# The Effect of the Storytelling on Social Skills of Female Preschools' Students of Educational District (1) in Tabriz

**Maryam Daemi, Mohammad Ali Farnia**

Department of Educational Sciences, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine the effect of storytelling method on children's social skills. This research was an applied semi-empirical. The study population included all 2050 pre-school students of first educational District in Tabriz in the academic year 2011_2012. In this study, two schools (available) were selected none randomly out of 88 schools. The numbers of students in these two schools were 240. Using Morgan table, 148 samples were selected randomly, 61 of whom were non-random (available). The number of students considered in the experimental group was 30 and 31 in the control group. Teaching rating of social skills was used in order to rate social skills in pre-school children. The scale consisted of three subscales of social competence, social skills and interaction with peers. 8 sessions of storytelling were held, every social skill were told in the form of two social stories and with the content related to the social skills in two sessions. The results were analyzed by SPSS ANCOVA. Statistical analysis showed that storytelling increased the level of social skills, social competence, and interaction with peers.

**KEYWORDS:** storytelling, social skills, social competence, interaction with peers

## INTRODUCTION

One of the important goals of modern educational systems is to train individuals who are easily able to overcome the difficulties and problems in everyday life and the social environment (Salcuk, caliskan and Errol, 2007). These educational systems help people to obtain knowledge, skills and attitudes required for overcoming the difficulties. (Altun, 2003), Celest (2007) argued that even in such an environment where supportive individuals are abundant, students should have a vast social skills resource to enter the social and provide a stable social interaction to be considered socially independent. Failure of social skills can lead to academic, social problems and have a negative impact on future life (Caldarella and Merrell, 2008). Storytelling is an available communicative mean in storytellers 'command which makes audiences familiar with diverse ideas, feelings and thoughts that are delightful, exciting and entertaining for them. The storyteller's tale is a method for transferring and training the formalities stories, traditions, beliefs and history across the generations (Habibi, 2009).

Storytelling is the art or profession of telling a story in the form of poem or prose which is carried out live to the audiences. The narrated stories can be in the form of discussion , songs; singing with or without music, illustrated or not along with images other tools. These stories may come in oral, printed or mechanically recorded forms and one of their objectives should be entertainment. In ancient times, history, traditions, religion, customs, and ethnic pride were transmitted from generation to generation by storytellers (Hejazi, 2005).

Throughout the world, a nation cannot be found without the art of storytelling. Tales, fairy tales and stories have been told by grand ever since ancient times.

The process of storytelling consists of three main factors: the story, the storyteller and the audience. In turn, each of these factors along with their specific characteristics play a major role in the storytelling process and lack of any of them means lack of storytelling. Time and place are also effective in the process (Nazemi, 2006). According to the experts, stories in a working unit not only promote creativity in children, but also expand their vocabulary range and provide them with a set of scientific, ethical, and social points in an indirect and attractive way (Vakilian, 2006).

Students of all ages based in proportion with their cognitive structure will encounter problems to solve which call for scientific and rational solutions. If they learn them in school, they will go for solving their problems (Shabani, 2006).

Tales, stories, analogy and metaphor can be used as therapy and training means to solve a lot of babies and children's common problems, such as aggression, bed-wetting, nail biting, thumb- sucking, fear, etc. Storytelling can also help to teach childeren virtues such as patience, generosity, self-esteem, cooperation and many other virtues (Yazdani, 2006).

Storytelling will continue to exist as a redemptive river throughout the human life. The technological advancements not only are not a barrier to the flow of the river, but a factor in line with the change and variety of storytelling styles (Taj Abady, 2010).

The story which is expressed in different alphabets is the common language; it brings the same sensory information (Mirshafie, 2006). These receptions more than anything owe to storyteller's stating and transferring

**\*Corresponding Author:** Maryam Daemi, Department of Educational Sciences, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

sense of story to the audience with capabilities inherent in storytelling. Otherwise, this story should be told by skilled storyteller to affect people speaking other languages. In support of this claim, it must be said that the warmth and sweetness of expression of the storyteller is story's spirit (Bidmeshki, 2006).

