



Research article

The effect of storytelling on the development of language and social skills in French as a foreign language classrooms

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ABSTRACT

Youth literature allows for the exploration of linguistic and cultural elements, guiding learners to develop their oral interaction skills and critical thinking in the face of sensitive topics such as coexistence, differences, tolerance, xenophobia, and racism. The UNESCO (2010) considers the learning of living together as a fundamental educational mission. Starting from the premise that these values can be embraced by educational systems, this paper examines the effect of storytelling on the development of language and social skills among French as a foreign language learners. The researchers focus on middle school students who are learning French as a foreign language, aiming to address the following question: To what extent does storytelling facilitate the advancement of language acquisition as well as socialization and coexistence skills among the target group? Approaching this, the French textbook designed for middle school students in Algeria is examined, revealing the motives behind the various selections found in the book in order to support our argument. A total of 23 students were given a pre-test to evaluate their level of socialization. After completing three storytelling sessions, a post-test was conducted to assess student's level of socialization. The findings indicate that examining narratives that focus on various social and civic principles is crucial since they affect students' perspectives. The fact that underlines storytelling's role in enhancing students' ability to coexist harmoniously. The results reveal that the study of narratives conveying various social and civic values had a significant impact on the observed students' perceptions. By exploring tales that convey these values, we observed noticeable changes in how students grasp the concepts of respect, responsibility, and cooperation within the educational and social community.

1. Introduction

Storytelling, being as old as culture, existed as and is still a feature of humankind and a witness to their presence. Various social groups and communities have established storytelling as a tradition through which they aim to entertain as well as educate. Stories have always circulated as a means of entertainment, education, dissemination and communication regarding cultural customs, traditions, and shared values. For societies which depended, and still do, on orality or on writing, the different forms of storytelling, including myths, legends, fables, songs, poems, and proverbs, form a strategic way of existence and resistance. Through this system of

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documentation, be it orally or linguistically, stories defy time and challenge the continuous attempts to erase peoples' collective memory, history and voices. Hence, the practice of storytelling is an essential cultural, social and political element of human life. For societies to thrive, such knowledge and heritage must be carried on through the younger generations. Accordingly, teaching the members of such groups the stories of their forefathers or of other cultures is an essential technique for defiance. From an early age, children's exposure to the world is facilitated through storytelling. The process not only involves teaching values, discipline, and tradition, but it also extends to touch upon their sense of who they are, their identity, social roles and self-realization. Moreover, their linguistic skills and language acquisition are polished through stories that connect their realities with their fantasies and form a bridge that leads them to learn more about others through learning their language as one core method of intercultural and international exposure.

E. Gianini Belotti highlights how children's literature portrays distinct models based on gender. The researcher also emphasizes how these representations, at the time she is writing her work, align perfectly with the socializing messages conveyed by family or school. According to her, these representations contribute to assigning different qualities to girls and boys:

"Children's literature exclusively serves the purpose of confirming the models already internalized by children. The transmission of cultural values is orchestrated in harmony without dissonance. The emotional strength with which children identify with these characters gives them significant powers of suggestion, which are reinforced by countless entirely coherent social messages." [1].

Jerome Brunauer [2] clarifies that from an early age, children evolve within narrative contexts and acquire language, literature, identity and an understanding of the world through storytelling by imagining potential realities. As a pioneer in the cognitive revolution, Brunauer observes the side of the mind, which is responsible for human imagination and the actions that are generated depending on this ability which eventually helps us make sense of our experiences. Storytelling is one good example of such acts of imagination, which lead generation after generation to make sense of collective as well as personal experiences. The "narrative mode", as Brunauer calls it, is responsible for the creation of stories in their various forms as well as cultural rituals and historical accounts. In a way, Brunauer centralizes the "narrative mode" as a core element when studying the mind and Man's pragmatic and deconstruction abilities.

This mental narrative process is crucial for comprehending the world around us, our own selves, as well as understanding others. Obviously, the act of storytelling extends its role as a literary genre intended for amusement, as it imparts moral lessons and societal ideals in addition to preserving cultural heritage and identity across generations. Throughout the history of mankind, fables, fairy tales, myths, drama, and other forms of narratives have claimed, and still do, this dual purpose of providing entertainment on the one hand and conveying ethical and societal teachings on the other. Nowadays, such educational purposes are paving the way for many people to document collective and individual stories through which they achieve a sense of belonging to certain in groups and cultures. Furthermore, the educational feature of storytelling allows people to record and consume stories to establish a communal tool across different times, places and communities. The past is thus linked to both the present and the future in order to create a full story that helps nations and individuals figure out personal and collective history and claim that. As a communication tool, synchronous or asynchronous, storytelling functions as a strategic method to integrate personal stories into group stories to form a social, cultural and political power.

