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Conceptualizing and Implementing the Content of Short Stories as Pedagogic Tasks in Teaching Vocabulary: A Case Study of " English for Iraq" in Intermediate Schools

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Article Info	Abstract
	This case study aims to explore the efficacy of conceptualizing and implementing the content of short stories as pedagogic tasks for teaching vocabulary in intermediate schools within the context of "English for Iraq" curriculum. Traditional methods of vocabulary instruction often rely on rote memorization and isolated word lists, which may not facilitate meaningful and contextualized language learning. By utilizing short stories as pedagogic tasks, this study seeks to provide an alternative approach that promotes vocabulary acquisition through engaging narratives and authentic language use. The research methodology employed a qualitative design, incorporating observations, interviews, and pre/post-tests to evaluate the impact of the approach on students' vocabulary development. The study involved a sample of intermediate school students in Iraq, who received instruction through the "English for Iraq" curriculum. The content of short stories, carefully selected to align with the students' language proficiency level, formed the core material for vocabulary instruction. Findings from the study indicate that the reconceptualization and implementation of short stories as pedagogic tasks in teaching vocabulary yielded positive outcomes. Students exhibited increased motivation, engagement, and retention of vocabulary items through exposure to meaningful and context-rich narratives. Furthermore, the approach fostered improved reading comprehension skills and facilitated a deeper understanding of cultural and linguistic nuances embedded within the stories.

Introduction

New English curricula contain short stories as a tool of teaching English. Short stories proved to be effective tool for teaching English because they not only increase the student's lexicon but also they activate their imagination and teach them how words can be characterized in a clear context. That is why they are depended by modern English curricula in Iraq. Their desirable style and attractive representation of events increase the students' linguistic ability in making them understand and discuss the content of the story in English will increase their linguistic comprehension when they are introduced to its deeper context.

Pedagogies of teaching vocabularies are important. There is a tendency to believe that teaching is all about teachers and teachers' job; yet, the students and what they learn are the most essential components of the educational process. As a result, what is meant by learning must be re-thought. Many discrepancies in ideas and concepts may be found in educational literature, particularly educational psychology. It is a well-known reality that most instructors are created rather than born. Through consistent and purposeful efforts, good instructors build their knowledge and abilities. Understanding the teaching-learning process in more depth is one of the prerequisites for being a successful teacher. This promotes a greater understanding of both the teaching profession and the educational process. Furthermore, teaching is a series of activities that take place outside of the classroom and are intended to help the internal learning process. The learner is not involved in the teaching (instruction). Learners are responsible for their own learning.

Meanwhile, one cannot motivate others unless one is motivated themselves. Motives are not visible, but behaviors are possible. Topics are presented by providing particular observations, case studies, or issues, and theories are taught or students are assisted in discovering them only after there is a need to know them. Inquiry learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning, case-based teaching, discovery learning, and just-in-time teaching are some of the most often utilized inductive teaching strategies discussed in this study. The study outlines each approach, identifies commonalities and contrasts, and examines data on the methods' efficacy. While the quality of the evidence varies per approach, inductive methods have repeatedly been demonstrated to be at least as good as, if

not better than, classic deductive methods for reaching a wide range of learning goals. "while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (Wilkins, 1972). In the meantime, the inclusion of literature especially fiction and short story in teaching English particularly vocabulary learning and teaching seems inevitable and indispensable in the era where real life matters are so academic in nature though unacademic in form and expression. One may find lots of knowledge wrapped in fictional gloss. This research can contribute to a growing teaching vocabulary in short stories inside the classroom. Building on existing teaching as a pedagogic work, this research project may provide an overview of using vocabulary inside short stories as well as teaching them cooperatively. It seeks to investigate the practice and processes of negotiating employment and caring responsibilities for learning L2 language.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher has a question for which he has chosen the problem as follows: Is the Implementation of short stories effective for developing students 'vocabulary? The study will explain the literary ways that help students in intermediate schools to enhance their vocabulary. They may read books or materials that are beyond their grade level in some situations. Teachers should not prohibit students from reading short stories, comic books or graphic novels, but they should learn what genres they enjoy and encourage them to read. Some students may have poor prediction abilities, leaving blank holes in their reading and missing a lot of information, making it impossible for them to deduce the meaning of a new word from a phrase or paragraph; They may be unable to transfer new terms to real-life vocabulary. New terms are readily forgotten and never utilized in this situation. As a result, the instructor should choose phrases that are as close to the real world as possible.

Lack of practice is very important problem that students suffer from. The problem that faces most of students is the lack of motivation, and learning environment outside the classroom.

