

Using Short Stories in the EFL Classroom

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Abstract

This quantitative and qualitative paper investigated the use of short stories in the EFL classroom. It examined students' general attitudes towards using short stories in the EFL classroom. Moreover, it evaluated if short stories enhance learners' language skills, develop their personal reflection and facilitate their cultural tolerance. Additionally, it explored certain approaches and applications for teaching a short story in the EFL classroom. The sample of the study included 2nd–4th year students of English major enrolled in the fall semester of the academic year 2014-2015 in Hebron University, Palestine. The number of the questionnaires filled was 135 where eighty percent of the respondents are females and the rest are males. The results showed that students held positive attitudes towards using short stories in the EFL classes. Additionally, the results revealed that there are statistically significant differences in the attitudes of the students towards the use of short stories due to Grade Point Average (GPA). However, there are no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of the students towards the use of short stories due to gender, seniority, and major. Finally, procedure was suggested for teaching a short story in the EFL classroom.

Keywords: Short Stories, Language Skills, Cultural Understanding, Imagination and Reflection.

استخدام القصة القصيرة في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية

ملخص

تناولت هذه الدراسة استخدام القصة القصيرة في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية. وكذلك تتبعت ميول الطلبة واتجاهاتهم نحو هذا المجال، وتقوم الدراسة بتقييم دور القصة القصيرة في تعزيز المهارات اللغوية عند الطلبة وتطوير قدراتهم على التعامل مع الثقافات الأخرى وتفهمها والتعايش معها. وإضافة إلى ذلك تهدف الدراسة إلى استكشاف أساليب متنوعة في تعليم القصة القصيرة. وقد شملت عينة البحث طلبة من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة الخليل من مستوى السنوات: الثانية والثالثة والرابعة للفصل الدراسي الأول من العام الجامعي 2014-2015. وقد كان عدد الطلبة المشاركين في العينة 135 طالباً وطالبة. وأظهرت النتائج التوجه الإيجابي للطلبة نحو استخدام القصة القصيرة في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية. كذلك أظهرت النتائج الإحصائية أن هناك اختلافاً ملحوظاً في توجهات الطلبة من حيث استخدام القصة القصيرة في التعلم؛ ويعزى هذا الاختلاف إلى المعدل التراكمي للطلبة (كلما ارتفع المعدل التراكمي ارتفع التوجه الإيجابي نحو استخدام القصة القصيرة في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية وتعلمها)، كذلك توصلت النتائج الإحصائية إلى عدم وجود فروقات ذات دلالة إحصائية في توجه الطلبة نحو استخدام القصة القصيرة في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية وتعلمها تعزى لكل من جنس الطالب وأقدميته وتخصصه من حيث الأدب واللغة. وأخيراً، تم اقتراح أسلوب لتدريس القصة القصيرة في صفوف اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القصة القصيرة، المهارات اللغوية، الفهم الثقافي، الخيال، التأمل.

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Introduction:

Teaching literary works in the language classroom has various valuable advantages to the EFL learners in relation to language, self-motivation, critical thinking and culture. Also, teaching literature can be encouraging, enjoyable and interesting to EFL learners. Learners, therefore, become more creative, tolerant to other culture and this lead to their personal and intellectual round ability, and open-mindedness. The world of short fiction both mirrors and illuminates human lives (Sage, 1987:43). Teaching short fiction enhances the development of imagination, creativity and self-awareness among EFL students.

Why use short stories?

Using short stories in the EFL classroom exposes learners to distinctive opportunities for educational, intellectual, cultural and linguistic development. Short story is considered as one of the literary genres that can be used in the EFL classroom to enhance language skill, motivate students, and increase their cultural awareness and tolerance. King (2001) concludes that short stories can be utilized as engines, and a powerful and motivating source for assisting learners consolidate and practice language (grammar, diction). Similarly, Ellis and Brewster (1991: pp. 1-2) emphasize that “as stories are motivating and fun, they can help students develop positive attitudes towards the foreign language and enrich their learning experiences”.

