

絵本と第二言語教育：ストーリーランド をとおして、みえてくるもの

政 次 カレン (子ども学科)

Storyland: using picture books in second language education

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This paper will describe how Storyland, a library of children's English books, continues to encourage and support reading in English both by students and members of the local community, and serves to provide a unique training environment for future teachers and childcare workers.

Keywords: picture books, teacher education, Teaching English to Young Learners.

Introduction

As described in a previous study (Masatsugu, 2013) Storyland was established on campus at Kwassui Women's University in 2009 to provide access to quality, age- and level-appropriate English books and materials for parents and children to read together, and support for bicultural families trying to raise their children bilingually. Periodic read-aloud events are held to encourage shared reading and parental involvement in children's English literacy, and to provide experience for student-teachers at the university. The library also provides resources for local teachers and currently contains over 1800 books including picture books, chapter books and graded readers.

This paper will describe how the library has continued to work in the intervening years since the previous study, investigating whether the original aims are being fulfilled, and if the users and their needs have changed over the past five years.

Background

Storyland is open to the general public for borrowing once a month (except September) and two read-aloud events are held each academic term, usually around week 8 and week 15. Since 2012, fourth year students from the Department of English and the Department of Child Development and Education who choose to take Reading Activities I & II class, have been required to plan, prepare and carry out the read-aloud events. In class students self-select English picture books from Storyland to read and study together, considering textual, visual and cultural aspects. They practice reading aloud and design language learning and play activities based on the books, and perform retold stories in various formats such as panel theater, apron theater, 'kami shibai' (stories told with picture cards), and puppet shows. Some students choose to do graduation projects connected to Storyland, for example creating an original picture book, or a handbook for elementary school teachers about using picture books in class with the 'Hi Friends' textbook.

The library is free of charge, and is open to anyone with an interest in reading in English, either for

themselves and/or their children. Once they have registered, members can borrow up to four books per family, for a period of one month (between the library open days). Many people attend the events who do not register as members or borrow books.

Picture books and stories in second language education

The benefits of reading aloud for native speakers (Trelease, 2001; Fox, 2001) and the use of picture books and stories in teaching English to Young Learners (EYL) are well-known (Cameron, 2001; Moon 2000; Slattery & Willis, 2001; Wright, 1995, 2013). In their book for primary teachers of English, Slattery and Willis state: “Stories are the most valuable resource you have. They offer children a world of supported meaning that they can relate to” (Slattery & Willis 2001: 96).

Recent research has shown that picture books are not just for children but can be utilized with older foreign language learners to foster traditional language literacy, visual literacy and social and political educational objectives encompassing intercultural awareness (Bland and Lutge 2013; Mason 2013). In her introduction to the collection of studies on children’s literature in second language education, Bland states it is “essential to provide university students in teacher education with criteria for selecting complex yet linguistically appropriate children’s literature” Bland 2013: 5), and MEXT proposals suggested that from 2018 teacher training courses for elementary school teachers in Japan should include “overseas children’s literature” (Japan Times 2016).

The literature on Extensive Reading (ER) in EFL stresses that easy access to suitable books is essential for any ER program and is the first item on Pilgreen’s (2000) list of factors for maximizing the effects of a reading program, while Krashen (2013) reiterates that a library is a better investment than skills-based reading teaching. In reference to children in the Japanese context, Akazawa (2016) observed that younger children interact with books more than older children and suggested that enjoyable experiences of shared reading at a young age will increase children’s chances of becoming early independent readers, while Claflin suggested that easy L1 children’s books can be a useful bridge to native speaker literature, “the training wheels on the bicycle that takes the young reader towards the world of adult literature” (Claflin 2012: 157.)

Storyland therefore endeavors to provide access to appropriate books for people who wish to read in English for pleasure and to improve their English, either by themselves or with and for their children, and resources for teachers of EYL. The events aim to provide a pleasurable experience of reading in English, and provide valuable practical experience for students hoping to be teachers or child care workers in the future, as they learn about the books and how to use them with an audience of various ages and abilities.

The study

A mixed-methods approach (J. D. Brown, 2015) was used to ascertain how often members were attending, borrowing and reading the books; how much students were reading; and what, if any, benefits students felt they gained from Storyland.

