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MASTER'S THESIS

The use of storytelling in online foreign language learning

A case study of a basic English grammar course provided to Vietnamese adult e-learners

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Summary:

Online education has gained enormous popularity thanks to the advancement of technology and the Internet. Not only do students learn from Massive Open Online Courses but they also utilize social media such as Facebook for learning. However, online classes have been criticized for the lack of interactions and sense of community. These factors are interestingly the advantages of storytelling. Hence, incorporating storytelling in online education could bring a solution to this problem.

By applying the PACE model – a storytelling-based pedagogical model – in a case study of an English grammar online course designed for Vietnamese adult learners at the beginner level using Facebook Livestream and Facebook group as the online platform, this study expects to give an insight of the online use of storytelling in a specific context. Furthermore, this research aims at finding how the use of storytelling and the PACE model could facilitate the learning development of learners. Moreover, this thesis intends to further develop the use of storytelling and the PACE model to be more suitable in the online learning environment.

The results of this study indicate that storytelling could be useful in online classroom regardless of oral, digital or written formats. Furthermore, contents, images and sound of the stories should be paid attention to when preparing and conducting the storytelling sessions. In addition, the findings suggest that the use of the PACE model has impact on students' learning development in three aspects: interpersonal, historic-cultural, and individual. Besides, teachers should be aware of potential problems related to Internet connection, group work, the use of single devices while applying the PACE model in online learning.

Keywords: storytelling, online education, foreign language learning, PACE model, sociocultural theory

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

As an online teacher conducting classes using Facebook Livestream, it has been a privilege for me to meet numerous new students from various backgrounds in every e-lesson. However, since I hardly had the same group of students each time, unlike the traditional classroom, the online classroom did not give me the feeling of being in a group. The fact that I could not see my students prevented me from getting to know their learning style, their understanding and/or their personality. Hence, I often felt disconnected with my students at the personal level. This disconnection frustrated me when my explanations received no response from students as I could not interpret their reactions. Alternatively, whenever I told a story to my students, the atmosphere of the class changed; they became engaged in the story and started sharing their thoughts and experience of the same topic. At that time, our personal connection level seemed to increase.

The reasons for that change in the connection level could be because storytelling activities bring people together to share their lives' experience and knowledge, thus, creating a strong sense of community. Moreover, through storytelling, a specific context is provided, concrete examples are given so that listeners can then relate to tellers based on their own personal experience. From the cognitive perspective, this mutual creation of understanding through storytelling connects people together (Peck, 1989). Furthermore, dating back to 4000 B.C when writing was not yet invented, storytelling was "the only tool available" to store and transmit knowledge and experience from generation to generation (Abrahamson, 1998, 440). Egan (1989, 456) believes that knowledge made by storytelling is "more faithfully memorable than by any other means". This "memorability" is believed to be significantly attributed to the emotions storytelling brings to listeners (Tigner, 1993). In other words, storytelling not only connects but also educates people through shared understanding and emotions evoked from the stories. These benefits of storytelling, therefore, urge me to apply storytelling in my online foreign language teaching, thereby contributing to the general use of storytelling in online education.

Additionally, in Vietnam, the Government has been promoting the Learner-centered Strategy and the Teachers as Facilitators Approach, especially in teaching foreign language (Dang, 2006). A great number of studies point out the feasibility of this approach in Vietnamese universities (Le, 2013; Humphreys & Wyatt, 2014). However, in practice, either little attention has been paid to that approach (Tran, 2013) or the results are not as successful as expected (Le & Phan, 2013). The synchronous feature of Facebook Livestream allows for the resemblance of the traditional offline classroom. There is then potential to incorporate the learner-centered approach and storytelling into a Facebook Livestream online course and test it in a case study in the Vietnamese context. Moreover, in English grammar classes in Vietnam,

grammar-translation method is centered (Khuong, 2015) and storytelling method is still unusual in teaching practice (Nguyen et al., 2015). In this research, I utilize the PACE model – a storytelling-based pedagogical model which emphasizes co-construction of knowledge and promotes learner-centered instruction – in a Facebook Livestream English grammar course and expect to provide a new insight into the use of storytelling in online education.

Furthermore, storytelling has been used in both offline and online settings in teaching numerous subjects, especially in teaching foreign languages. In both settings, previous studies show that using storytelling in the classroom is effective in promoting collaboration (Liu et al., 2011), enhancing 21st century skills (Robin, 2008; Niemi & Multisilta, 2015), broadening knowledge, and improving language skills (Alterio & McDrury, 2003; Ge, 2015; Kamaludin et al., 2015; Lucarevski, 2016). In other words, storytelling benefits learners in terms of not only knowledge acquisition but also in the development of various skills. These benefits of storytelling are undeniable. However, my interest is more on the reasons behind the success of storytelling in facilitating the learning development of students than the success itself. Besides exploring the use of storytelling in online education, this research also aims to understand how storytelling, through the use of the PACE model, has impacts on foreign language ‘e-learners’, or online learners.

1.2. Definitions

1.2.1. Storytelling

In the field of education, storytelling has been defined in numerous ways. Peck (1989, 138) defines storytelling as the “oral interpretation of a traditional, literary, or personal experience story”. Likewise, Hsu (2010, cited in Lucarevski, 2016, 25) highlights the use of “voice, facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and interaction” in storytelling sessions. Similarly, Dyson & Genishi (1994) consider storytelling as a process that utilizes the vocalization of narrative structures and/or mental imagery to communicate with listeners. These definitions emphasize the traditional oral format of storytelling with the help of non-verbal expressions such as gestures, eye contact, imagination, et cetera.

Some researchers make a clear distinction between storytelling and reading aloud (Wang & Lee, 2007; Kim, 2010). They argue that storytelling concentrates on conveying the main message(s) through free uses of verbal and non-verbal languages, while reading aloud requires exact words from the story and/or memorized text presented to listeners. However, there is a lack of studies justifying differences in effects that storytelling and reading aloud bring to learners (Lucarevski, 2016). My solution to this is to consider reading aloud as an integral part of storytelling.

In addition, the permeation of the technology in education has made room for another format of storytelling called digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is defined as “a process that blends media to enrich and enhance the written or spoken words” (Frazel, 2010, 9). By taking advantage of technology such as computers, cameras, audio recording devices, et cetera., this digital format of storytelling engages storytellers to create their own stories in a more creative way (Robin, 2008). In the classroom, digital storytelling has been used as an exercise to facilitate collaboration, deepen knowledge and develop students’ critical thinking (Nam, 2016). Furthermore, ready-made digital stories can be re-used by teachers as instructional teaching materials for later classes (Frazel, 2010). Though in most studies, digital storytelling refers to user-contributed content, the definition of Frazel implies that digital storytelling can make use of ready-made video content. In other words, the use of digital video-recorded stories, in this research, is counted as a means of storytelling.

Instead of defining storytelling in terms of its format, I follow the definition which focuses on the content of storytelling. As Alterio & McDrury (2003, 31) suggest: “Storytelling is a uniquely human experience that enables us to convey, through the language of words, aspects of ourselves and others, and the worlds, real or imagined, that we inhabit”. In other words, any formats that storytellers can express their chosen stories “through the language of words” to their audience will be considered as storytelling. In this study, storytelling is displayed in three languages of words: spoken, digital, and written language. Moreover, the content of the stories also ranges from personal experience and moral lessons to scientific knowledge of nature, from real experiences to imagined ones, and from ready-made stories to user-created ones.

1.2.2. Foreign language teaching and learning

Foreign language is defined as the language that “is learned largely in the classroom and is not spoken in the society where the teaching occurs” (Moeller & Catalano, 2015, 327). This means foreign language teaching and learning is teaching and learning the language that is non-native to foreign language learners. For example, a Vietnamese student whose mother-tongue is Vietnamese will consider learning English as foreign language learning. To understand how foreign language learners acquire the new language(s), various language learning theories have been developed from the linguistic perspective such as Universal Grammar, psychological point of view as Autonomous Induction to social approach as in Vygotsky’s Socio-cultural theory (Myles, Marsden & Mitchell, 2013). In this study, since storytelling is used as the pedagogical tool and social media is utilized as the online teaching and learning platform, the social approach would be more appropriate to analyze the learning development of online foreign language learners. Hence, Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory will be the leading theory in this thesis’ theoretical framework.

Additionally, in foreign language teaching, storytelling has been used to enhance both general and specific language skills of learners (Lucarevski, 2016). In terms of grammatical skills specifically, the PACE model – a storytelling-based pedagogical model is gaining popularity thanks to its innovative approach of knowledge co-construction and its effectiveness in enhancing students’ learning outcomes (Haight et al., 2007; Groeneveld, 2011). However, this model has not yet been tested in online education. More studies should be conducted in this approach to further develop the PACE model in online learning. This, therefore, emphasizes this study’s use of the PACE model in teaching grammar online as a case study to examine the use of storytelling in online education.

1.2.3. Online education

Online education, which can be referred to as ‘e-learning’ (electronic learning) and also ‘distance education’, means “conducting a course partially or entirely through the Internet” (Ko & Rossen, 2010, 3). With the help of digital devices such as smart phones and laptops, teachers and students can meet each other easily in a virtual classroom at anytime, and it “applies equally well” to any learners regardless of their backgrounds, age or knowledge level (Ko & Rossen, 2010, 4). Thanks to its benefits and the advancement of technology, online education has been gaining enormous popularity among learners (Chung et al., 2018). Specifically, a survey conducted by the Association for Talent Development in 2017 suggests that the number of e-learners will keep growing, and e-learning portfolios from market-driven companies will rise from 27 percent to 52 percent in the next five years. This trend is also expected to focus on personalization, which means learners will choose to learn courses that fulfill their needs (Robinson, 2017). Hence, it is undeniable that distance education has played an essential part in people’s learning paths.

Various online platforms have been developed and utilized to satisfy the demands for online classroom, ranging from asynchronous to synchronous learning, and from well-structured formal online learning websites to social media. The asynchronous method refers to the use of “time-delayed capabilities of the Internet” such as discussion threads, videos, file attachments, et cetera (UMass, n.d, 6). In asynchronous classrooms there are instructors, but learners can study at their own pace and hardly meet each other online due to personal schedule differences (Hiltz & Goldman, 2005).

Alternatively, the synchronous approach utilizes the “live or real-time” communication between instructors and learners “through text-, audio-, and/or video-based communication of two-way media that facilitated dialogue and interaction.” (Martin et al., 2017, 5). In other words, this learning method requires participants to attend the lesson and interact online at the same time. In some situations, the synchronous method even

outperforms both the asynchronous and traditional face-to-face methods in facilitating students' learning development (Chen & Wang, 2008). Thanks to the advantages of both asynchronous and synchronous approaches, online platform developers and educators tend to incorporate both methods in their products and teaching to maximize the benefits (Chen, et al., 2005). In this study, both asynchronous and synchronous methods are adopted.

The e-learning market is growing and expected to generate \$65.41 billion revenue in 2023 (ReportLinker, 2018). In this market, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) lead with the total number of learners reaching 81 million in 2017 (Shah, 2018). The top five popular MOOCs providers are Coursera, edX, XuetangX, Udacity and FutureLearn with more than seven million registered users (Shah, 2018). MOOCs courses are often offered by prestigious universities themselves or co-operating with tech-companies. In either case, the credibility of the content is ensured. However, the retention rate is problematic in MOOCs (Ossiannilsson et al., 2015) due to lack of motivation, cultural habits and aptitude – the amount of time to master assigned tasks (Park et al., 2015).

In addition to the well-designed formal platform for e-learning, social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, et cetera are gaining popularity as educational environments. Launched in 2005, YouTube is the most well-known video sharing platform, which is experiencing an increasing role in teaching and learning (Bonk, 2011). As Lee et al. (2017) indicate, videos are more effective tools than static images, and this makes YouTube a promising platform to support learning and teaching (Balakrishnan et al., 2015). It is for these reasons that storytelling videos from educational YouTube channels are utilized as teaching materials of the English grammar online course in this study.

Besides, the permeation of Facebook in personal life as a means of maintaining interpersonal relationship has attracted attention of educators. Previous studies show that Facebook is beneficial in improving informal learning experiences (Madge et al., 2009; Selwyn 2009) and enriching the classroom community (Bosch, 2009; Hurt et al., 2012). Camus et al. (2016) find that the use of Facebook fosters participation in online discussions as well as peer interactions. Thus, Facebook has often been used to facilitate online discussions in online courses. However, the introduction of Livestream broadcasting function in Facebook has created an opportunity for Facebook to become an online classroom platform rather than just a discussion forum.

The Livestream broadcasting function of Facebook has currently grown in popularity (Hern, 2017). It is normally used as a means of entertainment to broadcast games, music, et cetera. However, thanks to its

real-time benefit, Livestream has also been used as a synchronous educational tool. The Livestream function in Facebook shares some similarities with that of Google Hangouts. First, it enables teachers and students to interact with each other at the same time through any smart-mobile devices or computers connected to the Internet. Second, the lessons can be recorded and stored in personal computers of teachers and also in Facebook groups where the lessons are conducted. Third, teachers can share the screen with students so that they can follow the lessons. The difference is that in Facebook Livestream, only teachers are visible. In other words, teachers cannot see their students and neither do the students see their peers.

The study conducted by Hashim et al. (2017) indicates that participants meet their learning outcomes through studying Livestream virtual classes in Google Hangouts. The recording function of Livestream is found to facilitate the learning and reflection of students. Since the Livestream function of Facebook and Google Hangouts is similar; it is expected that the Livestream Facebook lessons will generate equivalent results. Moreover, few researchers specifically study the effects of Facebook Livestream as an educational online platform; thus, this study carried out using the Facebook platform expects to contribute a new angle of vision to online education research.

Online learning classes have also attracted attention of numerous education researchers. Chung et al. (2018) indicate four crucial factors for the success of online courses: (1) interaction, (2) support, (3) engagement and (4) supervision. Previous studies indicate that there is a strong positive association between interaction and students' satisfaction with online courses (Driver, 2002; Bolliger & Martindale, 2004) and sense of community (Shen et al., 2008). Adding to that, Cho & Kim (2013) emphasize the importance of self-regulation in students' online interactions. Moreover, timely support of peers and teachers, students' engagement in class activities and teachers' supervision during class time are of great importance.

To do that, there is a need for a pedagogical model that can facilitate interaction, give necessary support, enhance engagement and provide supervision. As mentioned earlier, storytelling activities connect people and create a sense of community. Furthermore, the use of the storytelling-based model (PACE model) can boost interactions between students and teachers and give opportunity for support and supervision. Hence, it is promising that the PACE model is an ideal choice of pedagogical model in online learning. Therefore, I am interested in testing the use of the PACE model in online settings, in this case, using Facebook as the platform. In addition, the case study is conducted with adult learners who are struggling with learning English as a foreign language but willing to study online - in the Vietnamese context where the e-learning market is booming, and students have strong cultural habits of study.

1.3. Vietnamese context – The case study

1.3.1. Vietnamese e-learning market

The Vietnamese e-learning market has rocketed in recent years with approximately 40 percent revenue increase each year, and the market value was estimated at \$2 billion in 2017 (Cong & Duc, 2017). Ambient Insight (2014) predicted that Vietnam will be in the top ten “highest self-paced e-learning five-year growth rates” in Asia from 2013 to 2018. This dramatic growth results from the support of the Government as well as the private sector. Since 2000, the Vietnamese Government has introduced numerous policies to promote e-learning in schools. In 2010, with the launch of EduNet – the first Vietnamese e-learning networks between schools, Vietnam became one of the few countries providing free Internet in education (Anh, 2012). Aiming at life-long learning, making education accessible anytime, anywhere for students, the Vietnamese Government has acquainted Vietnamese students with e-learning.