Lazar (1993) believes that exposing learners to literature provides them with memorable syntactical or lexical items. Moreover, it also encourages learners to make predictions, inferences and draw conclusions about actions, behaviors of character and ends of literary works.

This quantitative and qualitative paper aims to shed light on EFL learners’ attitudes towards using short stories in EFL classroom and exploring certain practical applications for one selected short story in the classroom. Another advantage for short stories is their practical length, which enables learners to wrap up the discussion and analysis of the story in one or two classroom sessions.

Statement of the Problem:

The use of short stories in the language classroom increases students’ language awareness, motivation, personal reflection and cultural understanding. Unfortunately, little attention is given to short stories in the in EFL classroom. In the light of the researchers’ observations and experience in the field of English language teaching, insufficient number of language instructors use short stories in their teaching practices. Some teachers decline teaching short stories because they believe that short stories may include linguistic difficulty or cultural complexity or both. This research aims to demonstrate that short stories have the potential of enriching students’ language skills, enhancing their motivation, and increasing their cultural sensitivity and awareness. Furthermore, through using short stories, students are exposed to opportunities that enable them to express their thoughts and feelings, thus developing their personal reflection. The researchers aim is to examine students’ attitude towards using short stories and to explore with them how using short stories can achieve the above mentioned points.

The purpose of the study:

This study aims to:

1. Examine students’ general attitudes towards using short stories in the EFL classroom.
2. Evaluate if short stories enhance learners’ language skills, develop their personal reflection and facilitate their cultural tolerance.
3. Recommend certain approaches and applications for teaching short stories in the EFL classroom.

Research questions:

1. What is the general attitude of learners towards short stories?
2. Can short stories develop learners' language skills, personal reflection and cultural understanding/ tolerance?
3. Are there statistically significant differences in the attitudes of students towards short stories, due to gender, seniority, academic performance and major?
4. What are the suggested approaches and applications for teaching stories in the EFL classroom?

Significance of the study:

This paper will have invaluable benefits to a number of beneficiaries. First, Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education certainly will be informed and invited to share the discussion of the recommendations of this research and is encouraged to apply the findings in its high schools. In addition, graduate students whose research and goal is to be future university instructors will be given the opportunity to attend the discussion and the recommendation. The final target beneficiaries are university instructors of different Palestinian universities.

Literature review:

Several studies discussed the importance of using literary genres in the EFL classroom. The studies explore and illustrate the benefits of utilizing such genres in the language classroom such as authenticity, language enhancement, personal development, critical thinking and cultural awareness: Yeasmin, et al, 2011; Pardede, 2011; Khatib & Rahimi, 2012; Thiyagarajan, 2014; Violetta-Irene, 2015). For example, Thiyagarajan (2014: 5-6) stated that "Reading short stories motivates the students not only to develop their reading skill, but also their imaginative thinking skill." He added that reading skill enables learners "to speak the language in a more imaginative way and to discuss everyone's perspectives." According to him, "reading of short stories not only mirrors and illuminates human lives but also improves the learners' communicative competences".

The following subsections demonstrate the value of using and selecting short stories:

- 1. Authenticity:** One of the main advantages for using short stories is that they offer authentic material which appeals to the taste, interests, and liking of learners in the reading and discussion process (Cameron, 2001; Ghosn, 2002; Shrestha, 2008). They discuss and reflect human experiences (Collie and Slater, 1987: 15). One of the fundamental characteristics of the communicative approach is that learners should be exposed to authentic materials and extensive reading activities. Thus, "a literary text is authentic text, real language in context, to which we can respond directly" (Brumfit & Carter, 1987, p. 15). They add that "Literary texts provide examples of language resources being used to the full, and the reader is placed in *active* interactional role working with and making sense of this language." In this regard, learners respond to texts intended for native speakers and they are exposed to actual language samples of real life experience, so they become familiar with many different linguistic approaches, communicative functions and meanings (Khatib, Ranjbar, Fathi, 2012). Short stories can be seen as the best opportunities where learners are exposed to authentic material that is genuine and not distorted. As Collie and Slater (1987) explain that "students have also to cope with language intended for native speakers and thus they gain additional familiarity with many different linguistic uses, forms and conventions of the written mode: with irony, exposition, argument, narration, and so on (p.6). Brumfit (1988) asserts that "literature provides us with a convenient source of content for a course in a foreign language "p. 184". According to him, it could provide motivational and communicative material. Tasneen (2010:2) explained that learners "are exposed to real, authentic usage of language in literary texts; these texts show them a variety of styles, registers