The integration of different methods and practices to form solid knowledge and cultural bases is a recurrent end for societies. Most cultures invest in the young generations as the strength in the face of oblivion and extinction. Storytelling has long been regarded as an exemplary medium for transferring knowledge, especially for young individuals through children's literature and/or other resources targeting this group as an audience. With their ability to move beyond the text and cross borders through fantasizing, children are fertile soil for stories to move beyond the frames of entertainment. Consequently, as an educational technique, storytelling is transformative as it affects young learners' cultural and moral development and enhances their intercultural communication and empathy. Moreover, it plays a major role in the construction of children's self and construction and tolerance.

Storytelling also has a psychological function since engaging with literature helps cultivate imagination and promote identification with the characters. Last but not least, a story's primary purpose is to provide a didactic function by aiding in the acquisition and comprehension of the language in which it is written. Thus, in Algerian school textbooks, graphic novels and other literary forms such as short tales, fables, and plays are used as pedagogical tools. Roxane Paillier [3] underscores that the value and/or role of children's literature as an educational method can be tracked down through different aspects. Literary works targeting children as their only and/or major audience often focus on teaching children moral lessons. Such educational role extends to include triggering children's imagination, identification with archetypal characters as well as their role models, in addition to contemplating the world in order to try to make sense of realities around them. Paillier clarifies that via exposure to narratives depicting the exploits of a protagonist, whether via auditory or textual means, young children can establish a sense of identification and internalize a novel set of principles that may be subsequently applied to their daily existence [3]. These principles include many aspects of communal life, social interaction, and ethical conduct. The socialization process is ongoing throughout an individual's lifespan, with particular significance during the early stages of development.

Each child's biological and genetic characteristics contribute to his/her social, cultural and individual identity. This is reflected in children's personalities, characters, and preferences. Yet one cannot ignore the crucial role of a child's early experiences and contexts. Accordingly, schools, classrooms and/or any other educational institution are often regarded as the most efficacious and foundational platform for influencing children's identities through impelling certain notions, knowledge, social values and ideologies. Hence, utilizing storytelling within educational systems allows narratives agency and power over the very construction of the young generation. Among the different literary genres, fairy tales are seen as seriously effective in the education of young learners. Fairy tales

acquire their captivating features from their power to facilitate the crossing between reality and fantasy. Their various aesthetic elements allow for a smooth assimilation and adaptation between what is real and what is fictional. This surely speaks to the hearts and minds of young children who still believe in fairy tales and probably dream of the day they come true. Consequently, narratives that often get integrated into the educational system should vary in terms of the literary elements they highlight. Among those elements, the theme forefronts the list with moral lessons underscoring self-assurance, familial bonds, companionship, tolerance and intercultural communication. However, one also comes across narratives about more delicate topics that are still crucial to address, such as separation, aggressiveness, and loneliness.

By engaging with these narratives, young individuals acquire a deeper comprehension of their identity and sharpen their perspectives about their surrounding contexts and the world in general. In addition to the theme, a narrative's characters play a strategic role in triggering young children's desire to explore their capabilities and investigate those of others. As members of certain in-groups, young people look up to role models who form some kind of a challenge or parallel those in their own cultural heritage. This infatuation is constantly fed due to their fresh experiences and yearning to learn. Fairy tales often present such characters who facilitate children's self-acknowledgment as well as their acknowledgment of the other. Such a process of identification strengthens the relationship between the young readers and/or learners and the text and thus makes influence a matter of time. Bruno Bettelheim [4] explains that each character's unique attributes guide infants to differentiate the inherent dissimilarities among individuals, empowering them to make personal determinations regarding their personal, social and cultural identities.

Through the use of fairy tales and their associated characters, children are presented with a legitimate opportunity to practice individuality and enhance their self-image. Young people find this informative and challenging as they develop, test and realize their self-esteem effectively. Fairy tales and their characters have proven to be a highly effective tool in boosting students' interest in learning. This particular genre of literature persists throughout many cultural contexts and historical periods due to intergenerational transmission within specific in-groups and cultures. This reality makes fairy tales trustworthy in conveying values and establishing shared points of reference that contribute to preserving social unity. As per Rene Kaës [5], the transmission of the tale occurs through oral communication, encompassing the act of speaking and listening. This process involves a word that establishes a dual connection between the speaker, who utters a previously expressed form, and the listener, who engages with a narrative that has already been recounted [5].

