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EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF TASK-BASED ACTIVITIES ON VOCABULARY ACQUISITION AND STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS READING SHORT STORIES: A COMPARISON OF TWO APPROACHES

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of integrating short stories with task-based learning activities in English as a foreign language (EFL) class to promote vocabulary development and motivation among L2 learners. Six short stories were selected by the participants based on their interests, pre- and post-tests were conducted to evaluate vocabulary acquisition and a questionnaire was used to gather information about the perception of task-based activities after reading short stories among students. The study involved 60 intermediate level English students at the SEEU Language Center, assigned to either the control or experimental group. The experimental group completed post-reading tasks such as keeping vocabulary notebooks, reading circle discussions, sequencing activities, plot structure understanding, and group poster presentations after reading each story. The findings suggest that the incorporating engaging reading activities had a favorable effect on language learning. The experimental group exhibited greater vocabulary acquisition and comprehension than the control group. The follow-up tasks created a sense of achievement, improved communication and interaction among the students. According to the study, including comprehensible input through extensive reading along with constructive output from task-oriented exercises can

effectively promote language progress and enhance students' motivation thus effectively facilitating language development in L2 learners.

Key words: Short Stories, Task Based Reading, Vocabulary Acquisition.

INTRODUCTION

Acquiring vocabulary is a crucial part of learning any language, yet short stories as a tool for enhancing vocabulary acquisition are often overlooked in language classrooms. Despite their potential to improve reading, writing, and vocabulary building, some teachers perceive stories as time-consuming. However, integrating short stories into English language instruction could make learning more enjoyable and effective for students. Additionally, the use of short stories can help learners gain cultural knowledge by exploring themes, characters, and settings. Through reading and discussion, students can intentionally and incidentally acquire new vocabulary words while engaging in a range of activities.

Short stories can be used to teach foreign languages, as previously mentioned. However, teachers must select materials that are appropriate to their students' level of language skill, otherwise, they can find reading to be a challenging task. In this regard, Hişmanoğlu (2005) argues: "When choosing the literary works used in language classes, language teachers must consider the needs, motivations, interests, cultural background and language level of the students" (page 57). It seems that in order to effectively lead activities and assure the success of academic work, teachers must come to know and understand the students they teach.

Background To the Study

South East European University (SEEU) Language Center is a unit where all the students from all the departments take mandatory English courses. There are Basic Skills English (EFL) Levels starting from Level 1(Elementary), Level 2 (Pre-Intermediate), Level 3 (Intermediate) Level 4 (Upper Intermediate) and Level 5 (Advanced). Apart from these courses, the Language Center also offers courses in Academic English and ESP for Law, Public Administration, Computer Sciences and Business Economics. However, these advanced courses diverge from Basic Skills (EFL) Courses. The most crucial difference lies in the student and the purpose of learning English. Learners of academic English and ESP are advanced students who have mastered the fundamentals and are acquiring new languages in order to trade a specific set of professional abilities and carry out particular job-related duties.

At the beginning of each semester, students have to take a proficiency test in order to place them to the most suitable level for them. Each semester consists of 12 weeks of instruction. They have four English classes per week and each class time is 50 minutes. The Basic Skills Courses use "Pioneer" course book published by MM Publications. The syllabus is unified and the same for all the teachers. The course focuses on the four primary language skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking. Apart from the course book, supplementary materials such as newspapers, videos, books, extra materials taken from other English language teaching books and other resources are given to students. The syllabus also includes various writing activities that are separate from the ones from the course book, and the topics are different for each level, such as (descriptive, narrative, argumentative CV, Formal Letter writing etc.)

Being one of the busiest units of the university where we serve about 800 students each year, At the end of each academic year, the teachers get together to brainstorm new approaches, materials and methods to provide the best instruction possible for enhancing students' English skills. Additionally, some students at our university are dissatisfied with current approaches, such as using textbooks that place an emphasis on grammar rather than communication skills development, thus teachers at our institution are interested in developing innovative ways to inspire students to study English. However, these textbooks are mandatory for the institution and serve as the main source of instruction. Apart from the reading texts that are found in the textbook and are usually intensive reading activities focusing on detail, we were able to allocate time for extra writing activities as mentioned above and also for extra six hours of in-class reading sessions with graded readers or short stories appropriate to their level of English. The idea of using short stories is based on the positive effects of extensive reading, and although it is a good idea to use it in class, the way it is implemented at SEEU Language Center Classrooms seems to have many flaws. First of all, extensive reading is reading a lot. It is also leisure reading for reading for pleasure. The fundamental objective is to read, so extensive reading should be at a level that is pleasant and "easy" for the student. The objective is to improve reading fluency and enjoyment. Last but not least, intensive reading should be done consistently over time. Finally, extensive reading is something that should take place over a sustained period. Studies that have shown inspiring results are studies that have devoted a serious amount of time to an extensive reading program. (Elley & Mangubhai, 1981) Another flaw is that the teachers use comprehension questions that the graded readers offer, which are produced to meet the demands of teachers who apply to graded readers the same methodology

that they apply to intensive reading passages. Comprehension questions can be helpful in pointing up important features of a story, but they can very quickly accumulate into a burden rather than support and descend into detail instead of focusing on the central issues.