In addition, more than 40 percent of the Vietnamese population have access to the Internet; the majority of them are young and willing to study (Cong & Duc, 2017). E-learning, then, has become a profitable target market in the private sector. Until 2017, there are approximately 150 start-ups in online learning. Interestingly, 80 percent of them were established after January 2016 (Takayama, 2017). However, they are often criticized for focusing more on quantity rather than quality. Further development in quality is, therefore, of great importance in this market. Moreover, like other countries, MOOCs are leading in the Vietnamese e-learning market.

1.3.2. Vietnamese e-learners

In terms of online learners, the age gap in online learning has reduced while the age range has increased (Le, 2017). A greater number of e-learners from different age groups have paid attention to e-learning, in which the majority of e-learners are in the 15-34 age group (Moore, 2015), also known as young adults and middle-aged adults (Bonk & Kim, 1998). Furthermore, one of the top searched keywords of e-learning is English courses (Trung, 2016). Hence, it is interesting to study this young and middle-aged adult group in their online foreign language learning.

In addition, not only do Vietnamese e-learners learn languages, especially English in MOOCs but they also study English through Facebook. In Facebook, English Facebook Fanpages, and English Facebook closed or public groups are among the most popular sources of English learning for Vietnamese students (Nguyen, 2014). Recently, Facebook Livestream from various English teachers, both native English speakers and Vietnamese speakers has gained popularity among Vietnamese language e-learners (Thu, 2017). This popularity results from the fact that Livestream is a free source of learning, and it can also assist interactions

between teachers and students, which often lack in the online learning environment. Until now, few if any studies have been carried out in this Facebook Livestream platform, which urges me to conduct a class utilizing the Livestream function and Facebook group as a case study for my research.

1.3.3. Vietnamese foreign language learning and teaching

Regarding learning, the foreign language learning style of Vietnamese students is often associated with “passive”, “traditional”, “mechanical”, et cetera (Le & Phan, 2013, 248). This association may partly result from Vietnamese culture (Nguyen, 2015; Yao & Collins, 2018). Vietnamese culture is considered as “villager culture” (Phan, 2008, 3) and belongs to Confucian Heritage culture which values hierarchy and social order (Tran, 2013). In this culture, children are expected to be obedient, and show their respect to the older and the ones with higher rank (Ramburuth & McCormick, 2001). Hence, in class, teachers are “the fountain of knowledge” that students need to listen to (Tran, 2013). In other words, Vietnamese typical classrooms are teacher-centered and students are expected to play a passive role in learning.

Furthermore, the collectivism and face-saving characteristics of Vietnamese culture also contribute to the passivity of students (Nguyen, 2015; Yao & Collins, 2018). Collectivism refers to the value system that an individual’s opinions are affected by the group he/she is in, while face-saving means individuals are afraid of making mistakes that could do harm to the group they represent (Phan, 2008). Therefore, in Vietnam, students hardly raise their voice to challenge or answer questions from teachers. They seem to feel uncomfortable to be out of the group or to lose face in front of others. In addition, Vietnamese students tend to be restricted in creativity because their views may be largely affected by others; they prefer thinking and doing the same as others. Unfortunately, even adult learners seem to share the same mentioned learning style.

On the other hand, the advancement of technology and globalization are expected to contribute to changes in the learning style of Vietnamese students. Nowadays, the Vietnamese younger generation tends to study on the Internet and from socialization more than in the traditional classroom (D, 2018). Furthermore, Vietnamese foreign language teachers are currently more open-minded, and willing to adopt innovative pedagogical models to change the negative views about Vietnamese classrooms (Le & Phan, 2013). Hence, Vietnamese students have been introduced to numerous learner-centered “Western approaches” of teaching and learning (Tran et al., 2017). Thus, there is a high hope that the learning style of Vietnamese students would differ in a better way in the future.

However, Le & Phan (2013) indicate that the situation could hardly change if students are unwilling to participate in the novel approach of teaching. In other words, reforms can only be made when both parties – students and teachers – make efforts. On the other hand, the study by Le & Phan (2013) is conducted in traditional offline classrooms where students are compulsory to study. This compulsion may hinder the students from performing their best. This leads me to question whether the situation is different in the e-learning environment where students voluntarily take part in courses and can be anonymous. Therefore, in this research, I study the use of PACE model – an innovative model – in Vietnamese language grammar teaching context where grammar-translation method is centered (Khuong, 2015) and storytelling method is still unusual in teaching (Nguyen et al., 2015) in the online environment with a group of adult learners at English beginner level.

1.4. Research problems and purpose

As storytelling has been used successfully in traditional offline settings as a pedagogical tool, especially in foreign language teaching, it is appealing to me – an online language teacher – to further investigate the use of storytelling in online education. Hence, the main question of this research is “How could storytelling be used in online education?”. Furthermore, to provide a specific and new angle of storytelling online use, a case study in Vietnam is conducted. In this case study, the PACE model – a storytelling-based pedagogical model – is tested in an online English grammar course to find out the relations between the use of storytelling and students’ learning development, and how the use of storytelling can be further developed. Moreover, in this research, Facebook is utilized as an online learning platform with the innovative tool – Facebook Livestream for synchronous study and Facebook group for asynchronous discussion. This study expects to give a better understanding of how storytelling can be used in a specific online context.

1.5. Relevance of research

In online learning, storytelling is not a newly researched topic. Numerous education researchers have investigated storytelling as teaching materials. In terms of teaching materials, storytelling in online classroom is often referred to as digital storytelling. It is important to note that digital storytelling in these studies encourages user-created content with the help of technology; hence, besides knowledge, skills are also developed. A great number of studies concentrate on the effects of digital storytelling on enhancing 21st century skills, exchanging language and culture, and improving literacy skills. For example, the article “*Digital storytelling promoting twenty-first century skills and student engagement*” by Niemi & Multisilta (2015) points out how digital storytelling facilitates motivation and engagement of students in creating knowledge in Finland, Greece and California. The digital storytelling project used in that study is based on a technological platform, which is found to be effective in teaching 21st century skills.

In addition, a project of sharing digital stories about daily lives, local cultures and traditional tales between middle-school students in China and Australia was conducted by Oakley et al. (2017). The results show that digital storytelling supports language learning and cultural understanding, and also promotes 21st century skills. Moreover, Rahimi & Yadollahi (2017) compare the impacts of offline storytelling with that of online digital storytelling on EFL student's literacy skills. They find that students who learn English as a foreign language improve their reading and writing skills more significantly in the online platform.

Unlike digital storytelling, the traditional use of storytelling as a pedagogical tool in online classrooms has not been discussed thoroughly, especially in foreign language teaching – the interest of this research. In online language learning and teaching, to the author's knowledge, there is only one study conducted using storytelling as ready-made stories in an online course. This is Ge (2015) which studies English vocabulary retention of Chinese adults e-learners between two methods – storytelling and rote memorization. The findings prefer storytelling in vocabulary learning. Apart from that, regarding Facebook as learning tools, Yen et al. (2013) examine the role-playing strategy in an online English language learning course using Facebook for asynchronous learning and Skype for synchronous learning. The results show that Facebook and Skype facilitate the speaking and writing skills development of online students.

In summary, while digital storytelling accounts for the largest portion in storytelling used online, I am interested in tracing back to the original use of storytelling in a completely online language class. It means storytelling created without help of technology so that learning outcomes focus more on language learning itself than technical skills. Furthermore, since few studies have been conducted on this side, my thesis expects to contribute a new angle to the field.

1.6. Aim and structures of the research

This thesis finds itself in the media education field. First, the main interest of this research is in the use of storytelling in foreign language learning, which is a part of education. Second, the case study – the English grammar course is conducted in the online platform of social media – Facebook with its two functions: Facebook group and Facebook Livestream. Third, participants in this study not only gain knowledge about English grammar but also learn to take advantage of social media – Facebook and YouTube in their language learning paths. Therefore, this thesis covers teaching through media, and at the same time educates participants how to use social media for educational purposes.

This thesis expects to provide a deeper understanding of the use of storytelling in foreign language learning in online education. By applying a storytelling-based model, which does not require participants to create story content using complicated technological software as digital storytelling, this study aims to broaden the view of online storytelling use. Hence, this would be a good reference of pedagogical model for online foreign language educators who intend to utilize storytelling in teaching. Furthermore, since no research has been carried out yet using the Livestream function of Facebook to conduct an online course, the results from this research would bring a new side to online education research. Besides, online learners could grasp some ideas of using social media for their learning by understanding how different functions of social media work in education.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. In the first chapter, key concepts are defined, the case study is contextualized, and the purposes of the research are addressed to give readers a general idea of the whole thesis. In chapter 2, the theoretical framework is established; in which, socio-cultural theory, the PACE model and previous studies on the use of storytelling in foreign language teaching and learning are discussed. Chapter 3 provides a clear and specific research protocol of how the research is conducted. Empirical results from this study are presented in Chapter 4, and discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 also serves as the concluding part with recommendations and the potential for further studies is mentioned.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Socio-cultural theory

2.1.1. Background

Psychological theory of learning has gone through dramatic changes over the last two centuries. Different paradigms according to various perspectives about the position of learners and educators have been developed. Among them, it is worth mentioning behaviorism, maturationism and constructivism – wherein socio-cultural theory is located. First, behaviorism considers learning as “a system of behavioral responses to physical stimuli” (Fosnot, 1996, 8). Hence, knowledge contents will be divided into “skills” ranging from simple to complex for teaching and learning. Furthermore, this paradigm assumes that (1) learning is a result of observations, listening to clear explanations from teachers, or taking part in activities, practices with feedback, and (2) proficient skills are major assessment of the whole learning process (Bloom, 1956). Moreover, behaviorists believe that learners are passive in learning, needed external motivation, and their progress is assessed by “behaviors on pre-determined tasks” (Fosnot, 1996, 9). Thus, educators spend their time developing well-structured plans and skills assessment materials for their learners.

Maturationism, on the other hand, finds dependence of knowledge on the developmental stage of the learners. Advocates of this paradigm focus on exploring stages of growth and explaining behavioral characteristics of each stage (Fosnot, 1996). For maturationists, age is the most crucial element in predicting behaviors because they believe that learners are active in making meanings, interpreting experience according to their age’s cognitive maturation. Hence, the educators’ role is to design tasks and developmental environment that are appropriate to learner’s age. For learners’ assessment, it should be designed according to their “developmental milestones” (Fosnot, 1996, 10). This means skills that are thought to be beyond the cognitive capacity of that age group children will not be introduced to them until later.

Constructivism is opposite to both behaviorism and maturationism. The focus of this paradigm is not on behaviors or skills as that of behaviorism, but on the development of concepts and deep understanding. Furthermore, developmental stages are not considered as the result of maturation as in maturationism, but as “constructions of active learner reorganization” (Fosnot, 1996, 10). The classroom of constructivists provides not a teacher-centered environment but a learner-centered one. In these classes, learning is development and requires participation of both educators and learners; hence, learners are given room for asking questions, making their own hypotheses, et cetera. Furthermore, errors and reflections will not be ignored, as they are needed for learners to reorganize their thoughts and exploring their potentials. Last but

not least, dialogues among learners are also essential because it sharpens their thinking while defending, communicating and justifying their ideas with others.

2.1.2. Socio-cultural theory

As a constructivist, Vygotsky developed his socio-cultural theory focusing on the interrelations among three factors of development: interpersonal, cultural-historical and individual factors (Tudge & Scrimsher, 2003). Each of these aspects will be further discussed in the following section. Before that, it is important to note that development in Vygotsky's theory is not a stage, but a "constant transformation" – "a continual process of becoming" (Gajdamaschko, 2015, 331). In other words, according to Vygotsky, development will keep continuing regardless of age. Furthermore, Vygotsky distinguished "spontaneous" concepts from "scientific" concepts. According to Vygotsky, spontaneous concepts are those children develop naturally based on their own "reflections on every day experience" (Kozulin, 1986, cited in Fosnot, 1996, 18). Meanwhile, scientific concepts are "culturally agreed-upon, more formalized concepts", which result from structured activities in classroom instruction (Fosnot, 1996, 18). Compared to spontaneous concepts, scientific ones are defined more logically and abstractly. Moreover, Vygotsky also referred "higher mental processes" to those cognitive processes that are uniquely human (Kozulin, 2015).

In terms of the interpersonal factor, Vygotsky argues that children's development should not be assessed without their interactions with the social environment. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept best describes this interpersonal aspect of Vygotsky's theory since it contrasts the traditional measures of intellectual development (actual development) with the "proximal level" - what children can do with the help of more knowledgeable peers or adults (Tudge & Scrimsher, 2003, 212). The concept of ZPD will be explained in more detail in the next section. In addition to ZPD, internalization is also used to explain the impact of social interactions on children's development.

Internalization is defined as the "internal reconstruction of an external operation" (Vygotsky et al., 1978, 56). This concept illustrates how children transform the external information resulted from associating with others into their own. Internalization consists of a series of transformations. First, the idea of an external activity will be reconstructed and begin to occur internally. For example, at first a child does not know pointing, but their unsuccessful movement of grasping an object beyond their reach is translated to "pointing" by his mother. She then reacts to the child's movement, which makes the child start internally changing the meaning of his gesture. Hence, the idea of pointing occurring in that child is originally established by others – in this case his mother. Second, the interpersonal process is transferred to the intrapersonal one.

As Vygotsky et al. (1978, 57) states that

“Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals”

Back to the example of “pointing”, the child’s development of the pointing concept is first developed on the “social level” by interacting with his mother. After a sufficient amount of time and repetition, he realizes his unsuccessful movement of grasping actually means pointing rather than grasping. At that point, he developed the concept of “pointing” for himself. Last but not least, to transform from the interpersonal process to the intrapersonal one requires “a long series of developmental events” (Vygotsky et al., 1978, 57). This means to change from unsuccessful movement of grasping to pointing takes a lot of the child’s physically simplified movements. It is essential to note that the transformation will cease when it fully functions and widely understood by other people.

The cultural and historical aspect in Vygotsky’s theory is the crucial factor in the distinction between human beings and animals. It is the “historically created and culturally elaborated dimensions of human life” that separates human cognition development from other species (Vygotsky et al., 1978, 132). According to Vygotsky (1928/1993, cited in Tudge and Scrimsher, 2003, 215), culture is “the product of man’s social life and his public activity”; it is the ways people get used to interacting with one another, their tools and institutions. Culture in Vygotsky’s theory is viewed as the source of higher mental functions development. Meanwhile, history is used to study “development in the process of change” (Gajdamaschko, 2015, 331). History not only refers to “ontogenetic and microgenetic development” but also relates to species and the cultural group development (Tudge and Scrimsher, 2003, 214). Vygotsky’s idea of history is different from the Western one. The West views history as past events; hence, they distinguish the study of historical behaviors and that of present-day behaviors. Vygotsky, on the other hand, believes that these studies are inseparable since development in his theory is continuous. He argues that without understanding the history of one’s development, the current state of his or her development is indefinable (Gajdamaschko, 2015). In other words, the historical factor plays an important role in assessing one’s present development.