In fact, According to recent studies, teaching vocabulary can be difficult and problematic since many instructors are unsure of the best practices in vocabulary education and, at times, are unsure where to begin to develop an instructional emphasis on word acquisition (Berne &Blachowicz, 2008). Because languages are built on words, teaching words is an important part of learning a language

(Thornbury, 2002). It is nearly hard to learn a language without words; even human communication is founded on them. The learning of vocabulary is a crucial aspect in teaching a language, according to both teachers and pupils (Walters, 2004). One of the most debated aspects of teaching English as a foreign language is vocabulary instruction. Around 128,000 "word families" may be found in a huge dictionary. The typical college student knew around 58,000 common "basic terms," 17,00 unusual "basic words," and 96,000 derivatives and compounds, according to the study.

Unfortunately, many students face difficulty to learn new words. For many students learning English as a second language, a lack of appropriate vocabulary knowledge is an evident and major barrier. Most learners see vocabulary acquisition as their colossal single source of issues, and most learners openly confess that they have significant trouble with it (Meara,1980). Meanwhile, vocabulary is an aspect of foreign language training that has been ignored for a long time, vocabulary is a major issue for pupils, particularly in Asian nations.

Purpose of the Study

The most important purpose of this study is to describe the implementation of techniques used in classroom; To describe the teacher's instructional methods for teaching English vocabulary; To discuss the students' reactions to these tactics. It aims to reconceptualize and implement the content of short stories and introduce ways with which teachers can introduce literary content inside the classroom and students may learn it as well as perform it. It also aims to learn about the effective vocabulary learning tactics employed by English major students, as well as to determine which strategies have a favorable impact on the students' vocabulary acquisition. In addition, this research has been conducted to determine what approaches are used by students who have high learning efficiency. It aims to help teachers and students be acquainted with instructing and acquiring vocabulary through short stories. It also tries to show how short stories are good materials for language classrooms for achieving the targeted purpose. The findings can be used as a guide, dependently or independently, by the students and teachers as they will ponder upon many techniques in vocabulary expansion through redesigned use of short stories as tasks in an Iraqi environment with an eye to a course book.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in proving how short stories can increase and improve students' linguistic competence and performance. If the stories had a desirable style, they can attract the students' interest and can activate their imagination. They teach students not only new vocabulary or grammar, but they also teach them how to understand words from their context. Introducing words in a certain context make the students memorize the vocabulary better when they learn the words in a clear context. For sure, short stories that are convenient to the students' level can really make a difference through teaching English in a desirable and attractive way that is directed to activate the students' imagination and mind.

Research Questions

The questions must reflect the title which has to do with the inclusion of short stories as content and pedagogical task for teaching vocabulary. Therefore, this research aims to address the questions below.

RQ1. How can the content of short stories be redesigned as tasks for teaching English vocabulary?

RQ2 What is the impact of using short stories as pedagogical content for teaching English vocabulary?

Literature Review

The Concept of Pedagogic Tasks in Short Stories

The concept of pedagogic tasks in short stories involves using short narratives as educational tools to facilitate learning and promote critical thinking among readers. Pedagogic tasks are specific activities or exercises designed to engage readers in analyzing and understanding the story's content, themes, and literary elements. In the context of short stories, pedagogic tasks aim to enhance reading comprehension, language skills, and cognitive abilities. They can be tailored to various educational objectives, such as developing vocabulary, improving reading fluency, or exploring moral dilemmas.

Teaching and Learning Vocabulary through Short Stories

The necessity of extensive reading in the growth of EFL learners' vocabulary is crucial, despite the fact that there are several ways and tactics for teaching and growing vocabulary of

EFL learners (Nagy and Anderson, 1984). And in that sense, "using short tales might be the most effective way to accomplish this. Both EFL teachers and students can profit greatly from the usage of short tales" (Pathan and Al-Dersi, 2013, pp. 04–06). A summary of these benefits is provided for making reading comprehension simple, engaging, and enjoyable. The vocabulary development of EFL students is greatly aided by stories. According to Blachowicz and Fisher (2004), pupils with extensive vocabularies are those who read widely. As stated by Brabham & Villaume in 2002, "A serious commitment to decreasing gaps in vocabulary and comprehension includes instruction that allows all students to learn and use strategies that will enable them to discover and deepen understandings of words during independent reading" (p. 266). EFL teachers can benefit from teaching vocabulary via context by employing short tales to expand the vocabulary of their students. Looking for hints in the phrase that could reveal anything to the reader about the meaning of the term in question is all that is required to teach vocabulary through context. The effect of verbal and visual cues on learning words in context has been researched. In this regard, Walters (2006) noted that when 11 ESL students, whose ages ranged from 17 to 47, engaged in an English language program, were offered skills for deducing the meanings of new terms from context cues, reading comprehension increased.

