

Journal of English language  
Teaching and Learning  
University of Tabriz  
Volume 11, Issue 23, (Spring & Summer 2019)

## **Exploring English Language Literacy as a Form of Narrative by Tracing Life and Resistance Stories in Curriculum\***

**Sareh Poursaduqi \*\* (corresponding author)**

TEFL Ph.D candidate, Alzahra University of Tehran

**Sue-san Ghahremani Ghajar\*\*\***

Associate professor of TEFL, department of TEFL in Alzahra University of Tehran

**Mohammadreza Sangari\*\*\*\***

Assistant professor of Contemporary Literature, department of literature, Islamic Azad University, Dezful branch

### **Abstract**

The researchers in this study aimed to explore the literacy shaped in a narrative-based curriculum for medical students and the productivity of this notion for foreign language literacy. Nourished by principles of narrative inquiry, critical, like, and other events, this was instantiated through exposing learners to narratives of resistance language and literature which reports on narratives of critical events. The findings of this study illustrate how the language in narratives of resistance as critical events inspires learners to discover their own English language learning events embedded in their real lives by deep reflection. This on its turn can lead to self-discovery for learning. Moreover, depicting the vastness of human soul and his/her adaptivity and struggle for learning in pain and suffering, English language embodied in resistance narratives can encourage learners to discover their roots for language learning via the power of sharing narratives .

**Keywords:** English Language Literacy (ELL), Resistance Language and Literature (RLL), Narrative Inquiry, Critical Events, Medical students

\*Received date: 2019/01/26 \_\_\_\_\_ Accepted date: 2019/04/24

\*\*E-mail: [s.poursaduqi@alzahra.ac.ir](mailto:s.poursaduqi@alzahra.ac.ir)

\*\*\*E-mail: [s.ghahremani@alzahra.ac.ir](mailto:s.ghahremani@alzahra.ac.ir)

\*\*\*\*E-mail: [m.sangari@yahoo.com](mailto:m.sangari@yahoo.com)

### **Introduction**

The representation of curriculum as prescribed map-like or one-suit-all materials has been criticized among literacy scholars (Freire & Macedo, 2005; Laidlaw, 2005). These scholars believe that developing curriculum as if they are maps of certain known roads is not acceptable. In the world of English language literacy (ELL), many studies demonstrate that the spoon-fed prescribed materials are of commercial nature and ignore the real life needs of language learners, and it is exactly on this account that these materials tend to fail in many learning contexts (Holliday, 2001; Kırkgoz, 2007; Nunan, 2003; Wedell, 2003). They are further disapproved for limiting teachers and learners' mindsets to certain repetitive neutral themes and topics for language learning and for underestimating teachers' and learners' own role in the learning process (Ghahremani-ghajar & Poursadughi, 2017; McLaren, 2016; Proglar, 2011).

During the last decades, the need for a curriculum which provokes self-directed language learning is negotiated and addressed (Gan, 2004; Navarro and Thornton, 2011). This demands reinvention of the curriculum and admission of complexity of foreign language literacy when "literate artifacts are entangled with other moments, objects, texts, histories, beings, selves" (Laidlaw, 2005; p 65), that is to say they are sculpted out of people's milieu, values, intentions, and most outstandingly, their lives. People tend to discover, evaluate, and approach their life experiences via narratives they narrate about them. Exploring ELL shaped by language learner narratives can embed this type of literacy in people's life stories and be a candidate to address this educational need by bridging language learning to real life.

The significance of shaping English language learning acts in narratives of people is doubled within the landscape of this study whose language learners are medical students. Medical practitioners diagnostic and inferential power takes its roots in their patients' life histories (case histories). The way they approach their patients passes through their exploration in patients narratives of their illness and symptoms. Their ability to gather a sensitive and nuanced history

besides performing a thorough and accurate examination deepens medical practitioners-patient relationships, focuses their patient assessment, and sets the direction of their clinical thinking (Bickley & Szilagyi, 2009). In the same vein, a novel field of study named *narrative medicine* was developed by Dr. Rita Charon and her colleagues in 2001. Narrative medicine highlights the importance of storytelling in medicine and its impact on physicians' personal insights and active affiliation which in its own turn can enhance their *connection, recognition, communion*. This can inspire patients to face their critical illness and empower their healing (Charon, 2006; Charon et. al, 2017). Therefore, exploration with narrative and narrative analysis in the general English medical course nourishes English language literacy acts with the narrative both as the phenomenon and a method. It may also simultaneously prepare students for other medical curricular and career demands.

