
The role of short stories in improving linguistic and intercultural aspects for Sudanese EFL undergraduates, College of languages

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Abstract:

This research paper aims to study to what extent can short stories improve linguistic and intercultural aspects and its influence in scaffolding the undergraduate students' language competence and awareness, and to expand their linguistic cognitive skill, and cultural knowledge, and investigate their contribution in promoting linguistic. The paper also attempts to underline the significance of short stories in overall language development and literary understanding. The main purpose of this research is to discover answers to questions through the application of scientific procedures, and to find out the truth which is hidden and has not been discovered as yet.

Key words: short stories teaching, Language competence, Cultural knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

This study concerns with the use of short stories in scaffolding linguistics and intercultural aspects and its influence in elevating the students language awareness and competence,

undergraduate students, Faculty of languages, 3rd year. Sudan University of science and technology.

The main purpose of this research paper is to investigate how short stories contribute to promoting linguistic. It intends to explore the correlation that exists between the study of short stories and improving linguistic. The study also attempts to underline the significance of short stories in overall language development and literary understanding.

The short story is probably the most pleasurable of *the literary genres for young people*. A good story can be understood and appreciated at many different levels. The short story can provide as much intellectual stimulation as the other genres but it is much easier to appreciate. It has a beginning and an end, the satisfying familiarity of narrative and is a complete experience in itself. Its brevity and story line hold the interest of young readers without taxing their patience. In fact it is because of its length that it so readily lends itself to the teaching of the reading skills that students need in their study of literature.

Teachers may also find short stories easier and more interesting to teach and a good Introduction to the demands of the novel. Short stories allow instructors to teach the four skills to all levels of language proficiency. Murdoch (2002) indicates that “short stories can, if selected and exploited appropriately, provide quality text content which will greatly enhance ELT courses for learners at intermediate levels of proficiency” (p. 9). He explains why stories should be used to reinforce ELT by discussing activities instructors can create such as writing and acting out dialogues.

Also, Oster (1989) affirms that literature helps students to write more creatively (p. 81).

Instructors can create a variety of writing activities to help students to develop their writing skills. They can ask students to write dialogues (Murdoch, 2002, p. 9) or more complex writing activities if students have reached a high level

of language proficiency. Short stories allow instructors to teach the four skills to all levels of language proficiency.

As EFL learners go on reading short-stories, they go on guessing the meaning of new words from the context which is very crucial in foreign language learning (Duff and Maley, 2008). Therefore, the use of short-stories need to be given preference while selecting vocabulary teaching and learning strategy. The use of short-stories for developing EFL learners' vocabulary is also advocated because the activities based on stories for developing vocabulary offer opportunities for EFL teachers to integrate them with the productive skills like: speaking and writing. Story-telling also provides a platform for EFL learners to tell their own moral stories, and thus to express and enhance their own responsibility through the process of authoring (Tappand and Brown, 1991, P. 184). The use of short-story is also regarded as an interesting method which can attract EFL learners to learn more, not only remembering each words but also the culture, moral values, and elements which are contained in a storytelling and the most main is their reading comprehension. Therefore, the use of short-stories should be given the preference while teaching, developing and enriching the vocabulary of EFL learners.

Whatever may be the steps of research works and studies, one thing that is important is that they all meet on the common ground scientific method. One expects scientific research to satisfy the following criteria:

- The purpose of the research should be clearly defined and common concepts be used.
- The analysis of data should be sufficiently adequate to reveal its significance and the methods of analysis used should be appropriate.

The main question, What is short story? and how can the language learners elevate their linguistic awareness and competence?

A *short story* is fictional work of prose that is shorter in length than a novel. Edgar Allan Poe, in his essay "The Philosophy of Composition," said that a short story should be read in one sitting, anywhere from a half hour to two hours. In contemporary fiction, a short story can range from 1,000 to 20,000 words.