Though individual characteristics is not discussed in great detail as the other two aspects in Vygotsky’s theory, this individual factor cannot be ignored in one’s development. The reason for this lack could be because the keyword “obuchenie” in Vygotsky’s work has been mistakenly translated into “instruction” instead of “teaching/learning”, which limits the understanding of Vygotsky’s followers to uni-directional

affect rather than two-way influence (Tudge & Scrimsher, 2003). In fact, Vygotsky explains this individual aspect in relation to the environment. He (1935/1994) argues that the same environmental factors at different stages of children's development will differ in meanings and impacts on children. This difference results from the fact that children's experiences in various social situations have become "their personal property" (Vygotsky, 1935/1994, 352) and influence the ways they deal with other situations. Hence, it is understandable that the same teaching environment for a group will result in various meanings and impacts on each member of the group based on their own interpretations.

In short, socio-cultural theory emphasizes that the internal development of a person is at first external. Through social interactions with others, new concepts are established, and higher mental functions are developed. As Vygotsky (1931/1997, cited in Tudge & Scrimsher, 2003, 105) claims: "through others, we become ourselves". However, the influences of social environment and social interactions depend on each individual's interpretations, their history of cognitive development, and the culture of the surrounding environment. Therefore, the cognitive development of a person relies on the interrelations of three factors: interpersonal, cultural-historical, and individual factors. Though Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is one part of socio-cultural theory, its applications in teaching and learning have been so popular that it is worth a section mentioning all the important aspects of this concept.

2.1.3. Zone of Proximal Development

The relationship between development and learning has been the crucial point of educational theory. In Piaget (1959), children's development is independent of their learning. accordingly, school learning has no effect on children's understanding of the world or their development of thoughts and abstract logic. These developments will occur by themselves at some certain ages. Advocates of this theory assume that "learning trails behind development", which excludes the influence of external learning on internal development of children (Vygotsky et al., 1978, 80). James (1905), however, believes that learning and development occur at the same time. In his reflex theory, learning process is considered as habit formation when development is the accumulation of all possible responses. Koffka (1965), on the other hand, combines the idea of both Piaget's theory and James' theory. He views development as the combination of maturation and learning process. This means, development of children is affected directly by their inner nervous system development and their learning, which Koffka considers also as a developmental process.

Analyzing all these theories above, Vygotsky et al. (1978) finds that children start their learning even before they go to school. For example, before learning arithmetic in school, students already have had some experience with quantity such as dealing with addition, subtraction, division. Though learning at pre-school

level differs dramatically from learning at school, it should not be ignored. Furthermore, Vygotsky argues that children's development of skills is through learning. For instance, through imitating adults or being taught to act, children develop "an entire repository of skills" (Vygotsky et al., 1978, 84). Hence, according to Vygotsky, there is an inter-relation between learning and development in children from their very early age. However, unlike Koffka who concentrates on children's learning at its simplest form occurring at pre-school level to find its relations to mental development, Vygotsky claims that there should be at least two developmental levels to match with learning capabilities of children: the actual developmental level, and the zone of proximal development.

The major difference between these two developmental levels is the time frame. While mental development is characterized "retrospectively" by the actual development level, it is characterized "prospectively" by the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky et al., 1978, 86-87). More specifically, the actual developmental level is the level of the child's mental development. This development results from "certain already completed developmental cycles" (Vygotsky et al., 1978, 85). Furthermore, in mental development studies, there is an assumption that mental abilities are determined by only those things that children can do by themselves. Hence, in short, the actual developmental level is the level at which children can independently solve problems without assistance of others. However, Vygotsky finds that once children are given support, each one of them will reach various levels even though their mental age starts at the same point. This difference is called zone of proximal development. In Vygotsky's words, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky et al., 1978, 86). In other words, ZPD is the difference between the level of problems ones can solve by themselves and the level at which they receive assistance from others.

It is important to note that "what is in the zone of proximal development today will be the actual developmental level tomorrow" (Vygotsky et al., 1978, 87) and there is a "continuous cycle of assistance" in ZPD (Shrum & Glisan, 2005, 9). That means, ZPD is an iterative process where the potential developmental level of today could become the actual developmental level of tomorrow or next week, next month, et cetera. For instance, when asking to build a puzzle, a novice can put pieces with straight edges together without any assistance by himself. That is his actual developmental level. Then, with the guidance of a more competent assistant, he can put pieces within the puzzle but still close to the perimeter. That is within the zone of proximal development. Soon, this novice can do the same thing without assistance, he reaches the level of potential development at that point. One week later, for example, he is able to put pieces

of the puzzle together, and only needs help for difficult positions. This means his “potential developmental level” one week ago has become his “actual developmental level” today, and this cycle will keep continuing.

However, there are three common conceptions about ZPD that researchers and teachers should take into consideration when applying ZPD into teaching (Chaiklin, 2006). The first conception is *generality assumption* which assumes that ZPD can occur in any learning. As Tharp & Gallimore (1998, 96) assumes “for any domain of skill, a ZPD can be created”, or Wells (2006, 333) claims that ZPD can apply to “any situation in which, while participating in an activity, individuals are in the process of developing mastery of a practice or understanding a topic”. However, in Vygotsky’s concept, though ZPD must be related to development, it is “not concerned with the development of skill of any particular task” (Chaiklin, 2006, 43). He also makes the distinction between instructions towards full development of the child and those towards specializing in a specific skill such as typing or riding a bicycle. Moreover, he concludes that learning and inner developmental processes are united but not identical (Chaiklin, 2006). Hence, ZPD is not created all the time in every task or form of learning.

The second conception is *assistance assumption* which puts emphasis on how more competent assistance should interact with a child. Gillen (2000) emphasizes “Arguably, the notion of the zone of proximal development is little more meaningful than that of a learning situation presented to a child, where adults and/or more advanced children directly or indirectly have a positive influence on the child”. Though Vygotsky et al. (1978) agrees that with the help of a more capable other, children can perform more difficult tasks than they can do independently, he uses the concept of ZPD to explain that phenomena rather than focuses on the importance of more knowledgeable assistance (Chaiklin, 2006). In addition, interactions with more capable others are to assess ZPD rather than to create ZPD in children (Chaiklin, 2006). Hence, the emphasis should be put on understanding how assistance affects a child’s learning and development instead of how important the assistance is.

The last conception is *potential assumption*. This conception idealizes ZPD as the zone where “a person’s potential for new learning is strongest” (Fabes & Martin, 2001, 42). Furthermore, researchers often assume that if ZPD is identified properly, teaching in that zone will result in children’s most enjoyable and “most effortless” learning form (Chaiklin, 2006). However, as Chaiklin (2006) argues that potential is not a property of the child; it is the stage of “maturing functions” – a target for “meaningful, interventive action”. In other words, the potential level is not under control of children; instead, that is the aiming level in assisting children’s learning. Moreover, in Vygotsky’s example of a child running a race, though this action

is a part of zone of proximal development, it is not necessary to bring pleasure to that child, especially after losing the race. Hence, teaching in ZPD will not always result in joyful learning.

As Chaiklin (2006) argues above, the purpose of interactions with more knowledgeable others is to assess ZPD. Agreeing with that, Shrum & Glisan (2005) claim that to discover ZPD of the novice, experts or more capable peers need to participate in a “dialogic negotiation” with the novice and give support (9). However, it is essential to pay attention to the characteristics of the help itself. As Aljaafreh & Lantolf (1994) point out, the effective assistance should be “graduated” and “contingent” (468). First, “graduated” intervention refers to the tailored support, which is appropriate to the level of the novice. Second, “contingent” assistance is support given only when the novice needs it, and this support should be withdrawn when the novice is capable of solving the problem(s) independently. This means the role of the teachers and more competent peers should be transformed from providing solutions to facilitating learners in finding the solutions at the suitable level and at the right time.

2.1.4. Implications of socio-cultural theory on adult learning, online learning and language learning

Though socio-cultural theory was developed in light of children’s cognitive development, its application to adult development should not be ignored. As Cross (1994) argues that besides traditional the academic learning goal, adults also place emphasis on personal development, cultural knowledge and social relationships. In reserve, culture and context – which refers to adults’ history and culture (Malcolm & Zukas, 2001) or the setting where learning takes place (Hanson, 1996; McIntyre, 1995) also have a significant impact on adult learning (Bonk & Kim, 1998; Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Furthermore, Tharp & Gallimore (2002) indicate in their research that as well as children’s ZPD, adults’ can also be addressed through negotiated dialogues. It is appealing to understand adults learning through sociocultural perspective whereby we create a learning environment that can facilitate adults’ learning development. To do that, adult learning experts suggest teachers to emphasize collaboration, implement teaching techniques that respect adults’ previous experience (Jarvis, 1995), and provide adult learners with “self-directed learning opportunities” which empower them to take control over their own learning as much as possible (Bonk & Kim, 1998, 11). However, since adult learners are accustomed to teacher-centered classes and assembly-line schooling through their traditional school system, to utilize this learner-centered approach would be challenging (Willis, 1985). This issue is still relevant to the current Vietnamese context where English learners are associated with “passive”, “traditional”, “mechanical”, et cetera (Le & Phan, 2013, 248). Hence, extending socio-cultural theory to adult learning is worth attempting.

The development of technology, however, facilitates the application of socio-cultural theory in online learning. Online platforms, especially social networking sites such as Facebook, have become a useful interactive social learning environment for adults (Fetterman, 1996; Yu et al., 2010; Kabilan et al., 2010; Gabarre et al., 2016). As suggested by Bonk & Kim (1998, 11), under the socio-cultural perspective, learning in this environment should include three phases (1): “real-time communication” where ideas and opinions are discussed between educators and learners, (2): students observe ongoing conversation and receive feedback from teachers, and (3): learners and educators interactively share online database.

In terms of language learning and teaching, the introduction of socio-cultural theory has attracted attention of numerous researchers to use it as theoretical lens for explaining second language acquisition, and later as a motivation to develop pedagogical models (Compernelle & Williams, 2013). Teemant et al. (2005, 1677) suggest five standards of an effective sociocultural pedagogy:

- (1) joint productive activity (JPA) among teacher and students to support learning
- (2) language and literacy development (LLD) to enhance competence in language production and language literacy
- (3) making meaning (MM) to connect students’ previous knowledge and experience to learning materials
- (4) complex thinking (CT) to challenge students towards cognitive development
- (5) instructional conversation (IC) to engage learners in negotiated dialogues with teachers

Hence, in a language classroom from the socio-cultural perspective, the emphasis should be put on (1) collaborative activities which foster the interpersonal aspect, (2) meaning making which creates room for cultural and historical implications of languages, and (3) language production which encourages individual mental rehearsal of learners (Lantolf, 1997; Shrum & Glisan, 2005; Turuk, 2008). Furthermore, Turuk (2008, 253) claims that the socio-cultural approach is a “process approach”, which focuses not only on the development of language skills as a whole but also acknowledges the contributions of learners in class. In the following section, a sociocultural approach and pedagogical model called story-based approach and PACE model respectively will be introduced and discussed. These approach and model will later be used as the pedagogical model of my study.

2.2. Story-based approach and PACE model

2.2.1. Story-based approach

2.2.1.1. Storytelling in language teaching

Storytelling is “the original form of teaching” (Dujmović, 2006, 76) where culture, history and morale lessons are transmitted. Through stories, a closer relationship is established between storytellers and

listeners. Open discussions following told stories will benefit the development of both listeners and storytellers (Alterio & McDrury, 2003). In addition, cultural and historical aspects inside each story engage listeners to understand the world through the lens of story's characters, thereby enriching life experience of the audience (Shrum & Glisan, 2005; Wajnryb, 2012). Moreover, storytelling gives room for imagination, which encourages individual interpretations based on listeners' own background and experience. Hence, the popularity of storytelling in education; especially language teaching, as a socio-cultural approach is predictable.

With the advancement of technology, storytelling has been used in language classrooms in various forms: from oral format where teachers are storytellers to digital format where video-recorded stories are used to lead the stories (Dujmović, 2006; Wajnryb, 2012; Lucarevschi, 2016). However, regardless of the formats, storytelling still proves its effectiveness in language development of learners (Lucarevschi, 2016). In addition, types of stories are also analyzed in language learning research. For example, Cary (1998, cited in Lucarevschi, 2016) studies the influence of one fable, one fairytale, and two folktales on language skills development of children learning Spanish as a second language. Ko et al. (2003) and Nicholas et al. (2011) examine the effects of personal experience stories on students learning English as a foreign language. Kamaludin et al. (2015) invent their own stories based on analogical reasoning to teach English grammars for 40 low-intermediate students. All examined types of stories prove effective; however, no researchers specify which type is the most effective in a specific context and audience. In my study, all mentioned story types and formats will be used in eight basic English grammar lessons for beginner adult learners, and based on learning diaries and teaching diaries, I expect to find which story type works best in my case.

In addition, storytelling benefits language learners in the development of language skills not only as a whole but also particular skills. Kim (2010), Atta-Alla (2012) and Kim & Mc Garry (2014) investigate the influence of storytelling on adult language learners. After listening to stories, participants in these studies were encouraged to retell or rewrite the stories to their teacher and peers for feedback. Pre-test and post-test were used to examine the improvement in language proficiency of participants. The results show that attendants improve all four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. However, Kim (2010) finds that storytelling is hard for those who struggle with basic communication. Furthermore, participants have doubt about the English level of non-native English instructors, which hinders the success of the lessons. Moreover, Kim (2010) and Kim & Mc Garry (2014) state that adult learners usually regard storytelling as suitable for children rather than adults. This attitude prevents learners from making efforts to learn in that approach. These issues will be discussed later in this study.

In terms of specific language skills, researchers show that storytelling plays an important role in the development of speaking, reading, and grammar skills. Hsu (2010, cited in Lucarevski, 2016) conducts a ten-week quantitative study on a group of grade five and grade six Taiwanese elementary school students learning speaking English as a foreign language, with 25 students in each group. The experimental group received instructions through storytelling activities while the control group did not. The post-test results suggest that the experimental group of students outperform the control ones in speaking. Huang (2006) examines the effects of the Contextualized Storytelling Approach – which uses objects, music, body language, visual elements, et cetera to facilitate learning – on reading skills development of 72 EFL learners in Taiwan. The control group read text-only stories while the first experimental group were exposed to illustrated written stories, and the second experimental group first listened to stories, then read the illustrated written texts. Findings in terms of reading comprehension and story recall show that the second experimental group had the best results. Finally, Kamaludin et al. (2015) also prove the effectiveness of storytelling in enhancing grammar skills of language learners by comparing the test results of the control group and experimental group. 20 low-intermediate students in the experimental group were instructed by storytelling while 20 of the control group were not. The post-test results favor the experimental group. The rationale behind that success will be discussed in the following section.

2.2.1.2. Story-based approach in grammar teaching

Before explaining the story-based approach in grammar teaching, it is important to understand the two predominant instructional approaches in today's classrooms: the deductive approach and inductive approach. On the one hand, the deductive approach gives the authority of grammar explanation to teachers, then follows the instruction by exercises designed to practice new structures. In other words, grammatical rules must be learned before creating meaningful conversations (Vanpatten, 1998; Mantero, 2002). This approach is criticized for “artificial contexts” which have no relations to the real communicative intention of learners (Donato & Adair-Hauck, 2016, 218) and passive roles of learners in exploring new grammatical points. Hence, this approach results in unmotivated learners creating uncommunicative sentences. On the other hand, the inductive approach expects students themselves to find out rules of grammar without any guidance as long as they are exposed to “sufficient amount of language that interests them and is globally understandable to them” (Donato & Adair-Hauck, 2016, 219). However, Herron & Tomasello (1992) find that this extreme freedom gives confusion to learners, which results in incorrect or partial understanding of grammatical structures.