The approach of language learning for medical students is still challenging from another perspective. Studies with a focus on practices of learning medical English declare the need for preparing students for active use of English upon graduation. This cannot be accomplished unless Medical English teaching expands the horizons of language learning via more problem solving, decision making, and inference-involved language activities. This is how medical students are encouraged to adapt practical skills applicable in specific future professional setting (Milosavljevic, Vuletic, and Jovkovic, 2015).

In this regard, within the landscape of this study two educational measures were taken to relate the ELL curriculum to both language learner academic needs and the conception of narrative. First of all, integrating narrative authenticity and originality, it was decided to start with the narratives originated in literature or literary genres. Next, this study was informed by the principles of narrative inquiry which prioritize and acknowledge the significance of human lives critical events in their learning. A critical event by the virtue of its definition transforms one's life after s/he undergoes a certain challenging or difficult experience which grants them with revelations

and transcendence. Hence, it was the narratives of resistance literature which were selected to be worked on as the language content to be explored by learners for their proliferation of critical events. These narratives are replete with ordinary people stories in and of war, military occupation of homeland, prison, and martyrdom which in effect change and transform many lives. The basic themes in all these stories are human endurance of suffering and pain, his/her resistance as well as challenges which are parallel themes in narrative medicine. Second, they open doors to new horizons of language learning beyond 'repetitive' topics and themes such as travel, weekend, restaurant, and food already presented in commercial McDonaldized EFL instructional materials. Third, its language reflects human responsibility and engagement for supporting their beings in suffering and pain and by hardships which are expected to happen in medical contexts by raising learner attention to topics like forbiddance of the use of mother tongue, language learning in prisons or during the war, pain of casualties, bitterness of death, and the sweetness of victory.

This study indeed presents our efforts to inspire learners with resistance and insight embodied in narratives of resistance and encourage them to engage with their surroundings, create, and share their own life narratives to enhance their acts of English language literacy. As an illustration, learners were involved with their fathers or mothers narratives of Sacred Defense events. Still more were the narratives of medical practitioners narrative of war along with the challenges, resistance, and learning which took place in eight-year Imposed war against Iran.

With the benefit of hindsight, this study was conducted to pursue the matter in the following questions: How may a narrative based curriculum marinated in resistance language and literature, critical events and codes of meaning shape English language learning (ELL) and literacy acts for medical students? How do language learners in this study perceive the RLL narrative frames of meaning and bridge it to their ELL and practice of medicine?

## Literature Review

### Narrative

Stories reflect life voyages and they represent the first forms of learning human beings experience in childhood. They characterize world views. Stories can construct and reconstruct a sense of the situated self in the world (McCormack, 2009). In spite of the essential role of stories in people's lives, their theoretical potentials for devising research tools have been studied only recently. Study of narratives (stories) was originally given an impulse in the field of literary theory, yet has gradually gained momentum in recent decades as the "narrative turn" (Hyvarinen, 2010; Riessman, 2005). Today narratives are utilized in different fields of study, including history, psychology, sociology, medicine, and education (Webster & Mertova, 2007). The narrative turn in various academic fields occurs on the account of the realization of the insufficiency of current statistical and empirical research methods in grabbing the whole picture of the phenomenon they are dealing with (Ellis, 2004; Harter & Bochner, 2009). However, in medicine, the narrative turn is also taken as a consequence of similar concerns, as Charon et al. (2017) maintains *narrative medicine* emerged to

challenge a reductionist, fragmented medicine that holds little regard for the singular aspects of a patient's life and to protest the social injustice of a global healthcare system that countenances tremendous health disparities and discriminatory policies and practices. We clinicians, scholars, and creative writers who began this work together were convinced that narrative knowledge and skills have the power to improve healthcare by increasing the accuracy and scope of clinicians' knowledge of their patients and deepening the therapeutic partnerships they are able to form (p.1).