Verbal communication and written language function as one major method for the transmission of knowledge and heritage inherited in tales. When this linguistic process is hindered or blocked, the influence of the tales ceases to be or at least weakens. When teaching young children, especially those learning a foreign language, any lack of terminology or insufficient knowledge of words poses a challenge for educators who often integrate tales into their educational technique in order to teach children essential social, cultural or moral lessons. This lack affects children's listening and reading comprehension, which calls for the introduction of animated narratives as a way out. Employing animated narratives as part of a vocabulary enhancement strategy enhances comprehension, fosters profound critical thinking, bolsters empathy, and even potentially instigates social change [6]. Employing children's visual abilities along with their cognitive ones facilitates vocabulary development and strengthens language comprehension. Animated narratives aid in incorporating children's psychological reality and the social context in which they are active, making the educational process more interesting and productive. The simplicity and accessibility of short story animations make them an ideal resource for students, prompting researchers to incorporate animated media into their study. With prominent legitimacy and agency, schools provide an interactive and collective environment for students to engage in creative and communicative activities.

In a study conducted in 2018 [7] on the creation of digital stories by fourth-year high school foreign language students, the results reveal that all students in the class successfully created a digital story in the target language and presented the finished product to an audience. Through this research project, the data demonstrate an epistemological shift where students are initially concerned with technology and grammar, but surpass this focus to create a compelling, emotional, and in-depth story in the foreign language. The research project of Liguori and Rappoport [8] explores the synergy between digital storytelling (DS) and the Learning Lab, showcasing how their combined use enhances creativity, demystifies the incorporation of cultural artefacts in education, and increases accessibility for diverse stakeholders. The study recognizes the interconnected nature of the 4Cs (Creativity, Critical thinking, Communication, and Collaboration) and highlights the challenge of assessing these skills within the digital storytelling process.

Some authors [9] conducted an ELODiL project (Language Awareness and Opening to Linguistic Diversity) in order to enable all Quebec students to develop a sense of living together in a pluralistic society and to promote the integration and academic success of everyone, including allophone students from immigration backgrounds, the emphasis has been placed on both effective practices in teaching French (both oral and written) and pluralistic approaches to languages (language awareness). These approaches aim to arouse the curiosity of all students towards linguistic diversity and, in the context of inclusive education, ensure that the linguistic (and cultural) background of allophone students is recognized as an asset rather than an obstacle. In Algeria, several studies have been conducted on children's literature, particularly highlighting the cultural potential of storytelling in French as a Foreign Language classroom for the development of linguistic and cultural skills [10–13] However, it is noteworthy that, to date, no research has explored storytelling as a tool for socialization and a carrier of civic values.

That is why, this study aims to examine storytelling's impact on students' language skills and socialization process empirically. It attempts to explore if the act of storytelling contributes to the enhancement of children's social development within their social and physical contexts; first with the familial context, then extending to educational institutions, and ultimately including the broader social setting. The experimental procedure was preceded by a pre-test questionnaire and followed by a post-test questionnaire. The questionnaire was initially administered to a cohort of five students to assess their comprehension of the survey items. The test administration was conducted on two distinct groups: the experimental group comprising 12 kids and the control group comprising 11 pupils. The questionnaire was administered for a second time to both groups to evaluate the potential impact of studying the tales suggested in

the textbook and those delivered on the participants' socialization process.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Fairy tales

Man's dependence on narration has been going on since our first ancestors realized the urgency of documentation. Orality dominated the scene before the invention of verbal communication and languages and communities recorded their history, rituals and heroes to guarantee their presence even if they ceased to exist. Many stories and tales still beat with life and continue to influence Man's realities to this day. Depending on the present definition provided in the Larousse dictionary, a tale is "a kind of storytelling, often of concise duration, including fictional occurrences." Tales have been included in academic writing and other narrative genres, such as books and short stories. The etymology of the word 'tale' may be traced back to its Latin root 'computare,' which once denoted the action of 'calculating.' In contemporary times, this verb contains the dual meanings of 'to count' and 'to tell.' Notably, 'to count' as a process of calculation and 'to tell' as a process of narrating both originate from the same linguistic source.

The narrative has a notable pedagogical aspect, imparting knowledge via the ethical principles that arise from the anecdotes while being a source of amusement. The genre under consideration in this work has a historical importance, tracing its origins back to the folklore of many cultures. Marc Soriano [14] presents a sufficient explanation of fairy tales, linking the genre to the very construction of cultural awareness, self-realization and identity. Soriano [14] explains that fairy tales may be seen as oral narratives that likely existed before the establishment of historical civilizations and have been adapted and/or documented throughout different periods. Usually, the authorship of tales is anonymous as they develop due to distortion and the accumulation of human and cultural expertise and experiences over time. Generation after generation, these tales get passed down defying time, place and border, the physical as well as the mental ones. Fairy tales cannot be seen as simple entertainment as they negotiate facts and realities across various historical periods and cultural contexts and explain the world's idiosyncrasies.