In a successful storytelling, the audience of other languages could understand the spirit of the story without translating any words. Putting together the two, it can be claimed that the spirit of the story , which lies in the commonality of human emotions , is not possible without storytelling (Shokraneh, 2006).

Through storytelling, child's growth and profound stable training of values can be facilitated.  In terms of facilitating growth, in each storytelling program, even if the content of story is forgotten, through involvement of experiences and emotions of a child, we can help him to grow and learn. Of course, its effects is not yet known (Salimi, 2009).

Some of the effects of stories on children are:

Conveying the meaning: The story because of its tone, beauty, motivation and curiosity can transfer a lot of concepts into child's world. Indirect method of conveying meaning not only helps better and faster absorption , understanding of the concepts to child's mind and language, but also makes it easier to understand them. For this reason, story could be considered as the most serious and fundamental way of conveying meaning to the world of audience, especially the children's. For example, science fiction, are made in the same direction.

Transfer Values: tales have deep effects on planning virtues, behavioral necessities, vilified and denied treatment or anti-values, offensive and unfair behaviors. For years among all nations and peoples, this feature has been one of the most prominent features of stories and storytelling. Inviting to honesty, courage, humanity, generosity, even helping animals, avoiding lies, betrayal, hypocrisy, fear, avarice, impurity, injustice and moral vices, are the basis and subject of most stories in diverse nations.

Behavior modification: tales with an indirect verbalization invite children to behavior modification. Story teaches children and adults how to behave. Because story provides compliance with the hero or heroes. So behavior modification happens more naturally, faster, and better. Many times it is seen that the child immediately plays the role of hero. This feature is even more vivid in television stories.

Enhancing creativity: Children after hearing the story, sometimes tell stories, share the story with their toys or change part of the story and according to their interest and special world they change the names or story events. Sometimes original and creative behaviors were seen in a child which is the production of stories they have heard or read or seen.

Strengthening curiosity: The chain of events in the stories , force children to follow the events or search what they heard in the story in the outside world.  A well scientific story can provide curiosity outside. For example, if the hero of a tale was a child lost in the woods and finds his direction based on stars or signs of nature, we can ask children to navigate in the same way. After hearing the story, children are more motivated and curious to do so.

This is to say that we often don't use the power and motivation in children's stories.

Language Learning: stories make children familiar with words, idioms, proverbs and ... that is why they play an important role in language learning.  Beside storytelling, we can ask the child to repeat word or words or for example say where the hero had moved from, what was his name, what had he seen or said, and with this repetitions which shouldn't affect the course and speed of movement of the storytelling, we can help the child to express words, remember and correct his mistake. The story is a good opportunity to correct the mistakes and failures of language.

Social interaction:  If children are active in the course of story and even after telling the story they are asked to retell the story, grounds will be provided to practice methods of having interaction with others by making connection between the speech and the expression of feelings. This method is very effective, especially for bashful and secluded children.

Cultural links:  Stories are the reason for transmission cultural heritage and the link between the present and the past. Children become aware of dreams, sufferings and joys, faith, and the life of their predecessors when they hear stories. Stories are the bridge that take today's children to past in depth and are considered as a kind of historical training because through tales, an image of the past is opened to the reader or listener.

Development of imagination power: In stories, the imagination factor is very powerful and effective. Many stories have imaginative elements. Children's imagination will develop by hearing and reading stories. Sometimes, it was seen that the child manipulates the story he has heard or based on that story creates another story. If this imagination is directed, the children's talents may flourish in the fields of literature and art. Storytelling is one of the best ways to explore the power of children's talents and potentials (Taj Abadi, 2010).

**Storytelling**

Social skills are a set of learning capabilities that enable an individual interact with potentiality in an appropriate way in a social context. Among the most commonly known social skills are self-expression, coping skills, communicative skills, making friends, interpersonal problem solving, the ability to regulate cognition, emotions and behavior of individuals (American Psychological Association, 2007). Appropriate social behavior in a particular social status is called social skills (Canney, C & Byrne, 2006).
Tyler's social skills include:
1 - Having the ability to calm down or be patient while facing anxiety in anxious social situations.

