

The effect of Short Stories Reading in enhancing EFL Secondary Schools Students' Paragraph Writing.

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Abstract

The study was applied on a purposeful sample of second year secondary school's students in a governmental school in Khartoum south in the academic year 2019/2020. The sample included (89) students at Hamdan Bin Rashid Secondary School for Boys in Mayo District. Students were assigned to experimental group and control group, the experimental group was taught by using the short stories reading technique, while the control group was taught by the ordinary method. The findings of the study showed that there were statistically significant differences in students' paragraph writing due to the method of teaching in favor of the experimental group. This study recommended that training programs could be offered to train teachers on using the short stories reading technique. Students need to be provided with opportunities to practice using it. Based on those findings, the study recommended the necessity of implementing modern methods of teaching short stories reading for better outcomes in students' paragraph writing, and more studies should be conducted on different variables and subjects were recommended.

Keywords: using, Short Stories reading, Development, second year, paragraph writing, Mayo District

المستخلص:

هدفت الدراسة إلى معرفة تأثير قراءة القصص القصيرة في تعزيز كتابة الفقرة لطلاب المدارس الثانوية . تم تطبيق الدراسة على عينة هادفة من طلاب الصف الثاني الثانوي في مدرسة حكومية في الخرطوم جنوب العام الدراسي 2020/2019. وشملت العينة (89) طالباً في مدرسة حمدان بن راشد الثانوية للبنين بمنطقة مايو. تم توزيع الطلاب على المجموعة التجريبية والمجموعة الضابطة ، وتم تدريس المجموعة التجريبية باستخدام أسلوب قراءة القصص القصيرة ، بينما تم تدريس المجموعة الضابطة بالطريقة التقليدية. أوضحت نتائج الدراسة وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في كتابة الفقرة لدى الطلاب تعزى لأسلوب التدريس لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. أوصت هذه الدراسة بإمكانية تقديم برامج تدريبية لتدريب المعلمين على استخدام أسلوب قراءة القصص القصيرة . يجب تزويد الطلاب بفرص لممارسة استخدامها . وبناءً على هذه النتائج أوصت الدراسة بضرورة تطبيق الأساليب الحديثة في تدريس قراءة القصص القصيرة لتحقيق نتائج أفضل في كتابة فقرات الطلاب ، ولجراء المزيد من الدراسات حول المتغيرات والموضوعات المختلفة .

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستخدام ، قراءة القصص القصيرة ، التطوير ، السنة الثانية ، كتابة الفقرة ، منطقة مايو

Introduction

All literature is ideological, and so are all attempts at reading and writing, because they always emphasize some aspects and ignore others. Therefore, when discussing literature, we can produce discourses that

identify present and sometimes ruling ideologies, while trying to remain neutral or play a significant role reproducing or changing structures of powers and dominations (Street, 1993).



This wide range of possible points of view makes reading and writing fiction a unique learning environment. In addition readers own interpretations emphasize that the meaning goes through dynamic interaction between the reader and text in an overarching way (Rosenblatt, 1978). Therefore, reading is a unique learning process. It has commonly been assumed that using literature in foreign language instruction originated about two hundred years ago when the grammar translation method was the dominant method of foreign language teaching. However, when other methods became successful in EFL teaching, and language study began to be perceived as a pure science, the aspect of pleasure and interest was forgotten, and literature was completely ignored and put aside from foreign language teaching.

On the contrary, since the 1980s, literary materials have come back into the second language instruction curriculum. Recently more and more teachers are interested in using literature in language teaching. They have found that literature can be used to attract students and motivate them in acquiring a second language. Therefore, it may generally be used as a complementary component in language teaching to improve students' language skills. Quirk and Widdowson (1985), for example, point out that "foreign language learning is a very complex process. To reduce this complexity, Applied Linguists and Methodologists seek different methods" (p. 3). Further, they believe that "using literary texts would bring enjoyment to language classes, enabling students to be exposed to real language and the way of life of a population".