The Advantages of Using Short Stories in English Language Teaching and Learning

They provide learners of new languages realistic environments in which to process it. According to Collie, J. and Slater (1991), "the tales and other literary writings use language meant for native speakers, they can act as a guide for language learners as they acquire the many forms and customs of the target language" (p. 4). The use of stories can help kids' general linguistic abilities. They can also introduce EFL students to a broad range of styles because literature is where the language's resources are most effectively and skillfully employed. Additionally, short stories aid EFL students in developing their communication skills. Lazar, G., another famous proponent of the use of short tales in ELT for language proficiency, thinks that stories may offer teaching and learning material that is "motivating, authentic, and has great educational value." (Lazar, 1993, pp. 17–18). Such materials help EFL learners improve their language awareness and interpretive skills in foreign language classes. This method of using short stories in the classroom may help make learning a foreign language enjoyable by adding a

little spice and excitement. Additional linguistic advantages of using short tales in EFL classroom is the straightforwardness of sentence patterns and language.

For EFL courses, the use of short tales offers several sociocultural advantages. For thousands of years, telling tales has been the most effective way to teach morals, values, and common sense. According to Kirschenbaum, "Storytelling is one of the effective tools for inculcating morality, especially for the youth, as stories contain powerful images and symbols and operate on both conscious and unconscious levels, conveying intellectual and emotional meaning," (1995, P. 68). Stories can be the most effective way to instill remedial cultural and moral values in today's modern, culturally sterile world, where cultural values are degrading daily and many evils and tribulations are infecting the young generation with unthinkable bad habits, immoral deeds, immodest behavior, and horrific crimes, in their early, impressionable age. The greatest source of information for this is likely to be local folklore. While teaching foreign language skills, EFL teachers might experiment with the inclusion of diverse religious and moral tales as well as myths, legends, fairy tales, fables, and folktales from the culture of the EFL learners. Even historical tales and tales concerning the national heritage of EFL students might be employed. Due to their familiarity with these stories, such usage would not only make language learning interesting and simple for them, but it will also revive their sense of national pride and ideals. While teaching and learning foreign language skills, tales from the culture of EFL learners may be engaging and successful. However, stories from culture of the target language. Such tales from the culture of the target language might offer highly important cultural details about the target language. They can broaden EFL students' understanding of the nation

Strategies of Teaching Vocabulary in Short Stories

Some of these 'strategies' are mentioned by Vanisree and Charyulu (2015) as follows; "associated words, word formation, word compounding, synonyms and antonyms, word families, idioms and collocations, etc. are some of them" (p.41). Associated words, as a strategy of teaching vocabulary in short stories, involves helping students establish connections between new vocabulary words and related words they already know. By drawing on the familiarity of existing vocabulary, students can better understand and remember the meaning and usage of new words. Begin by presenting the new vocabulary words to the students. Provide clear definitions, examples, and context to help them grasp the meaning and significance of the words. Prompt

students to brainstorm and identify words that they already know and that are related to the new vocabulary words. Encourage them to think of synonyms, antonyms, words with similar meanings, or words used in similar contexts. These related words will serve as anchors to which students can connect the new vocabulary. Engage the students in a discussion about the similarities and differences between the new vocabulary words and the associated word Guide students to create word associations that connect the new vocabulary words with the related words. These associations can be based on similarities in spelling, pronunciation, meaning, or context. Encourage students to make mental connections between the new words and the associated words to solidify their understanding. ds they identified. Encourage them to analyze the nuances in meaning, usage, or connotation. This step helps students develop a deeper understanding of the vocabulary and its variations and its citizens and the individuals who speak the language being studied.

Enhancing the Quality of Learning

Additionally, short stories' illustrations typically catch students' interest and encourage them to read them. Vocabulary is regarded as the fundamental concept and the fundamental building block in learning a foreign language, hence researchers and linguists place a lot of emphasis on the various learning techniques designed to assist students in expanding their vocabulary knowledge. Traditionally, memorizing a list of words without actually using them in context was thought to be the extent of vocabulary development. Nowadays, learning new words is considered as an active process that involves both the definition of the words in dictionaries and their application in various settings. Reading short stories is really one of the most efficient learning techniques that a foreign language student may use to extend and enhance his or her vocabulary knowledge since it involves both word definition and usage. Reading comprehension and vocabulary are two facets of the same concept. In other words, they have a tight bond. Reading and understanding texts will be made simpler the larger and more varied the learners' word bank is. In other words, a reader's understanding of word meaning is a prerequisite for pupils' successful comprehension. Without a shadow of a doubt, reading plays a crucial part in improving a foreign language learner's vocabulary; the more the student reads from legitimate sources, the more his vocabulary will advance. Numerous studies have demonstrated the substantial correlation between word knowledge and text comprehension. Harmon (2002)