Furthermore, from the socio-cultural theory point of view, neither the deductive nor inductive approach acknowledges the interactions between teachers and students and among students. Neither approach

considers contributions and backgrounds of learners to the class, and neither of them take into account cultural and historical aspects in teaching materials (Donato & Adair-Hauck, 2016). These problems, however, are solved in the dialogic story-based approach. In this approach, the use of stories at the beginning of the lesson promotes cultural and historical understanding of the language before comprehending new grammar structures. This means that students are exposed to meaningful communicative contexts in advance; thus, encouraging them to learn and use grammar structures in real contexts. In addition, in this approach, both teachers and students are expected to attend actively in co-constructing knowledge. The role of teachers is assisting students in finding “how, when and where to focus on form” (Donato & Adair-Hauck, 2016) through interactions with students. Hence, this approach facilitates language learning development of learners. By this approach, it is unnecessary for learners to reinvent or generalize grammar rules they already know (Karpov, 2003; Negueruela & Lantolf, 2005). In other words, previous knowledge of students is also considered in this dialogic story-based approach.

To conclude, the story-based approach is a suitable approach for teaching grammar in the socio-cultural perspective. To further develop this approach, I will introduce a pedagogical model that I will use as the pedagogy in my study in the next section. This is the PACE model, developed by Donato & Adair-Hauck.

2.2.2. PACE model

2.2.2.1. PACE model

The PACE model is a pedagogical model, which was first introduced in 1994 by Donato & Adair-Hauck. This model is based on a story-based approach that focuses on meaning-making of the grammar form rather than the rules of the grammar. The PACE model has 4 phases:

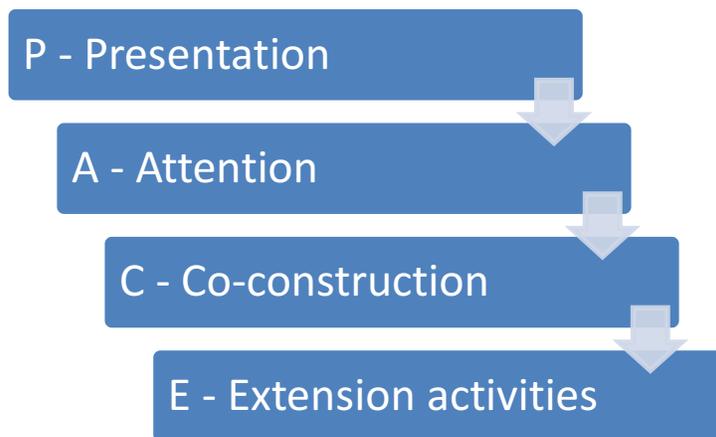


Figure 1: PACE model

- **Presentation**

The first phase of the PACE model is the presentation of the story. The story could be fairy tales, folktales and legends as suggested by Donato & Adair-Hauck (2016). Besides, other authentic materials are also welcoming to use in the PACE model such as “authentic listening segment”, “authentic document” or “demonstration of a real-life-task” as long as these materials are interesting and thought provoking so that students can engage in. However, the use of story is highly recommended. Regardless of the materials, they should be appropriate to the actual and potential level of development of the learners as instructed in the ZPD.

In the presentation phase, it is important to note that written script will not be shown to students. Instead, teachers can assist the understanding of students by images, acting out during storytelling time. More importantly, this presentation stage should be interactive rather than passive. In other words, instead of just sitting and listening to the story, students are expected to react while listening. Some activities to test the understanding of students are needed such as “thumbs up/ thumbs down” when a certain word/ phrase is mentioned or predicting the end of the story. The rationale behind it is that learners can absorb new elements of the target language in meaningful texts rather than disconnected and unnatural sentences.

- **Attention**

The second phase of the PACE model is Attention where “a conscious joint focus of attention” is established (Donato & Adair-Hauck, 2016). At this stage, teachers need to draw students’ attention to the specific form that will be discussed later in the class. Teachers can ask simple questions such as: “What phrase did the main character repeat many times?” or “Can you notice any changes in this verb in different situations?”. Another way of attracting students’ attention is to use visual elements. Teachers can write on the board or use slides which highlight the key structures in different colors. This way will make students pay attention to the grammar points. However, teachers also need to consider the interest of students. In other words, instead of concentrating only on the pre-determined forms, if students are curious about other aspects of the form, teachers should also clarify and explain them to students so that joint attention will be established. This means teachers need to realize and step in the Zone of Proximal Development to facilitate students immediately.

- **Co-construction**

The co-construction phase involves a “collaborative talk” between teachers and students. Teachers play a guiding role in students’ learning path(s). Instead of giving direct explanations of the grammatical points,

teachers can only give brief hints, examples or a bit of information so that students can themselves explore the rules, hypothesize about the rules and understand why and how the rules are used.

Teachers can form students in pairs or group work to ask them to share their observations of the samples from the story. Then, teachers can start a “co-constructed grammar conversation” with students. However, it is important to note that teachers’ questions should be based on students’ answers rather than a series of prepared questions. Furthermore, teachers also need to be flexible in assisting students; for example, teachers can give more similar or simple examples so that students have more chances to guess the structures and the rationale behind the structures.

- **Extension activities**

The last phase of the PACE model is Extension activities. In this phase, students are given chances to use the new grammatical concept in creative and interesting ways. Hence, the activities should relate to the theme of the class, and create room for creativity. Some suggested activities could be information-gap activities, role-play, games, writing, paired interviews, class surveys, et cetera. There is no limit for the activities as long as students have an opportunity to use the target form in a useful, interesting and creative way.

2.2.2.2. PACE model’s development

PACE model has been widely used among foreign language grammar teachers. A lot of websites have been developed to distribute free PACE lesson models such as <http://web.cortland.edu>; <https://wlclassroom.com>; <https://sites.google.com/site/teachingfrenchgrammar/>, et cetera. Numerous researchers have applied this model to their teaching research and the results are significant. For example, Haight et al. (2007) compares the effects between deductive and guided inductive instructional approaches on French grammar learning of 47 second-semester college students who have at least one and a half years of studying French. Participants were taught eight grammatical structures: four with deductive approach and four with guided inductive approach in 14 weeks. Each week, students spent approximately four hours in class and one and a half hours outside working on related materials. The materials used during class is *French in Action* – a video-based program where students got exposed to authentic conversation contexts. An identical grammar test was used for pre-test and post-test to examine the long-term effect of each approach. In addition, eight immediate quizzes corresponding to eight structures were used after each class to test the short-term effect. It is important to note that the guided inductive method used in this study was based on the PACE model. Researchers only modified the Co-construction phase where they provided students with a set of written questions to answer instead of asking questions based on answers of students as instructed in PACE model.

The results show that guided inductive approach has more significant impact on students' improvement in both short-term and long-term.

The consistent result is shown in the research of Groeneveld (2011) when she applied PACE model into her Spanish class and her colleague's Dutch class for 34 high school students of American School of The Hague in three weeks. Those participants aged from 15 to 17 have learnt Spanish or Dutch for one to two years. On both class series, concentration was placed on four grammar concepts that students usually struggled with: "agreement, demonstrative pronoun, superlative, and direct object" (26). The same test was used for both pre-test and post-test to find the improvement of students. In each class, PACE model was applied; specifically, different formats were used in the presentation stage ranging from teacher's self-written short stories, songs to videos, pictures. The test result shows an improvement in students' performance. Moreover, PACE model also brings joy to both students and teachers. However, Groeneveld points out the "general rule" focus of PACE model is disadvantageous in teaching difficult grammar concepts with exceptions. Besides, different formats used in the presentation stage requires various teaching skills and a great amount of preparation time of teachers. Furthermore, no control group was used; hence, it cannot be concluded that the improvement of students' performance was solely from PACE model.

Previous research illustrates that the effectiveness of PACE model is undeniable. After 20 years of development, PACE model has opened opportunities for various types of stories and authentic materials in the Presentation part as long as they follow the principles behind the model. However, in my research, I only focus on stories as the materials for the Presentation part. Furthermore, the model does not suggest the use of teachers' self-written stories because it could sound unnatural. I do not totally agree with this point because teachers can create stories using metaphors which still catch student's attention and still can follow each step of the model. Moreover, Kamaludin et al. (2015) proves that their self-written stories are helpful for students in learning grammars. Hence, in my research, there are two lessons I create stories myself in this type to test its effectiveness to students. Furthermore, PACE model was designed and has been used in offline settings (Haight et al., 2007; Groeneveld, 2011) which results in some parts of the model requiring specifically offline settings to make it happen. For example, the Attention phase suggests students to sit near the storytellers, not too far away to ensure the attention. However, it could not be applicable in the online setting where students could not even see students, and they could not see their classmates. Hence, it is interesting to test the PACE model and develop it more to fit the online settings. Moreover, there could be some parts of the PACE model designed too strictly that can be looser in practice.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study aims to investigate the use of storytelling in foreign language teaching and learning in online education. A case study of an online course with ten Vietnamese adult learners who are at the beginner level in studying English is analyzed to give a deeper understanding of the use of storytelling. The English grammar online course uses PACE model as the pedagogical model and the Livestream function of Facebook as the means to conduct the course.

3.1. Objectives and research questions

The objective of this research is to provide an insight of the use of storytelling in online education, especially in foreign language teaching and learning. Furthermore, finding how the PACE model – a storytelling-based approach model is applied in a new setting – the online setting, and examining the impacts of that model on students are also of this study’s interest. Based on these aims, three research questions emerge:

RQ1: How could storytelling be used in online education?

As discussed in previous chapters, storytelling has been widely used and proved its usefulness in offline classrooms. In online education, digital storytelling has become popular recently in developing various skills of learners. However, digital storytelling pays attention to stories created by learners rather than the use of stories itself as an instructional method. Furthermore, the PACE model, which is advantageous in using storytelling as instructions, has not yet been tested in the online setting. Therefore, it is a good opportunity for me to explore more how storytelling can be used in online education. The results from students’ exercises and tests, as well as their attitudes towards stories used in each lesson are expected to answer this question.

RQ2: How can the use of PACE model facilitate the learning development of foreign language learners?

According to socio-cultural theory, the learning development depends on three inter-relation factors: interpersonal, cultural-historical and individual factors (Tudge & Scrimsher, 2003). However, so far, the learning development of students in studies using PACE model has been evaluated in terms of test results only. Furthermore, few studies examined the socio-cultural theory in adults. Hence, it is interesting to evaluate the use of PACE model regarding socio-cultural theory in an English grammar course where participants are adults as in my case study. To do that, learning diaries from students are major materials to

analyze. Moreover, my own teaching diaries are also used as reference to Zone of Proximal Development of learners in this study.

RQ3: How can the use of PACE model be further developed for online education?

As the PACE model is specifically designed for the offline setting, there would be guidance given in the model to fit in that particular setting. However, since online and offline environments differ in some aspects; whether the original suggestions from the PACE model are still valid in online class is my interest. Furthermore, PACE model strictly prevents the use of teachers' self-written stories, which I disagree with. Hence, two out of eight stories used during the course are my self-written ones to test their effects on students. From my teaching diaries, as well as reactions from students during class and their learning diaries, I expect to provide ideas for the development of PACE model so that further investigations could be done to examine these new hypotheses.

3.2. Research design - Case study

Previous researchers have different opinions on the definition of case study as a research method. Schramm (1971) defines cases according to case topics such as “individuals”, “organizations”, “processes”, “programs”, et cetera. Other researchers consider case study as “the exploratory stage” of other research methods, or they mix up case studies with “ethnographies or participant-observation” (Yin, 2009, 17). Disagreeing with these definitions, Yin (2009, 18) sees a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. This definition is the base for my research method choice. As discussed in previous chapters, my main interest of this research is on the contemporary teaching method “storytelling in online foreign language learning”. However, this topic is too broad and general for a master thesis to cover. Hence, giving this topic a real and specific context of Vietnamese adult learners who are beginners in learning English would increase possibilities to understand storytelling in depth; thus, better the findings of this research.

Furthermore, case studies are suggested to be used when researchers would like to investigate “how and why” the phenomenon happens (Rowley, 2002; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2009). As described in my research questions, I am interested in finding “How” storytelling is used in the online classroom, “How” the use of the PACE model facilitates students' learning development and “How” the use of the PACE model can be developed more to fit in online classroom settings. In other words, my focus is on finding answers to “How” questions about storytelling and PACE model. Therefore, the case study method is

suitable for my study. Moreover, Yin (2009, 47) suggests the single-case design to “critical case” that aims to test or extend “a well-formulated theory”. In my study, the socio-cultural theory will be tested for adult learners; the PACE model is followed in every lesson to find out weaknesses of the model to improve. Furthermore, this study’s analysis includes not only an online course outcome in general but also learning results of students in that course. Thus, my research is designed as an embedded, single-case study where an online English teaching course is the case and students’ learning outcomes are units of analysis.

To conduct successfully a case study, there are four tests that case-study researchers need to take into consideration: construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability (Judd & Kidder, 1986; Rowley, 2002; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2009). First, construct validity refers to concerns over the insufficiently operational measurements and the “subjective judgements” in collecting the data (Yin, 2009, 41). To pass this test, researchers should have a specific definition of concepts being examined, a clear set of measures, and a multiple source of evidence. Second, internal validity is threatened when researchers fail to realize other factors affecting the examined one, or when researchers make a vast number of inferences rather than use collected evidence (Yin, 2009). Hence, researchers should be objective and careful in analyzing data. Third, external validity problems arise when study’s findings are unable to generalize the situations. This is a typical problem of case-study, especially single-case study. However, Yin (2009) suggests that the use of a specific theory as clear propositions can solve this problem. In my case, socio-cultural theory and PACE model already set clear propositions for my research. Finally, reliability test emphasizes that the same results and conclusions should be arrived no matter how many times the same case is conducted over again. To achieve that, a clear and easy-to-follow case-study protocol and case-study database should be established (Yin, 2009). These four mentioned concerns will be addressed later in the following steps of my study.

3.3. Participants and ethics

The participants of this research are ten Vietnamese citizens from different parts of Vietnam who self-assess their English level as beginners. All participants volunteered to attend the case study online English grammar teaching course by expressing their agreement on the purpose of the researcher, and completing a grammar pre-test within the given time. Some basic information of participants will be provided in the following section.

3.3.1. Demographics

Among the ten participants, only two are male, the rest are female. Among them, one male is married, and one female is married with children, the others are still unmarried. This figure is important in analyzing how cultural factors – i.e. family issues – may affect the learning process and learning development of participants. In terms of occupation, two students are studying at high school, the other two are at university level while the other four are working full-time in Vietnam.

