (his parents), who learnt lately about this fact.

A list of new words to study: friendly/warm – дружелюбный; kind – добрый; enchanting – обаятельный; generous – щедрый; optimistic – оптимист; cheerful – веселый; ingenious – находчивый; easy-going – добродушный, легкий на подъем; sensitive – чуткий, чувствительный; sensible – разумный; frisky – энергичный, резвый; versatile – разносторонний, легко адаптирующийся; strong – сильный; honest – честный; responsible – ответственный; reliable – надежный; punctual – пунктуальный; hard-working – работающий; clever/bright/smart – умный; ambitious – амбициозный; sympathetic – понимающий, сочувствующий; self-confident – уверенный в себе; organized – организованный; intelligent – интеллигентный; self-disciplined – дисциплинированный; polite – вежливый; offended – обиженный; aggressive – агрессивный; cruel – жестокий; obstinate – упрямый; stubborn – упрямый; greedy – жадный; canny – хитрый; cheeky – наглый; stinker – мерзавец; boasting – хвастливый; coward – трус.

The demonstrations of dramatized sequels are usually appreciated and approved by group mate students. They watch them with a great interest and excitement, then they express a response in form of some discussions. Their authors are usually very creative and proud, when they obtain a favour of their mates.

In some cases the dramatization of the story continuation may be purposed as a home task in form of video. The video should be shown at the following lesson and may be also supplied by some new evaluation tasks.

Research methods

So, in the course of this article, we have considered and analyzed one of the well-known in European school methods - the use of Storyline in training foreign languages. This technique, combined with traditional tools, allows to achieve faster language acquisition. To come to this conclusion, we used methods of scientific observation and investigation, critical thinking and analysis method observing synchronic and diachronic aspects of the item.

The results of the study

Practical implementation of the Storyline technique in learning FL indicates that it is really valuable for amplifying all types of language activities due to creation of friendly environment in studied language, development of students' mental activity in FL.

Conclusion

The Storyline technique develops student's imagination and allows mobilizing their abilities for training all communicative competences (speaking, listening, reading and writing). In the course of experiment, we come to the conclusion that students' motivation has grown; being surrounded by English speaking environment they have managed to develop their communicative skills and achieved a good experience of team-based learning. As a matter of fact, our experiment demonstrates the advantages of this technique which were clearly seen in the course of learning.

References:

1. Bell S., Harkness S., White G. Storyline: past, present and future. University of Strathclyde, 2007.
2. Creswell J. Creating Worlds, Constructing Meaning: the Scottish Storyline Method. Hcincniann, 1997.
3. TESOL International Association (TESOL). 2018. The 6 principles for exemplary teaching of English learners: Grades K-12. Alexandria, VA: TESOL International Association.