The way in-class reading is implemented at SEEU Language Center seems to be an improvisation of extensive reading, as six class hours and six short stories would not be very beneficial for the students. Furthermore, the assessment is not appropriate for this type of reading. The idea of this research project came up as a result of observing the lack of vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension and motivation for reading in Southeast European University, Language Center students. Students showed low interest in reading and said they had had bad experiences in reading because their teachers had made this process difficult and tedious. In other words, teachers had made reading a dull skill to practice while the intention of using these books was to motivate students and break the monotony of using only textbooks.

After detecting this flaw from student feedback and quiz outcomes following the reading of short stories, it was crucial to investigate the matter further and determine whether allocating more class time and employing supplementary effective techniques can facilitate students in improving their vocabulary acquisition and comprehension of the material.

The outcomes of this study can aid educators in acknowledging the significance of maximizing the benefits of short stories for learners. This research will consider the hindrance of time constraints within the 15 weeks of instruction and the pressure to go through the textbook and the syllabus and allocate activities that might enhance vocabulary and reading comprehension while using short stories. The activities used will be described in detail in the following sections.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

According to the aforementioned argument, using short stories in English class can be a successful strategy to promote students' linguistic development because these stories have many educational benefits. For example, the language used in these narratives is typically understandable to learners, which makes it easier for them to participate in the reading process. Similarly, Kohan and Pourkalhor (2013) mentioned some of the advantages of teaching English through stories: "They make reading tasks easier for students, help students to be more creative, increase cultural awareness, reduce the anxiety of the students and help them to feel more

relaxed. They handle the language, they deal with fiction" (page 3). Indeed, these concepts focus educators' efforts on purposeful tasks that considerably help students' academic success.

In addition, Pardede (2010) found in his research that using short stories as materials for personal enjoyment is very interesting and helps students' better master language skills. As a result, teachers can assign assignments that encourage students to improve their language learning abilities. The use of language seems to be a natural and spontaneous process when pupils become fully involved in a narrative, enabling them to recognize the function of words within sentences. Sakthivel, Phil, and Kavidha (2010) point out, "By reading a literary work, students can understand the different uses of words, phrases, phrasal verbs, multiple meanings, idioms, etc." (page 230). These explanations show how teachers employ stories as they promote interactive language use, which is interesting and enjoyable for students.

While reading is certainly helpful for vocabulary development, it is not the only way to acquire new vocabulary. Learners can also increase their vocabulary through deliberate study, which involves focusing on learning new words specifically. Research has shown that deliberate study helps integrate new information with existing knowledge and can be an effective way to learn words. In addition to extensive reading and deliberate study, language production or output has also been shown to facilitate vocabulary development. This means that actively using the language by producing it yourself is essential for learning a language, especially for vocabulary development. Some studies have shown that language production can be particularly helpful for improving vocabulary (Dobao, 2014; Swain & Lapkin, 2002). So, while reading and studying are important, actively using the language is also crucial for developing vocabulary.

This is because producing language can lead to instances where a learner questions the meaning of a word they said, questions the correctness of a word's pronunciation or receives a corrected word form that they were unable to produce correctly (Nguyen, 2013; Williams, 1999).

Research shows that producing language can be very helpful for language learning, as learners may question the meaning or correctness of the words they use, and they may also receive corrections from others. Therefore, both input and output should be considered when assessing vocabulary development. In a recent study, Nakanishi (2015) looked at 34 studies from 1989 to 2012 to investigate the effectiveness of extensive reading. Interestingly, these

studies often involved more than just reading. Participants also engaged in various activities that provided opportunities for language production. Participants also took part in a variety of tasks that provided opportunities for language production. The meta-analysis, however, did not account for these activities, which might have given the impression that the studies exclusively involved a traditional reading only approach. As a result, it is crucial to take into account all linguistic activities when evaluating the success of vocabulary development, on the contrary the results could be misleading. The inclusion of activities and the absence of research into their impact on development implies that it is impossible to determine the effects of reading in isolation. It's possible that learners acquired knowledge through the activities in addition to reading, making it difficult to discern the specific impact of reading on vocabulary development.

PRESENT STUDY

The study aims to investigate and compare two methods of using stories to determine to what extent they promote vocabulary development. The first method is the traditional read-only method, and the second method is a task-based method, which supplements reading with meaning-centered post-reading activities. The study will investigate how these two approaches affect Southeast European University students' reading comprehension and vocabulary learning by using qualitative and quantitative methods. This research will examine the effectiveness of post-reading tasks and strategies by including a detailed analysis of the post-reading activities and strategies to determine if they are beneficial for the learners.