3.3.2. English language learning

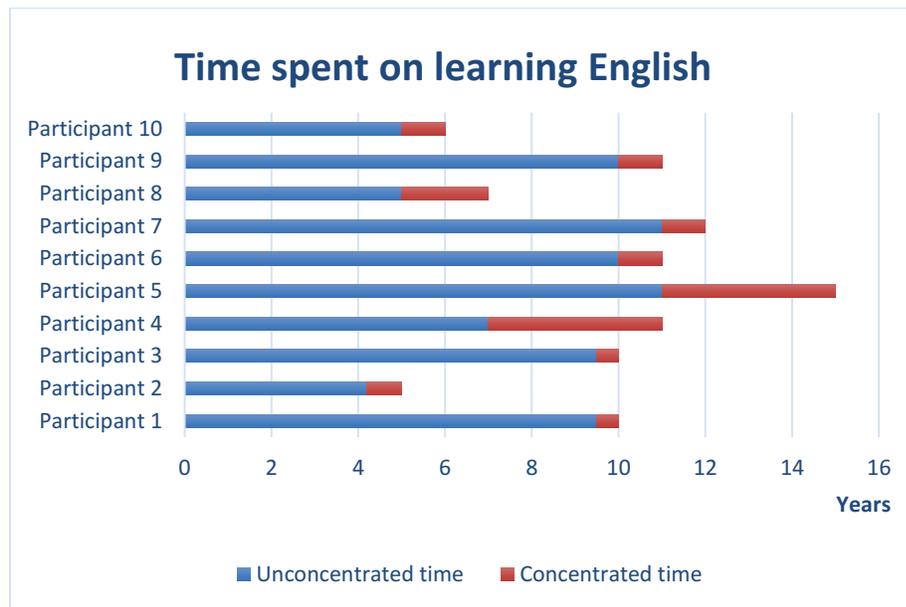


Figure 2: Time spent on learning English of each participant

When asked about the time spent on learning English, participants claimed that they started learning English since secondary school. This means the total time they have learnt English vary from five to fifteen years. However, all of them have not paid attention to studying English for a long time. They often refuse to consciously study English because they could not understand it, or they feel overloaded with other more important subjects. This time I name “Un-concentrated time”. On the other hand, the “Concentrated time” refers to the time participants consciously focus on studying English.

Participants were also asked whether, at the time of the online course, they were participating in another English course. Only two participants claimed to attend other English courses during research time. In terms of sources used in studying English grammar, all students report studying through books, 50 percent of them learn through videos, 10 percent from movies or music. Interestingly, none of them reported using stories to learn grammar.

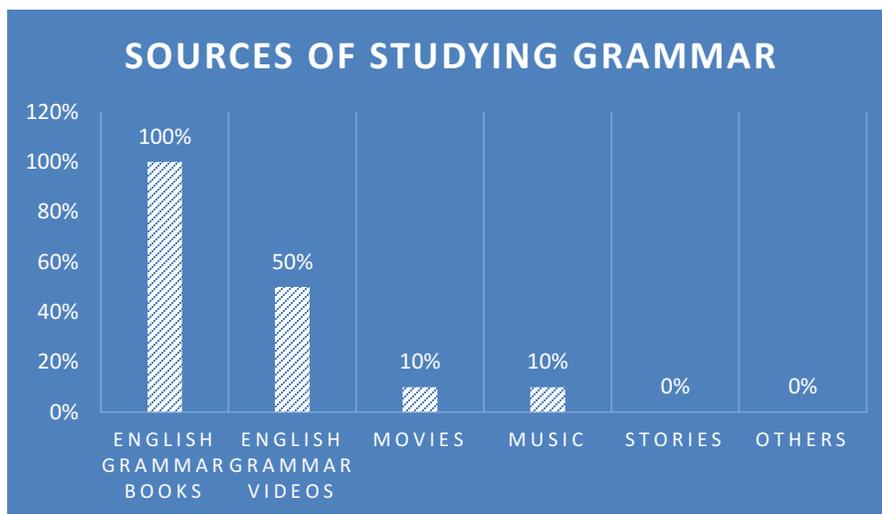


Figure 3: Sources of studying English

3.3.3. Ethical issues

This thesis follows the guidelines of the Finnish National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (2009) on ethical principles. As suggested by the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (2009), there are three areas of ethics that researchers should pay attention to while conducting the study: (1) autonomy of research subjects, (2) harm avoidance, and (3) privacy and data protection of research subjects. Each principle is properly adhered to in this research.

First, participants are voluntary and also aware of their rights to withdraw at any stages of the research. In fact, there were two students who cannot take part in the study from lesson 6 due to personal issues. However, their prior learning diaries and homework exercises are still available for analysis as indicated in the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (2009, 6). Furthermore, at the beginning stage, all participants agreed that participating in the English grammar online course meant being the subjects of this research, and their learning diaries and exercises would be recorded and analyzed for research purposes. They were also provided with personal contacts of researchers, purpose, methodology, time, and the voluntary nature of the research. However, participants were not informed of the study's specific topic related to storytelling to avoid their bias in studying and writing learning diaries.

Second, participants were treated with politeness and respect. During the course, students built a closer relationship with the researcher by asking questions related to English but outside the scope of the research. Moreover, the English grammar online course used as the case study was free of charge, and necessary devices for the course were readily available for students; hence, causing no harm to finance of participants.

Third, to protect privacy of participants, their learning diaries were asked to be individually sent through the Facebook Messenger function directly to the researcher, and their exercises were stored in a closed Facebook group. However, this measure could be problematic when Facebook is encountering an online privacy scandal (Yurieff, 2018). In addition, all the learning diaries and teaching diaries were stored in the personal computer of the researcher. These materials were not shared to any third parties. Furthermore, each student was assigned to a specific number so that participants are not identifiable in research publications, but the materials are still trackable by the researcher for further analysis or secondary research.

3.4. Data collection procedure

3.4.1. Procedure

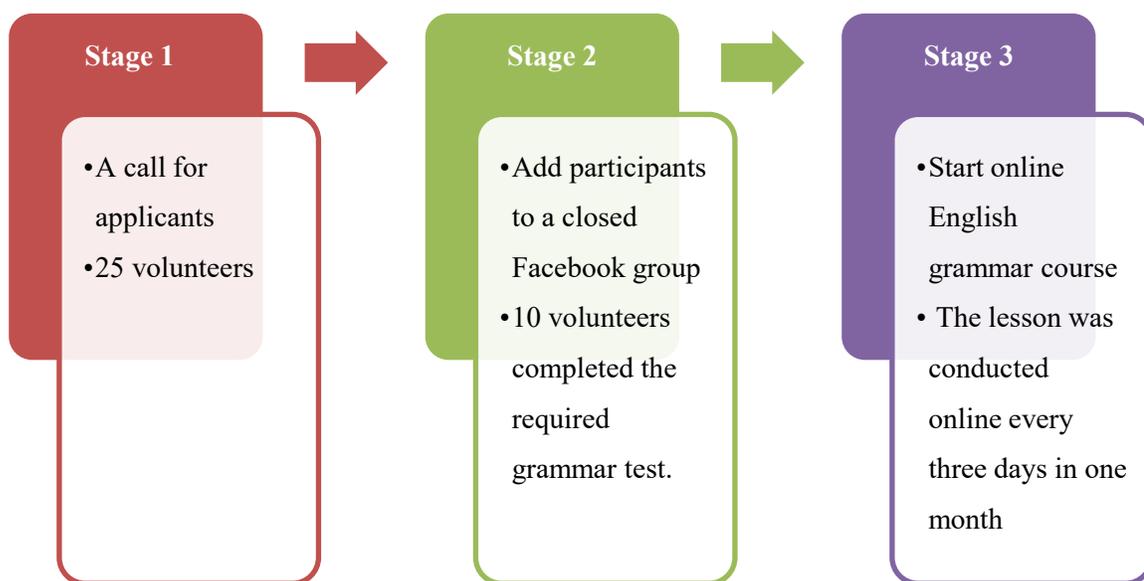


Figure 4: Data collection procedure

A call for English beginner applicants was posted on Facebook account “Kim Manh Tuan” – my personal account designed specifically for teaching. Students were asked to comment on this post to reserve a spot in the course. After the deadline (one day after the post), commented students were added to a closed Facebook group named “English grammar course for research”. There were 25 students at that stage.

At the second stage, students needed to complete a grammar test with a short survey about their basic information included (Appendix 1). Only those who completed the test within the deadline of one week would continue with the project. After the deadline, ten students finished the test and promised to keep going with the course. Other students got deleted from the group after the final list had been announced.

After the participants' list was finalized, students were introduced to the purpose of the project and requirements of attending the case course. Agreeing with the purpose and requirements, ten students started participating in the English grammar course, which was designed based on the story-based approach PACE model. There were eight lessons on the course, which covered eight basic topics of English grammar (Table 2). Each lesson lasted from 60 to 90 minutes depending on the level of difficulty of the topic. Every three days, a lesson was conducted by Live-broadcasting function in Facebook group with the help of Xsplit broadcaster program. Thanks to the Livestream function, each lesson was recorded and stored in Facebook group and Google Drive so that students who cannot attend the class can watch it again later. The lesson plan model of the course is below.

3.4.2. Lesson plan model – applying the PACE model

Phase	Activities	Time
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Introducing new words</i> • Students are introduced to new words (from 6 to 12 words). These are words they will encounter in the story, which will later be shown in the class. • New words are presented in pictures for students to guess the meaning or in matching games – where students need to match new words with definitions or related pictures • Notes: Teacher guides students or gives hints for students to guess the meaning rather than gives the definitions immediately. 	5 – 10 minutes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Telling the story • Teacher either shows a digital animated story without subtitles or tells the story to students. The list of stories can be seen in Table 1 • The story is shown or told twice so that students can get the general meaning of the story • Note: Teacher uses Aegisub and Format Factory software to cover the English subtitles of the original videos. 	10 – 20 minutes
Attention	- Meaning making / filling blanks activities	10 minutes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the story, students are asked to answer story-related questions to ensure the attention of students towards listening to the story. • Students are also asked to fill in blanks with scripts from main characters. • The aim of this part is to attract the attention of students towards the grammatical topic of the lesson • Note: Students can do group work if needed. 	
Co- construction	<p>- Introducing to the main structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher shows the grammar-related script to students. The target grammar structure is written in different colors. • Students are asked various questions to find out which structure is used in the script, why this structure is used, what is the hidden meaning behind that structure. • Teacher can only guide students, give more examples if needed to assist students in finding the correct structure, sensible meaning and usage of the structure. • After students find the structure, the teacher summarizes the key contents of the lesson to make sure students remember the main topic. • Note: Questions are based on answers of students. Teacher needs to wait until receiving answers or reactions from students to ask another question. 	30-40 minutes
Extension activities	<p>- On-spot exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are given tasks related to the topic of the lesson. They could be short writing like “introducing their partners in three to four sentences” or “making a short story based on given new words / structures” or ‘correcting mistakes from their previous homework” • When students write their answers, teacher can read all and take the commonly-made mistakes as an example for students to correct. 	15-20 minutes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: Teacher should only focus on mistakes related to the topic of the lesson. 	
	<p>- Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are given extended exercise for their on-sport exercise as homework. In some cases, students are asked to write another ending for the story they were shown at the beginning. • With this exercise, students need to use their imagination and new words, new structures introduced in that lesson to complete • Students’ homework is posted on Facebook Group of the class. Other students can leave comments, help each other to correct their work before Teacher gives comments and feedbacks. • Teacher usually asks students questions to help them correct their own mistakes rather than immediately giving them answers 	1-2 days

Table 1: Lesson plan using PACE model

3.4.3. Stories selection

Pedersen (1995) mentions various criteria of stories that should be used in a language class. The chosen stories for beginners need to be simple and repeated in terms of vocabularies and structures. It is important to choose stories with positive values such as stories that express joy, happiness and sympathy, et cetera. Agreeing with that, Hughes & Hughes (1999, 27) emphasize that the level of difficulty in chosen stories should be “within students’ grasp, yet a bit challenging”. Vecino (2006, 259) adds that stories should have “problematic situations” or “cultural issues” that students can reflect on or exchange views on. Moreover, it is essential that stories make students interested and curious about the ending to retain their attention. Last but not least, stories should contain illustrations which teachers can use to explain new vocabularies or structures to their students (Smallwood, 2002). Based on these criteria, the following stories were chosen.

Lesson	Topic	Stories	Types	Source
1	Sentence structure	Story of a sentence village	Self-written analogical reasoning	Appendix 2 (5 minutes)
2	Subject – Verb Agreement	Truant Ant	fable	Fairy Tales YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2U77sGhVO6A&t=16s (4:16 minutes)
3	Verb tenses	I want my hat back	fable	YTV YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0oRBk-Upko (2:50 minutes)
4	Nouns	The Very Hungry Caterpillar	Children's book	Little Angel Reader YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muGAPNgBXDc (3:10 minutes)
5	Adjectives and Adverbs	Angelia Jolie's Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award Speech	Personal experience	Oscars YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ATgxOp31oI (4:35 minutes)
6	Irregular Adverbs	Story of the "Ly" prince	Self-written analogical reasoning	Appendix 3 (4 minutes)
7	Comparison	Snow White and the Seven Dwarves	fairytale	Pinkfong! Kids' Songs & Stories YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkRYINu_W7g (8 minutes)
8	Pronouns	The Best of Princesses	fairytale	Pinkfong! Kids' Songs & Stories YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZaJgD4OdBw (5 minutes)

Table 2: Stories used in the course

In addition to the content, I also pay attention to the source credibility and the length of the story. First, chosen YouTube channel needs to serve educational purposes. This means they have already developed series of educational stories aiming at different English levels. The Oscars YouTube Channel is an exception. However, since the speech of award winners contain personal moral and inspirational stories inside, and the speakers are native English speaking, this channel still fits the educational purpose. Second, correct pronunciation and attractive voices of storytellers are of immense importance in my video selection.

Finally, the short attention span of students in the 21st century is now between 10 to 18 minutes (Blake, 2016). Furthermore, in the Presentation phase, stories are told or played twice. Hence, my chosen stories should last about five to nine minutes to keep attention of learners and be suitable for the lesson time management.

3.5. Data collection

As Yin (2009) suggests one of the solutions for construct validity is the use of multiple sources of evidence. In my study, various evidences were collected. First, after each lesson, students were asked to write a learning diary specifying their thoughts and emotions on the lesson. Students would send the learning diary to me using inbox function of Facebook to ensure their confidentiality during the research. Second, participant-observation was used in terms of teaching diaries. As a teacher leading the course, I also wrote a teaching diary concentrating on how the lesson had been run, what problems had occurred during the class, what could be improved in the PACE model to facilitate online teaching. Third, I took notes of my direct-observations on students' reactions to each part of the PACE model, and what factors that may have impacts on the results of the lesson. These field notes would then be incorporated in my teaching diary after each class. Finally, video records of each lesson were stored in the Facebook closed group and my personal Google Drive to facilitate analysis.

In addition, to avoid subjective judgements, I also used tests to evaluate changes in students' learning results. Before and after the course, students needed to take the same grammar test to show their improvement after the course. The test is divided into 2 parts. The first part is in multiple choice questions where students need to choose the most suitable answers for that question. The second part is in short answer questions, where students need to find the correct form of the given words to fill in the blank in the given sentences. The results of both tests will be analyzed later. Besides, after each lesson, students were given homework to complete; they would post their homework on our course's Facebook group for other students and me to comment on and give feedback. The number of mistakes and their ability to correct their own mistakes and find mistakes in other students' homework will be examined as a part of my analysis.

3.6. Data analysis - Explanation-building

As Yin (2009) suggests, case-study researchers should avoid subjective analysis to increase the internal validity of the study. One recommended method of analysis is explanation building, which requires analytical insight from researchers. Since I also participated in the research as an insider – a teacher of the course, it gives me chances to better analyze the data from an explanation building lens. Hence, I chose explanation building as the key to analysis of this study. It is essential to note that, in explanation building,

the explanations are based on theoretical propositions. In my study, socio-cultural theory with three crucial factors: interpersonal, historic-cultural, and individual factors, and PACE model with four phases: presentation, attention, co-construction, and extension are used as the leading theoretical propositions for analysis.