and language learning materials at several stages of difficulty.” Hwang (2005: 2) explained that learners’ exposure to great amount of authentic materials “increases their sensitivity to and competence in the target language”. He added that popular materials such as short stories “have been found most appealing because of their realistic, ready-to-use language and relevance to learners’ mindsets and experiences”. Learners’ exposure to authentic material will prompt the process of natural language acquisition (Hwang, 2005; Sell, 2005).

2. **Language Enhancement:** Literary texts contribute to language skills enhancement as they are ideal tools for intensive and extensive reading approaches. Collie and Slater (1987) mention certain benefits that learners can gain when tackling literary texts. For example, learners are exposed to “a rich context in which individual lexical or syntactical items are made more memorable “p. 7”. Moreover, learners can develop their “ability to make inferences from linguistic clues, and deduce meaning from context “p.7”. Learners’ exposure to short stories will help them gain new vocabulary and encourage them to guess their meaning. Povey (1967: 41) suggests that “literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, and complex and exact syntax.” McKay (1982:530) clarifies that “literature presents language in discourse in which the parameters of the setting and the role relationships are defined.” She explains that since language is best understood within a social context, literature is the ideal environment for developing awareness for language use. Slatterly and Willis (2001: 98) suggest that the activities that teacher develop should help learners to acquire language unconsciously. Consequently, they state that “stories are the most valuable resource” for helping learners in acquiring a language as they offer them “a world of supported meaning that they can relate to” and can be used to help learners “practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing.”
3. **Cultural enrichment:** Short stories enhance and enlighten learners’ knowledge of the native culture of the learned stories. In order to get better understanding of this aspect, the literary text will not be a translation of a literary work into English. This genre provides the opportunity for learners to explore the various cultural aspects and to see the similarities as well as the differences between their culture and the cultures exposed through their reading. King (2001) believes that short stories are very important as they enhance certain values and beliefs.
4. **Personal growth and reflection:** Short stories play a vital role in the development and the growth of the personal experience of learners and their reflection on life through literature and through reading, analyzing, and appreciating. Carter and Long, (1991) stated that literary genres encourage intellectual development and personal growth simultaneously, Tasneen, (2010: 2) testified that “reading literature is more likely to provide the students with opportunity for reflection and personal growth.” Furthermore, Violetta-Irene (2015: 3). Noted that reading literature effectively will enhance the growth of learners in addition to helping them in establishing stronger relationships with their surroundings. It is worth mentioning that personal growth of learners depends to a certain extent on the quality of the literary texts and the experience and depth of understanding from the side of the instructor. As Violetta-Irene (2015: 3) mentioned in her article that encouraging individual growth necessitates that “the teacher has to select texts to which students can respond and to which they can use their ideas and imagination creatively.”

The selection of the short story:

When selecting a short story, certain criteria should be taken into consideration. Instructors should avoid texts that are linguistically or culturally extremely difficult or offensive to the learners. Murdoch (2002: 9) explains: “short stories can, if selected and exploited appropriately, provide quality text content which will greatly enhance English language teaching courses for learners at intermediate levels

of proficiency". In order for the selected texts to achieve the desired benefits McKay (1982: 532) suggests selecting "texts from literature written for young adults. According to her, such literature has the following benefits:

- a) the theme of such literature deals with the problem of personal growth and development.
- b) most literature for young adults tends to be relatively short, and the characters usually limited to a small cast of characters with a young adult as the central character.
- c) most importantly, from an ESL perspective, many of the books tend to be stylistically less complex."

Similarly, Thiyagarajan (2014: 8) advised ESL instructors to "select authentic materials on the basis of learners' needs and expectations, proficiency of the learners, interests, age and gender and different levels of the learners." Further, cultural sensitivity should be considered when choosing a short story. In summary, this section provided literature review related to the advantages of using short stories and the criteria of selecting them. The following section will discuss the methodology of the study.