The voices and knowledge transmitted through stories and tales hold the sum of human wisdom and experience. These narratives expose people to diverse social-ecological issues revealing often fundamentally different cultural elements and/or worldviews. From an individual, community and cultural perspective, and due to this richness of human perspectives, fairy tales hold part of the criteria that shape peoples' identities and result in their sometimes contrasting value system and established behaviours. Throughout time, narratives have undergone evolutionary changes, causing the spreading of diverse worldviews and different forms of social organization. More dangerously, these changes have often resulted in reinforcing conflicting patterns of representation. Negotiating the knowledge presented through tales has to be carried on through synchronic ways that facilitate intercultural communication and the co-existence of multiple perspectives.

One way of diverting narrative is through digital storytelling (DST), a form of digital media. As a modern technique, digital storytelling paves the way for people to share stories through virtual reality and online resources, which achieve tangible educational effects. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that digital storytelling is mainly a community-based documentation or system of recording rather than it being digital literature. Digital storytelling utilizes the tools available through computers and multimedia in order to achieve narrative purposes. In essence, it blends conventional storytelling with a range of multimedia components. Beck and Neil [15] explain that digital stories are "short vignettes that combine storytelling with still pictures, video clips, music, and text using a variety of video software." It has been consistently reported as highly engaging and motivating for students [16–19]. This is because, although the creation of a digital story involves the process of writing, learners do not perceive it as a traditional writing assignment. Instead, it is seen as a creative work rather than an academic task.

This freshness and modernity in narrativity appeals most to the young generation, especially students and learners in different educational levels and institutions. The up-to-date nature of this narrative style enhances its applicability and triggers students' enthusiasm. Hafner and Miller [16] emphasize this fact, indicating that digital storytelling tasks are approached by students as different forms of writing and reading compared to academic assignments. While there is a substantial body of research on using digital storytelling in education, only a limited number of these studies specifically focus on its application in second language (L2) learning. Nonetheless, the available research suggests that digital storytelling is generally effective and beneficial for L2 learning [18,20,21].

Parallel to this, researchers should also pay attention to the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education. A sufficient body of scholarly works has scrutinized the merits, challenges and dimensions of integrating ICT in educational institutions. Nowadays, different educational contexts and settings worldwide regard ICT-based media as essential for improving knowledge access for students and educators and promoting the integration of media into school-based learning, thereby enhancing students' and teachers' proficiency in utilizing technology. Many studies have highlighted the importance of school culture in the use of ICT and how that reflects on students' socialization skills. Using animation to create tales and stories is one example of ICT integration into the learning process and language acquisition. Animation is a dynamic visual format in which each frame depicts a specific scene, collectively weaving together a narrative [22]. An animated story is one of the multimedia tools that influence Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and simplifies the teaching process since the incorporation of audio and video can significantly boost students' engagement in the learning process. Animated stories represent one of the audio-visual techniques employed by educators as a medium for instruction [7].

2.2. Language learning and storytelling

The art of narration records back to prehistoric cave drawings, and storytelling is an international practice and a traditional form of

communication. The power of stories has been accredited by pioneer thinkers, philosophers and scholars such as Plato, who employed vivid myths, analogies, parables, and allegories to forefront his philosophy and ideas. By this, Plato managed to win the hearts and minds of people and influence social and political change in a smoother way than arguments often do. Teaching young people is no different than calling for reform; thus, depending on storytelling in classrooms can lead to great results. Stories address the human nature to tell and hear stories and combine this nature with man's constant desire to learn and be exposed to the world.

Storytelling is at the heart of effective learning, especially when teaching foreign languages to young learners. Supporting any learning environment with stories and various narrative elements adheres to recent guidelines and educational methods proposed by the communicative method. Integrating telling stories as a pedagogical approach plays a crucial role in promoting an educational environment that recognizes diversity and multiculturalism. This incorporation of storytelling within the classroom serves solid educational purposes. It utilizes persuasion as a technique for shaping the ideologies, attitudes and representations of students towards their own culture and that of others. Students, especially young ones, acquire self and other knowledge through such multi-lens through practising observation, comprehension, and connection. Juxtaposing what they know with what they are learning is important for developing skills of critical thinking, criticism and appreciation. Through this, foreign cultures, knowledge and languages are not perceived as better but rather as different, which is a logic capable of steering our world towards much-needed tolerance, inclusion and co-existence.

Storytelling in educational settings promotes active engagement among learners, stimulating their interaction with language and linguistic structures while tapping into their childhood memories. This methodology offers learners ease while engaging with a foreign language, creating some kind of a comfort zone as students draw upon their knowledge and experiences. Accordingly, institutions and classrooms committed to teaching foreign languages should never disregard the importance and benefits of introducing storytelling as an old and new technique to facilitate the process of foreign language acquisition. For one thing, storytelling cultivates students' reading skills, which results in a richer cognitive store. This facilitates verbal and non-verbal communication and enriches students' imagination, creativity and inventiveness. Furthermore, it participates deeply and crucially in developing and improving learners' writing abilities and self-expression. Given that narratives often centre on themes associated with affective states and emotions, stories can significantly influence the emotional and psychological maturation of students, particularly those between eight and nine years old.