2 – Listening skills such as giving feedback
3 - Empathy with others in different situations
4 - Establishing a friendly relationship with others and continuing to interact with different people
5 - Self-disclosure
6 - Good eye contact

Gresham & Elliot (1990) considered social skills as a set of learned and reasonable behaviors that enables an individual to have effective relationships with others and avoid unreasonable social reactions. Cooperation, partnership with others, helping, being the initiator of the relationship, seeking help, praising others and appreciation, are examples of social skills (quoted from Khoshkam, 2008). UNICEF defines social skills as an approach based on changing or forming behavior which considers three areas of consideration for establishing balance: These 3 include: knowledge, attitudes, and skills. UNICEF's definition is based on research evidences which shows that, if in the empowerment of community members, knowledge, attitudes, skills, are not considered all together, the expected result , ie, reduction of risky behaviors , will not be achieved (Foroghmand, 2008).

Social competence is a social dance between all participants, in that each individual evaluates and adjusts subtle differences of interaction, often on a subconscious level. It's very strange that most of children in order to join this dance fight and struggle with others or dance with different tunes and steps (Deborah, 2011).

Interpersonal communication is the process by which we share information and feelings through verbal and nonverbal messages with others. (Abili, 2001).

Interpersonal communication is the basis and cornerstone for human excellence and identity and forms the initial base of linking with others. Effective social skills cause individuals to flourish and improve the quality of the relationships. On the other hand , non-effective social skills prevent human's flourishing and are considered as a poison for relationships, they even destroy relationships. People involve in the relationship in search of identifying and deepening bonds with others in the community and also solve the problems of the society (Wood, 2005).Many experts see the effectiveness of stories in education and have implications to it (Wear D, 2005) (Francis L. Kay, 2006) (George J, 2006).

Foreign researches on stories and storytelling show effectiveness in reducing behavioral problems and increasing positive behaviors in children. For example Rahill (2002) examined the effectiveness of a story-based program on improving the quality of social skills and peer interaction skills in children with emotional disabilities, where the story has been used as a means to explore children's social problems in school and improving selection skills and application of strategies for solving these problems. Gulay and Akman's research (2009) in the area of social skills training for pre-school children through play therapy, Audry and Caron's research (2011) entitled" social skills among peers during games and also O'Hara, Margarit (2010) on the use of social stories to teach social skills.

According to internal related studies in the field we can change children's explanation styles using the example of optimism teaching model through storytelling (Nikmanesh and Kazemi, 2009).

Namazi (2010) in a study entitled "the effect of education on increasing knowledge through 2 ways of storytelling and models for preschool children" showed that storytelling performance is better in storytelling group than the control group who received no intervention.

Hassanzadeh Kalate (2011) in a study showed that a) the degree of social acceptance by peers were more in the experimental group, b) the social skills of children in the experimental group had improved according to their coach.

According to the Dewing (2009) one of the effective activities in active learning is using methods such as storytelling. Thinking increases after storytelling and much more motivation is created in order to learn skills deeply.

## METHODOLOGY

Total number of 2050 female students in preschool education district 1 in Tabriz in the academic year 2011_2012 in 88 preschool center made up the population of this study.

In this study, schools were selected non-randomly (available)... The number of students in these two schools was 240, using Morgan table 148 sample were selected which 61 students were available samples. Needless to mention, picking up two schools to prevent communication of the students in control and experimental groups is to increase research validity. To screen students with social skills pre-test was used. After collecting the questionnaires and identifying children who have difficulties in social skills, the number of students in each group randomly were 30 people for the experimental group and 31 for the control group. To evaluate social skills, a teacher grading scale form of social skills was used. This scale consisted of three subscales: social incompetence (30 items), social skills (30), and communication with peers (15 words). Some options were related to the two or three components (TROSS,"Teacher Rating Of Social Skills",1989). This scale has good concurrent validity and its diagnostic and therapeutic applications for pre-school children have been confirmed in several studies. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 1226 people is reported 0.81. The reliability of the scale trials of social skills are reported 0.91 (Yarpoya Test, 2012).Using Cronbach's alpha, the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.87.

