

Use Of Short Stories To Develop Reading Skills At Secondary Level In Public Schools In Rahim Yar Khan: An Experimental Study

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Abstract

The current study examines the impact of using short stories from English as original material to develop reading skills: an experimental study conducted among EFL students at the secondary level in Rahim Yar Khan region. The main objectives of the study were to assess whether English as a foreign language learners can develop reading skills using short stories. The research is then limited to the study of EFL learners of secondary level in public schools in Rahim Yar Khan. The study will use the Pretest-Posttest Equivalent-Group Design. The short story program is expected to have a positive effect on reading comprehension. Secondary level public schools of Rahim Yar Khan were selected through an appropriate selection process. The accessible population consisted of total 80 students. 80 students were selected by simple random sampling. The results of reading comprehension tests clearly showed that the use of short stories in the development of reading skills has a strong positive effect on student achievement and is more interesting learning material for students than those in their textbooks.

Keywords: Short stories, reading skills, secondary level,

1.1 Introduction

English is an important means of communication in the age of globalization. English is the international language. This means that each country uses English to communicate with people from other countries. English is inseparable from people's activities, as it helps them to communicate or communicate widely. In addition, we know that many books are published in English, and almost every product, including services and goods, uses the same language. Hence, Obviously, English is inseparable from our daily lives.

There has been a great deal of discussion about the use of literature in language classes. Its use in

language classes is not new and its use in international languages has been one of the main materials of the Grammatical Translation Method of teaching English Literature since the 19th century. Students were required to translate literary works into their native tongues. Students solely focused on the surface level, such as dictionary definitions and grammatical structures. They were unconcerned about the passages' literary significance. In comparison to the Grammatical Translation Method, however, the utilization of literature in language schools has altered dramatically. There are no current literary works used in the translation. Hismanoglu (2005), the ultimate goal of language teaching used to be literature. Literature is now

used as a source of creative material in language classes. The use of literature to teach both basic language abilities (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and language areas (i.e., vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation) is particularly popular in this area. Furthermore, many language teachers in translation classes require students to translate literary materials into their home tongues, such as dramas, poems, and stories.

Özdemir (2002) emphasized that critical reading is a skill that should be used throughout life. As a result, assisting EFL students in mastering critical reading is crucial in preparing them to be critical readers in the future. Despite the necessity of critical reading, many EFL professionals believe that students have a limited ability to be critical (Macknish, 2011) or no ability to criticize at all (Buckingham, 1992). The findings of Hayati's (2010) study in Indonesia showed similar concerns. When attempting to apply critical pedagogy, he discovered that EFL teachers encounter a dilemma in that Indonesian pupils are inexperienced with producing difficulties and asking hypotheses. According to Kirkpatrick (2007), the purpose of reading an EFL in a college curriculum in Indonesia appears to be extremely effective: just comprehend the material in the text. In other words, the curriculum of Indonesian ELT programs emphasizes on reading the text only through questioning it, rather than pulling it out of the text. The findings of other investigations back this up (Cahyono & Widiati, 2006; Sulistyono & Suharmanto, 2007; Floris & Divina, 2009).

Reading plays a very important role in our lives. It is a part of everyday life, without which it is difficult to imagine a life. Reading is one of the most important factors in shaping a person's personality and developing their vision, which brings them closer to other individuals. Reading truly liberates and shields people from ignorance and misunderstandings (Unal, 2010).

Furthermore, reading abilities help individuals to profit from educational activities as well as fully participate in social and economic activities (N'Nambi, 2005).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Short stories in the EFL classroom provide students with numerous educational, intellectual, cultural, and linguistic development opportunities. The short story is one of the literary genres that can be used in the EFL classroom to develop language abilities, encourage students, and increase cultural understanding and tolerance. Short stories can be used as a vehicle and a powerful and compelling resource to help learners reinforce and practice language.

1.3 Research Objectives and Questions

Objectives of the study were:

To ensure that EFL learner's reading skills can be developed through the use of short stories.

How can EFL learner's reading skills can be developed through the use of short stories?

1.4 Delimitations of the Study

The study is limited to the study of EFL classes at the public schools in Rahim Yar Khan none of the other private or public institutions were included in the study.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Teachers struggle to balance the need to offer the finest education possible for pupils with the requirement to use the resources allotted to implement the curriculum wisely. At a younger age, students are expected to grasp reading skills. The importance of reading in educational reform stresses the acquisition of reading abilities. Teachers are expected to teach students to read using the most effective ways available (Bush, 2001).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter, called the Literature Review, is based on a review of the literature on the impact of short stories on the variable 'reading comprehension skills' in the current study. It also lists previous research and literature that explores and discusses the nature of the relationships between these variables.