Because of the shorter length, a short story usually focuses on one plot, one main character (with a few additional minor characters), and one central theme, whereas a novel can tackle multiple plots and themes, with a variety of prominent characters. Short stories also lend themselves more to experimentation - that is, using uncommon prose styles or literary devices to tell the story. Such uncommon styles or devices might get tedious, and downright annoying, in a novel, but they may work well in a short story.

A short story is a brief work of literature, usually written in narrative prose.

Short story can be the start point for the students in their reading and writing and it can improve their language.

Indeed, the short stories as multi dimensional literary genre profitably used in the acquisition of various language skills. The short story's distinctive features, its brevity, modernity, and variety make it appealing and interesting to language learners and increase their linguistic.

Short stories help teachers to teach literary, cultural and higher- order thinking aspects. As far as culture and other benefits are concerned.

Literature helps students to expand their "linguistic and cognitive skills, and cultural knowledge, and intercultural aspects.

It is irrefutable fact that short story plays a salient role in the academic lives of the learners. This is because if foreign language learners lack a mature vocabulary, their mother language skills suffer significantly.

Short stories are affective when teaching culture to EFL students. Short stories transmit the culture of the people about whom the stories were written.

The interaction and reciprocal collaboration of literature and language teaching has been the subject of interest to many foreign languages using literature as a vehicle for reading of second or foreign language has proved very beneficial to the EFL students' learning experience.

Reading comprehension as a fundamental language skill requires a complex acquisition process which can account for the way that learners comprehend what they read.

There for, a good number of EFL experts do agree that content knowledge is a salient factor in the learning process of reading short story.

Educators have untiring attempts to find more efficient ways of enabling the students to become more proficient readers by reading literature.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The researcher looks for suggesting some methods that can increase linguistic and intercultural facets for Sudanese EFL undergraduates, through reading literature (short stories).

According to researcher's experience in teaching this kind of literature, noticed that there is a weakness in reading comprehension and are not capable of learning.

The arising question is, what is the best method that can enable or help the students who use EFL to master and elevate linguistic through reading correctly?

The researcher is going to probe the main factors behind the aforementioned probe, so he is looking after how can he find a suitable ways for increasing their linguistic proficiency and intercultural aspects.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

“All progress is born of inquiry. Doubt is often better than overconfidence, for it leads to inquiry, and inquiry leads to invention” is a famous Hudson Maxim in context of which the significance of research can well be understood. Increased amounts of research make progress possible. Research inculcates scientific and inductive thinking and it promotes the development of logical habits of thinking and organization.

Research has its special significance in solving various problems. It provides the intellectual satisfaction of knowing a few things just for the sake of knowledge and also has practical utility to know for the sake of being able to do something better or in a more efficient manner.

The significance of this study stems from the fact that.

- This study attempts to explain how can be vital importance for developing and enhancing students reading through short stories.
- Many of the problems that are seen in the classroom are that the students do not have the ability to communicate with the teacher in reading of short story.
- Some of the students are not able to develop pre-reading skills through literature.
- Some of the students are not able to identify the elements of a sentence.

QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study tries to answer the following questions

- How students can manipulate their weakness in reading and understanding?
- Are the students have competent enough to grasp English skills when reading short story?
- How far do the teaching of EFL with short stories affect on the performance of the students?

- What those expected solutions / suggestions of ill – done understanding of short stories?
- What are the benefits of reading short stories?
- What are remedial processes that can be taken to overcome the problem?
- What is the role of short stories in English language teaching?
- To what extend can short stories scaffolding students' competence and awareness?

HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH

The research hypotheses are:

- What are the expected advantages and disadvantage of using ways of reading in short stories?
- It is observed that many approaches, ways and models that have been suggested to use a reading comprehension through short story in raising linguistic.
- The teaching of short stories should improve the students awareness and competence
- Students should ask to write their personal attitudes about the short story
- EFL instructors should be familiarized with the effectiveness of using literature in elevating linguistic.
- Literature should add new dimensions to the teaching of EFL.
- Short stories help students to the four skills- listening, speaking, reading and writing more effectively.
- Elevating linguistic requires using literature within teaching EFL.
- Short stories texts constitute valuable authentic materials.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research is intend for students at universities, the researcher is going to develop linguistic and intercultural aspects through using of short story for achieving an expected aims for the language skills by means of getting a group of goals.