Furthermore, explanation building is an iterative process where theoretical propositions will be tested and revised over and over again (Figure 5). This iterative nature is an advantage but also a disadvantage for case study. By testing and revising the propositions, explanation building provides a thorough explanation for the case; however, it could easily drift researchers away from the original interests (Yin, 2009). To avoid this potential problem, researchers should constantly refer to the original purpose of the study, build a case-study protocol, and establish a database for the case study (Yin, 2009). These procedures are strictly followed by the author in this research.

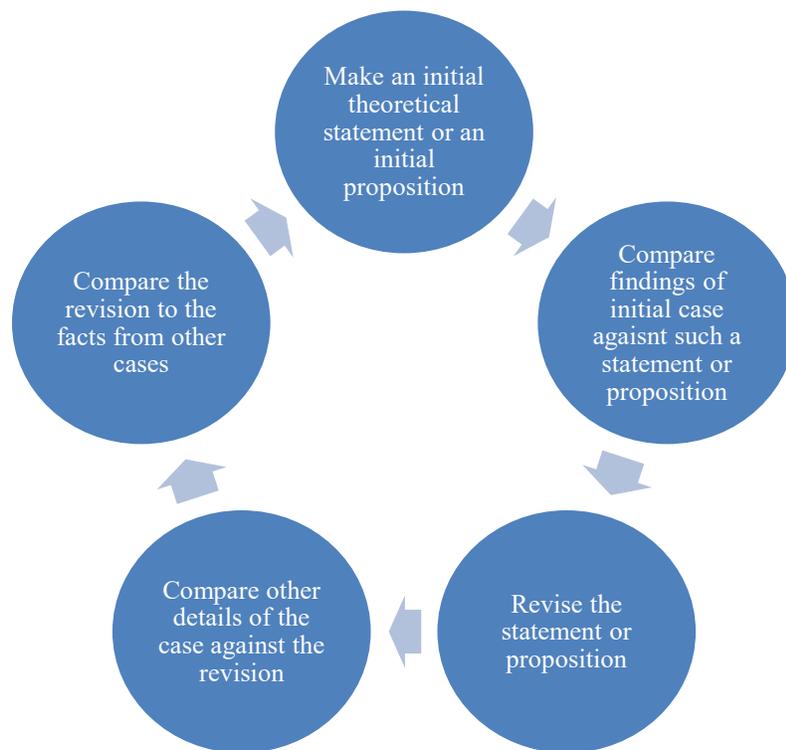


Figure 5: Explanation building process (adapted from Yin, 2009, 143)

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In this chapter, important findings derived from collected data will be presented in response to each research question.

4.1. How can storytelling be used in online education?

In this section, key findings for the first research question: *How can storytelling be used in online education?* will be presented. In this question, my original interests are in the storytelling formats that teachers could use in online platform, storytelling criteria that students feel easier to engage in storytelling activities, and the effects storytelling has on online learners. By analyzing learning diaries, teaching diaries, homework and grammar tests of students, the following results are found.

4.1.1. Storytelling format

In terms of the storytelling format, it is important to note that this study was conducted based on a story-based pedagogical model – PACE model. Hence, storytelling formats varied based on in which phase of the PACE model storytelling was used. As mentioned in the methodological chapter, storytelling was used in both Presentation phase and Extension phase. Each phase required different formats of storytelling.

First, in the presentation phase, both self-written stories and ready-made stories were used. In which, self-written stories were told in the oral format while ready-made stories were introduced in the form of the digital video-recorded format. Interestingly, there was no difference in the reactions of students towards these two formats. In lessons 1 and 6, when self-written stories were told, students found this way of study “*interesting*”, “*fun*”, “*not boring at all*”. One student even expressed her willingness to keep learning from this storytelling oral format. In other lessons, the video-recorded format also received praise from students. The two sentences: “*I love watching videos*” and “*Watching videos keeps my attention to the class*” were frequently repeated in after-class learning diaries. These reactions may result not only from the comfortable feelings but also from the benefits in terms of study that these formats bring to students.

“... *It [storytelling in oral format] helped me gain new knowledge easier. Especially, the listening part at the beginning was a bit challenging for me because of my poor listening skill. However, thanks to it, I got more exposed to English listening...*” (Student 10, learning diary, lesson 1)

“... *They [videos] made it easier for me to memorize vocabularies and understand the story...*” (Student 7, learning diary, lesson 3)

However, teacher's attitudes towards storytelling formats were different. In terms of preparation time, oral format was preferred as finding suitable video materials that both contained the target structures and suited the beginner level of students was a more time-consuming task. Furthermore, in case of the low Internet connection, digital format encountered troubles since "*it consumed a lot of Internet data...*". (Teaching diary, lesson 8). On the other hand, the diversity of contents was the advantage of digital format over the oral one when ready-made videos from various sources were readily available online. These findings support the warning of Groeneveld (2011) that dealing with different storytelling formats requires different teaching skills and a lot of time for preparation. In addition, another factor that teacher should consider in online platform is the Internet connection. In case of low Internet connection, a back-up plan for digital format is highly recommended.

Second, in the extension phase, storytelling was used in the written form where students were asked to create their own stories and publish them on our close Facebook group. This written format could be controversial since "telling" is expected to use voice (Hsu, 2010, cited in Lucarevschi, 2016, 25). However, this study followed the definition of McDrury & Alterio (2003) which emphasizes that storytelling can be conveyed "through the language of words". Hence, the written form can also be considered as a part of storytelling. Unlike the other two formats, the written format received conflicting feedback from students. Some students got excited to create their own stories, but some found this task burdensome because of lacking vocabulary. However, all of them agreed that this written form helped to improve their writing skill. Student 7, for example, felt that her writing was improving day by day throughout the course.

In conclusion, all three formats facilitated the learning development of students. This result supports the finding of Lucarevschi (2016) that storytelling plays a role in the learning development of students regardless of formats. Furthermore, in online teaching, all oral, digital and written formats were suitable to use. However, teachers should be aware of troubles that the low Internet connection could cause to the digital format so that they can prepare back-up plans to run the lesson smoothly in any situations.

4.1.2. Storytelling criteria

In addition to storytelling formats, contents, images and sound played essential roles in the effectiveness of storytelling on students' learning development. Each factor will be discussed in further details in the following section.

- **Content**

The first and most crucial element of the story that students paid attention to was the content, in which, vocabulary was of great importance. Since participants considered themselves as English beginners, they often struggled with stories that contained a lot of new vocabulary. In lesson 5, for example, the award-winning speech of Angelia Jolie frustrated students because it was “too difficult to understand without subtitles” and “full of new vocabulary”. On the other hand, stories with less complicated words motivated participants to concentrate on the listening activity. However, teachers should be aware that students may know the words in the written form but not in the oral form. The reasons, as Student 4 stated in her learning diary, could be because she was not used to the pronunciation or she had never used these words before. In either case, reviewing new vocabulary before the storytelling session would be helpful.

The plot of the story also contributed to the success of storytelling. Interesting storylines with unpredictable twists or motivational personal stories were highly appreciated. Moreover, the more familiar the plot was, the more excited students got. Specifically, in lesson 1 and lesson 6, self-written stories were used with familiar personification, which brought parts of sentences to normal life. In both lessons, students used highly emotional words to describe the stories such as “unforgettable”, “extremely interesting”, “particularly impressive”, et cetera. More interestingly, in their learning diaries of these two lessons, students were able to recall all the story instead of mentioning only grammar structures as in other lessons. Furthermore, in lesson 7, the English version of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves took students by surprise. They showed their excitement in asking the teacher to play the story twice even though they already knew the story in advance, and in phrases such as “more motivated to learn new structures through a story from my childhood” and “easier to remember” in their learning diaries.

- **Images**

Though previous research suggests using images to enhance story comprehension of listeners during storytelling sessions, how and which types of images should be used have not been clearly specified. The use of the digital video-recorded format in this online course has opened room for images to be further discussed. First, in terms of image types, participants preferred stories with colorful pictures which should be “attractive” but “not too distracting”. Unfortunately, the level of attractiveness and distraction varied among participants, and none of them specified their definitions of these criteria. One participant expressed her preference of “dynamic images” over “static ones”. Despite that, there was no difference in her learning development and attention towards these two types of images.

Second, though images could “make it [the story] less boring” (Student 10, learning diary, lesson 7) or help students “guess the meaning of the story” (Student 7, learning diary, lesson 2), they were not irreplaceable. Particularly, in lesson 1 and lesson 6 when no descriptive images were used, there were no sign of difficulty in understanding from learners. Furthermore, in lesson 7 when a video of Angelia Jolie was used, the images in that video did not describe her stories. In other words, students could not guess the meaning just based on the images. The struggle students encountered in that lesson was from the content itself, not from no descriptive images. Hence, images in storytelling could be beneficial but may not be as important as the content of the story.

- **Sound**

Although sound was less often mentioned than the content and images, it was still a contributing factor that caught attention of students during storytelling sessions. Among elements of sound, clear pronunciation was the most essential one. Since participants were at the beginner level, they were not yet used to the normal speed of native-speaking conversations. Hence, they preferred stories that were told at a slower speed and clearly pronounced every word. With stories that used liaisons (linked consonants and vowels of following words), students highly appreciated teacher’s efforts to warn them in advance when and how liaisons would be used. In addition to pronunciation, tone of voice also attracted attention of students. Particularly, “warm voice” and “cute voice” were preferred to maintain students’ interest in the story. Besides, reasonably raising and falling intonation corresponding to the storyline also excited participants. Specifically, they found timely intervention of intonation important for them to understand the storyline and stay focused on listening to the story.

4.1.3. Effects of storytelling

As storytelling was used in the Presentation phase as a listening activity and Extension phase as a writing exercise, the impacts of storytelling on participants will be evaluated through the performance of their written homework, and their self-assessment in learning diaries.

First, since students got exposed to English listening through storytelling in the Presentation phase in every lesson, almost all participants claimed their improvement in their listening skill though the level of development could vary from students to students. Besides, they admitted that one of the reasons for their improvement lied on the fact that there are no subtitles for the stories. They had no choice but to focus on listening in order to understand and be able to answer story-related questions in the Attention phase. This pressure motivated students to try harder each time; eventually, it resulted in improvement of their listening comprehension.

Second, the increase in vocabulary also resulted from storytelling sessions. Participants stated that new vocabulary which was put into context of the stories were a lot easier to “memorize” and “understand”. Especially, with vocabularies that were already pre-taught, students tended to recognize and remember these new words immediately when they were repeated in the listening part. Furthermore, unusual words or confusing words were of great interest to participants. They often mentioned these vocabularies as a part of their learning outcome besides new grammatical structures. For instance, instead of general statement: “Today I learnt some new vocabulary”, they would write: “*scrunch up*”, “*ball*”, “*cast the spell*”, “*buck teeth*” are all unique and new to me” (Student 4, learning diary, lesson 8) or “*Now I know ice-cream cone is also one kind of ice-cream*” (Student 8, learning diary, lesson 4).

Last but not least, participants also found their writing skills improved. Interestingly, they were all surprised when self-realizing that. One student even thought that she was dreaming that her writing skill was sharpened. However, like the listening skill, the level of development was not the same among students. It is important to note that their writing skill was only evaluated in terms of grammar accuracy. In their homework writing, most of the participants made fewer and fewer mistakes regarding grammars after every lesson. However, each time students wrote only a paragraph of five to six sentences. Hence, it is hard to generalize their overall writing. On the other hand, at the beginner level, this requirement was demanding enough. Thus, it is reasonable to claim that there was an improvement in participants’ English writing capability.

4.2. How can the use of PACE model facilitate the learning development of foreign language learners?

As a story-based approach, PACE model has been proven effective in developing language skills, especially grammatical skills of learners by previous research. In this section, my interest is in finding how the use of PACE model facilitates the learning development of foreign language learners through the lens of socio-cultural theory. In other words, three factors: interpersonal, historic-cultural, and individual factors will guide the analysis of this section. Before that, general learning development of participants will be discussed.

4.2.1. Learning development

As discussed in the previous section, there were improvements in the listening skill, writing skill, and vocabularies of participants. It should be noted again that the writing skill was evaluated based on grammar accuracy. Supporting that finding, grammar test results (Figure 6) also show an increase in the number of

correct answers of almost all students. Participant 2 is the only one who experienced a decrease in the results. Participant 3 and 6 did not complete the final grammar test; hence, there is no data for these two students. However, in general, the better performance in the final test of students could imply their learning development throughout the online course.

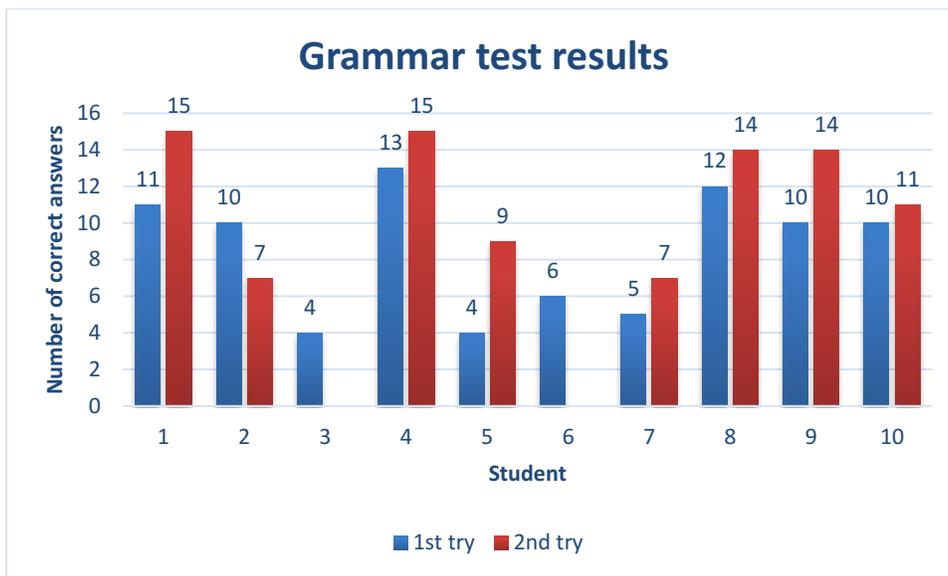


Figure 6: Grammar test results

In addition to the development of specific skills, a boost in confidence also resulted from this English grammar online course. Students claimed in their learning diaries that they felt more confident in writing and listening than before. It may be not only because they saw their improvements in these skills but also because they strengthened their belief in their abilities. Furthermore, the frequent interactions with teacher and peers also boosted confidence in students to raise their opinions. More interestingly, one student admitted that she stopped feeling afraid of talking with foreigners; she was then able to speak in English confidently whenever a foreigner approached her for help.

The above findings suggest that the use of PACE model in this English grammar course has benefited participants in their language skills and also their confidence in using a foreign language. Further discussions on how the use of PACE model could facilitate learning development of foreign language learners through the lens of three crucial factors in the socio-cultural theory will be presented in the following section.

4.2.2. PACE model vs learning development

4.2.2.1. Interpersonal factor

As PACE pedagogical model emphasizes the co-construction of knowledge between teachers and students, social interactions with teacher and other peers were inevitable in every lesson. These interactions seemed to facilitate the development in participants through Zone of Proximal Development and Internalization.

- Zone of Proximal Development

It is interesting to find out that students appreciated the interactions with teacher and other peers in developing their language skills, especially in terms of grammar. Thanks to interacting with others, students were able to figure out and correct their own mistakes in writing, which they failed to recognize by themselves. Student 4 admitted in her first learning diary that: *“self-learning grammar without help from others is too risky and challenging”*. Furthermore, students found it “easier” and “more motivating” to gain new knowledge with the help of others. In other words, interactions with the teacher and the other peers assisted participants to reach the “potential level” – which they cannot or take a long time to achieve by themselves.