Methodology:

This is a quantitative and qualitative study. The present section discusses the population, research instrument, procedure, developing the questionnaire and its reliability, selecting a short story and using it in a language classroom. Keeping in mind, that the length of the short story is suitable to be discussed in two class meetings.

Population of the study:

Hebron University 2nd-4th year students of English major enrolled in the fall semester of the academic year 2014-2015.

Research Instruments:

This included a questionnaire and a short story discussed in classroom. Pre-reading, while-reading and post reading assignments were given to the students.

A. The Questionnaire:

Based on the literature review, the researchers developed a questionnaire with the aim of examining the learners' attitudes towards using short stories in the EFL classroom. The questionnaire has two parts: Part one covers demographic information: gender, seniority, Grade point average (GPA), and major; while the second part of the questionnaire included 18 statements using Likert's 5-point scale, (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree). Students were advised to put a tick in the appropriate box which best represents their attitudes towards using short stories in the EFL class. The items were structured according to three dimensions: *language skills*, *personal reflection* and *culture*.

Validity of the Questionnaire: Five experts from two Palestinian institutions (Hebron University and An-Najah National University) examined the questionnaire. They commented on the content validity of the questionnaire and assessed its suitability for the purpose of the short stories characteristics. Their comments and recommendations were incorporated in the final questionnaire.

Distribution of the questionnaire: The questionnaire was distributed to 2nd - 4th students majoring in English Language and Literature at Hebron University, Palestine in the Fall semester of the Academic Year 2014-2015.

The number of the questionnaires filled was 135. They were analyzed using SPSS version 19.

Reliability of the Questionnaire: The researchers examined reliability of the questionnaire. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was estimated using Cronbach Alpha. The estimated value was (0.78), which is reliable and acceptable for the purpose of the current research.

B. The material: Using a short story in the class:

A short story that was used "Thank you Madam" by Langston Hughes.

Results and Discussion:

This section presents the results of the Questionnaire first. Then, the outcomes of using a short story inside the classroom will follow.

The Questionnaire:

This section presents the results of Part One in the Questionnaire, demographic information.

Results related to Demographic Data:

Table 1 showed, 80% of the students were females and the rest were males. Regarding their year of study, around 4.5% of the students were in their second year of study, 46% in their third year and 61.5% of them in their fourth year. Concerning their educational average, 26% of students average falls between 65-74, 68% between 75-84, and 6% above 85. Finally, 21.5% of students majored in English-Education, 53.5 majored in English literature, and 25% majored in English-French.

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	27	20%
	Female	108	80%
	Total	135	100%
Years of study	Second	6	4.5%
	Third	46	46%
	Fourth	83	61.5%
	Total	135	100%
Average	65-74	35	26%
	75-84	92	68%
	85+	8	6%
	Total	135	100%
Major	English-Education	29	21.5%
	English literature	72	53.5%
	English-French	34	25%
	Total	135	100%

The following section presents results of Part Two in the questionnaire. It aims to answer the research questions of the current study.

Question One: What is the general attitude of learners towards short stories?

To answer this question, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated for the questionnaire items that are related to the three dimensions (*language skills*, *personal reflection* and *culture*). Table 1 shows the calculated mean of items and their standard deviation appear for each dimension.

No	Dimension	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Culture	135	3.94	.54104
2	Personal reflections	135	3.87	.44203
3	Language skills	135	3.84	.41888
General Attitude		135	3.87	.34074

As the table reveals, the general attitudes for the students towards using short stories is positive (mean =3.87). The three dimensions are arranged according to the higher means with the dimension of developing cultural understanding coming first (mean = 3.94) and developing language skills coming last

(mean = 3.84). This is in line with several studies that indicated that students held positive attitudes towards using short stories in the EFL classes (Ellis & Brewster, 1991; Lazar, 1993; King, 2001; Slatterly & Willis, 2001; Yeasmin et al., 2011; Pardede, 2011; Khatib & Rahimi, 2012; Thiyagarajan, 2014, Violetta-Irene (2015).