Training materials including social stories to teach social skills:
 1. Level of active participation in organized activities
 2. Confidence and stability in social situations

3. Social cognition (social competence)

4. Interpersonal communication

8 sessions of storytelling were held and every social skill was presented in two social stories needed to relate to the content of the story in two sessions. It should be noted that the findings' of Asgharzadeh (2011), Cruz de Quiros & etal
(2010) on the effectiveness of mother tongue to tell the story, and story in comprehension and communication of children with stories, stories were told in Turkish language (mother tongue).

Outline of the training sessions and educational purposes of the stories:

Part I: Social Skills

The story of "shop"

First Session

Objective: To increase the ability of participating actively in organized activities

The story of "treasure map"

the second Session

Story, "You're a coward Mina Jalali!"

The third session

Objective: To increase confidence

Story, "I like myself"

Objective: To increase confidence

Part II: Social cognition (social competence)

The story of the "tent"

the fifth session

Objective: To increase public understanding

Story "What does your father do Sevda Akbari?"

Sixth Session

Objective: To increase public understanding

Part III: interpersonal communication

Story, "I pay attention to others'

seventh session

Objective: To improve interpersonal communication skills

The story of "drawing"

the eighth session

Objective: To improve interpersonal communication skills

## Structure of stories

The characters used in the stories in this study were girls at the same age with students to help them replicate and have an easy replication. Contents of the story synchronize with educational goals that we briefly mentioned.

Tent story: The stories of students who can easily run properly dummy shop.

The story of the treasure map: The stories of students who help each other draw a treasure map.

Story, you're a coward Mina Jalali: the story of a little girl in school due to avoiding fights was called a coward who later succeeded in proving that she was right.

The story " I like myself " is the story of a girl who has developed a list of potentials and due to his ability (however small) admires herself.

Tent story: The stories of students who play in a tent and with the increasing number of people decide how to continue playing.

The story " What does your father do Sevda Akbar" is the story of a girl who works regularly with her father's help.

The story " I respect other people": the story of a girl who explains her relationship with others.

The Story of "drawing": The story of two students who are drawing and in addition to drawing, their coach teaches them do not mock each other.

This study was quasi-experimental study. Since the aim of the study was to evaluate the impact of storytelling, the test method is used in a way that the standard questionnaire was performed before storytelling course and repeated after implementation to determine the difference between the two periods. To ensure the results, an experimental group and a control group was considered; in a manner that storytelling course was only conducted in the experimental group.

## RESULTS

The same trend continued in the control group and then re-test results were compared in two groups.

The diagram plan is as follows: In terms of social skills, there is a difference between control and experimental group

**Table 1: Control group pretest – posttest design**

|  | Pre- test | Independent Variable | Post- test |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Experimental Group** | T1 | X | T2 |
| **Control Group** | T1 | - | T2 |

In terms of social skills, there is a difference between control and experimental group

**Table 2: Results of social skill variable analysis of covariance**

| variables | η² | Sig | F coefficient | Variance | Total square |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social skill(pre-test) | 0/1 | 0/014 | 6/416 | 71/383 | 71/383 |
| Groups | 0/61 | 0/00 | 90/621 | 1008/291 | 1008/291 |
| Error |  |  |  | 11/127 | 645/338 |

Calculated F for the differences of social skills of the post test of the two groups along with the pretest scores equals 90/621 , (P=0/02) regarding error's level null hypothesis is rejected. It means storytelling with 95% confidence level is effective in enhancing social skills of students. The eta square is 0/61 (0/61= ²η) which means the independent variable, explains 61% of the variance of the dependent variable. In terms of  social skill, there are differences between the control and experimental groups

**Table 3: Results of peer communication  variable analysis of covariance**

| variables | η² | Sig | F | Variance | Total square |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| peer communication  (pre-test) | 0/427 | 0/00 | 43/254 | 182/055 | 182/055 |
| Groups | 0/416 | 0/00 | 41/35 | 174/04 | 174/04 |
| Error |  |  |  | 4/209 | 244/121 |