Charon (2006) made the case that narrative medicine contributes to clinical effectiveness by developing narrative competence through *attention, representation, and affiliation*. This practice brings about

professional reflection and accurate interpretation of patient stories of illnesses for medical practitioners.

The domain of narrative inquiry dealing with the linguistic reality of human experiences focuses on human narratives as representations of their ways of knowing and thinking, nevertheless (Hart, 2002; Alleyne, 2017). Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) work was one of the pioneer works and a cornerstone in the field whereby narrative inquiry was introduced in educational research to acknowledge the importance of teachers and learner narratives of curriculum. Other researchers taking the narrative turn in educational inquiry also mostly look at the ways teacher narratives shape and inform their practice, research, and identity (Craig, 2013; Johnson & Golombeck, 2002; Norton & Early, 2011, Tsui, 2007). In applied linguistics, Barkhuizen, Benson, and Chik (2014) illustrate how narrative inquiry engages researchers of the field in the real worlds of teachers, learners, and their language learning stories. Barkhuizen et al. (2014) show that the study of language learners' self-narratives which are the stories they tell about their learning experiences can help researchers to discover how they situate their voice, identity, self, and individuality through language in the world.

Narrative inquiry is a vast field of inquiry, but within the context of this work, Webster & Mertova's (2007) categorizations for narrative events is employed as the basis for materials selection with the focus on critical events in materials development which is the common point among the events of medical practice, language learning, and RLL.

Table 1 Definition of Critical, Like, and Other Events

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<b>Critical event</b>	<b>An event selected because of its unique, illustrative and confirmatory nature</b>
<b>Like event</b>	<b>Same sequence level as the critical event, further illustrates and confirms and repeats the experience of the critical event</b>

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**Other event Further event that takes place at the same time as critical and like events**

As table 1 illustrates critical events are instrumental in changing or influencing our understanding in life. Furthermore, they convey messages beyond their own time and place. Nevertheless, other data sources, including teacher/researcher observations, reflective narrative documentations accompany this narrative-based curriculum to present a holistic view of the work.

**Resistance Language and Literature**

According to Torabi (2009) and Harlow (1987), the term *resistance literature* was first used by Ghassan Kanfani, the Palestinian poet, to describe the suffering and the pains imposed on Palestinian by the Zionist regime. Soon afterwards, this term became prevalent in the Arab world and then, in the whole world. Harlow's (1987) work which is the cornerstone of this literary genre observed the role of the language of resistance literature in the context and literature of the third World countries and maintains that this language travelled beyond the tight individual limits to convey a universal message which is to fight against oppression and cruelty to abate human suffering and pain. The value of this language for English language literacy lies in the fact that it can redeem language learners from the McDonaldized instructional materials that exaggerate the ideality of the target language culture and neutrality of human beings behaviors at the expense of negligence of human beings common roots and branches. Additionally, the ubiquity of this language can draw the curtains to fall on the cultural vertigo experienced by language learners in the process of English language learning.

In the context of Iran, language in the literature of the sacred defense (LSD) is known as the best manifestation of the language codes of the literature of resistance by literary experts (Amiri Khorasani & Hedayati, 2014).

Accordingly, in parallel with the prospects of this work in Iran, the proposed content for the curriculum in this study was developed based on Sangari's (2010) list of themes common between literature of sacred defense and the world RLL. As resistance themes in Sangari's (2010) work covered the common codes of meaning in the language of resistance between literature of sacred defense (Iranian Resistance) and the world (RLL), they can be studied to shed light on how human beings share their stories of suffering and pain as well as resistance and endurance to form a common code of language to talk about a common experience.