Therefore, one of the most significant reasons for this interest of teachers is the authenticity of literary texts. Most

teachers now believe that literary texts have the potential to be more useful than other materials for they suggest real occasions for assessing novel language. Proving this belief, Littlewood (2000) reveals the fact that the most important problem of EFL teaching is the making of an authentic situation in the classroom. Most of the language classrooms are outside the native speakers' community, they are isolated from the happenings and contexts that create real language. Based on his ideas "literature has the capability to overcome this problem, because in literary texts language creates its own context and goes above the artificial situation of the classroom and presents real world experiences, relationships between people and the place where the target language is spoken to the students" (Littlewood, 2000), p. 3). Although literature has some advantages for language teaching, there are some opposing ideas against its use. Lazer (1993) remarks that "literature exposes students to complex themes and fresh, unexpected uses of language. A good short story may be particularly fascinating in that it involves students in the suspense of unraveling the plot" (p. 37). The application of literary materials in second language instruction has been considered as one of the old methods of instructing for years. Nevertheless, the research regarding the application of literary materials is very restricted regarding the fame of its application. Most of the EFL classrooms are isolated from the context and situations of target languages since they are outside the community of native speakers, which produce natural language. On the other hand, informational material can be boring for the learners.

Literary materials as short stories are able to overcome this issue, for literary materials, particularly stories, produce real situations that are similar to the students' living condition assets, thus instigating students to keep on reading (Masayuki, 2015).

Many researchers have worked on the effect of literary texts on EFL learning. McKay (1982) states that, in fact, literary materials have an influence in second language pedagogical planning as it is believed that such materials are able to provide a cause to instigate many students to read the materials in English. However, the success in using literature significantly depends on the text selection. This is especially true in that the selected texts should not be extremely complicated in their linguistic or abstract characteristics. It has been reported that "The use of literary texts in English language teaching is a fast-growing area within English language education, EFL/ESL and stylistics, and is likely to continue to grow, along with courses where language and literature teaching are combined into a single subject" (Masayuki, 2015, p, 24).

The great amount of researches that measured the relations between novels, short stories, drama, etc. and language instruction have indicated four advantages of literary materials. They can be enumerated as (1) "Literature helps developing linguistic knowledge both on usage and use level" (Widdowson, 1984, p, 1); (2) "Literature may enhance students' motivation" (McKay, 1982), p. 1); (3) "Literature has the potential to increase learners' understanding of the target culture" (McKay, 1982), p. 1); and (4) "Literature may help develop skills of

cognitive and critical thinking" (Lazer, 1993) p. 1). Many of these advantages are "based on the experience of teachers and researchers who had substantial background in the teaching of literature; however, none of them is supported by research that is coming from real classroom settings" (Yuksel, 2009, p, 17). The current study makes an effort to familiarize second language teachers with the influence of applying short stories reading in second language teaching on developing EFL students writing skills and analyses the impacts of wide application of short stories reading on the improvement of the second language learners' writing skills.

Short Stories Reading Develop Writing Skills

It is a rich soil for writing in EFL classroom both as a model and as a subject matter. A piece of literature works as a model that students can follow in writing, especially in putting ideas together in a paragraph or an essay. As a subject matter literature serves as a model of thinking and interpretation or analysis (Stern, 1987).

Ibsen (1990) views literature writing as a source of pleasure which lies in expressing ourselves. He also states that writing is a process involved in learning and thinking. Literature presents different models of writing activities, ranging from paragraph writing to complete composition and stories and from controlled to independent kind of assignment. For example, writing a paragraph involve the student rephrasing in his own words what he read and hears. As for narrative summary, it works well with realistic short stories and work controlled to independent kind of assignments.