Woodhouse [23] highlights that the purpose of "storytelling is to 'humanize' the process of learning by appealing to the students' imagination". Students' engagement is probably the most important consequence of such an intimate and familiar sensation. Work engagement is a challenge and an end in itself, especially in language classes, as such engagement reflects the range of students' real language acquisition. Students' involvement is driven by three factors: meaningfulness, safety, and availability of resources [24]. Stories within a classroom can set the ground ready for the actualization of these factors by associating meaning to the course content and motivating students' desire and skills in order to participate towards the content at hand through inputs. Storytelling allows students to experience all this freely by creating a sense of community that excludes fear of expression, sharing information and/or being mistaken. As previously stated, young people's identity formation process is intricately linked to their emotional encounters and cultural experiences. The use of storytelling seems to impact the cultivation of self-esteem significantly. Stories provide a fantastic chance for youngsters to develop self-awareness about their concerns and approach them objectively, enhancing their ability to manage these obstacles successfully. Including narrative context in tales fosters a sense of agency in youngsters, prompting them to actively address their difficulties by leveraging the scenarios presented within these narratives.

2.3. Self-perception

Stories influence learners' and especially young children's self-assurance. They also foster positive behavioural patterns in and outside the learning environment. This paves the way for more fruitful engagement with classmates, teachers, and the content. It facilitates the exploration of their resolves, therefore fostering their continuous psychological growth. Examining this, Bettelheim [4] underlines that kids need to understand their conscious experiences in order to face and cope with the contents of their unconscious mind. Further, he explains that individuals can overcome difficulties by understanding the unconscious. Rational learning of the unconscious's nature and content is not fully capable of empowering learners to reach this understanding. It is possible by becoming familiar with it, engaging in daydreams, and reflecting on fantasies rooted in specific narrative elements, paralleling students' experiences with unconscious pressures. Gaining an understanding of the difficulties inherent in life, confronting concerns, fears, and emotions, and recognizing the existence of viable resolutions are pivotal milestones in the personal development of every individual. Narratives impart lessons to youngsters, equipping them with enhanced self-assurance and resolve to confront the challenges of real life. There is evidence to suggest that assuming the perspective of a fictional character might serve as a means of acquiring the skills necessary to develop and establish one's own identity. But connecting with fictional characters bestows certain qualities that last forever. According to Bettelheim's research, the identification process between the kid and the hero character in a tale only occurs when the child becomes persuaded of the ultimate superiority that the hero embodies throughout the narrative. The kid is prompted to critically examine their self-perception, characterized by a diminished sense of self-worth, through connecting with the hero's first portrayal within the narrative. In summary, narratives have a crucial impact on enhancing children's self-esteem as they facilitate a constructive alteration in their self-perception and valuation as persons.

2.4. Socialization through storytelling

Kenyon and Randall [25] clearly state, "To be a person is to have a story. More than that, it is to be a story." Each of us needs to

narrate and share his/her story with people from his/her in-group or even out-group. This act of sharing emphasized people's ability and openness toward communication and socialization. Socialization refers to a serious process of inclusion as individuals seek to be identified as members of groups via the necessary skills, knowledge, and behaviours. In classrooms devoted to teaching languages, narration through storytelling develops the interdisciplinary attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary for intercultural communicative awareness. Upon acquiring the linguistic means and the social skills, students are ready to interact with others in socially and culturally appropriate ways. In its role, such cultural and linguistic appropriateness motivates students, especially young learners, to learn more and accept the other.

Under this particular framework, fairy tales transmit social norms and principles to youngsters as they progress, mature, and transition into adulthood. Fairy stories serve as didactic tools for youngsters, imparting knowledge about their societal duties and places, delineating acceptable and rejected behavioural norms, and establishing limits that should not be transgressed regarding individual conduct and interpersonal relationships. Children's personalities experience substantial growth and transformation over the period spanning from their initiation of nursery school to the culmination of primary school. The significance of gaining the requisite abilities for navigating social interactions is immediately seen within the framework of personality development. Consequently, young individuals must integrate into social groups, develop their sense of self, and nurture conduct conforming to prevailing societal standards. Storytelling is a potent vehicle through which to transmit these ideals to young individuals, placing much emphasis on interpersonal relationships. Notably, in these storylines, the heroes are consistently shown as persons who are not alone in their pursuits. Conversely, individuals frequently find themselves in a heterogeneous group, wherein various individuals may adopt the roles of supporters or opponents.