### **Method**

#### **Teaching Landscape and Participants**

This research project was conducted in Dezful University of Medical Sciences (DUMS) and for two general English courses. The milieu of Dezful as the City of Resistance because of Dezful people's resistance during the eight-year Sacred Defense deepens and strengthens the meaning made of the codes of resistance in this study. This research project lasted for two academic terms beginning September 2015 and ending in May 2016. A General English course was held for 24 sessions (two sessions each week) and was characterized as a three-unit course in the medical field chart. The participants in this study were medical students mainly aged between 18 to 20 years with the exception of two male and female students aged 25 and 32 years, respectively. The number of participants in each class was between 25 to 35. All participants in this study had experienced English classes in private institutes prior to entrance to university. The language level of students was not absolutely equivalent for all learners. However, the presupposed language level for course materials was considered intermediate by the English department in DUMS.

#### **Procedure**

In the first phase of the study, the researchers in this study decided on the kind of materials (narratives) to be worked on. In this regard, the most thorough and available list of prevalent themes in resistance language and literature developed in Sangari's (2010) analysis of



common codes of meaning between literature of sacred defense and the world resistance language and literature (illustrated in table 1) was selected for the development of a narrative-based curriculum focusing on critical events of resistance.

Table 2. Common themes between RLL and LSD

Symbolizing the language	Proposing the past honors
Appreciation and description of heroes and martyrs	Disdaining the enemy and reverence of self
Description of the enemy's cruelty and brutality	Inspiration of hope in the future and the promised victory
Illustration of the suffering of innocent people or the civilians	Appreciation of freedom, the nobility and the nobles (freedom fighters)
Invitation to resistance and defiance	Objecting against inconsideration, loss of identity ,luxurious lifestyle, ignorance, and hypocrisy
Appreciation of the fatherland	Anguish and alas for martyrs and the frontline nostalgia

Next, narratives were selected, and in some cases translated to be presented in class. These narratives were gathered from credible literary works in RLL and supervised by the third reader in this study. By this time, the researchers assumed that texts selection for language learning is not in paradox with texts selection for critique, and the analysis and achievement of both is possible since analysis and critiquing text meaning cannot be accomplished without mastery of linguistic features (Wallace, 2003). The rationale behind the materials development was adopted on account of materials criticality of the described events based on Webster& Mertova's (2007) definition of critical events in NI where they are characterized for the impact they have on storyteller's life and the change and transformation they bring

about in this regard. Still more to be considered was the narrative relevance to the current concerns, needs, language level of language learners in this study. Translated texts (10 percent of the total materials) were evaluated by the other two researchers for ensuring the accuracy regarding grammatical structures and wordings. Finally, the teacher researcher formed a database of prepared narratives in different modalities (written, audio, video, and so on) gathered from resistance literature for class presentation.

At the next phase, materials needed to be organized for class presentation. Adapting the critical event approach to narrative, learners needed to learn about how to study and approach the adopted narratives. Accordingly, first, the narrative sketch (its components) perceived by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) was introduced to learners in this study on account of its relevance to the field of education. This narrative sketch considers emplotment, character, scene, place, time, and point of view as the central components of narrative. Second, learners were also introduced to Yolder-Wise and Kowalski's (2003) list of the key reasons for creating stories to be guided in their search of deep layers of meaning and analysis. This list invited students to look for *recurring themes, consequences, lessons, what worked, vulnerability, to build for future experiences, and explore other resources*. In the same vein, in the first session of each week, learners were asked first to write the narrative sketch for the narratives they were exposed to. This was conducted as *morning sessions* similar to what medical practitioners in the hospital do when they present patient history (narrative). This phase unties the basic knots in the narratives and paves the way for the next phase which invites learners to reflect and discuss the first five elements in Yolder-Wise and Kowalski's (2003) list. Indeed, this list was only utilized for inspiring learners in their discovery with the narratives; however, they were encouraged to ask questions and discuss the narratives regarding whatever language matter attracted their attention. Then by the second session of each week, learners were invited to engage with the narratives in accordance with the last two elements of Yolder-Wise

and Kowalski's (2003) list, i.e. building for future experiences and exploring other resources writing their *like* or *other* events. This session was the simulation of *round* sessions of medical practitioners when they reexamine and rediscover their patients in groups to strengthen a medical diagnosis. This led learners to share their own narratives related to the resistance theme or code of meaning being inspired by the narratives they had worked on previously and invoke new meaning by objectifying the resistance codes of meaning in situ.