For example, writing a paragraph involve the student rephrasing in his own words what he read and hears. As for narrative summary, it works well with realistic short stories and plays since they generally follow a chronological sequence of events and contain concrete elements, as plot setting. Character and theme, which guide students in their writing, as for adaptation, involve rewriting prose fiction into dialogue or a play into a narrative. This activity helps students become aware of the differences between written and spoken English (Hişmanoğlu and studies, 2005). Haines (2004) states that in order to develop and demonstrate the skills of communication for ideas, to engage in informed written debate and to present ideas in a sustained discursive form, English students must be required to write essays as a fundamental part of their learning experience. Writing essays as part of studying a literature course is, then, primarily a method of learning, and we would say the most profound method of learning. Pugh (1988) recommends a broad range of works and a lot of writing and sharing of personal responses to build awareness of the commonalities among readers of the same texts. In this way, students begin to understand their membership in a cultural and literary community.

The view point by Peterson et al (2008) who believes that writing helps students to make a kind of ideas go through students to minds, which in turns gives them shape and form. This process allows new understandings to come through discovery and deep thinking. The spark of creativity and focused thought which could be recorded on paper creatively. Previous researches has revealed that the initiation of the writers'

workshop has positively helped instructors in teaching writing and underlined the fact that students need to be given the opportunity to live the "whitely" life in order to help them see the life through the writes' eyes. The sustained human interest in stories over the centuries is clear from the rich evidence of the epics, myths, legends and folk tales which have inspired, thrilled and entertained all people since time immemorial. Literature can be regarded as writing that pre-eminently reflects in depth and quality some aspect of the human experience, illuminating it from the perspective of a sensitive and intelligent observer (Smit and Communication, 2007). Within the last few decades, literature has been broadly regarded in many disciplines as a major way of knowing; a focus on interpreting meanings to construct understanding of human action and a complementary. Sharples (1996) defines writing as a primary mental activity and a resource from pens and papers to words process that relies on physical tools. Writing involves deliberate planning, discovery system, problems solving and evaluation requirement. Byrne (1998) describe writing as the act of forming a graphic symbol, letters, or combination of letters that pertain the sound that people produce in their speech. Stovall (2006) defines writing as a means of communication in order to reflect ideas, express thoughts and to convey information and messages. It's the process by which thoughts and ideas are translated into words that compose sentences which form paragraphs. Use of vocabulary appropriately can be a writer's strongest asset but when it is used inappropriately. (Wambui, 2010)

Writing may be considered the most difficult of language skills. Errors in spelling and grammar are not easily excused even if meaning is clear and handwriting is attractive and legible. So, writing out to be taught for learners must be graded in steps according to the level and situation for both English as first language or foreign language.

Nolen (2006) states that the teacher controls the writing process as it is an instrument of both communication and self-expression. Most people, however, especially when writing a foreign language or second language use it primarily with other members of their own community or the wider world. The teacher's main task is to teach effective functional writing rather than creative self-expression. Before the invention of writing as a means of communication, people face many problems in conveying their messages, ideas and thoughts clearly. They use primitive ways of communication such as verbal messages and symbols to draw other people's attention.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher, from his own long teaching experience at secondary schools' level, identified EFL students' face difficulties in paragraph writing. So, teaching short stories reading is one of the most effective and motivational tools in teaching a foreign language. This study aims at investigating factors that reinforce paragraph writing skills for EFL students through short stories reading.

The Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to identify factors that reinforce paragraph writing through short stories reading. The results and findings of this study could be implemented and used with EFL students to enhance their students' writing. The study can be replicated at similar situations.

Objectives of this Study

This study attempts to achieve the following objectives:

- To enhance paragraph writing through short stories reading.
- To identify items that improve EFL students' paragraph writing in such a proper manner.

Methodology and Methods

This study adopts experimental, descriptive and analytic approaches in scientific research. It follows a quantitative method of analysis. Data were gathered from EFL students through pre/post tests for control and experimental groups.

Subjects

The population of this paper was the students at a secondary governmental school in South Khartoum, second class students. The school is Hamdan Bin Rashid secondary school for boys.

Test

The researcher designed pre/post tests. The test was to examine the students' skills, competencies and level of their writing skills. They are asked to write an essay on a topic that is familiar to them.