indicated that "many students continue to struggle with comprehension due to limited vocabulary knowledge and ineffective strategies," (p. 606). In other words, students who lack a strong vocabulary may have a difficult time comprehending and conveying the content of a book or passage. All of these points of view are in favor of the notion that reading in general and short tales in particular are the most efficient and practical learning strategies utilized by EFL students to build and expand their vocabulary knowledge. Short tales expose students to new word meanings and word situations. That is to say, certain words have more than one meaning, and as the context shifts, the meaning of those words also adjusts to match the new setting. Reading short tales gives learners the chance to encounter new terms in various settings. Additionally, short tales inspire pupils, and it has been demonstrated that engaged students learn more.

Method

Design

The research topic was "Reconceptualizing and Implementing the Content of Short Stories as Pedagogic Tasks in Teaching Vocabulary: A Case Study of 'English for Iraq' in Intermediate Schools." This indicated that the study focused on the use of short stories as pedagogical tasks for teaching vocabulary in the context of English language education in intermediate schools in Iraq. The research was characterized as a qualitative study of ethnographic nature. This meant that the study aimed to gather and analyze non-numerical data to gain an in-depth understanding of the research topic. The ethnographic nature suggested that the researchers immersed themselves in the research context, observed and interacted with participants in order to explore the patterns of participation, interaction, and learning related to the use of short stories as pedagogical tasks. The research specifically focused on examining the patterns of participation and interaction related to the pedagogical use of short stories. This suggested that the study aimed to understand how students and teachers engaged with the content of short stories, how they interacted with each other during the learning process, and how these patterns influenced vocabulary learning. The research explored the learning of the English lexicon (vocabulary) through the use of lexical pedagogical tasks. This indicated that the study investigated how specific instructional activities, based on short stories, supported vocabulary acquisition among intermediate school students in Iraq. The research took place in the context of "English for Iraq" in intermediate schools. This implied that the study focused on English language teaching and

learning within the educational system of Iraq, particularly at the intermediate level. Overall, this section provided a detailed description of the research, including the specific research topic, the qualitative and ethnographic nature of the study, the focus on patterns of participation, interaction, and vocabulary learning, and the context of English language education in intermediate schools in Iraq. It gave a clear framework for understanding the scope and objectives of the research.

Participants

The participants of the study comprised 20 intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners who were studying at schools in Iraq. All of the participants were male. Initially, their vocabulary abilities were assessed to ensure the homogeneity of the group. This step aimed to confirm that the participants had similar levels of vocabulary knowledge before the intervention. Following the vocabulary assessment, the participants were engaged in a series of pedagogical tasks designed to teach them English vocabulary. Specifically, the researcher created ten tasks based on the principles of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), drawing from relevant literature in the field. These tasks were designed to facilitate vocabulary acquisition and were implemented using short stories as the primary content and instructional material. Throughout the study, the participants were exposed to the designed pedagogical tasks, which included various activities and exercises aimed at expanding their English vocabulary. The content and form of the short stories served as the basis for delivering the vocabulary instruction. These pedagogical tasks were carefully constructed to align with TBLT principles, ensuring that the participants actively engaged with the materials and interacted with each other to promote meaningful language learning. By utilizing this approach, the researcher aimed to explore the effectiveness of using short stories as pedagogical tools for teaching English vocabulary to the 20 intermediate EFL learners in the study. The use of TBLT-informed tasks and the focus on short stories provided a contextualized and meaningful learning experience for the participants, enhancing their engagement and potential for vocabulary acquisition. In summary, the study involved 20 males intermediate EFL learners from schools in Iraq. Their vocabulary abilities were assessed to ensure homogeneity, and they subsequently participated in a series of pedagogical tasks, specifically designed using TBLT principles and short stories as

the instructional content. These activities aimed to enhance their English vocabulary skills and promote interactive learning experiences.

Instruments

In this study, a range of data collection instruments was utilized to gather information on the impact of re-formatting fiction content, specifically short stories, on the teaching and learning of English vocabulary. These instruments included observation in the form of teacher's field notes, interviews with participants, and students' diaries. The instruments were chosen to provide a triangulated approach to data collection, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Observation, in the form of teacher's field notes, played a crucial role in capturing the dynamics and interactions within the learning environment. The researcher observed and recorded relevant information during the ten-session experiment. These field notes provided valuable insights into the implementation of the fiction-loaded material and the participants' responses and engagement throughout the sessions.