The narratives of each week were delivered to students one week earlier in order for them to have enough time to study texts in depth before the class and to enable learners to critique and analyze the texts more efficiently. However, in the beginning of each session, learners were encouraged to ask questions regarding vocabulary and grammar items in the text and the teacher took time to respond to these questions by relating them to their meaning representation in the text. Moreover, the teacher read all learner narratives each week and wrote comments. Students replied to teacher comments and rewrote their narratives as much as they could.

#### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The present study has a qualitative design in which data collection and analysis was conducted in several layers and levels and from different angles to accomplish triangulation of the data and method to ensure the foundations of its transferability and dependability. This research project lasted for one year (2 academic terms) for the teacher/researcher to achieve prolonged engagement and persistent observation. In this study, all interactions were audio-recorded, transcribed, and followed by in and post class teacher reflective notes. Moreover, learners' perception and articulation of the narratives (critical events), and themes of resistance were also gathered in learners' weekly reflective narratives (written literacy acts) to be examined for in-depth articulation of conceptions. Therefore, the bulk of more than 700 reflective narratives were collected and analyzed during the two terms in this study. However, the narratives of each term had been analyzed throughout and by the end of the term.

Furthermore, by the end of each term, learners' perception of the whole work was explored by asking learners to write down their English language *literacy narrative* guided by 8 questions developed by Webster & Mertova (2007) which are found to be useful in getting participants to reflect on the past events (here their literacy acts in a critical event narrative based curriculum for ELL). This could both encourage further reflection among learners and extend the realms of possibility for the researchers to explore literacy as a form of narrative.

The process of analysis of narratives was guided by Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) criterion for the interpretation of narrative, including broadening, burrowing, and restorying. This criterion is considered as the cornerstone in narrative analysis in educational research and continuously is employed by scholars in the field (Craig, 2007, 2013; Li, 2018; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Broadening refers to learners' generalizations of the narrative event and is of lesser value in its interpretation sense. Burrowing reflects learners' focus on the quality of the event itself and their attempts for reconstructing the event from the point of the involved character and is of more value since it can reflect learners' deeper engagement within their literacy acts. Restorying refers to learners' attempts to bridge the significance of the present and future events to contemplate their meaning in their real lives and the changes they can bring about for their self.

To demonstrate the contribution of narrative to learner engagement in depth of literacy acts, learner narratives were labeled with Broadening (Br), Burrowing (Bu), and Restorying (Rs) labels. Then the narratives written by each student during the year were divided into three groups based on their temporal sequence, that is 1<sup>st</sup> month, 2<sup>nd</sup> month, and 3<sup>rd</sup> month respectively to display the characteristics of student writing throughout the term. Next narratives of all students were gathered to gain the total picture of narratives for each month. We considered the proportion of the broadening, burrowing, and storytelling as an indicator of the amount of learner

engagement in the narrative-based curriculum in each month and the changes in quality of the narratives.

## Results and Discussion

### Learners Perceived Meaning

#### *Birth of Meaning in Language Learning*

One of the recurrent themes that emerged from learner exploration through the language of resistance is about learner discovery of word meaning in the worked and the written narratives. Learners discovered that the very most familiar frequent words that they had encountered in their prior English language learning experiences at school or language institutes gained a different meaning in the context of critical events in resistance narratives.