Question Two: Can short stories develop learners' language skills, personal reflection and cultural understanding/ tolerance?

A. **Language Skills:** To see the attitudes of students pertaining to the use of the short stories and the development of the *language skills*, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated for the questionnaire items that are related to this issue. Table 2 reveals the calculated mean of items and their standard deviation appears for the *language skills* topic.

No	Language Skills	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
3	Short stories enhance reading skills	135	4.24	.80279
7	Short stories is one of the main resources of vocabulary acquisition	135	4.20	.76761
6	Short stories enrich critical thinking skills	135	4.04	.77659
5	Short stories strengthen writing skills	135	3.95	.73058
2	Short stories improve speaking skills	135	3.83	.84223
1	Short stories develop social/communication skills	135	3.60	.78340
4	Short stories sharpen listening skills	135	3.05	1.04999

Table 3 presents the results arranged according to the highest means. The table reveals the items that are related to reading comprehension, vocabulary building, and enriching critical thinking skills got the highest means. It is important to point out that utilizing short stories in the EFL classroom, enhances almost all the language skills of the learners. This is in line with several studies that indicated that short stories have positive impacts on developing learners' language skills and critical thinking in the EFL classes (Povey, 1967; McKay, 1982; Collie & Slater, 1987; Ellis & Brewster, 1991; Lazar, 1993; King, 2001; Slatterly & Willis, 2001; Hwang, 2005; Sell, 2005; Yeasmin et al., 2011; Pardede, 2011; Khatib & Rahimi, 2012; Thiyagarajan, 2014, Violetta-Irene, 2015)). However, the listening skill items got the lowest mean within the language skills domain. It should be noted that this item has the least mean score within the whole questionnaire.

B. **Personal reflection:** To see the attitudes of students concerning the use of the short stories and the development of the *personal reflections*, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated for the questionnaire items that are related to this dimension. Table 3 illustrates the calculated mean of items and their standard deviation appears for the *personal reflections* subject.

No	Personal Reflections	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
14	Short stories enhance imagination	135	4.39	.73210
8	Short stories make the learning process interesting	135	4.13	.71677
13	Short stories enhance creativity	135	4.01	.79641
10	Short stories motivate learners to reflect upon their views	135	3.88	.73730
9	Short stories make the learning process authentic	135	3.65	.71657
12	Short stories enhance empathy	135	3.56	.76793
11	Short stories enhance self-esteem	135	3.50	.77984

Table 4 presents the results arranged according to the highest means. As the table reveals the items that are related to *enhancing imagination*, making the *learning process interesting* and *enhancing creativity* got the highest means within the personal reflections domain. It should be noted that item number 14, *enhancing imagination*, has the highest mean score within the whole questionnaire. It is worth noting the learners can benefit to a large extent in relationship to their personal reflection when using short stories in particular and literature in general. This is in line with several studies (Oster, 1989; Carter and Long, 1991; Tasneen, 2010; Violetta-Irene, 2015). Oster's (1989: 85) stated that, "literature helps students write more effectively and creatively." On the other hand, the items that are related to enhancing empathy and self-esteem got the least mean score within the *personal reflection* framework.

C. **Cultural Understanding/ Tolerance:** To see the attitudes of the students pertaining to the use of the short stories and the development of the *Cultural Understanding/tolerance*, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated for the questionnaire items that are related to this dimension: Table 4 reveals the calculated mean of items and their standard deviation appear for the *Cultural Understanding/tolerance* perception.

No	Cultural Understanding/Tolerance	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
15	Short stories enlighten students' knowledge about other cultures	135	4.09	
16	Short stories assist students to accept different backgrounds and cultures	135	4.03	
17	Short stories encourage students to tolerate cultural differences	135	3.83	
18	Short stories help the development of intercultural sensitivity	135	3.68	

Table 5 presents the results arranged according to the highest means. As the table reveals item number 15 (*Short stories enlighten students' knowledge about other cultures*) got the highest means within the *Cultural Understanding/tolerance* domain. It is vital to point out that learners are positive recipient to cultural differences and understanding through using short stories. This is in an agreement with a number of studies that suggested that the primary appeal of using short stories and the major value lie in its cultural content.. On the other hand, item number 18 (*Short stories help the development of intercultural sensitivity*) got the least score within the *cultural/tolerance* issue.