The data consists of quantitative data from the attendance, membership and borrowing records of Storyland, (maintained by the researcher), and qualitative data collected by questionnaire from library users either face-to-face or by e-mail, written reports by students, and observational notes made during and after open days, events and classes. An online survey was also sent to 14 recent borrowers but received zero responses.

Results: Library Users

Attendance, membership and borrowing records were examined to determine how many people are attending, how regularly, and how many books they borrow. Table 1 shows the total annual attendance between 2013

(since the previous study) and 2017, including all open days and events during that time. Attendance peaked in 2016 at 255 people and shows a considerable decline in 2017, down to 161 people. Event attendance corresponds to yearly attendance as shown in Table 2, the greatest attendance being 129 people in 2016 declining to 92 people in 2017. The average attendance at events was 27 to 28 people or ten families. The largest attendance was 51 people (20 families) at the January 2016 event and 46 (17 families) at the November 2015 event. The lowest attendance rate was in July 2014, when only six people, two families, attended. The February, June and July events in 2017 had an average attendance of eleven, ten and seven families respectively, but the November attendance fell to four families or thirteen people. As mentioned above, not all attendees register as members. Table 3 shows the membership growth between 2013 and 2017, one family being counted as one member. It shows a gradual rise from 72 members in 2013 to 113 members in 2017, the largest increase being in 2015 when 17 new members joined. Of these new members since 2013, 40 are Japanese, three families are foreigners (an Italian, American/Finnish and South African family) and seven are Japanese-bicultural families. Just under 25% of the total membership is non-Japanese or bicultural, however many have moved away and no longer attend.

Table 1: annual attendance 2013~2017 (January to December)