*Life is a word that now means different for me. In my English books out of this course, life means lifestyle and everyday simple present tense actions, but now I see life as life. It means I am alive..... I know that everyone dies, but it differs when everyday or every moment one might be killed because of war..... The border between life/death can be touched in war. I guess the same is experienced in hospitals everyday by doctors. I don't know how we come along with this....*

*Bathroom meant a room where one takes a bath or a shower to be clean every day. Some have a shower. It is a room in addition to other rooms in a house with certain linked vocabulary like towel, bath-tub, etc. However, bathroom in these stories presented other meanings: taking a bath after weeks of loss of water, after returning home after being far in battle lines which is so refreshing, or being afraid of bathing 'cause you might be killed naked as a result of missile attacks while taking a bath.....*

The data was proliferated with these themes where learners associated new connections of meaning to the words they already knew. This directed the language learning experience to different paths where learners wiped the dust of repetitiveness and redundancy

from the word meaning and polished the association of meaning in their memory. The analysis of the data revealed that depth of learner involvement with the criticality of narratives boosted their attention to the variety of the concepts and the referents which can be associated to the word representations in the real world. *This birth of meaning* in language took its roots in the *language of pain* and *the suffered* which is noted in narratives and later represented in learners own narratives.

*I read stories and I created ones. I experienced delight and pain as if I am giving birth to my English. This is new for me. It is delightful to write because I can see I can do it, but it was painful because it wasn't easy to tell your story in a foreign language....to be honest when you study about people endurance of bad beyond pains and still go on you can't be indifferent even if you try, you must say something.....*

*These narratives were full of forgotten excellence. They reminded me of the growth I can have if I help others and care for them in difficult situation. I need to use for my patients....I must be patient in my job. This patience meaning is gentle in our job. I mean we need to be patient with our patients...*

Decoding and coding meaning in English language were experienced by learners through unfolding the language of pain and the suffered, stimulating the language of affection, and promoting the language of identification and affiliation. Human beings cannot be indifferent of other human fellows' pains and suffering as caring is one of their invaluable traits. The English language acts of literacy were *affectionized* and *humanized* in this study; that is to say, the folded stories of vast horizons of meaning and human possibilities were unfolded in the active creation and involvement with language of the pain and the suffered in the narratives. This probably inspired these language learners to shape their *language of care* which is one of the fundamental qualifications in the practice of medicine notified in the field of narrative medicine.

### **Narratives and Literacy**

*Reflection, Resistance, and Growth*

Further analysis of learner experimentation with English language in their created and studied narratives revealed still another pattern of meaning related to learner meta-cognitive and meta-language efforts. The language of pain, the suffered, and the care embodied in the narratives of resistance provided learners with insights to establish their relationship between the self and the world and inspired them to change their world by writing about it which was guided by language exploration. The inspiration event is shaped partly because language learner emotions and thoughts were stimulated by the affectionized language of resistance narratives as well as their criticality.

*I recognized my English learning in this course gave me the chance of being introduced with real lives of great people who had the power to prove themselves to the world around them.....Writing about these people and watching around for the relevant cases helped me to involve in my world and my life more than before.....*

*When you are asked to read and think about all these critical events in people's lives, you can escape from the cage within you to fly to see other places at other time..... when I wrote my narratives in English, I saw that I can tell my stories to the world because today people communicate by English and they can hear you better....*

*Time sometimes is so short, sometimes so long. But I understood that one can create a long story in short time when s/he feels the necessity like these martyrs whereas one may not be able to create even a short story in long time as s/he does not mind time or necessity...*