Materials of Teaching

The researcher used (Jane Eyre) simplified booklet that was designed by the Ministry of Education in Sudan as a tool of teaching in a period of two months. The duration of teaching the story is about twelve hours. The story was used as reading text. Vocabulary was taught and emphasis was put on teaching language. Elements of writing essays, composition and summaries were focused on when reading the short stories with the students during regular classes. Exercises were extracted from the story and activities were designed to be fulfilled by the students to improve their writing skills. Dictations were used to check students' spelling skills.

The reading story was exploited for extra purposes to teach the language in addition to its main purpose for entertainment and motivation.

Statistical Methods

To achieve the objectives of the study and to verify the hypotheses, statistical methods were used as follows:

1. Frequency distribution of the answers.
2. Percentages.
3. Charts.

To get results as accurate as possible, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. The study targets two groups in the same school. The

researcher applied short story reading in order to promote his students' writing skills, whereas

in the control group another teacher applied a traditional method in teaching the same story without emphasis on using the story as a reading text.

The researcher analyzed data using SPSS to the answers of the test. The researcher also analyzed the pretest for the control group and the post test for the experimental group.

This course deals with the field study procedures under the following sections

Table (3.0) Names of schools and students' number:

Name of the school	Number of pupils
1. Alkalakla Secondary Model schools for boys.	10
2. Hamdan Bin Rashid secondary School for boys.	326
2.1 The First class	127
2.2 The Second class	98
2.3 The Third class	101

Table (4.0) illustrates the frequency and percentage for the Control group (pre - test)

sex	Frequencies	Percentage
Pass	16	36.4%
Failure	28	63.6%
Total	44	100.0%

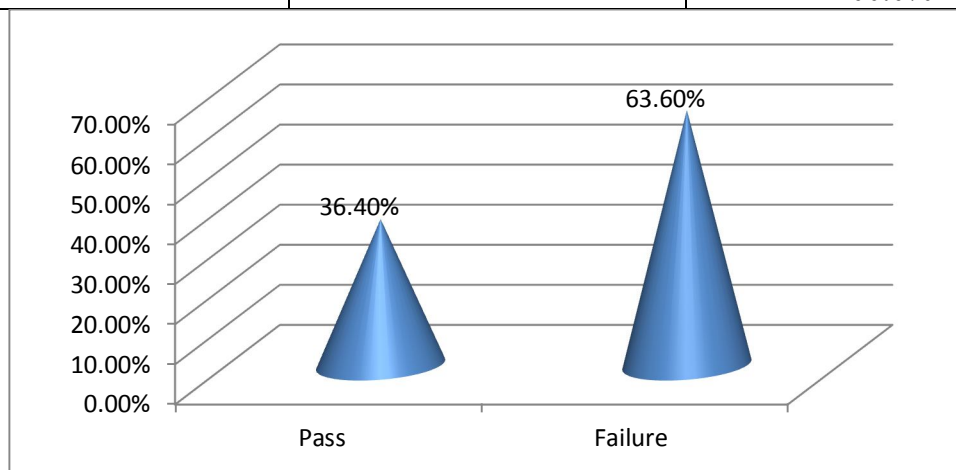


Table (4.0) illustrates the views of the distribution of the pre sample by Pass by (%36.4) and Failure by (%63.6).

Table (4.1) illustrates the frequency and percentage for the Control group (post - test)