2.1 Concept of Reading

There are four skills that students need to learn in English: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Tadros (2014) states that reading is the process of constructing meaning from a written text. This is a complex skill that requires the coordination of a number of interconnected sources of information. Clearly, reading is the most important language skill, for those who learn to read will benefit from it. Students are expected to have solid reading abilities in order to expand their knowledge and learn new things. Reading is not a talent that can be learned in a passive manner (Harmer, 2001). This indicates that by comprehending the components of language, the reader may comprehend the meaning of words. Berardo (2006), claims that reading is an interactive process (a conversation between the writer and the reader, even if the writer is not there). It is the interplay between teaching and reading that occurs when people read a material.

2.2 Concept of Reading Comprehension

Grabe and Stoller (2001), reading is the ability to extract information from the text and connect it with information and expectations previously available to the reader. Because the goal or end of a reading activity is to understand what a person is reading, reading and comprehension are inextricably linked. Readers build their own connections between the language's sign and the symbol's meaning as they read. Al-Salmi (2011, p. 698) states that reading comprehension is not only about understanding the print on a page, but

also about creating meaning by combining what the print says with what all the reader has already acquired as knowledge. It is possible to understand the result obtained by the reader after reading the text.

2.3 Aspect of Reading Comprehension

According to Davenport (2007, p.61), there common types of questions in reading:

1. Identify the main idea, the main idea, the author's purpose, or an alternative title for the transition.
2. Recognize the tone of the fabric or determine the style.
3. Understand the information directly in the piece (find supporting details).
4. Answer relevant questions, even if the author's thoughts or ideas are not directly expressed.
5. Recognition of the structural methodology used to develop the transition, for example, sequence (reference).
6. Conclude the limited information provided by the author and draw a logical conclusion (meaning of the conclusion)

This research focuses on the main idea, supporting details, meaning of the result, dictionary and reference. Suparman (2012) states that the main purpose of understanding the main idea is to obtain the main idea. The primary idea is the most important concept developed by the writer throughout the paragraph. The reader must be astute in defining the text's key concept. The primary point is frequently expressed in the first or last few phrases of the opening paragraph by the author. The author, on the other hand, can express the key idea at any point in the section. Occasionally, the author merely makes a mark inside the work and only suggests the basic idea. There may be more than one primary concept in a lengthy reading. The theme of a literary work is

sometimes referred to as the central idea of the piece (p. 130).

2.3.1 Supporting Detail

Facts and concepts that prove or explain Gloria's main point are known as supporting details (1989: 106). Auxiliary sentences or specialised information expand on a topic sentence by providing a definition, example, fact, event, comparison, analogy, quote, cause and effect, and so on. After reading a Cinderella stories, for example, a general query about specific details can arise, such as: (1) Where did Cinderella live? (2) What was his mother's attitude toward Cinderella?

2.3.2 Inference Meaning

Based on the logic of the transition, the result is a good approximation or result. Finding a conclusion indicates that the reader has grasped the meaning of the sentence or piece and has arrived at a logical conclusion. Questions about such reading can be an example in general: (1) What is the story's moral value? (2) If you were in his shoes, what would you do?

2.3.3 Vocabulary

According to Linan and others. (2007, p. 87), the role of vocabulary in reading is clearly understood: vocabulary knowledge helps to understand and use the meaning of words, reading comprehension and building knowledge. To understand a dictionary is to understand what words mean. As vocabulary improves, perception will deepen. The problem of understanding the dictionary can be for examples: (1) What is the closest meaning of the underlined word? (2) What is the synonym for the word "beauty" in line 5?

2.3.4 Reference

An intentional use of something to signify something else that offers the information needed to comprehend one another is referred to as a reference. Finding a result necessitates the

translation of one language statement into another. (1) Does the word "o" in line 2 apply? (2) Does the word "o" in line 2 apply? (3) Does the word "o" in line 2 apply? Reading and comprehending all of the preceding definitions entails gaining a knowledge of the main idea, supporting facts, conclusions, vocabulary, and references.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This investigation was carried out using an experimental design. Hypotheses about the cause-and-effect relationship are tested using the experimental technique. This is the only study method that can be relied upon to solve the cause-and-effect relationship. The researcher discusses the issues that have arisen in the development of education as a science, as well as the practical and theoretical answers to these issues. The researcher manipulates at least one independent variable, controls the other relevant variables, and is fully aware of the consequences of one or more dependent variables in an experimental study. The experimental group receives a new or different treatment. To compare if a new treatment is more effective than a conventional or traditional technique, or whether one approach is more effective than another, a control group is required. Two sets of groups, control and experimental, are required to evaluate the influence of short stories on EFL learners' reading skills at the secondary level. To draw findings from the study, the performance and achievements of different groups were compared. Two groups were observed in the study to determine the true benefits of short stories on reading skills. The size and statistics of the observed groups were almost equal. The data collection and analysis for the study were done in a quantitative manner. To validate results and

facts, as well as to assure quantitative correlation of data, a quantitative technique is used. As a result, the data was quantitatively collected, as well as quantitatively analyzed and interpreted.