Question Three: Are there statistically significant differences in the attitudes of students towards short stories, due to gender, seniority, grade point average (GPA) and major?

No	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.
1	Gender	1.408	.101
2	Seniority	1.205	.239
3	Grade Point Average (GPA)	2.164	.002
4	Major	1.204	.241

Table 6 shows that there are no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of the students towards the use of short stories due to gender, seniority, and major. However, there are statistically

significant differences in the attitudes of the students towards the use of short stories due to Grade Point Average (GPA). This means that the higher the level of the students, the more positive attitudes they have for using short stories inside the classroom. This is normal for learners with higher GPA, are, to a certain extent, willing to take a step further when dealing with new or challenging issue.

Question Four: What are some of the suggested approaches and applications for teaching stories in the EFL classroom? Or what impact do the applied examples have on students?

Suggested Procedure: The study was conducted on a course of "literature in the language classroom" during the fall semester of the academic year 2014-2015. One of the objectives of this course is to expose enrolled students to reading, understanding and analyzing short stories in order to enhance their interpretative skills and improve their language and to expose them to other cultures.

In order to demonstrate how short stories can be used in the EFL classroom, students were given in class and out of class assignment to work on over a period of one week. The following procedure was followed: Students were divided into groups, each group has five students. They were given the short story, "Thank You Madam" by Langston Hughes. The researcher chose this story as it has a universal theme that can help students to reflect on the events and to relate on their own experiences. The aim was to encourage students to develop their own response, while enjoying reading the story. The focus was on the close study of the linguistic features of the story.

The instructor explained the three stages to the class that they need to address:

***Pre reading:** In the pre reading procedure, students were given a copy of the short story. The aim of this stage was to help the learners to have some background knowledge and relate to their own experiences and to develop their critical thinking skills. The various groups suggested several pre-reading techniques and activities to put the students in the mood of the intended text. They are encouraged to discuss the author, title, and the cultural aspects. For example, group number one offered the following pre-reading activities: offering some background information about the author, Langston Hughes, and Harlem neighborhood in New York. They also suggested that the instructor discussed the moral aspect of the story in order to encourage students speak about similar experiences concerning lying and stealing. The teacher relates these concepts to moralities and religious codes related to evil.

Examples of questions the instructor may ask to the students as suggested by the different groups:

1. *What do you know about the neighborhood of Harlem?*
2. *Who lived in it during the time of the story?*
3. *Are the blacks treated equally in the American society?*
4. *How do the whites think of the blacks in America?*
5. *What do you think of lying and stealing?*
6. *Have you ever stolen or lied in your life?*
7. *What are the reasons or causes of stealing?*
8. *What if someone tried to steal something from you; how do you react?*
9. *Do you think that hunger justifies stealing?*

In addition, students discussed regional varieties of the language used (dialect) and they offered some examples:

Then she said, "Now ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

Firmly gripped by his shirt front, the boy said, "Yes'm."

The woman said, "What did you want to do it for?"

The boy said, "I didn't aim to.""

Finally, the students were encouraged to have some answers for the above questions, thus involving them in the process of drawing on their background knowledge and experiences.

***While reading:** While reading activities aim to provide students with a more active approach to reading and encourage them to check their comprehension. During the reading phase, students were asked to pay attention to language and grammatical rules, the style of the writer and the new vocabularies. The activities were suggested to further develop students' comprehension ability. While reading stage included activities pertinent to the theme, grammar, vocabulary and idioms.

For teaching vocabulary, the groups suggested that students can write the most difficult words on the board such as: *tug, snatch, rattled, slung, stooped, frail etc.* Then, the instructor can ask students to work in groups and to try to guess their meaning from the context.

As for grammar, the students suggested to focus on tenses, punctuation marks, negative forms and adjectives correcting errors and writing their own sentences. For example, they suggested the following exercise for tenses:

Correct the underlined verb tenses' errors in the following passage:

"Sweat popped out on the boy's face and he begins to struggle. Mrs. Jones stopped, jerking him around in front of her, put a half-nelson about his neck, and continued to dragging him up the street.