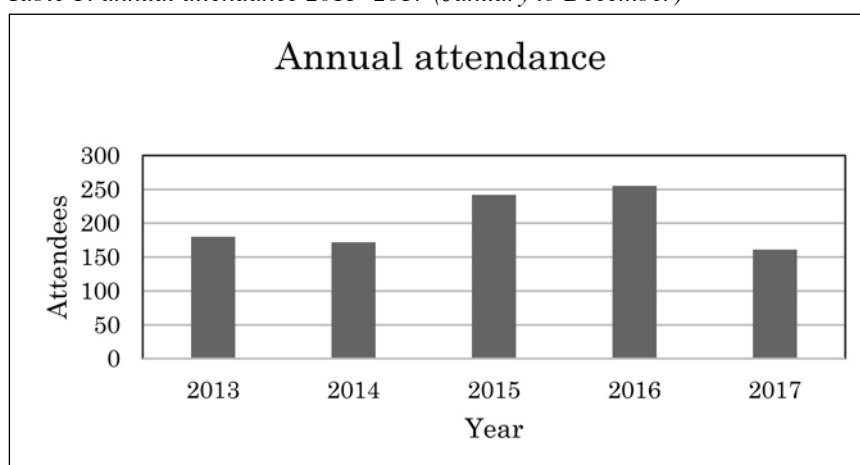


Table 2: Event attendance 2013~2017

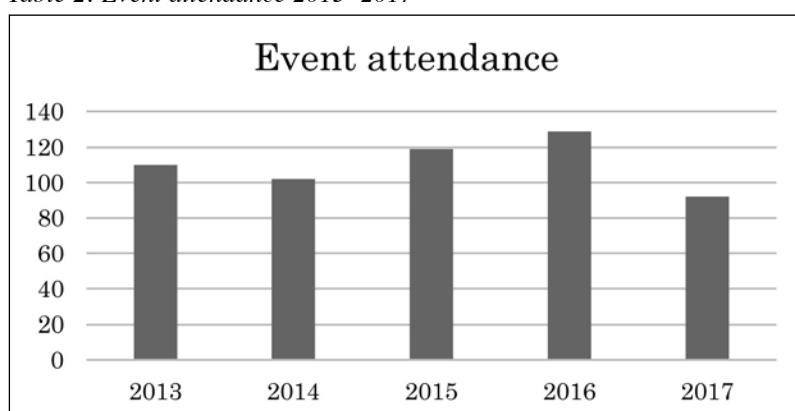
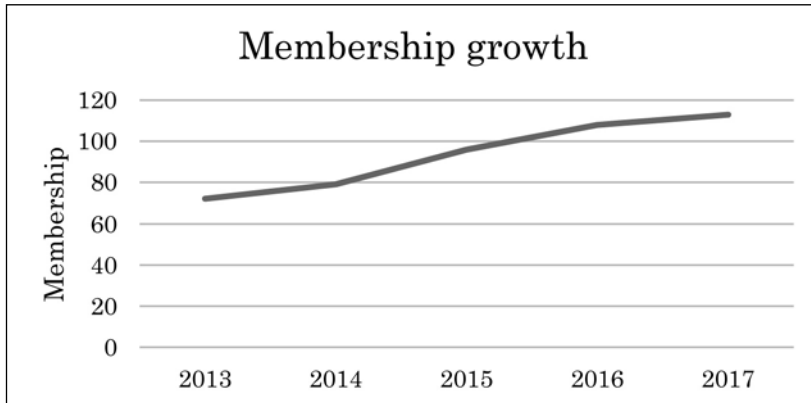
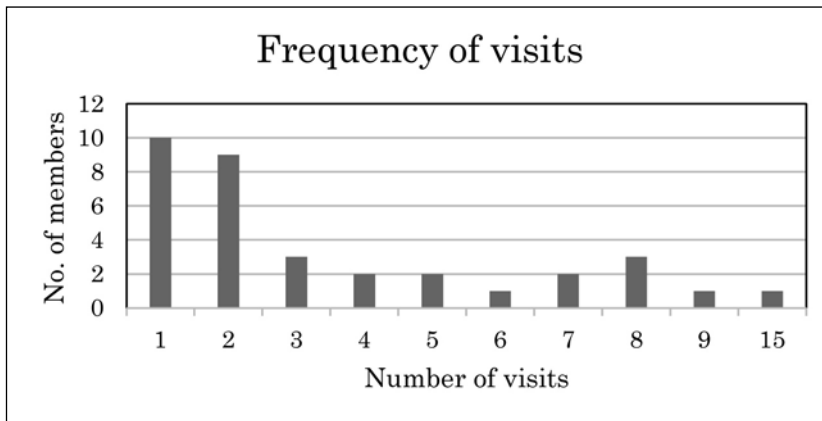


Table 3: membership growth 2013~17



Attendance figures between May 2016 and December 2017 were examined to determine how often people are attending. During this 20 month period, Storyland was open for borrowing and events a total of 21 times.

Table 4: Frequency of visits May 2016~December 2017.



As seen in table 4, most members only attended once or twice in this period. The most frequent visitor attended 15 times, followed by 8 or 9 times. A closer look at this data will be made in the discussion section. The borrowing records of the members who visited during this period were examined to find out how many books they were borrowing.