Interviews were conducted as another important data collection instrument. The researcher engaged in one-on-one interviews with the participants to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences, perceptions, and thoughts regarding the impact of the re-formatted fiction content on their vocabulary teaching and learning. These interviews allowed for open-ended discussions, enabling participants to express their opinions and provide rich qualitative data. Additionally, students' diaries were used as a means of collecting individual reflections and personal accounts from the participants. The students were asked to maintain diaries throughout the ten-session experiment, recording their thoughts, reactions, and experiences while engaging with the short stories, specifically focusing on the provided short story titled "Jad and Johnny." These diaries provided a more personal and introspective perspective on the participants' experiences, allowing for individual insights and reflections on the impact of the fiction-loaded material.

Throughout the experiment, the participants received the fiction-loaded material, with each short story, including "Jad and Johnny," covered over two sessions. The short stories consisted of approximately 200 words and were specifically chosen to align with the intermediate level of the participants. By providing these materials, the researcher aimed to explore the impact of re-formatting the fiction content on the participants' vocabulary teaching and learning, using the

chosen stories as the primary instructional material. In summary, the study employed a triangulated approach to data collection, utilizing observation (teacher's field notes), interviews, and students' diaries. The participants engaged with the provided short stories, including "Jad and Johnny," during the ten-session experiment, with each story covered over two sessions. These data collection instruments and the selected fiction-loaded material aimed to gather comprehensive insights into the impact of re-formatting fiction content on the teaching and learning of English vocabulary.

Procedures

In this study, several procedures were implemented to investigate the impact of teaching vocabulary through short stories as pedagogical tasks. The procedures included pretesting, vocabulary instruction using short stories, post-story activities, observation and field notes, interviews, and a posttest vocabulary assessment. Let's examine each procedure in detail: Firstly, a pretest of vocabulary was administered to assess the participants' initial knowledge and ensure homogeneity among them in terms of vocabulary proficiency. This pretest aimed to establish a baseline for comparison and to ensure that the participants had similar levels of vocabulary knowledge before the intervention. Following the pretest, the participants received vocabulary instruction using short stories as pedagogical tasks. The instruction involved presenting the reading material, after which the participants were instructed to underline unfamiliar vocabulary items within the context of the story. This process encouraged them to engage with the text and make attempts to deduce the meanings of the unfamiliar words based on the story's context. After underlining the vocabulary items, the participants were given time to exchange views and discuss the words they had learned. This collaborative activity allowed them to share their understanding, clarify doubts, and further reinforce their vocabulary comprehension. At the end of each session in which a short story was presented, the participants were given a quiz to evaluate their level of comprehension. This quiz served as a formative assessment to gauge their understanding of the vocabulary and overall comprehension of the story. Simultaneously, careful observation and field notes were taken to capture any noteworthy behaviors, reactions, or insights related to vocabulary development. Additionally, participants were interviewed at various times to gather deeper insights into their vocabulary development, allowing them to

express their thoughts, experiences, and perspectives regarding the instructional approach and the impact of the short stories on their vocabulary learning.

It's worth noting that there was also a control group in the study. The participants in the control group were taught vocabulary using traditional texts. They were presented with vocabulary items through word lists that included synonyms, antonyms, and dictionary definitions. The control group participants received traditional reading materials and instruction instead of the short stories used in the experimental group. Finally, at the end of the term, the participants, both in the experimental group (taught through short stories) and the control group (taught through traditional texts), were given a posttest vocabulary assessment to evaluate their performance on a vocabulary test. This posttest aimed to measure the impact of the instructional approaches on vocabulary learning outcomes. After all, the study involved a series of procedures, including pretesting, vocabulary instruction using short stories as pedagogical tasks, post-story activities, observation and field notes, interviews, and a posttest vocabulary assessment. These procedures were implemented to investigate the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary through short stories compared to a traditional instructional approach.

Data Analysis

The data in this study was gathered through the triangulation of data collection instruments explained in the Instrumentation section. By employing multiple data sources, such as observation, interviews, and students' diaries, the researchers aimed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of literary pedagogical tasks on vocabulary learning. The convergence of information from these different sources would provide a more robust and reliable assessment of the research topic. Furthermore, the primary objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between using vocabulary as pedagogical tasks and learners' language skills. The researchers sought to examine how incorporating vocabulary-focused pedagogical tasks influenced the development of learners' writing and speaking skills. By utilizing literary materials, such as short stories, as the basis for these tasks, the researchers aimed to explore the potential effect of literature on enhancing learners' proficiency in vocabulary.