Calculated F for the differences of social skills of the post test of the two groups along with the pretest scores equals 41/35, (P=0/00) regarding error's level null hypothesis is rejected. It means storytelling with 95% confidence level is effective in enhancing peer communication of students. The eta square is 0/416 (0/416=²η) which means the independent variable, explains 42% of the variance of the dependent variable. In terms of communication skills with peers, there are differences between the control and experimental groups

**Table 4: Results of competence variable analysis of covariance**

| variables | η² | Sig | F | Varience | Total square |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| competence | 0/334 | 0/00 | 29/139 | 353/535 | 353/535 |
| Groups | 0/57 | 0/00 | 76/775 | 931/471 | 931/471 |
| Errors |  |  |  | 12/133 | 703/687 |

Calculated F for the differences of social competence of the post test scores of the two groups along with the pretest scores equals 76.775 , (P=00/0) regarding error's level null hypothesis is rejected. It means storytelling with 95% confidence level is effective in enhancing social competence of students. The eta square is 0/57 (0/57 = ² η) which means the independent variable, explains 57% of the variance of the dependent variable. In terms of social competence,  there are differences between the control and experimental groups

**Conclusion**

The results showed that in all subscales including social skills, social competence and communication with peers, there is a difference between control and experimental groups. The impact of storytelling on the mean scores of social skills, social competence, communication with peers, was significant after controlling for confounding variables. The results of this study showed that storytelling has an effect on increasing the social skills of children in pre-school. The results of this study are aligning with Hassanzadeh Kalate (2011) which showed that the social skills of children in the experimental group were improved according to coach.

The results of this study are also in aligning with the results of the Dewing (2009), he believed one of the effective activities in active learning is using methods such as storytelling. Thinking increases after the storytelling and more motivation learn is created in order to learn skills deeply.

In implementation period of storytelling, the seating arrangement and storytelling method is very effective for the use of incentives stimulation in using storytelling classes. In this regard principles of how to get seats arranged in various ways such as team teaching, role playing, etc., can be used. Studies have been conducted on how to use the advantages and disadvantages of different methods of teaching including lectures, group teaching, role play, and technological devices such as film, video projectors, and slides was used according to the method and the desired class.

## REFERENCES

Abili, Kh; Movafaghi, H. (2001). Human resource management strategies. Armstrong, Michael. Tehran: Fara Publication

Altun, I. (2003). The perceived problem solving ability and the values of students,nurses and midwives. Journal of Nurse Education Today, 23, 575-584.

American Psychology Association.2007.www.apa.org › Publications › APA Books®

Asgharzadeh, F. (2011), Review of narrative therapy to improve social adjustment of children with conduct disorder, Master Thesis, Islamic Azad University of Tabriz, Faculty of Humanities.

Audry, Caron (2011), social skills between pairs during recreation. To the diploma obtain: Master The Professions Education, Teaching, Training of Accompaniment. IUFM University of Loire center: Oreans.

Bidmeshki, M.( 2006) Effects of story and its impact on children's education (Selected storytelling Paper), Yazd, Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents,.

Canney, C & Byrne, A. (2007) Practicing Social Skills: How to Teach Your Students Social Interactions .National Center for Technology Innovation and Center for Implementing Technology in Education (CITEd)

Caldarella, P., & Merrell, K. W. (2008) .Common dimensions of social skills of children and adolescents: A taxonomy of positive behaviors. School Psychology Review, 26, 264-278.

Celest, M. (2007)  Social  skills intervention for a child who is blind. Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness, 100, 521-532.

Cruz de Quirós & els.2010 .The effect of a structured story reading intervention, story retelling and higher order thinking for English language and literacy acquisition Journal of Research in Reading .Volume 35, Issue

Deborah, Pl. (2011).  Games for improving social skills of children . Khalil. S; Ismaeilpour Parvizi .Tabriz: Forouzesh publication.

Dewing Jan.2009.Moment of movement: active learning and practice development. Nurse education in practice 2009:10:1016-1020

Education Organization website . (2011) Number of schools at A preschool area. P. 88 schools . http://ea.medu.ir/1801 Persian date May 2011

Foroghmand, A. (2008). The effect of  Life Skills on self- social adaptation of Ahvaz students. MA thesis, University of Ahvaz, Faculty of Psychology

Francis LK. Learning to listen: a fellow's experience. J Clin Oncol 2006 Jul 1; 24(19): 3209-10.