When she got to her door, she dragged the boy inside, down a hall, and into a large kitchenette- furnished room at the rear of the house. She switched on the light and left the door open. The boy could hears other roomers laughing and talked in the large house. Some of their doors was open, too, so he knew he and the woman were not alone. The woman still has him by the neck in the middle of her room."

Adjectives: Concerning adjectives, the students suggested the following activity: Complete the words below. The first word has been done for you as an example. *Remember that some words do not have all forms.

Verb	adjective	Noun
Combine	Combined	Combination
	Dripping	
	Canned	
		Mistake

Punctuation marks: Regarding punctuation marks, the students suggested the following activity

Complete this paragraph by providing the suitable punctuation mark:

" , ? ! _ . () ; :

() Then I won't turn you-loose () () said the woman () She did not release him () Lady () I'm sorry () () whispered the boy.

() Um-hum! your face is dirty () I got a great mind to wash your face for you () Ain't you got no body home to tell you to wash your face () ()

*** Post-reading stage:** This stage of activities presents students with effective tasks which help develop critical thinking skills. Students were told to check secondary sources, literature anthologies or internet sites and learn more about the author and the historical conditions during the time of writing the story. This, of course, encourages students and builds their interest about the action, characters, and theme of the story.

In Post reading activities,

* group discussion of the story

* students are asked to show their reaction about the story, *their interpretation of the story.

* re-write the story

The students suggested splitting learners into four groups in order to work on collaborative tasks that covered the four language skills: writing, listening, speaking and reading:

Writing: Students are encouraged to write about forgiveness, kindness, and empathy and how these themes affect people's life. These suggested activities reveal that the students developed their critical thinking skills, imagination and creativity. They were able to be creative and imaginative and were able to produce different versions for the story suggesting different ends and letters as they appear in the following activities :

Activity 1: write a different end for the story:

When Mrs. Jones caught the boy, she shouted at his face and asked him: "why...?" The boy became very frightened and the tears fell heavily on his dirty face, but she didnt give him any attention and she took the boy to the police station. The boy tried several times to run away but she was very strong. When they reached the police station, the woman explained the event to the officer and he started to ask the boy:" why did you steal the woman's purse?" He replied that he wanted to money to buy new shoes. The woman sympathized with him and gave him ten dollars to buy the shoes she wanted. Finally, she forgave him and went alone.

Activity 2: write a letter from the boy to the woman after a month.

Dear Madam,

You have an influence on my life that you have never imagined, and you have taught me a lesson which I take as a motto in my life. I will still think about you until the end of my life.

Activity 3: asking questions:

1. Which character do you admire most? Why?

I admire the woman mostly in the story because she forgives the boy and helps him instead of punishing him. I admire her because of the lesson she have taught to the boy.

2. Does people's appearance influence or reflect people's behaviors?

No. according to the story, we see that the woman is strong and powerful when she hits the boy. At the end, she appears as a kind and tolerant woman.

Speaking:

Activity 1: the teacher asks the student to re-act the story in the front of the class:

Mrs. Jones: "If I turn you lose, will you run?" asked the woman.

Roger: "Yes'm," said the boy.

Mrs. Jones: "Then I won't turn you-loose," said the woman. She did not release him. **Roger:**

I'm sorry, "whispered the boy.

Mrs. Jones: "Um-hum! your face is dirty. I got a great mind to wash your face for you. Ain't you got no body home to tell you to wash your face?"

Activity 2: the teacher asks the students to retell the story in front of the class.

Activity 3: the teacher writes abstract ideas on the board and asks the students to comment on them.

Examples:

1. What is your opinion about forgiveness?

It is a term which was recommended by Islam and people should live in peace and reject hatred.

2. Who should be responsible for teaching morals?

The family and the school are responsible to teach morals because most of the children's time is spent in the school or in their homes.

4. While Rodger was in the lady's home setting alone after the lady hid behind the screen, he had the chance to escape or to steal her pocketbook, but he didn't. In your opinion what is the reason behind this conduct?