In this study, there were three variables of interest. The first variable focused on investigating the relationship between using vocabulary as pedagogical tasks. This variable aimed to examine how the integration of vocabulary-focused tasks, based on literary materials, impacted learners' language skills, particularly their writing and speaking abilities. The second variable centered around learners' writing and speaking skills. Through this variable, the researchers aimed to explore the extent to which learners' writing and speaking abilities were influenced by engaging with vocabulary-focused pedagogical tasks. By analyzing the learners' written and spoken outputs during the study, the researchers sought to identify any improvements or changes in their language skills. The third variable aimed to examine the effect of literature in improving learners' proficiency in vocabulary. By incorporating literary materials into the pedagogical tasks, the researchers intended to explore the potential impact of literature on learners' vocabulary acquisition and overall proficiency. This variable specifically focused on the relationship between literary engagement and vocabulary development.

By investigating these three variables, the study sought to contribute to the understanding of how using vocabulary as pedagogical tasks, along with the integration of literature, can influence learners' language skills and their proficiency in vocabulary. Through the collection and analysis of data, the researchers aimed to gain insights into the potential benefits and implications of employing literary pedagogical tasks in language education. The data collection in this study was conducted through the triangulation of data sources. The researchers aimed to examine the impact of literary pedagogical tasks on vocabulary learning and explore the relationship between vocabulary tasks, learners' writing and speaking skills, and the effect of literature on vocabulary proficiency. By investigating these variables, the study aimed to enhance our understanding of the role of literature and vocabulary-focused pedagogical tasks in language learning.

Discussion

When redesigning the content of short stories as pedagogical tasks for teaching English vocabulary, several approaches can be taken. One approach is to focus on expanding students' vocabulary by selecting key words from the short story and creating tasks that encourage students to understand and use those words. These tasks may involve providing definitions, synonyms, antonyms, or context sentences for the vocabulary words, and asking students to match them correctly or use them in their own sentences. "Another approach is to explore word

relationships within the short story. This could involve identifying words that are related in meaning or usage, such as synonyms, homophones, or words with similar prefixes or suffixes" (Shintani, 2012, 260). Tasks can be designed to help students recognize and explain these relationships, such as matching pairs of synonyms or completing sentences using appropriate homophones. To develop students' ability to infer word meanings from context, tasks can focus on sentence or excerpt analysis. Students can be asked to infer the meanings of vocabulary words based on the context provided in the short story. This encourages them to use their reading comprehension skills to understand vocabulary in a meaningful way.

"Tasks that promote word usage and application can help students integrate the vocabulary into their own language production" (McDowell, 1984, p. 125). For example, students can be prompted to write sentences, paragraphs, or dialogues incorporating the target words, or engage in role-playing activities where they apply the vocabulary in real-life situations. Analyzing word forms and understanding changes in meaning or usage can be another aspect of vocabulary tasks. "Students can be encouraged to identify the word forms (noun, verb, adjective, adverb) of the vocabulary words and explore any differences in meaning or usage" (Nunan, 1989, 265). This can be done through exercises where students identify the word form or create new sentences using different word forms of the same word. Promoting word associations and creating word maps can help students make connections between vocabulary words and related concepts or categories. "Tasks that involve brainstorming associations, creating word webs or semantic maps, or categorizing words based on shared attributes can deepen students' understanding of the vocabulary" (Skehan, 1998, p. 234). In summary, redesigning the content of short stories as pedagogical tasks for teaching English vocabulary involves selecting key words, creating tasks that expand understanding and usage, exploring word relationships, inferring word meanings from context, promoting word usage and application, analyzing word forms, and fostering word associations. These approaches provide students with engaging and interactive opportunities to actively learn and use vocabulary in meaningful contexts.

Firstly, short stories provide a context that is conducive to learning and practicing vocabulary. Instead of simply memorizing isolated words, students encounter vocabulary within the framework of sentences and narratives. This contextualized approach helps students grasp the meaning of words in a more meaningful and memorable way. They can see how words are used

in different situations, improving their comprehension and retention of vocabulary. Furthermore, short stories offer an authentic and realistic use of language. Students are exposed to genuine expressions, idiomatic phrases, and natural collocations. "This exposure to real-life language usage enhances their understanding of how vocabulary is employed in everyday communication. It helps them develop a sense of linguistic authenticity and familiarity with the nuances of the English language" (Batstone, 2012, 460).

Reading short stories also contributes to the development of essential reading skills. Students learn to employ strategies such as skimming, scanning, and inference to comprehend the story. Within the context of the narrative, Students encounter various vocabulary items and learn to deduce their meanings from the surrounding text. This not only improves their vocabulary skills but also enhances their overall reading comprehension abilities. Moreover, "short stories expose students to a wide range of vocabulary, encompassing both common words and more advanced terminology" (Porter, 1981, p. 40). This exposure expands their vocabulary repertoire and enables them to express themselves more precisely and effectively. They become equipped with a broader range of lexical choices, which enhances their language proficiency and fluency. Additionally, short stories provide a platform for cultural and literary exploration. Many stories reflect cultural values, traditions, and perspectives, allowing students to gain insights into different cultures and develop intercultural competence. Furthermore, exposure to literary elements and storytelling techniques cultivates an appreciation for literature and encourages further reading. It helps students understand the power of storytelling and the role of language in conveying emotions, ideas, and themes.