Students realized that they then were capable of doing what they could not do before. Student 8, for example, used to confuse present continuous tense and present perfect continuous tense, but then he was able to differentiate these two himself (learning diary, lesson 3). Similarly, Student 7 could not put parts of sentences in the correct order while writing before, but then she could analyze the structure herself, and put them in the correct order (final learning diary). These mean in the future, teachers or other peers do not need to assist Student 8 in differentiating two confusing present continuous tenses, or help Student 7 analyze and correct sentence structures in her writing. In other words, what was in their Zone of Proximal Development before the course has become their actual development level after the course.

- Internalization

Not only did participants acquire new knowledge and improve their language skills, but they also formed new habits of studying after the English grammar online course. These new habits, interestingly, were the results of getting exposed to innovative English teaching methods throughout the course. Student 10, for instance, whenever she encountered some English sentences, she would start *“analyzing the structure as you [teacher] usually did in class”* (Student 10, learning diary, lesson 6). This means, by observing me [the teacher] frequently analyze English sentences during the course, Student 10 gradually formed a new idea that analyzing sentence structures was beneficial for her study. Then, after a period of repetition – six

lessons in this case – she started taking it as her own way of learning English. Student 1 had gone through the same process until he decided to apply the learning through storytelling approach in his study of English and even other subjects in the future. In other words, both Student 10 and Student 1 have developed their learning approach through others – the teacher in this English grammar online course.

4.2.2.2. Historic-cultural factor

Besides social interactions, the historic and cultural factor played an essential role in the learning process of participants. In terms of history, previous knowledge and previous learning style of students will be analyzed. With regards to culture, the impacts of shared-culture stories, learning culture, and cultural expectations of adults on participants will be discussed in the following section.

- Historic

Though participants were at the beginner level, they had from five to ten years studying English. Hence, they already knew some basic grammatical structures. However, their problems were that they could not apply theory to practice, and/or they did not have a deep understanding of the structures. It was common to see students use their previous knowledge to answer teacher’s questions instead of making meaning from the context. For example, in lesson 3, when asked to tell the meaning of present perfect tense in the sentence “I haven’t seen any hat”, instead of guessing the meaning based on the sentence, students listed all the uses of present perfect tense they knew. In this case, previous knowledge seemed to prevent learners from acquiring new and deep knowledge, which limited their learning development.

On the other hand, in lessons where students had some previous knowledge about the topic, they felt more confident and motivated to focus on learning. Student 5, for instance, was more engaged in lesson 4 (adjectives and adverbs) because she admitted knowing well how to use adjectives and adverbs beforehand. Furthermore, when students used to confuse some knowledge or realize their previous understanding was not correct, they tended to remember quicker and deeper. Student 7 and Student 4, for example, stated in their learning diaries of lesson 4 that they would never forget that “information” is an uncountable noun since they had been using “information” incorrectly as a countable noun for a long time. In these cases, previous knowledge benefited the learning development of participants.

In addition to previous knowledge, previous learning style also had impacts on the level of learning development of students. Among participants, four of them claimed to have a previous active learning style. This means they always tried to find extra materials online to support their learning in class or actively asked questions for better understanding of the topic. On the other hand, the rest of the participants admitted

being reliant on grammar textbooks and trying to learn the structures by heart without deep understanding. This learning style is considered “passive”. Interestingly, students’ self-assessment in learning diaries indicated that those with previous passive learning style improved their language skills more significantly than those with previous active learning style throughout the English grammar online course.

- **Cultural**

Among stories used throughout the English grammar online course, shared culture stories were found to be “the most impressive” and “easiest to remember” for participants. In lesson 1 and lesson 6, when analyzing the story, the mutual understanding of Vietnamese culture was utilized, which colored the lesson and assisted the learning process of students. For example, in lesson 1, in the clause family, “Subject” is daddy, “Verb” is mommy. In Vietnamese culture, father is the breadwinner and holds the power in the family; hence, he – Subject – is the head and in the first place of the clause. Mother, however, is always in the second place to support father, and takes care of the family. Therefore, the basic structure of a clause is Subject + Verb just like the structure of a Vietnamese family: Father + Mother. This approach excited participants so greatly that one student even raved about these stories and this way of explanation to her friends.

Another cultural factor lies on the culture of learning style in Vietnam, which refers to face-saving, passive, and suspicious of creativity way of learning. As PACE model emphasizes co-construction of knowledge, teacher needs to ask questions to guide students towards new knowledge comprehension. However, during the lesson, students were afraid of giving the wrong answers; one student even felt stressed when she could not answer the questions. The fear of losing “face” prevented some students from expressing their own opinions. Furthermore, participants hardly asked questions during class but would state their confusion in their learning diaries. This could result from “face-saving” or passive learning style when students expected teachers to clarify their confusion rather than they asked questions to clarify their own confusion. Moreover, some students preferred “fill-in blanks” exercises to “storytelling” ones. One student admitted that he could not think of any ideas to write; hence, he would rather do the fill-in blanks exercises. This shows that students avoided creativity in their learning. This culture of learning style somehow hindered learners from development.

Last but not least, since participants are adults, the social expectations also played a part in their learning process. As in Vietnamese culture, high education, social status and family are three core values (Goldman, 2009), participants spent a great number of time focusing on studying, working, and taking care of their family. With participants who are high school or university students, they sometimes could not attend or

complete homework of the English grammar course because of exams or extra classes at school. The other students were busy working overtime, and/or taking care of family. Especially, one student who is married with children had to stop attending the course because her children were sick. Hence, the learning process of participants was sometimes interrupted by these external factors.

4.2.2.3. Individual factor

It is interesting to find out different reactions of participants under the same circumstances of learning online through an English grammar course following the PACE pedagogical model. The major differences are on their attitudes towards studying and their learning styles.

In terms of attitudes towards studying, the discrepancy occurred when participants needed to re-watch the lesson's recording posted in our closed Facebook group because they could not attend the Livestream session. Some students found it hard to concentrate on learning by re-watching. They were easily distracted by outside factors such as "friends livestreaming to sell products", "phone calls from parents", or they were just bored because no one was interacting with them during re-watching time. On the other hand, some students found no difference in their concentration and learning development between Livestream learning and re-watching although they preferred the atmosphere in the Livestream session. Furthermore, some participants skipped answering teacher's questions to jump to the explanation part, while others paid attention to answering every question during the re-watching session.

With regards to learning styles, some students were active both in and after class time. Student 8, for example, after class, often re-watched the video-recorded stories with English subtitles three to four times to practice his listening skill. Student 2, for instance, tried to find other online video materials of the same grammar topic that he had learnt on that day for further and deeper understanding. Student 7, on the other hand, practiced writing diaries every day to enhance grammar accuracy. However, some students only completed assignments given by the teacher without self-learning by different methods. The self-assessment results show that those who have active learning styles improved more significantly than those who do not.

4.3. How can the use of PACE model be further developed for online education?

So far, PACE model has been applied and developed in offline settings where teachers and students interact face-to-face with each other. When it is used in the online settings, there could be weaknesses that teachers should be aware of for a better use of the model. By analyzing teaching diaries and learning diaries, this section aims to give ideas for the future use of PACE model in online education in terms of online settings,

improvements in the use of each stage of the PACE model, and recommendations for future studies related to the use of PACE model.

4.3.1. Online settings

As discussed in the previous section, there were two online settings that participants can choose to study throughout the English grammar online course: Livestream and re-watch. Livestream sessions provided students chances to interact directly with teacher and the other peers, while re-watch gave students opportunities to re-watch the lessons as many times as needed. The results show that Livestream settings takes advantage over re-watch because of the interactions and atmosphere of the class. One student compared Livestream learning and re-watch with watching football live at the stadium and at home. This means, the electric atmosphere while learning with others motivated students more to focus on study than studying alone. In addition, PACE model requires two-way construction of knowledge; hence, the success of the lesson was largely attributed to the synchronous interaction of Livestream. Furthermore, this direct interaction also gave participants an impression of a real traditional offline class. Hence, Livestream settings may be more favorable when using PACE model in online teaching.

Moreover, to enhance the effectiveness of PACE model in online education, teachers should be aware of problems caused by in-class groupwork, the use of single device, and the low Internet connection. First, though groupwork facilitated learning development through interactions with other peers, it may waste a huge amount of time when participants “have not added friends on Facebook with each other”, or the disconnected Internet connection interrupted their discussion. Thus, in online lessons, groupwork should be designed for homework activities rather than in-class activities. Furthermore, since PACE model and Livestream settings require full attention in each phase of the model, one moment distracted by the external factors could demotivate students. Hence, when students used only smartphones to watch Livestream, a message or a phone call from others could result in missing some important parts of the lesson. Therefore, it is highly recommended to use at least two devices to study Livestream. Finally, low Internet connection could frustrate both teachers and students; especially in the Construction phase when teachers needed to raise questions based on answers of students. In that case, teachers should be patient and prepare better Internet connection for the next lessons.

4.3.2. Improvements in the use of PACE model

PACE model has four stages: Presentation, Attention, Co-construction and Extension with guidance for each stage that teachers should follow. In this section, experience from teaching diaries and feedback from

learning diaries will be discussed to provide future online teachers with clearer guidance on how to apply each stage of the PACE model in the online platform.

First, at the Presentation stage, before the storytelling session, new vocabularies should be taught to make it easier for students to understand the stories and memorize the vocabularies. In the first and only lesson where no new words were reviewed in advance, students struggled a lot in listening comprehension while in the other lessons, participants hardly had difficulty in understanding the stories. Furthermore, positive feedbacks and excitement from learners about the two self-written stories strengthened the belief that self-written stories could be beneficial if these stories were interesting and shared the same culture with listeners. In addition, teachers should take into consideration the length of the stories. In lesson 7, the story which lasted eight minutes was found “...too long to catch necessary information (for those who are bad at listening like me) ...” (Student 5, learning diary, lesson 7) while other stories from three to four minutes in other lessons did not receive any negative feedback. Hence, with beginner level students, short stories of three to four minute-length may be preferable.

Second, teachers should be clear and detailed in instructions in the Attention phase so that students can pay attention to the right target structure. In lesson 2, when learning Subject-Verb agreement, students were asked to put given sentences from the story into two columns. The purpose was that students would put sentences with singular subjects and singular verbs in one column, and put plural subjects and plural verbs in the other. However, while other students followed the initial idea of the activity, one student divided sentences following the plot of the story instead. If the instructions had been more specific, this misunderstanding would not have occurred, and students could have focused on the target structure. This could be a problem of the online settings because unlike the offline settings, teachers are unable to see what students have done until they submit their answers. Hence, to avoid misunderstanding, teachers should give detailed instructions in this Attention phase.

Third, the co-construction stage is the most challenging part of PACE model in online education. As discussed earlier, this co-construction phase could be easily affected by low Internet connection, and often be skipped by learners who re-watch the lessons. Some students criticized this stage for being too long and a waste of time when teachers had to wait for students' answers before making new questions. They suggested that teachers should give as many hints as possible to avoid long waiting time when students were unable to give immediate answers. Furthermore, supporting materials such as images were suggested to be used to ease the thinking process of students. From teachers' side, patience was of great importance in this stage, especially in the case of low Internet connection. In addition, teachers should be aware of

students' actual developmental level to adjust questions and provide "graduated" and "contingent" assistance.

Last but not least, the extension phase could include on-spot exercises and homework exercises, which show a connection between the grammatical topic and practice. Regarding on-spot exercises, students wished to have longer time practicing with "fill-in blanks" exercises to get used to the new structure before making their own sentences. Furthermore, correcting other peers' mistakes in writing excited students because they could learn from and help others at the same time. In addition, participants highly appreciated being reminded of grammatical points from previous lessons. This way was claimed to facilitate their deep learning process of grammar.

In terms of homework, teachers should take advantage of the online platform – Facebook group in this case – to create a friendly environment for peer correction. The reason is that unlike offline settings where students could hardly see others' writing; the online platform allowed students to read and comment on others' writing and receive feedback from teachers publicly. Moreover, the closer the topic of homework writing was to students' normal life, the more motivated students were in completing homework exercises. Hence, teachers should pay attention to the writing topic to enhance the effectiveness of the extension phase. Furthermore, groupwork may be a suitable activity for homework since students were not under time constraints as during class time. However, some students had difficulty arranging online meetings with their partners, which results in individual work instead of groupwork.

4.3.3. Recommendations for future studies

In applying the PACE model in teaching grammar online, the author realized the potential of the PACE model in teaching vocabulary and the importance of class size in the success of the PACE model. These ideas may give opportunity for future studies to further explore and develop the storytelling-based pedagogical model – PACE model.

In terms of teaching vocabulary, the author unintentionally used the PACE model in pre-teaching new vocabulary before the storytelling session. First, descriptive images were shown on the screen followed by new vocabulary. This was the combination of presentation and attention phase. Then, the teacher asked students to guess the meaning of the words based on the images. The teacher gave hints but did not give direct translation of the word to students until students could guess the correct meaning. This stage was similar to co-construction phase where teachers facilitated learners' understanding of new structures. After that, the extension phase started when students watched a story containing these new words, which gave

contexts for better understanding of new vocabularies. Finally, students were asked to include these vocabularies in their homework writing. Participants showed surprisingly positive reactions towards this way of vocabulary learning because it helped them “memorize new words without revising”, and “know how to apply words in specific contexts”, et cetera. These encouraging signs urge the author to explore this innovative use more in future studies.

In addition, the fact that participants could not attend all the Livestream lessons due to external factors affected the atmosphere of the class. Participants always expected to study in lessons with no one missing so that it evoked cheerful mood during class time. However, this expectation was challenging to meet. Though there was no definite number of students for each lesson to ensure the electric atmosphere, the higher the number of students attending Livestream sessions was, the better the mood was. It could result from the lower stress to answer teacher’s questions and the quicker flow of the lesson when there were more students interacting with teachers and other peers. Future studies could examine more thoroughly how important the number of students is in online education, and may find the appropriate number for online classes.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. The use of storytelling in online foreign language learning

The findings of this research indicate that storytelling can be used flexibly and effectively in online foreign language teaching. Specifically, three storytelling formats: oral, digital, and written format generate similar results on students' learning development. This supports the findings of Lucarevski (2016) that regardless of story formats, storytelling is effective in enhancing foreign language skills of learners. The new idea is that the digital format requires more time for preparation and could be easily affected by Internet connection – which is a significantly essential factor in online education. Besides, the positive attitudes of students towards the sessions when the non-native English speaker told the stories conflict with the finding of Kim (2010) that students have doubt about non-native English speaking storytellers. One explanation could be in Vietnamese culture, students respect teachers so much that they tend not to have doubts on their teacher's ability in teaching.

Furthermore, story contents, images and sound contribute greatly to the success of storytelling sessions. In terms of the contents, the appropriate level of vocabularies and interesting twist plot are highly recommended by students, which goes well with suggestions of Donato & Adair-Hauck (2016) on choosing stories for the presentation phase of the PACE model. Furthermore, the study finds that the closer the stories are to students' life, the more engaged they are. This result confirms the argument of Shrum & Glisan, (2005) and Wajnryb (2012) that the cultural and historical factors in stories engage listeners to understand the stories. Moreover, unlike the results of Kim (2010) and Kim & Mc Garry (2014), adult participants of this study show no negativity towards storytelling, even with stories they know from their childhood. It could be because stories used in this research have a wider range of topics and genres than those in previously mentioned studies; and “childlike” stories account for only 30 percent of the whole course. Hence, participants may not have any strong opinions against storytelling.