sex	Frequencies	Percentage
Pass	14	31.8%
Failure	30	68.2%
Total	44	100.0

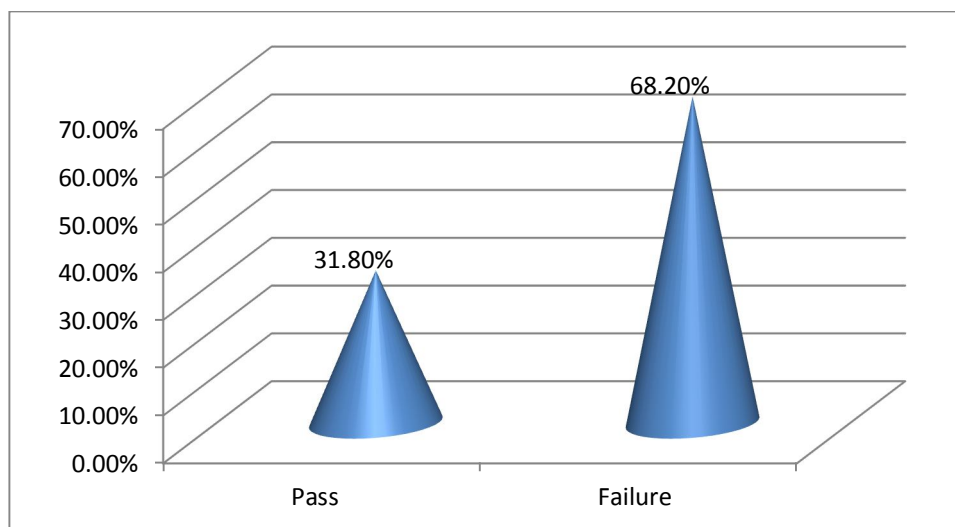


Table (4.1) illustrates the views of the distribution of the post sample by Pass by (%31.8) and Failure by (%68.2).

Table (4.2) illustrates the frequency and percentage for the experimental group (pre - test)

sex	Frequencies	Percentage
Pass	23	52.3%
Failure	21	47.7%
Total	44	100.0%

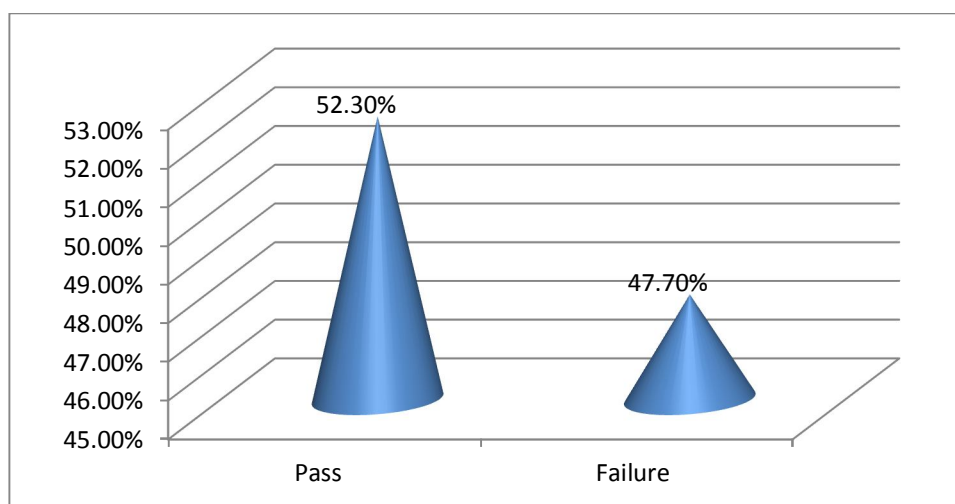


Table (4.2) illustrates the views of the distribution of the pre sample by Pass by (%52.3) and Failure by (%47.7).

Table (4.3) illustrates the frequency and percentage for the experimental group (posttest)