Table 5: Number of books borrowed May 2016~December 2017

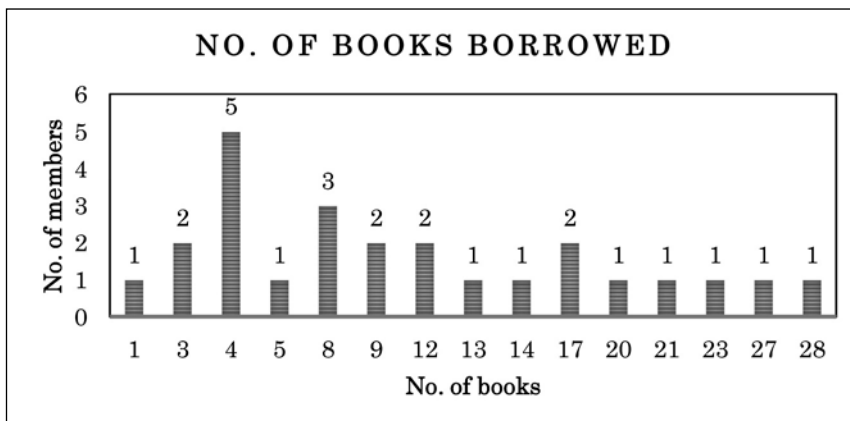


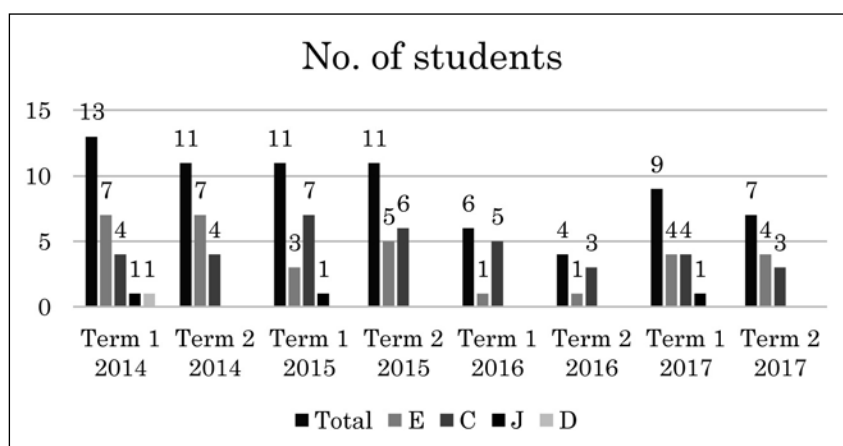
Table 5 shows the variation in the number of books borrowed. A total of 25 members borrowed books in the 20 month period. Five members borrowed 4 books, while five members borrowed more than 20 books each. Again, this data will be discussed in more detail later.

A questionnaire (see appendix) was created in July 2017 to try and ascertain how much people were actually reading but due to time constraints only five were administered, three face-to-face at open days, and two by e-mail. The e-mail version was edited down to the first five questions only. Of the respondents, one (M105) is a retired man who borrows books to read himself, while the others are families who borrow books to read aloud together. All were Japanese. Three of the families said they read the books every day or almost every day before bedtime for between ten to twenty minutes, the other reported they read the books two or three times during the borrowing period.

Results: Students

As for students, Table 6 shows the number of students who have taken the Reading Activities I & II classes since 2014, and which departments they belong to.

Table 6: number of students taking Reading Activities I & II, 2014~2017.



Usually the same students take the class both terms, with some minor changes, and the proportion of English Department students (E) to Child Development Department students (C) varies from year to year. In term 1, 2014 one student from the Design Department (D) took the class, and in term 1 2014, 2015 and 2017 foreign students studying in the Japanese Department (J) also took the class. A total of 43 different students have taken the class during the four year period.

Table 7: number of books borrowed by students April ~January 2017

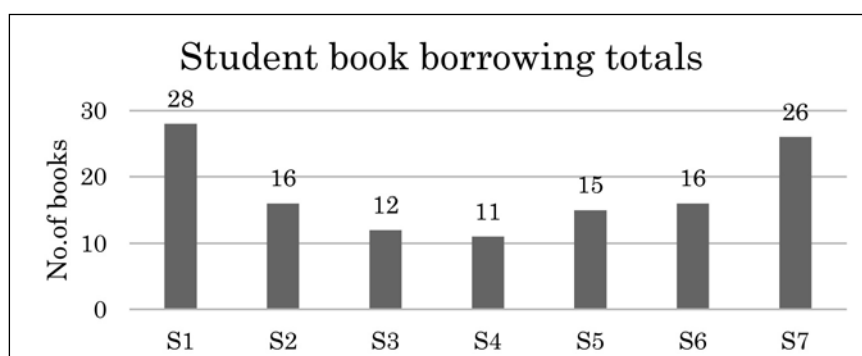
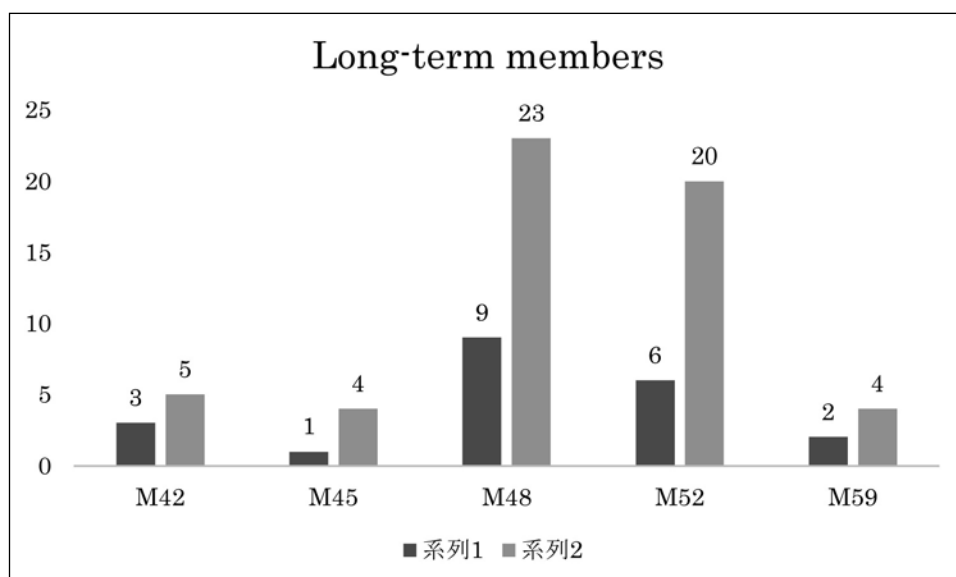