3.2 Population of the Study

This research was designed to find the effective development of the reading comprehension skills of the students of secondary level so that the research population consisted of EFL students from public schools.

3.3 Sample of the Study

A convenient selection technique was used to choose public secondary level schools of Rahim Yar Khan. There were 30 pupils in the accessible population. To create a homogeneous

atmosphere, previous findings and records of the people were analyzed. A basic random sampling method was used to pick 30 pupils. They were also divided into two groups and given a random task to complete for the purpose of the experiment. Every member of the sub-majority had an equal chance of being elected. One group was independent whereas the other was dependent. Group A followed the typical route and became an independent group. Instead, group B was converted to the group that received the treatment of the short stories approach and was accepted as a dependent group, with pre- and post-tests formed to measure the impact of short stories and examine student progress and learning. The sample's details are listed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Group wise representations

Sr. no	Group	No of EL learners
1	Controlled group	15
2	Experimental group	15
	Total	30

Table 3.2: Gender wise representations

Sr. no.	Gender	No of EFL learners
1	Male	14
2	Female	16
	Total	30

3.4 The Research Site

The study was conducted at public secondary schools in Rahim Yar Khan. compiling the main site for data collection, analysis and implementation of the results obtained from the current research. The main purpose of the research is to tell short stories taught and studied in the context of EFL to improve students' comprehension skills on the research sites.

3.5 The Research Instruments

Two critical reading tests were used as a tool to collect information from participants.

3.6 Data Collection Tools

Initial and subsequent tests were done on both the control (Appendix C, D) and experimental groups in the study based on this test. The mean comparison of both observation groups was subjected to a T-test, and the results were withdrawn and evaluated in light of the study

objectives posed in the first chapter. Finally, conclusions were drawn and pertinent recommendations were made.

3.7 Data Analysis

In order to obtain statistical and graphical evidence of the data, the data will be analyzed with the help of SPSS and conclusions will be drawn based on the findings.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the results of the research. The answers to the topics are given first in the form of tables, then a general summary of the results, as well as a detailed description. The researcher collected data from 30 randomly selected students. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-23.0) was then used for analyzing the data. This chapter describes descriptive frequencies, percentages, average scores, and std. Deviation analysis of the data.

Table

4.3 **Age**
group of the Learners (N = 80)

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 20 years	30	100

Table **4.4**
Gender of the Learners (N = 80)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	14	46
Female	16	54
Total	30	100.0

Table **4.3**
Mother Tongue of the Learners (N = 80)

Mother Tongue	Frequency	Percentage
Urdu	8	26.6
Saraiki	9	30
Punjabi	8	26.6
Other	5	16.6
Total	30	100.0

Table **4.4**
Independent t-test for reading comprehension pretest

Pretest	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control	15	39.86	15.48	-.390	78	.698

Experimental	15	40.73	13.58
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Sig. $p < 0.05^*$

As indicated in Table 0.1 above, there was no significant difference in scores for the experimental group ($M = 40.73$, $SD = 13.58$) and the control group. ($M = 39.86$, $SD = 15.46$); $t(-.39)$, $p = .698$ (two tailed). The differences in the

means (mean difference = 0.87) was very small (eta squared = 0.001). This shows that the two groups were similar in terms of reading comprehension before the treatment.

Table 4.5

Independent t-test for reading comprehension posttest

Pretest	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control	15	42.00	13.58	11.61	78	.000*
Experimental	15	68.46	11.26			

Sig. $p < 0.05^*$

The results of independent t-test for posttest in Table 0.2 indicate that there was a significant difference between the two groups in their final test ($p < 0.05$). Accordingly, there was a significant difference in scores for the experimental group ($M = 68.46$, $SD = 11.26$) and the control group, $M = 42.00$, $SD = 13.58$; $t(11.61)$, $p = .000$ (two-tailed). The difference in the means (mean difference

$= 26.46$) was very large (eta squared = .533). This implies that the experimental group considerably outperformed the control group in the reading achievement post test. In order to determine the mean gain or difference of students in the experimental and control groups, a repeated measure t-test or paired sample t-test was computed as presented below.