The purpose of research is to discover answers to questions through the application of scientific procedures. The main aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovered as yet. Though each research study has it is own specific purposes, we may think of research objectives as falling into a number of following broad grouping:

- To test hypothesis of a causal relationship between variables (such studies are known as hypothesis-testing research studies).
- To gain familiarity with a phenomenon or to achieve new insights into it (studies with this object in view are termed as exploratory of formulative research studies).
- The researcher who advocate the use of short stories to teach EFL in order to raise linguistic to obtain the following.
- Writing accurately.
- Reading fluently.
- Identifying the EFL needs.
- Helping students to acquire more vocabulary.
- The students to be able to understand or master English skills through reading short stories.
- Helping the students to read and speak the language in a more imaginative way, and become more creative.
- Students should be acquainted with and analyzed any cultural text that is highly pertinent for any society at any time.

- Acquiring linguistic for the students with their actual needs.
- Helping in increasing students' poor motivation and interests.

TOOLS AND DATA COLLECTION:

The study used two tools for data collection:

1- A questionnaire:

A questionnaire is a technique for collecting data in which a respondent (teacher) provide answers to a series of statements. Developing this questionnaire for this research that means collect the data that I want takes effort and time. However, by taking a step-by-step approach to questionnaire development, I can come up with an effective means to collect data that will answer my unique research questions.

The questions that I used in this questionnaire are clear, concise and direct, this will ensure that I can get the best possible answers from my respondents. The questions that are succinct and simple and my writing should not be a complex statements, that may confuse the respondents and lead to incorrect responses.

This questionnaire is designed for teacher and student.

Student questionnaire:

I used this measurement of the learning received during the class as a result of comparing what the student knew after the class experience.

In this research I used questionnaire for measuring a starting point or the amount of pre-existing knowledge on the course topic, and compare it with the starting point , and to indicate to the student the learning level of the course topic.

Also in this research I used post-test for measuring the learning as a result of the course topic, also to analyze the

appropriateness of the learning objectives, and to recognize students who need additional help, and to target any instructional needs to improve the course.

Post-test should be administered directly at the completion of the course and also at a later date to measure application and impact of the learning.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The researcher is going to investigate the experiments on the following phenomena on teaching EFL.

The study is assumed to be limited to the following perspectives:

- The study is limited to teaching EFL through short stories in order to develop linguistic and intercultural aspects.
- The type of writing in this study is limited to English language.
- The type of questionnaire in this study.
- The subjects of the study limited to third year students at faculty of languages. Sudan University of Science and technology.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. In it we study the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind them. Here it is necessary to deal not only with research methods/ techniques but with the methodology.

In doing a research, methodology is very necessary, because it shows the way how the research is to be conducted.

A methodology study, in general, refers to some difficulty which a researcher experiences in the context of either a theoretical or practical situation and wants to obtain a solution for the same, research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically.

Methodology in common parlance refers to a search for knowledge.

The researcher is going to collect sources of data, the major source of data are: student's questionnaire related to this research, the other source is: teacher's questionnaire as a tool to this study.

Also the researcher is going to put a suitable suggestion to this problem. The tools which will use for data collection include: classroom observation, and questionnaire with the teachers. The participants of the study are undergraduate students, Faculty of languages, English language teachers who teach EFL, particularly short stories at the same faculty with varying degree of experience.

We firmly believe that scaffolding linguistic is essential for teaching short stories and that it results in solid language gains and increase intercultural aspects, awareness and competence in the learning of EFL.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper is to promote the teachers' ability through reading short stories, and enable the teachers to teach literary, cultural and higher-order thinking aspects, and to help students to expand their 'linguistic, cognitive skill and cultural knowledge.

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