Table 7 shows the number of books borrowed by the seven students who took the Reading Activities class in both terms in 2017 and shows the book borrowing rate to be lower than anticipated. With a total of 30 classes we would expect to see at least 30 books borrowed whereas the highest were 28 and 26. Possible reasons for this will be discussed below.

Discussion

Between May 2016 and December 2017, twenty five members borrowed books. Of these, five are long-term members, three since 2011 and two since 2012. One is a bicultural Japanese/British family. The other twenty members all joined between 2015 and 2017. No members who joined in 2009~10 or 2013~14 have borrowed books in the previous twenty months. People often join and borrow books at an event but don't maintain regular attendance or borrowing. Observation shows that the stronger the parent's English ability, the more likely they are to borrow books more regularly.

Table 8: Long-term members' frequency of visits and borrowing rate May 2016~December 2017

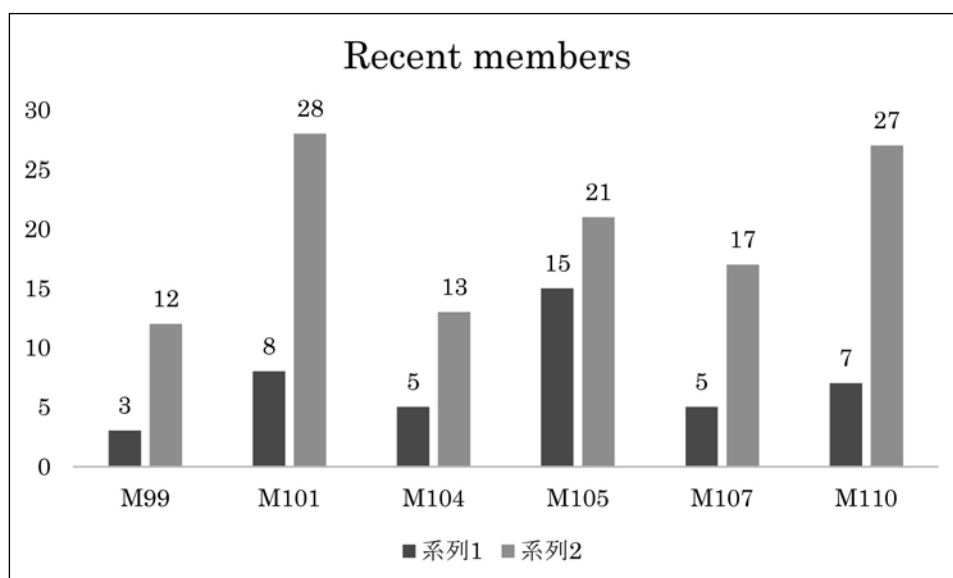


Examining the recent attendance and borrowing records more closely might show the reasons for the relatively low rates. Table 8 shows the attendance of (Column 1) and number of books borrowed (Column 2) by the five long-term members between May 2016 and December 2017. Member 42 who joined in May 2011 and has a ten year old daughter, rarely attends because of health issues. Member 45, who joined in June 2011 and has two daughters aged eight and twelve, although very keen, visits rarely because of other commitments. Member 48, a bicultural family who joined in November 2011, are the most regular visitors and frequent borrowers of this group, although their attendance has decreased since their son, now eight years old, started school. Member 52 joined in January 2012 and has two daughters aged six and three who she is trying to raise bilingually. They attend a monthly English class for mothers and children which sometimes coincides with Storyland open days and events so they are unable to attend. Member 59 who joined in October 2012 and has three daughters aged six, four and one, has only visited once since her third daughter was born, suggesting that she is too busy with childcare to attend Storyland.