Table 4.5

Paired samples test within group progress

Pretest	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control group pretest	39.86	15.48	-.860	59	.394

Control group posttest	42.00	13.58			
Experimental group pretest	40.73	11.51	-12.96	59	.000*
Experimental group posttest	68.46	11.26			

Sig. $p < 0.05^*$

As depicted in Table 0.3, the mean scores of the control group posttest and the pretest were 42.00 and 39.86 respectively. A 2-tailed paired samples t-test for mean difference showed that the mean gain between the post- and pretests mean scores was 2.14 ($t=.860$, $df=59$). This mean gain between the pre- and posttests mean scores of the control group was not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance since $p=0.394 > 0.05$. On the other hand, the achievement mean scores of the experimental group posttest and the pretest were 68.46 and 40.73 respectively. The achievement mean gain between experimental group pre- and posttests mean scores was 27.73. This clearly shows that using short stories to teach reading skills has a strong positive impact on students' achievement.

5. Findings, Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Findings

1. There was no significant difference in scores for the experimental group ($M = 40.73$, $SD = 13.58$) and the control group. ($M = 39.86$, $SD = 15.46$); $t (-.39)$, $p = .698$ (two-tailed). The differences in the means (mean difference = 0.87) were very small (eta square = 0.001). This suggests that the two groups were similar in terms of understanding what they read before treatment.

2. In the last test, there was a significant difference between the two groups ($p < 0.05$). Respectively, the experimental group ($M = 68.46$, $SD = 11.26$) and the control group, $M = 42.00$, $SD = 13.58$; $t (11.61)$, $p = .000$ (two tails). The difference in means (average difference = 26.46) was very large (eta square = .533). This indicates that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in the post-test reading achievement. To determine the mean gain or difference of students in the practice and control groups, a repeat measurement t-test or a paired sample t-test was calculated as presented below.
3. The control group averaged the final and initial test scores of 42.00 and 39.86, respectively. For the mean difference, the 2-tailed paired samples t-test showed that the mean gain between the post-trial and initial trials was 2.14 ($t = .860$, $df = 59$). This mean gain between the control group pre- and post-test scores was not statistically significant at 0.05, as $p = 0.394 > 0.05$. On the other hand, the average achievement scores of the post-experimental group and the initial test were 68.46 and 40.73, respectively. The mean score between the pre- and post-experimental tests was 27.73. This clearly shows that the use of short stories to teach reading skills has a strong positive effect on student achievement.

5.2 Conclusion and Discussion

The objective of the study was to assess whether an EFL student's reading skills could be developed using short stories. The results of the survey showed that the short stories were interesting to read, and the students read them with pleasure and witnessed their relaxation. Students also said that if they were given a choice, they would prefer short stories to readings in the text. This shows that the reading parts of the text are not interesting and encouraging. This, in turn, can result in highly affective variables that hinder admissions and create a negative attitude toward students' skills. These results are consistent with the findings of Krashen and Terrell (1983). Their research clearly shows that when the learning environment or atmosphere is relaxed and stress-free, students change their access to admissions, and literature can solve the problem of motivation and attitude for many learners because it is interesting and possible. encourage learners to speak (McKay, 1982).

Finally, the results found that the use of short stories in reading lessons helped to engage students more. This suggests that short stories are a valuable tool for engaging students in the learning process and for creatively interpreting individual problems, which in turn helps them understand. This finding is consistent with Oster (1989). He noted that when students read short stories, they interact with the text. They comment on what they read by interacting with the text. They can try to speak more creatively in English by commenting on what they read. A study by Masgoret & Gardner (2003) focusing on the relationship between second language achievement and the five relationship / motivation variables showed that the relationship between achievement and motivation and achievement and learning status was very high. The importance of attitude in learning a second language is clearly demonstrated in the results of this study. Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

5.3 Recommendations

The findings of this study have a number of important implications for future practice.

1. In-service trainings or seminars for foreign language teachers can be helpful in discovering lesson plans, materials, and assessment tools based on the Reading to Write model.
2. In future research, it may be possible to use a different type of text, such as non-fiction, instead of fiction for the same model.
3. Trainings, seminars, refresher courses, orientation classes should be conducted for teachers to teach short stories.
4. Teach teachers to use pictures, definitions, synonyms, antonyms, matching items, different usage patterns, etc. when teaching a short story dictionary. It is recommended to give.
5. Teaching short stories with materials makes the class livelier and more effective, allowing for longer comprehension, so teachers are encouraged to use teaching materials.

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