Catherine Velay-Vallentin [26] asserts that fairy tales exert a substantial influence on the process of socialization in young children. The hero, often shown as an enigmatic being, represents a ubiquitous archetype, encapsulating the transformative expedition of a youthful individual as they confront several obstacles in their quest for personal growth. The transformational process may encompass the institution of marriage and the attainment of a kingdom, serving as symbolic representations of the transition from a subordinate role to one of authority and the assumption of a position of power and leadership. To achieve this goal, individuals must liberate themselves from the influences placed upon them by their parents. Fairy tales, by their fictitious narrative structure, offer a favourable depiction of the world. The many elements inherent in storytelling make it a valuable and appropriate medium that may be efficiently used in the context of middle school teaching. The primary aim of this study is to investigate the use of storytelling to facilitate socialization. How can integrating LFF teaching and learning practices embrace socialization to enhance language acquisition?

3. Methodology

3.1. *The tale in the 2nd-year manual*

The editing of textbooks in Algeria is entrusted to national competence. This has not encouraged the emergence of a diversity of pedagogical approaches that could result from free competition among different textbooks. This state monopoly creates challenges, especially regarding the representation of cultural knowledge in textbooks. Generally, the nation-state aims to homogenize the population within its territory without genuinely incorporating multiculturalism into textbooks. The influence of the institution is evident in the choice of content, such as the promotion of Francophone Algerian literature in language textbooks, illustrating the institution's weight in decision-making.

The tale found in the second-year middle school manual represents a comprehensive project. Various tales such as "The Honest Woodcutter" and "The Little Boy and the Witch," accompanied by language focus activities, have been covered. The suggested activities in the manual enable learners to undertake various tasks, such as generating the beginning, middle, and end of a tale. These activities contribute to enhancing students' skills in comprehension, synthesis, and writing of tales. In summary, the use of tales in the manual represents a comprehensive and stimulating pedagogical approach for learners.

3.2. *Setting up the pre-test*

The research was started by providing a multiple-choice questionnaire (MCQ) to the observed pupils to assess their socialization degree. The main aim of the questionnaire was to investigate different aspects of socialization. This explicitly emphasizes the critical themes of this study, which include character identification, harmonious coexistence, self-awareness and awareness of others, rule transgression, differentiation between reality and imagination, and interpersonal relationships. Students' answers are compared before their exposure to the stories (pre-test) and after their exposure (post-test). The anticipated responses are shown in red inside the survey instrument (see the appendix). Questions 2 through 4 were carefully chosen to emphasize the overarching subject of 'coexistence,' exploring the concepts of personal identity and interpersonal relationships. These questions delve into many issues, such as gender dynamics and individuals' reactions to instances of mocking or ridiculing. Questions 5–7 explore the notion of character identification by enquiring about students' preferences for situational self-identification, which may substantially impact their individual growth. Considering the emotional nature of Year 2 students, it is evident that they exhibit a strong inclination towards identifying with youthful protagonists. This identification process allows infants to develop their identities, shaping their internal selves. Finally, the questionnaire investigates the notions of prohibition and compliance and how pupils interact with their peers, particularly in situations involving exclusion or solicitation of aid. Questions 8–13 highlight the significance of socialization within fairy tales, particularly concerning their interpersonal dynamics, conflicts, and the possible manifestation of prejudice.

4. Experiments

4.1. Research participants and choice of stories

The study's sample consists of 23 participants in their second year of the junior cycle. We encountered challenges in carrying out our research, particularly in expanding our sample. The lack of time among teachers due to already substantial workloads, as well as teachers' reluctance to engage, which may stem from professional obligations (such as finalizing the curriculum) or a seeming lack of interest in the research, were notable obstacles. The control group consists of 12 students, while the experimental group consists of 11 students. The control group adhered to the conventional method of studying the narratives presented in the textbook, but the experimental group derived advantages from an alternate approach. In the case of the experimental group, we decided to use the materials accessible on YouTube to augment their educational experience. The story selection process was conducted with great care, taking into account their pertinence to the core issues of our study. The tales may be accessed through the YouTube links mentioned above.

The experiment lasted three weeks. Each of the five sessions was 45 min, during which the instructor delivered narratives to both groups that aligned with their respective research variables. The first cohort was subjected to narratives chosen from the prescribed course material. Regardless of their fictitious or non-fictional nature, narrative texts are crucial in instructing second-cycle junior students in developing textual and phrasal competencies. Texts are selected based on students' narratives in educational and non-educational settings. During the second year of the junior cycle, students are exposed to many narrative styles, including fairy tales, comic strips, legends, and short stories. These literary genres provide readers an immersive experience in a fictional realm where fantasy elements seamlessly intertwine with realistic features. Regarding the experimental group, the participants were subjected to video narratives accessible on YouTube. Throughout each session, the students were exposed to different issues through scenarios that pertained to the selected topics, namely "cohabitation," "self-worth and character development," "compliance and familial connections," and "interpersonal bonds and associations." The issue scenarios were provided to the students to assess their degree of socialization and get insight into their emotional responses and reactions toward these topics. This would facilitate the examination of any disparities between the two cohorts in terms of their socialization processes and comprehension of the underlying concepts. This investigation would further help to enhance understanding of the effects of multimedia resources in teaching French as a second language, specifically within the context of children's literature at the middle school level.