Table 9 shows the attendance and borrowing records of members who joined in 2016~2017 and who borrowed more than ten books in the period May 2016 to December 2017. Column 1 shows the number of visits, Column 2 the number of books borrowed. M99 are a bicultural family with two children who joined in

June 2016 and were active borrowers but who moved away in the spring of 2017. M101, mother of two boys aged three and one, is typical of many members in that after joining in July 2016 she attended and borrowed books regularly for the first six months, but her attendance has fallen off to only twice in 2017. She was one of the respondents to the e-mail questionnaire in August 2017, reporting reading daily with her children before bedtime and it is not clear why her attendance has declined. M104 is a foreign family with eight and three year old children born and raised in Japan. They also attended regularly after joining but have been unable to attend since May 2017 because of other commitments.

Table 9: recent members' frequency of visits and borrowing rate May 2016~December 2017



M105 is a retired man who studies English privately and borrows books for his own reading pleasure to improve his English. He attends regularly to borrow books, usually borrowing one or two graded readers. M107 with a three year old son are also keen borrowers but have not attended since June 2017 because of pregnancy, although they express a desire to attend in future. M110 is a fluent English speaker who has lived abroad and is a former junior high school English teacher currently teaching in a private language school. She responded to the questionnaire in person in July 2017 reporting reading with her two year old daughter every day at bedtime.

The other two respondents to the questionnaire were M95 and M106. M95 joined in November 2011 and have two daughters aged nine and seven who attended an International Kindergarten in Nagasaki where they learned to read in English. The family attends Storyland unless they are busy. In a face-to-face interview in Japanese in December 2017, the mother reported that they had only read the borrowed books a couple of times due to lack of time. She wants her children to read English books “to learn English in a natural way” and they have some English picture books at home which are left around so that the children can read them anytime. Although they used to read in English in kindergarten they don’t now they are in elementary school, but they sometimes watch Disney movies in English with English subtitles. M106, a Kwassui graduate, joined in December 2016 and has a 3 year-old daughter. They have attended seven times and usually borrow one or two books. Responding to the questionnaire by e-mail in August 2017, M106 reported reading the books with her daughter almost every day for fifteen minutes.

The interview data and observational notes suggest that users are motivated to read English with their children but are restricted from borrowing because of the limited times Storyland is open and not being able

to attend when it is. The data also suggests that users may need more ongoing support and encouragement to keep attending and reading, and that they stop attending as their children start elementary school.

In the period examined in detail, May 2016 to December 2017, out of a total of 33 families, nine foreign or bicultural families attended, suggesting that there is still a need for a place for those families to be able to borrow English books and take part in English activities. It is also apparent that Japanese families enjoy the interaction they and their children have with the foreign and bicultural children, some of whom attend kindergarten or school together. Many of the Japanese families say they borrow books and attend because they want their children to become familiar with and enjoy reading English before they encounter it in school, especially as English, including reading and writing, will become a required subject from the 5th grade in 2020.

Regarding the impact of Storyland on students, as noted in the results section, student borrowing was relatively low. This could be the result of the pressures of 4th year life, with job-hunting and graduation thesis writing meaning that students had little time to read, or were absent and therefore didn't borrow books. However, students read both individually and aloud to each other in class, and were exposed to a considerable number and variety of picture books. Students' self-reports reflecting on the December 2017 event show the positive effects of being involved at Storyland on their development as teachers and child care workers.

Five of the seven students commented on what they felt they learned from taking part in the event. S1, 2 and 3 are Child Development and Education majors, S6 and 7 are English majors. S5 did not take part, while S4 did not respond to these questions.

Table 10: What did you learn from taking part in the event?