By using short stories as pedagogical content, language skills integration is achieved. Students engage in activities that involve speaking, listening, writing, and critical thinking while exploring the vocabulary and themes of the story. This integration promotes a holistic approach to language learning, where students can apply their vocabulary knowledge in various contexts. It enhances their ability to use vocabulary in practical, real-world situations. "The use of short stories also fosters motivation and engagement among students" (Richards, 2014, p. 234). The narrative structure, compelling plots, and relatable characters capture their interest and make the learning process enjoyable. This increased motivation and engagement can lead to improved language acquisition and a positive attitude towards learning English. Furthermore, short stories

facilitate the development of transferable skills beyond language learning. Students analyze different situations and conflicts presented in the stories, make predictions, and discuss potential solutions. This process encourages critical thinking, problem-solving, and empathy, which are valuable skills applicable in various areas of life.

Lastly, short stories create personal connections and opportunities for reflection. Students often find themselves emotionally involved in the stories and can relate them to their own experiences and values. This personal connection deepens their engagement with the vocabulary and themes of the story, making the learning experience more meaningful and memorable. In conclusion, "the use of short stories as pedagogical content for teaching English vocabulary offers a wide range of benefits and effects. It provides a context for meaningful vocabulary learning, improves reading skills, enhances cultural awareness, promotes language skills integration, fosters motivation and engagement, develops transferable skills, and encourages personal connection and reflection" (Bygate, 2001, p. 235). By incorporating short stories into language instruction, educators create a dynamic and effective learning environment that nur The primary goal of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) is to facilitate students' fluent communication in the target language. To achieve this objective, it is crucial for teachers to present an authentic model of language use. This involves not only focusing on linguistic aspects but also incorporating literary and cultural elements into the teaching process. Short stories, due to their inherent characteristics, offer a valuable resource for ESL/EFL teaching programs. However, the selection of suitable short stories should be carefully considered, taking into account the course objectives, the learners' characteristics, and the content of the story itself. Each teaching situation is unique, and the use of a specific piece of literature may vary from one classroom to another and from one teacher to another. As demonstrated in the preceding discussion, short stories can be effectively utilized to provide diverse activities in reading, listening, writing, and speaking classes. The use of short stories creates a meaningful context that enables the teaching of various language focuses and enhances students' interpretative strategies. Furthermore, short stories can serve as a valuable tool for vocabulary development and other language focuses or skills. By integrating vocabulary activities within the context of a story, students can learn and reinforce new words in a more engaging and authentic manner. Incorporating short stories into ESL/EFL teaching programs can be highly beneficial as they provide an authentic model of language use, incorporate literary and cultural elements, and offer

a rich context for various language activities. However, it is essential for teachers to carefully select appropriate stories that align with the specific learning objectives, learner profiles, and content requirements. By effectively utilizing short stories, teachers can create an engaging and meaningful learning environment that enhances students' language skills and fosters their ability to communicate fluently in the target language.

Previous research studies in the field of language learning have consistently highlighted the value of using short stories as a means of acquiring vocabulary. Scholars such as Woodinsky and Nation (1988) and Krashen (1989) have affirmed that reading short stories can lead to incidental vocabulary acquisition in second language (L2) learners. In fact, there are proponents who argue that vocabulary acquisition through reading short stories alone is sufficient for L2 learners. Nagy, Herman, and Anderson (1985) assert that short story reading promotes significant vocabulary growth, surpassing the outcomes of explicit instruction alone. The prevailing view among practitioners of second language instruction is that incidental L2 vocabulary learning through reading is indeed adequate. Building on the theories of Schmidt (1990) and Ellis (1994), which suggest that incidental L2 vocabulary acquisition should encompass both implicit and explicit learning processes, the use of short stories as a pedagogical tool has proven successful in this study. During the experimental phase, learners in the experimental group were provided with reading learning strategies and note-taking strategies. Moreover, explicit instruction was offered to those who faced challenges in comprehending the language content. In line with Krashen's (1982) comprehensive input theory and Nation's (1991) theories of L2 vocabulary acquisition, the incorporation of short stories in this study aimed to provide learners with comprehensible reading materials that would encourage extensive reading for vocabulary acquisition, as well as the development of reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. According to Nation (2001), exposure to a variety of meaning-focused input contributes to vocabulary growth. Krashen (1989) also emphasizes that reading short stories in an L2 is a primary method by which language learners acquire new vocabulary. However, for effective acquisition to occur, learners must be exposed to a substantial amount of comprehensible texts, as encountering a word multiple times in rich contexts aids in its retention and reinforcement. The findings of this study support the notion that the appropriate utilization of short stories can enhance the teaching and learning of English vocabulary.