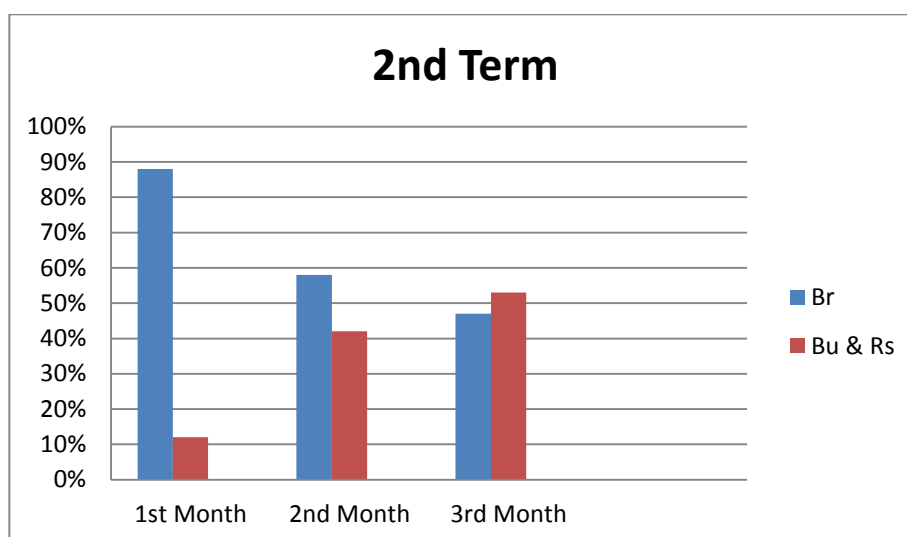
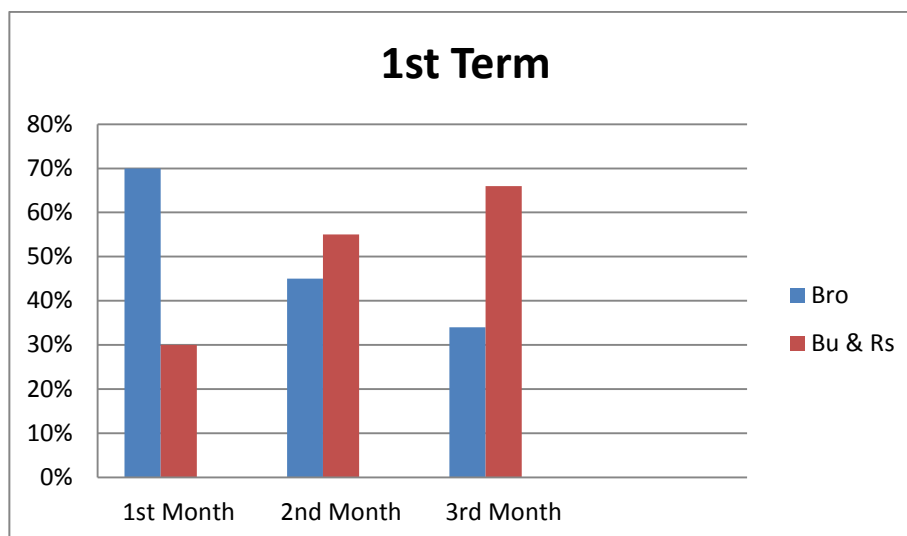
Learner attempts to search in insightful critical events and discovery of the underlying meaning guided them to unfold their stories, i.e. thoughts and provided them with the frame of meaning (narratives) to express their own meaning. According to Oishi et al (2012), narrative is the “strongest method for organizing fragmentary

knowledge human being has” (p.2126). In this sense, narrative sketch represented a canvas for learners where learners were required to choose their colors (language elements=fragmentary knowledge) to fulfill this canvas of meaning.

This part of the argument is observed in the emerged patterns of the data and in parallel with the broadening/burrowing/restorying pattern of engagement in critical events. As people tend to think in stories in all cultures which is a universal trait for human species, the narrative canvas decreased the cognitive load of language learning as such. Hence, learners had to focus on the linguistic items which embodied their stories and the deep layer of meaning they were inclined to express. That is why the broadening/burrowing/restorying coding of the data (Figure 1) showed that by the passage of time learner burrowing and restorying pattern in their narrative was increasing as they were getting more and more familiar and engaged with the narrative canvas for creating meaning. Still more was found to be the link learners demonstrated between the burrowing the narratives and restorying the self narrative when the former brought about the latter. In other words, these two interpretive patterns were observed in parallel with each other. The thread of this link was actually pursued by researchers in learner emotional engagement with narratives as if the more they engaged with the content message the more they identified themselves with the characters and consequently the more they rediscover the significance of the messaged for their present and future distinctions and reactions.