Table 1 above depicts the sequential development of the original experimental procedure with the control group, focusing on the analysis of fairy tales. The lessons include a range of components, beginning with exercises focused on oral and written comprehension. Following this, the investigation digs into the characters and their characteristics, ultimately culminating in activities focused on oral and written expression (see Table 2). The incremental nature of this technique allows students to cultivate their abilities in storytelling and deepen their understanding of tales while simultaneously immersing themselves in many facets of children's books.

The integration of films provided a twofold function: it brought a facet of light-heartedness and effectively captured the students' curiosity and focus in acquiring narrative knowledge. The aims of this protocol are multifaceted, spanning the understanding of narratives and more profound components such as the cultivation of self-esteem, the encouragement of obedience, and the promotion of values such as coexistence, friendship, and respect for others. The use of videos as an instructional tool in this study unquestionably provided a more engaging and stimulating learning experience for the students in the experimental group, fostering a more thorough examination of storytelling and its related concepts.

4.2. Analysis and discussion of results

The pupils showed significant involvement and passion from the beginning of the lessons. The first questionnaire notably aroused the respondents' attention, and they excitedly looked forward to uncovering the questions to submit their replies. The experimental procedure progressed without any issues, and the students in the second group (EE) showed significant motivation levels when they

Table 1

Experimental sequence with the control group.

Session	Content	Objectives
Session 1 45 min	Listening comprehension The little boy and the witch, Emmanuel LEPETIT	Understand a story read by the teacher.
Session 2 45 min	Reading comprehension The Fisherman and his wife, An Algerian tale	Identify the characteristics of the genre. Recognize the story's vocabulary.
Session 3 45 min	In the shoes of the characters The two sisters and the fairies After Charles PERRAULT	Get to know the characters in the story. Identify the characters in the story by playing one of them to overcome their fears. Know that there are imaginary and stereotyped characters in fairy tales.
Session 4 45 min	Oral production Le Renard et le Lion Based on Jean MUZI and Gérard FRANQUI	Giving your opinion on a story Telling a story orally. Invent a story based on the text studied.
Session 5 1 h	Written expression Activity: Tell an invented story, respecting chronology and logic	Telling a story Respect the characteristics of the tale.

Table 2
Experimental sequence with the experimental group.

Session	Content	Objectives
Session 1 45 min	Listening comprehension The animals who wanted to live together https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUqdyJwyo84	Understanding a story on video.
Session 2 45 min	Reading comprehension Big head, big belly, and small feet https://www.yotube.com/watch?v=6nEIGm8Th6M	Identify the characteristics of the genre. Promoting living together.
Session 3 1 h	In the shoes of the characters The Arrogant Rose https://www.ytube.com/watch?v=oa2nxGbe338&t=163s The ugly duckling https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woAPUtKnwf4&t=3s	Learn about the characters in the story. Identify the characters in the story by playing one of them to overcome their fears. Developing self-esteem.
Session 4 1 h	Oral production Little Red Riding Hood https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9OsRljQSBw The stubborn little elephant https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9V_ZYjClgMI	Telling a story orally. Invent a story based on the videos you have watched Promoting the spirit of obedience/relationship with the family.
Session 5 1 h	Written production The little red hen https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLk6Qxehh18 Good friends https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8MpVaRuHtc Activity: Tell an imaginary story highlighting the values taught in the videos you watched.	Telling a story. Respect the characteristics of the tale. Developing friendships and relationships with others.

were exposed to the tales presented via the Data Show in the classroom for the first time. To ensure a rigorous examination of our findings, we have organized them in the following table. Table 3 offers a comprehensive breakdown of the expected replies (EA), unexpected responses (NEA), and exceptional responses (OAA) for each participant about the two surveys.

The table presents data indicating that the control group (CG) exhibited an average anticipated answer of 6.63 in the pre-test. Still, the experimental group (EG) had an average expected response of 5.90. This suggests that the participants understood the questionnaire sufficiently before initiating the testing procedure. This implies that the participants possessed a reasonable degree of understanding of the questionnaire before the beginning of the experimental design. Following the completion of the experimental protocol, a notable enhancement was observed in the results of the post-test evaluations. Several students modified their answers after engaging with the narratives presented in the textbook. The mean value of anticipated responses rose to 8.54, indicating a noteworthy improvement in their comprehension of anticipated responses. Simultaneously, there was a drop in the average number of unexpected reactions to 4.45. Put differently, the sequence of events had a primarily favourable influence on the student's capacity to provide

Table 3
Experimental sequence with the experimental group.