sex	Frequencies	Percentage
Pass	30	68.2%
Failure	14	31.2%
Total	44	100.0%

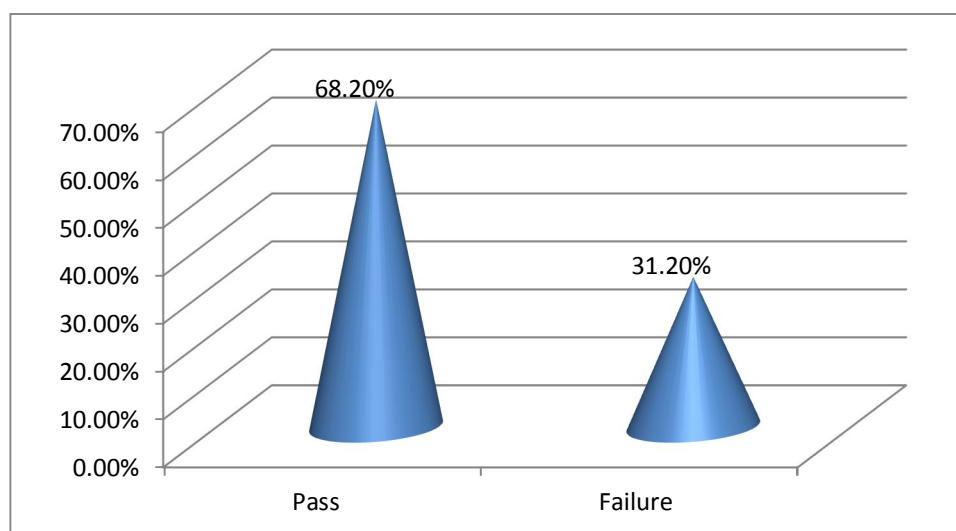


Table (4.3) illustrates the views of the distribution of the post sample by Pass by (%68.2) and Failure by (%31.2).

Table (4.4) t-test result showing group means of the experiment group

Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	D f	Sig. (2-tailed)	Scale
Pre-test	8.20	2.833	-5.478	43	0.00	significant
Post-test	10.36	4.254				

The value of (T) test calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the hypothesis was (-5.478) with signify value (0.000) which is less than the level of significant value (0.05) These refer to the existence of differences statistically for the Post-test.

Table (4.5) t-test result showing group means of the control group

Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	D f	Sig. (2-tailed)	Scale
Pre-test	7.66	3.177	1.159	43	0.253	insignificant
Post-test	7.23	3.490				

The value of (T) test calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the Hypothesis was (1.159) with signify value (0.253) which is more than the level of significant value (0.05) there are no statistically significant differences.

Table (4.6) t-test result showing group means of the pre-test

Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	D f	Sig. (2-tailed)	Scale
Control	7.66	3.177	-0.899	43	0.374	insignificant
Experiment	8.20	2.833				

The value of (T) test calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the Hypothesis was (-0.899) with signify value (0.374) which is more than the level of significant value (0.05) there are no statistically significant differences.

Table (4.7) t-test result showing group means of the post-test

Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	D f	Sig. (2-tailed)	Scale
Control	7.23	3.490	-3.779	43	0.00	significant
Experiment	10.36	4.254				

The value of (T) test calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the hypothesis was (-3.779) with signify value (0.000) which is less than the level of significant value (0.05) These refer to the existence of differences statistically for the experiment group.

Results Discussion

The value of (T) test is calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the Hypothesis is (-5.478) with significant value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (0.05). These refer to the existence of significant statistically for the post-test. There were two hypotheses. The first hypothesis was that there were significant factors that positively affect teaching Short stories reading to improve EFL students writing skill according to statistical analysis. In the second hypothesis teaching Short stories reading provide students to an insight to the target language vocabulary. The researcher found that there were significant factors affect positively for developing EFL students writing skills is short stories reading. Also researcher observed that short stories reading build up vocabulary stock for EFL students as the

result of statistical analysis. So, short stories could solve of the students writing skills problems.

Conclusion

There are significant items that have effects on enhancing writing skills through short story reading. They are: Using short stories reading enriches the student's vocabulary stock, make the students familiar with punctuation, encourages EFL student to study the language.

Recommendations

The recommendations based on the findings of this study are as follow:

1. Teachers in secondary schools should have to use short stories reading in teaching processes to enhance writing skills.
2. Short stories reading at secondary schools should be activated since it creates motivations and aptitude towards EFL students.

Suggestions for further Studies

The researcher suggests the following titles for further studies

1. The effects of using short story reading on enhancing reading skills at secondary schools.
2. The influence of using stories on developing the students interest in English Language.

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