In conclusion, previous studies, along with the findings of this research, demonstrate the significance of using short stories as a valuable tool for vocabulary acquisition in language learning. Reading short stories provides learners with a meaningful context for language comprehension and fosters vocabulary growth. Incorporating explicit instruction and utilizing effective learning strategies further enhance the benefits of using short stories as a pedagogical approach. The results affirm that the implementation of short stories can be an effective means of teaching and learning English vocabulary.

Implications

The research on utilizing short stories as pedagogic tasks in teaching vocabulary aligns with vocabulary acquisition theories, such as the Input Hypothesis by Krashen (1982) and Nation's (1991) theories of L2 vocabulary acquisition. The findings support the idea that extensive reading of short stories provides learners with comprehensible input, facilitating vocabulary growth and enhancing overall language proficiency. The case study of using short stories as pedagogic tasks demonstrates the potential of integrating this approach within a Task-Based Language Teaching framework. It highlights how task-based activities based on short stories can effectively engage learners in meaningful language tasks, promoting vocabulary acquisition, language production, and communicative competence. The research carries implications from a sociocultural perspective, emphasizing the importance of cultural relevance and identity in language learning. By incorporating short stories that reflect the cultural context of English for Iraq learners, the study highlights the potential for fostering cultural awareness, empathy, and a deeper understanding of the target language. "The use of short stories as pedagogic tasks in teaching vocabulary aligns with reader-response theory, which emphasizes the role of readers in constructing meaning from texts" (Shanahan, 1967, p. 164). The findings of the research indicate that short stories evoke personal connections, emotional engagement, and critical thinking among learners, promoting a reader-centered approach to vocabulary acquisition. The research contributes to cognitive processing theories by shedding light on how learners process vocabulary in the context of short stories. It suggests that "the cognitive processes involved in reading, interpreting, and understanding short stories enhance vocabulary retention and application, as learners engage in deep processing and make connections between words and their contexts" (Savvidou, 2004, p. 12).

The research highlights the importance of incorporating authentic materials, such as short stories, in language classrooms. It emphasizes the value of providing learners with exposure to real-world language use and authentic language contexts, promoting effective vocabulary acquisition and language proficiency development. The use of short stories as pedagogic tasks aligns with interactionist perspectives, which emphasize the role of interaction and collaboration in language learning. By engaging learners in discussions, group activities, and collaborative tasks based on short stories, the research demonstrates how interactive teaching approaches enhance vocabulary learning outcomes and foster positive teacher-student interactions. The findings of the research hold implications for pedagogical practices and curriculum design. They suggest that integrating short stories as pedagogic tasks in vocabulary instruction can enrich language learning experiences, promote student engagement, and enhance vocabulary acquisition. The research underscores the importance of selecting appropriate short stories that align with curriculum objectives and learner needs. By exploring these theoretical implications, the research on short stories as pedagogic tasks in teaching vocabulary contributes to our understanding of effective vocabulary instruction, language learning theories, and pedagogical practices. It provides insights for educators and curriculum designers seeking to enhance vocabulary acquisition and promote meaningful language learning experiences in intermediate schools, specifically in the context of English for Iraq learners.

Suggestions for Further Studies

- Comparative Analysis: Conduct a comparative study to explore the effectiveness of short stories versus other forms of literature (such as novels or poems) in teaching vocabulary. Compare the vocabulary acquisition outcomes, student engagement, and overall language learning experiences between different types of literary texts.

- Longitudinal Study: Conduct a longitudinal study to investigate the long-term effects of incorporating short stories as pedagogic tasks in teaching vocabulary. Follow a group of learners over an extended period and assess their vocabulary development, retention, and application over time.

- Cultural Adaptation: Investigate the impact of culturally adapted short stories on vocabulary acquisition in specific language learning contexts. Analyze how cultural elements within short stories influence students' engagement, motivation, and connection to the language, and explore the potential for cultural adaptation to enhance vocabulary learning outcomes.

- Task Design and Variation: Examine the effect of different task designs and variations when using short stories for teaching vocabulary. Compare the outcomes of various task types, such as comprehension questions, vocabulary exercises, role-plays, or creative writing, in terms of vocabulary acquisition, student engagement, and language proficiency.

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