Student	Changes in responses from pre-test to post-test					
	Pre-test			Post-test		
	Expected response	Answer not expected	No answer	Expected response	Answer not expected	No answer
CG 1	5	8	2	9	4	2
CG 2	3	7	5	6	4	5
CG 3	8	6	1	10	5	0
CG 4	6	6	3	9	3	3
CG 5	10	5	0	12	3	0
CG 6	9	4	2	10	3	2
CG 7	4	6	5	7	5	3
CG 8	7	6	2	7	6	2
CG 9	5	8	2	8	4	3
CG 10	9	3	3	9	5	1
CG 11	7	6	2	7	7	1
MOY	6.63	5.90	2.45	8.54	4.45	2
EG 12	4	6	5	9	3	2
EG 13	7	2	6	10	2	3
EG 14	9	5	1	11	3	1
EG 15	10	5	0	12	2	1
EG 16	6	8	1	10	4	1
EG 17	4	8	3	11	2	2
EG 18	7	4	5	10	5	0
EG 19	8	7	0	13	2	0
EG 20	7	6	4	10	3	2
EG 21	5	8	2	11	3	1
EG 22	8	3	4	9	5	1
EG 23	5	7	5	9	6	0
MOY	6.66	5.75	3	10.41	3.33	1.91

anticipated answers and exhibit increased receptiveness towards social interaction and forming connections with peers. Following the sequence, there was a decline in the quantity of exceptional replies, with the average decreasing from 2.45 in the pre-test to 2 in the post-test. This finding suggests that students tended to respond to all the posed questions after finishing the sequence.

Regarding the students assigned to the experimental group (EG), notable findings were noted in their replies from the pre-test to the post-test. Before conducting the practical sequence, a pre-test was administered to gather data. The mean anticipated answer was found to be 6.66, but the mean unexpected reaction was 5.75. This finding suggests that students have prior knowledge of expected replies, while surprising answers were also seen. The average value of the anticipated responses showed a substantial improvement to 10.41, suggesting that pupils improved comprehension of the expected replies. Furthermore, it can be seen that the average value for non-expected responses exhibited a decline to 3.33, indicating a decreased tendency among students to provide non-anticipated replies. The mean score for exceptional answers decreased, decreasing from 3 in the pre-test to 1.91 in the post-test. This highlights the significance of narratives in forming children's personalities and socialization. In brief, the experimental group showed a marked inclination towards engaging in social interactions. It exhibited a substantial enhancement in their comprehension of anticipated reactions, alongside a decrease in unexpected replies and withheld responses, after the completion of the experimental protocol. This protocol entailed observing and comprehending videos that conveyed the principles of harmonious cohabitation.

5. Conclusion

In multi- or intercultural educational contexts, folktales from around the world are often approached as representative of diverse cultures and used to transmit knowledge and understanding of the literary, social and cultural heritage of those cultures to children. Storytelling has consistently shown to be a potent tool in facilitating the socialization process of youngsters. The activity not only reduces the acquisition of language abilities but also fosters the development of social and moral qualities. Our research examined storytelling's impact on middle school learners' social education, specifically focusing on their ability to live harmoniously with others. Fairy tales provide tangible illustrations of societal norms and ethical conduct by introducing young students to narratives infused with moral and social principles. Children can establish connections with characters, effectively navigate through crises and resolves, and develop a sense of empathy towards others via these tools. Our research findings have shown that examining narratives which communicate various social and civic principles has had noteworthy effects on students' perspectives, enhancing their capacity to coexist harmoniously. On the other hand, the results of this study indicate that the students in the experimental group had a positive attitude towards integrating Digital Storytelling into a French course. The protocol was seen as beneficial to their language learning, particularly in acquiring linguistic and social skills. All in all, this confirms that DST projects have a great effect on improving student motivation in the future.

This work would undoubtedly have benefited from the implementation of a longitudinal study, particularly to inform us about the long-term effects of socioemotional skills on young participants from the first year to the second middle school year, with a more expanded sample. It would have been interesting to gather additional data through an interview with the teacher of the observed class. Identifying further limitations for my research includes acknowledging the potential impact of a restricted temporal scope, the need for greater diversity in the participant pool, and the reliance on self-assessment. Additionally, the absence of multiple perspectives, such as feedback from the class teacher, and logistical constraints may have influenced data collection, emphasizing the importance of a more comprehensive approach to enhance the validity and relevance of the study. However, if we had had more time, it would have been possible to establish cross-curricular connections with the subject of civic education, history, and geography.

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Ethical statement

This study was approved by the university in Algeria. Ethics approval reference does not apply.

Data availability statement

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Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e29178>.

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