In my opinion, I think the reason behind Rodger's attitude in this scene or moment is the words directed to him by the lady, such as "ain't you ashamed of yourself?", "You ought to be my son", and "I were young once".

I think that these speeches influenced and affected his personality. Moreover, maybe these speeches make Rodger guilty and regretful, so he chooses to stay and think of her sayings.

Note: these activities are developed for both listening and speaking skills.

Listening: Activity 1: the teacher shows a video of the story to the students. This activity enriches the comprehension and enhances speaking and listening skills.

Activity 2: (the teacher brings a recorder and gives the students the intended activities).

Listen carefully to the passage and answer the questions below:

1. Fill in the blanks:

- She was..... woman with a large purse.
- When a boy..... behind her and try to snatch her purse.
- Mrs. Jones stopped..... him around in front of her.
- Do you need somebody to go to the.....

a.) large b.) ran up c.) jerked d.) store

2. Read the following sentences related to the passage, and write if they are true or false:

- The woman catch the boy. ()
 - She prepared some hamburger. ()
 - Shoes got by devilish way will burn your feet. ()
 - The boy runs away. ()
- a.) true b.) true c.) false D.) false

Reading and critical thinking:

Activity 1: answer the questions:

1. What is the message you have learned from the story?

I learned to forgive others and not to steal whatever the reason was.

2. What is the woman's advice to the boy?

Don't steal again, you can ask for help, but never take what you don't have.

3. Why didn't the woman watch the boy while she was preparing food?

She puts the purse beside him to make him feel of his sin.

4- Why does Hughes title the story "Thank You Madam"?

Because the woman has helped the boy in a very different way .At the beginning of the story, Roger tries to rob Mrs Jones. But instead of turning him in to the police, she treats him with kindness and help. By doing this, she makes him feel like a good person and she makes him want to behave, as when he does not steal from her when left alone with her purse. That gives him a big gift and hope to his future.

Activity 2: **1.** Match the traits with the suitable character:

- ashamed a) the boy
- frail b) the woman
- trust
- strong
- frightened
- black
- mistaken

2. Order the events according to the time sequence of the story you have read:

- The boy fell on his back on the sidewalk.
- Mrs. Jones dragged the boy inside.
- It was about eleven at night.
- The boy wanted to say something else other than thank you madam.
- The large woman simply turned around and kicked him

Discussion and Conclusion:

Learners like short stories. There is a rationale for teaching them to develop language skills and cultural knowledge. According to Cameron, (2001:159) short stories offer “holistic approach to language teaching and learning that places a high premium on children’s involvement with rich, authentic uses of the foreign language.”

The results of this study revealed that students believe that using short stories in the EFL classroom is beneficial in enhancing the language skills, personal development and reflection and cultural understanding and tolerance. This is in line with several studies (Povey, 1967; McKay, 1982; Collie & Slater, 1987; Oster, 1989; Ellis & Brewster, 1991; Lazar, 1993; King, 2001; Murdoch, 2002; Hwang, 2005; Sell, 2005; Shrestah, 2008; Yeasmin et al., 2011; Pardede, 2011; Khatib & Rahimi, 2012; Khatib, Shokoufeh, and Fathi, 2012; Thiyagarajan, 2014; Violetta-Irene, 2015). Moreover, it is demonstrated through this study how short stories can be used in the language classroom. The students proved that “Thank you Ma’am” can be used for developing language skills, critical thinking, creativity and imagination, cultural knowledge, and personal development.

It is evident that using literature in general and short stories in particular in EFL classroom, can develop and enhance students’ critical thinking, imagination, creativity, language structure and acquisition and cultural awareness. It is apparent, in this research that participants reacted positively to the story and their response and engagement were a testimony for that. Students’ involvement in the discussion, analysis and responses to the questions, prove that using literature in the language classroom is vital and recommended.

The authenticity of the literary work, the richness of the language, the scope of imagination and creativity and the process of critical thinking, are just a few advantages for using literary genres in the language classroom. Therefore, incorporation of short stories in the EFL texts will equip students with the necessary language skills and thus increasing their language proficiency to survive in the targeted language.

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