	What did you learn from the event?
S1	I learned how to read to a variety of children, how to communicate to them, how to get them to listen. (Translated)
S2	I thought that is important to reduce the irritation (stimulation) of the surroundings and make an environment where you can concentrate from (child's name) behaviour.
S3	I learned amusement of the picture books and English. I want to tell many Japanese about what is interesting about English picture books.
S6	The number of children was small, but the event was so interesting for me. I learned how to make a sock puppet and paper bag puppet, and I realized that children love craft activity. They really concentrated on making crafts. I could learn some animal sounds from the book about a turkey.
S7	I learned a lot. This time we faced the real unexpected girl. She was so clever and nice and active enough to run around during the activities. It was a good opportunity to have a child like her to learn how to manage children. We were confused at first and did not do well. However as time went on I found how to deal with her by talking to her or just letting her go.

Two students commented about the effect of being involved in the event on their English.

Table 11: Do you think preparing, practicing and participating in the event improved your English?

	Do you think preparing, practicing and participating in the event improved your English?
S2	Yes, while watching a picture, listening to English, I was able to think and understand what it was. I got to know a new word and English song. However as I am often confused to make a conversation, I would like to study (edited).
S7	Absolutely. First, preparing for the event I could know a lot of beautiful and wonderful books chosen by my friends. In those books are so many unfamiliar and interesting words. In addition I learned both language including pronunciation and grammar which is often used in English picture books and English speaking countries cultures. Second, on practice, I could realize how I can improve my reading in order to let them listen comfortably. I practiced reading again and again. Sometimes I have a pause between the sentences or the pages. I hope it was effective to get people's attention. By trying things that I could think of as much as possible, I believe that my reading got better than before. Third, participating in the event always made me excited and nervous but it built my mental strength, I hope. We sometimes face unexpected things like children are so active enough to be needed to get over somehow.

S7 also gave her overall impression of the event and being involved in activities with students from the Child Education department:

I believe that I could express what I have learned in your class on that day. I practiced my reading many times and thought how can I read this story to tell the story and meaning of the book to the audience effectively. I changed my voice depending on the person who appeared in the book and took some both slow and rapid paces on my reading... When I supported my friends I could deal with the children well. ...These 4 years I could learn so many things from them. They know how to deal with children, especially younger ones. S1 tells me how to direct children with short and easy words. S2 shows us how to get children's attention. S3 shows her cute kind face to the children. I learned these are important when we face children. I tried absorbing the parts of their wonderfulness that I admire and respect. This time I could output some or more of them.

Conclusion

Storyland continues to provide access to appropriate books for families in the community, and enjoyable experiences of reading aloud and performed stories at events. However the restricted opening times prevent Storyland from having a greater effect on users' reading quantity. This study was hampered by a lack of qualitative data. Better records need to be kept to more clearly evaluate users' borrowing, perhaps by asking them to keep reading logs, or rate the books for enjoyment and difficulty levels. Ideally, case studies of individual families and students could show greater insights into the effects of reading for pleasure on language acquisition and attitudes to learning English.

All students who have taken the Reading Activities class and participated in Storyland since 2012 have appreciated the unique practical experience it has given them, to learn about picture books, improve their English skills and gain exposure to a variety of families.

Challenges remain to publicize the library and the events to a wider audience and to maintain users' participation as their children grow older.

Appendix: Storyland user survey (paper questionnaire)

1. How often did you read the books?
2. How long do you spend reading the books?
3. Who reads the books? You Your child / children Someone else
4. Do you read them together? Who:
5. If you didn't read the books, why not? No time Too difficult Not interesting
6. What kind of books do you / your children like?
7. If you don't know the pronunciation of a word, what do you do?
8. If you don't know the meaning of a word what do you do?
9. Why do you read books in English, or want your children to read books in English?
10. Do you read other books in English?
11. Do you do any other English study or use English in your daily life?

Informant data:

Membership number:

Nationality:

Mother-tongue:

Languages spoken at home:

Books returned:

Date borrowed:

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<要旨>

絵本と第二言語教育：ストーリーランドをとおして、みえてくるもの

本稿では、英語の絵本や児童書専門の子ども文庫ストーリーランドの2013年から2017年までの活動の理論的背景説明する。地域の親子も、大学生の英語の読書を促進し続けていく方法を説明し、将来の教師や保育士のためのユニークな育成環境を提供する方法について説明します。