In addition to the story content, images and sound factors are found important in maintaining attention of students, which has not been mentioned in previous studies. Donato & Adair-Hauck (2016) suggest using images during storytelling sessions, however, do not mention which types of images. This study finds that dynamic pictures are preferable; however, whether they outperform static ones in supporting students' learning or not is questionable. Further studies should be placed in this matter. Moreover, the results suggest that in online education, clear pronunciation, warm voice and timely intonation are of great importance. Previous studies suggest how storytellers should practice telling the stories, but forget the importance of sound factors. Thus, it could be a reminder for storytellers to improve their storytelling skills.

In terms of learning development, participants are found to enhance their listening, writing, vocabulary and grammar skills during the English grammar online course. This result is consistent with findings of other studies such as Huang (2006), Kim & Mc Garry (2014), and Kamaludin et al. (2015). Moreover, it is interesting that students' performance in homework exercises is better than in post-test. This could result from the difference in nature of these two tests. While the grammar test gives pre-set sentences that students have to guess the situations to fill in the missing words, the homework storytelling exercises give students freedom to control the situations. Since the latter test is more similar to what they have exposed to during the English grammar online course using storytelling approach, the better result could be understandable. Besides that, participants' confidence level is also improved, which is a new finding. The reason could be because previously mentioned studies use experiments and/ or only focus on language skills development that they may ignore the confidence level of participants. On the other hand, this study analyzes learning diaries which make it easier for researchers to reach students' point of view.

Nevertheless, the impressive results of participants' learning development are arguable. First, the pre-test and post-test are identical. This could have a slight effect on the final results because students may already try to find the correct answers for the pre-test and remember them in the post-test. However, there is one student performing better in the pre-test than post-test, and the difference between these two test results of other students is not significant. Hence, it is hard to judge the reliability of this grammar test. Second, the voluntary participation may affect the result since students may be more active in the study than they actually are in the real online classroom situation. Despite that, the fact that students' activeness results in better performance confirms the assumption by Le & Phan (2013) that situation could change when both students and teachers make great efforts in class.

5.2. The use of PACE model in online foreign language learning

As a storytelling-based approach, the use of PACE model is beneficial in students' learning development, which agrees with the findings of Haight et al., 2007 and Groeneveld (2011). However, since this case study is not an experiment, the results could not be assumed solely from storytelling or PACE model itself. As participants are asked to write learning diaries, which acts as a type of revision for the class, this could have impacts on students' memorization. Furthermore, Vietnamese students tend to be shy to give negative opinions. Hence, their learning diaries may not express all their feelings and thoughts towards the lessons. Moreover, since the Livestream function of Facebook does not allow the researcher to see students; it is hard for the researcher to justify learning diaries without basing on students' body language during class. Besides, the sample size is small – ten students, which makes generalization of the results harder in larger scale. This is one of the limitations of this research.

This study also points out three factors affecting the learning development of adult participants: interpersonal, historic-cultural and individual factor. These factors are consistent with three interrelation factors in Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory. Hence, this finding agrees with the idea of extending the socio-cultural theory in adult learning of Bonk & Kim (1998). In terms of the interpersonal factor, participants' ZPD is addressed through negotiated dialogues and interactions with teacher and the other peers. This supports the argument of Tharp & Gallimore (2002) on the similarity between ZPD of children and adults. Moreover, it is unexpected that participants go through internalization process to pick up a new habit of writing and watching storytelling videos for language learning throughout the course.

Regarding the historic-cultural factor, it is interesting to find out that this factor had both positive and negative impacts on students' learning development. Specifically, previous knowledge and previous learning style can engage participants but can also hinder their language acquisition. The same thing happens with the cultural aspect, while shared-cultural self-written stories gain interest of students, cultural foreign language learning style and culturally social expectations cause trouble to participants in their learning. This finding is consistent with the claim of Malcolm & Zukas (2001) that culture and history are important in adult learning. This also contributes a new angle to Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory in terms of possible effects of this factor.

On the other hand, it is questionable that, the excitement towards self-written stories in this research may also result from the way they are written. Unlike other digital stories that students need to guess the grammatical rules based on sentences taken from the stories, self-written stories explain the rules throughout the story lines. This means participants can get the general rules by understanding the story without taking a further step as in other stories. Hence, the ease in learning rules may explain why the self-written stories receive a lot of praise from students compared to the others.

With regards to the individual factor, the learning style and attitudes towards study contribute to differences in learning development of participants. Particularly, some students who are used to teacher-centered learning style find it difficult to follow the learner-centered PACE model. They often look for teacher's explanation instead of trying to answer first, which supports the concerns of Willis (1985) about an adult's difficulty in exposing to the learner-centered approach. Furthermore, this study also indicates the importance of self-regulation in online learning. Some students can be easily distracted while the others are not. This finding agrees with the idea of Cho & Kim (2013) on self-regulation in e-learning.

In addition, this study suggests suitable online settings for the online use of PACE model in teaching foreign language grammar. Livestream sessions are found to be more effective and preferable than re-watch sessions. In other words, synchronous learning outperforms asynchronous learning in this case, which goes well with the idea of Chen & Wang (2008). However, as Chen, et al. (2005) suggest the integration of synchronous and asynchronous learning to maximize both methods' benefits. Indeed, a part of the extension phase needed to work in asynchronous Facebook group although the majority of the PACE model is in synchronous Facebook Livestream. Furthermore, without asynchronous re-watch sessions, students who miss the synchronous class could not gain knowledge and those who are not clear at some points could not get clarification by re-watching. Hence, keeping both approaches may be ideal in this case.

This study also gives some suggestions for changes in activities in each phase of the PACE model to be more suitable in the online settings. First, in the presentation phase, teachers should pre-teach vocabularies before storytelling sessions and be aware of the appropriate length for stories at the beginner's level. Stories from four to five minutes could maintain the attention of students. Second, the instructions in the attention phase should be clear and detailed to avoid confusion in students, especially in online classroom where teachers could not see what students are doing. Third, teachers should give as many hints as possible, and pay attention to the reactions of students to guess their understanding. In other words, the assistance of teachers in the construction phase should be "graduated and contingent" as suggested by Aljaafreh & Lantolf (1994). Finally, teachers could utilize Facebook groups for online discussions of students' exercises in the extension phase, and the exercises should be close to the theme of the lesson and also to students' lives.

5.3. Implications of the findings and conclusion

This research has found that storytelling and the PACE model could have influences on the learning development of foreign language e-learners; specifically, in this case, Vietnamese adult e-learners studying English at the beginner level. This result may uphold the decision of foreign language teachers to apply storytelling and the PACE model in their teaching, particularly in grammar teaching. Students, in addition, could also take up a new habit of learning foreign language through stories written in that language available online. Furthermore, some troubles related to the Internet connection and activities in each phase of the PACE model that online teachers may encounter in practice are also presented in this research. This is expected to equip online teachers with practical knowledge to prepare better for their future e-lessons using storytelling.

In addition, teachers, learners and developers of online learning could consider Facebook group and Facebook Livestream as alternative online platforms for language learning besides MOOCs. Though Facebook group and Facebook Livestream are user-friendly, some of their limitations in educational use and possible solutions are mentioned in this study. These limitations and solutions are expected to give ideas to developers and teachers to utilize these platforms better in the future. Furthermore, thanks to this case study, e-learners could have different opinions towards the use of Facebook as an educational tool rather than just as a means of entertainment.

Moreover, since the PACE model is a learner-centered approach which emphasizes co-construction of knowledge through negotiated dialogues, its positive results in this case study suggest potentials for learner-centered strategy in the Vietnamese teaching context. Vietnamese policy makers could consider promoting storytelling and the PACE model in teaching foreign language as a means of switching from teacher-centered classroom to learner-centered one. Though both teachers and students should change to adapt to this approach, the support from policy makers could boost the confidence and foster the belief of learners and teachers so that the process could be sped up.

Furthermore, this study may also contribute to the development of the socio-cultural theory and use of the PACE model. First, the socio-cultural theory has been focusing on child development in the offline settings. However, participants of this study are young and middle-aged adults, and the case study is conducted in the online platform; the findings on participants' learning development could be a specific reference of socio-cultural theory implications in adult learning and online learning. Second, in this research, the use of the PACE model in online classrooms is useful in assisting learning development of e-learners, and some practical recommendations are given to further develop the PACE model, this study expects to make a valuable contribution to the PACE model development.

Finally, this research may produce ideas for future researchers. First, the results suggest the new use of the PACE model in teaching vocabularies in addition to teaching grammar. Though previous studies agree on the effectiveness of storytelling in vocabulary enhancement of students (Ge, 2015; Kirsch, 2016), their approaches vary, and none of them have followed the PACE model, as yet. Hence, further studies on the use of the PACE model in vocabulary teaching could be feasible. Furthermore, class size in online learning is still in question. Future studies could focus on the impacts of class size on students' satisfaction in e-learning or on the effectiveness of the PACE model.

In conclusion, this thesis expects to contribute to the discussion on the use of storytelling in online foreign language teaching. Though the scale of the case study is small – ten students and the effects are measured in short-term – one English grammar course in one month, the results of the research are encouraging for the researcher to keep using storytelling in online foreign language teaching and introducing that approach to other online teachers and learners. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, the success of a pedagogical model relies on the efforts of both teachers and learners, it would take time for storytelling and the PACE model to work in the Vietnamese context where this approach has not yet been widely adopted. However, I have high hopes that storytelling will soon be applied successfully in Vietnamese classrooms.

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APPENDIX 1
Grammar test

I. Basic information

1. What is your name/ nickname?
.....
2. How old are you?
.....
3. What is your occupation?
 - A. Secondary school students
 - B. High school students
 - C. University students
 - D. Employees
 - E. Others: please specify
4. How long have you been learning English in total?
.....
5. How long have you focused on studying English?
.....
6. Which source(s) have you used to study English grammar? (You can choose more than one answer)
 - A. English Grammar books
 - B. English grammar videos
 - C. Movies
 - D. Music
 - E. Stories
 - F. Others: please specify
7. At the moment, are you studying English in other English grammar courses?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
8. What are your expectations when attending this course?
.....

II. Choose the most suitable answer for the blank

1. The staff will provide you with a short about the project.
 - A. Event
 - B. Advice
 - C. Overview
 - D. Choice

2. If you have questions regarding your purchase, please provide our staff with the relevant
 - A. informed
 - B. information
 - C. inform
 - D. informations

3. When Mary finishes lunch, can you askto see me in my office, please?
 - A. he
 - B. him
 - C. his
 - D. himself

4. Everyone found the report
 - A. satisfy
 - B. satisfactory
 - C. satisfaction
 - D. dissatisfy

5. Why did they kick the ball so?
 - A. hardly
 - B. hard
 - C. hardy
 - D. hardily

6. The Dilan Company produces the Mill Company.
- A. Twice fast as
 - B. As twice as fast
 - C. Twice as fast
 - D. Twice as fast as
7. My mother early every day.
- A. got up
 - B. get up
 - C. gets up
 - D. is getting up
8. You've left the door open. – Oh, sorry. I and shut it.
- A. go
 - B. will go
 - C. is going to go
 - D. is going
9. Everyone at the concert was by Ms. Vince's outstanding performance.
- A. impressive
 - B. impressionist
 - C. impressed
 - D. impressing
10. Ms. Kim is planning to attend the regional seminar, it is not absolutely necessary that she be there.
- A. where
 - B. or
 - C. although
 - D. due to

III. Fill in the blank with the correct form of the word in bracket.

1. You are never too old to go to college and gain some (QUALIFY)
2. Patrick Simmons is for both recruiting new sales personnel and training them. (RESPONSIBILITY)
3. The Young Business Leaders Society held anmeeting on Friday, April 18, with the guest speaker Mr. Frack. (INFORMATION)
4. Lan hasHuong. (AS ... PEN)
5. We my homework now. (DO)
6. When I was young, I often basketball after school. (PLAY)
7. I will introduce the new employees. names are Alfred and John. (THEY)
8. The castle in the 16th century. (BUILD)
9.I am too busy to come to the party. (UNFORTUNATE)
10. Bob works thein the morning. (EFFICIENT)

APPENDIX 2

Story of a sentence village

In a sentence village, there are many clause families, living happily together. This village is unique because when a boy grows up, he will be called “Noun”. In a normal clause family, there are a husband named “Subject” and a wife named “Verb”. They love each other so much that nothing can separate them apart; they will not be a family without each other.

One day, the clause family decided to have a baby boy. They name him “Object”. With the love of his family, “Object” grows up happily day by day, and he soon becomes a handsome and caring man. As the rule of the village, his name now changes to “Noun”.

A lot of girls fall in love with him, but he only pays attention to a girl named “Adjective”. She is such a beautiful and charming girl that every man wishes to be her boyfriend. No wonder why our Noun loves her that much. He always puts her in the first place, following her to make sure she’s happy and safe. With adjective by his side, Noun’s life becomes more colorful and more beautiful.

However, his mom “Verb” seems to like a girl named “Adverb” than “Adjective” because the “Adverb” girl dances gracefully and talks intelligently. “Verb” mom thinks “Adverb” would be the best for her son so she always keeps “Adverb” next to her. Indeed, “Adverb” is a supplement to “Adjective”. If they combine, Adjective will be much more attractive.

Despite his mom’s preference, Noun only loves Adjective, he fights so hard to marry her. In the end, mom Verb agrees that “Adjective” and “Noun” should be together, and “Adverb” is Mom “Verb” ‘s best friend. They all live happily together after all.

APPENDIX 3

Story of the “Ly” prince

Once upon a time, there was a Prince named “Ly” of the royal Adverbs family. He was so handsome and rich that he can get almost every girl he wanted. Any girls from the famous Adjectives family such as “Beautiful”, “Intelligent”, “Graceful”, “Elegant” wanted to marry “Ly” to be a part of the Adverbs family.

“Ly” became more and more famous among girls but “Good” did not find any interest in him. She fell in love with a man named “Well”, who was living in Adverbs family as a housekeeper. No matter how hard “Ly” tried to reach her, he failed to get “Good” ’s attention. “Ly” got angry; hence, he tried to flirt Good’s sisters to make her jealous. However, just like “Good”, “Hard”, “Fast”, “Late” and “Straight” did not pay attention to him. They knew how bad “Ly” was with other girls, so they would rather stay single, be themselves to be rich enough to be a part of Adverbs family than getting married with “Ly”.

“Ly” was so upset about it. He went to the bar and met “Early” and “Daily” – his old friend from Adverbs family there. “Ly” asked “Early” and “Daily”: “Why don’t they want me? I am rich and handsome. I have power in Adverbs family too. Why?”. “Early” and “Daily” laughed out loud and explained “Everyone has their own choices. Something you may think is good but actually it is not. You may think our royal Adverbs family is the best. Well, we are also from Adverbs, but sometimes, we just want to get out of it, take “Ly” off to live a normal life as an Adjective, but we cannot. We were born with “Ly”, no matter where we live, what we do, as an Adjective or Adverb, we still carry “Ly” as a part of our name. You know, it’s life, don’t expect everyone to be the same.”

After the conversation, “Ly” realized that life is full of irregularity, some adjectives want to be themselves when they be a part of adverbs, some want to have “ly” with them. It’s ok anyway, “Ly” felt a little bit better thanks to that.