George J, Saha S.(2006). Losing culture on the way to competence : the use and misuse of culture in medical education. Acad Med 2006 Jun; 81(6): 542-7.

Gresham,F., Elliott,S.N.(1990). Social Skills Rating System . Circle Pines, MN:  American Guidance Services.

Gulay, H Akman, B (2009). Preschool's social skills (Edition 1). Ankara: Pegem AkademiYay.Eğt.Dan.Hizm.Tic.Ltd.Şti.

Habibi, F. (2009). the role of Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents Association in the cultural identity of children and adolescents, Master's thesis, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch of Tehran, Faculty of Humanities.

Hassanzadeh Kalate, Z. (2011). The effect of teaching social skills on increasing popularity in preschool children . Thesis in Education and Psychology faculty: Ferdowsi University of Mashhad.

Hejazi, B. Children's Literature. Tehran, intellectuals and women's studies , 2004, Eighth Edition, p 200.

Khoshkam, Z. et al. (2007). The effectiveness of group problem solving training of students with visual impairment . Research on exceptional children/ issue 8 , No. 2, 2008/141-156.

Mirshfafiei, A.  Role of stories in exchanging human experience and cultural transmission (Selected storytelling Papers), Yazd, Intellectual Development Organization of Children and Adolescents, 2006.

Nazemi, J. Children's Literature , Tehran, Chapar, 2006, first edition, pp. 62-61.

Namazi, J; Kiyafar, M.  (2010)  The Effect of Learning through Storytelling and models on increasing the safety of preschool children in the street.  MA thesis. Faculty of Education and Psychology Ferdowsi University of Mashhad.

Nikmanesh, Z; Kazemi, Y. (2009) The Effect of Optimistic Method education    with storytelling based on children's documents . ph.D. dissertation, University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Faculty of Humanities.

O'Hara,Margarit,(2011).Using Social Stories to teach social skills :A Professional's guide .University of Pittsburgh

Rahill,S.A,(2002).comprehension of the effectiveness of story-based and skill-based social competence program on the relationship skills of children with emotional disability .unpublished Doctoral , Dissertation ,Carlson Albizu university Maryland. (http:proquestumi.com/pghweb).

Salimi, H.Using stories to develop thinking. Exceptional Education, No. 98 and 99, pp. 36-44, 2009.

Selcuk, G. S., Caliskan, S., & Errol, M. (2007). The effect of gender and grade levels on Turkish physics teacher candidate's problem solving strategies. Journal of Turkish Science Education, 4, 10-16.

Shabani, H. (2006). Educational skills . Tehran: Organization and Development of Human Sciences Books (Samt).Vol 1.

Shokraneh, A. (2006). Timeless People (Selected storytelling Papers), Yazd, Intellectual Development Organization of Children and Adolescents.

Taj Abady, R; Ranjbari, S.A.(2010). A journey in the art of storytelling and storytelling techniques (Selected storytelling Papers), Yazd, Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents.

Tyler, Jo A.2007. Incorporating storytelling into practice: How HRD practitioners foster strategic storytelling. Human Resource Development Quarterly . Volume 18, Issue 4, pages 559–587, Winter 2007.

Vakilian, M. (2006). Methods and techniques of teaching . Tehran: Payam Noor University, second edition, January 2006

Wear D, Aultman JM. The limits of narrative: medical student resistance to confronting inequality and oppression in literature and beyond. Med Educ 2005 Oct; 39(10): 1056-65.

Wood, H. (2005). Interpersonal communication (psychology, social interaction) . Feroz Bakht, M. Second edition, Tehran:  Ketab publcation, Mahtab

www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narrative_therapy

Yarpoya Test (2012).A Scal for rating children's social skills . http://www.azmonyar.com/Ghabar/NEWS% 20LETTER-18.htm

Yazdani, B; Emadi, M. (2006). Storytelling. How to enjoy stories to help children solve life problems. Roshan, A. Tehran:Javane Roshd.