Figure 1 The Distribution of Narrative Modes





However, the narratives of resistance tended to impact language learning still more from other perspectives. They pave the way for students deep reflection. This entails learner engagement in deep layers of meanings which predominate human being lives as a whole and address the basic essence of their beings that is independent from their routine lives. Second, the narrative canvas enabled learners to delineate their reflections by and in narratives where one can enjoy the benefit of humane universal frame of meaning for settling his/her

position, knowledge, and values. However, the length of experimentation with the language and meanings of narratives affected learners capability of burrowing meaning during the course as learners patterns of burrowing by the end of the third month of the academic term was rising in comparison to the previous two months each term. Nevertheless it was the narrative canvas (guided by the narrative sketch and search for their underlying themes) which permeated learners mind and freed them from the hustle and bustle of everyday live. In this canvas, they explored the depth and vastness of meaning in the story of their and others' resistance and endurance and fortified their efforts for transforming lives by shaping their language of care.

*Suddenly I noticed stories everywhere. My mind is full of stories. I found myself listening to others stories. As a future medical practitioner, I need to involve with people, so I must involve in people's stories. (Bu)*

*Our English course this term reminded me of the fact how people can tell different stories about one event, so I think we have to discover the truth ourselves...(Br)*

The issue of reflection as mentioned in the above learner narratives gained more significance for the learners in this study on account of their academic field of study (medicine) and their future career (medical practitioners). As mentioned earlier, medical practitioners are highly engaged in their patients narratives, what they call case histories. In this sense, language learner discovery of narratives can benefit the learners in this study in parallel with their future professional demands of high-order inference and affiliation for making difficult decisions.

Eventually, learner reflection by and in narratives steered their learning ship through the channel of self-development and self-cultivation. The rising pattern of burrowing/restorying in learners created narratives during the course each term is taken as the basic evidence for this. The more learners were engaged in burrowing

meaning, the more they were engaged in reasoning and reflecting, and consequently the better they could make attempts so as to discover and express the meaning in their learning. Engagement with the narratives and learners struggle for creating meaning led learners to bridge the self to the world via their English literacy acts brought about learners cultivation and growth.

*I have never found myself that confused in myself about what I did in life and the role of English in this. Previously, I learnt English to be able to speak it and understand it as I thought everybody should do that because of its importance in today's life. But now I used English to know myself and my family and friends.*

*This course was so different. Instead of talking about favorite restaurants or hotspots for vacation.....we talked about human suffering and endurance. This was different but difficult. These topics are heavy but they made us take shelter in stories far from the bunch of noise in Instagram..... where many people are SHOUTING their parties and ordinary outdoor and indoor activities to show off ... at least, here I had the chance to be myself and think about me as me and how I want to be in life and what my REAL story is....*

### **Conclusion**

This research reports on some of the dimensions of a wider scope study which cannot be fully argued within the limitation of one article. However, this part of work took the turn to focus on the inherent essence of narrative and the immanent power of critical events adopted from the world RLL in shaping language learner literacy acts. Inspired by the principles of NI and the human enthusiasm for learning through stories, language learners in this study who were medical students derived much benefit from the narrative canvas for both their language learning and preparation for their professional engagement with patients' narratives (case histories) in the future by discovering the language of pain and the suffered and giving birth to the language of care. A narrative based curriculum which took the

advantage of transformative critical events from RLL invited learners to discover their values, beliefs, and capabilities and achieve a kind of cognition not only about themselves but also human beings thorough reflection and burrowing meaning in theirs and others' narratives and restorying their own language learning narratives. Aroused by human adaptivity for learning and survival represented in the insightful language of resistance or different meanings of words under hard and complicated circumstance like war, racism, exploitation, and so on, they were encouraged to struggle for making and telling meaningful stories in their lives which directed them on the track of self-cultivation in their ELL acts and narratives. Finally, this qualitative study proposed an alternative self-directed curriculum which enables medical students to join their foreign language education with narrative inquiry and self discovery.

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