Specific objectives of this study:

- To implement reading short stories in students of Intermediate Level at SEEU Language Center in order to improve reading comprehension in English.
- To enhance the students' vocabulary by actively involving and motivating them.
- To implement various tasks and activities to improve vocabulary learning processes and enhances reading comprehension.
- To encourage and motivate students to read in order to improve their vocabulary learning and the habit of reading.

Research Questions

The following research questions motivate this study:

1. Do different types of interaction following reading short stories affect vocabulary development?

2. How is the students' attitude towards extensive reading and post reading tasks?

Methodology

This present study is carried out at SEEU during two-semesters of Winter-Summer 2018/2019. There was a total of 60 students involved in the study. They were taking Basic English courses levels B1 (Common European Framework). The researcher has conducted an experiment to investigate the effects of reading short stories for developing vocabulary, the students' attitude towards extensive reading, and post-reading tasks.

A pre-test is utilized to examine the students' knowledge of certain vocabulary that are in the six short stories that are used in the study. After reading the stories, students were assigned various tasks in order to enhance their vocabulary and comprehension of the texts. The tasks included in this study are post-reading activities such as keeping vocabulary notebooks, reading circle discussion tasks, sequencing activity, understanding plot structure, and group poster presentations of the short stories. They had a post-test to find out their development in learning vocabulary and comprehension questions to evaluate their understanding of the stories. The researcher has conducted an in-depth analysis for the obtained results. In this section the research method is explained in detail. The first part introduces the participant's background, then the design, the instruments, procedures and the measures for analyzing the data are explained.

Design of Study

First-year students who are enrolled at SEEU have to take a placement test in the beginning of each semester in order to determine their level of English. After the results they are placed into appropriate levels and then they are divided randomly to sections at that level based on their schedule of professional classes. Each level has approximately 10 sections, and each section has 30 students. This study uses two sections of level 3 and the total number of students taking part in this study is 60. One section of level 3 serves as a control group and the other one as experimental group. The control group was treated same as all sections and

followed the syllabus and the in class reading assignment was applied as required by providing the students with short stories and graded readers for 6 class hours during the semester. The students did not get a choice to choose the books and there was only a brief introduction of what is expected from them. They were told that they will read the books silently and they will have comprehension questions as an assessment tool. On the other hand, the treatment and approach to the in-class reading assignment of the experimental group was very different. The teacher devoted class time in order to motivate students to read and talked about the benefits of reading and how enjoyable it can be when they find books that interest them and are appropriate to their level in order to establish a purpose for reading. The teacher also explained the post-reading activities that would be assigned with a PowerPoint presentation in order to clarify what was expected from the reading class. Another external motivation was that the teacher told the students that if they finish all the tasks and were active, they would be granted 5% bonus points to their overall grade.

The teacher brought 20 short stories and readers form different genres and told the students it will be up to them to choose six stories that they want to read during the semester. The reason to give students a variety of text and choice was based on factors or principles for successful Extensive Reading (ER), which states that there should be a wide variety of text types and topics to choose from and students get to choose what to read. However, due to time pressure because of the necessity to follow the course book the survey was done through Google Classroom. (We utilize Google Classroom as the main course management system. The assignments, resources, library resources, grade book, tests and other features are used throughout the Google Classroom. Communication can also occur through Classroom, apart from the official university email accounts, which serve this purpose.)

The titles and short summaries of all 20 short stories were posted on Google Classroom and copies were also left at the Language Center library in case students wanted to analyze the books in more detail and they were encouraged to do so. The students were given one week to think about the stories they want to read and vote for six favorites. The six stories with the highest votes were chosen to be read during the semester. This procedure served to motivate students and give them a sense of control in choosing what to read according to their field of interest.

Prior to the first reading class, students were put in groups of five randomly. (There was no need for arrangement in groups, because luckily both groups in the study had very

similar proficiency levels. Having mixed abilities in the groups would have required further attention to details such as placing strong students with weaker students.) The aim in grouping students to groups of five was a requirement of the post reading tasks or assignments, since they would work best with five students in each group.

Participants

The study includes 60 participants who were non-English major and are students who are currently enrolled at SEEU Language Center taking English classes in different levels due to the fact that English classes are a compulsory part of their syllabus. The students taking part in this study are students of Level 3 who are of mixed majors of Computer Science, Communication, Business Administration, Legal Studies and Public Administration students. The age of the students varies from 19 to 24 years old, both male and female. The students are from different ethnic backgrounds (Albanians, Macedonians and Turkish). They were divided into two groups. The two groups are included of 30 students in each section. The rationale behind ensuring an equivalent number of participants is to evenly distribute them into groups that are manageable for calculating results, with the primary goal of obtaining a clear understanding of the outcomes when they are eventually compared.

DATA COLLECTION AND INSTRUMENTS

This research employed various instruments to collect data, including six short stories selected by the students, pre- and post-vocabulary test, and a questionnaire. Each instrument is described in detail in this section.

Pretest

Prior to the task, the participants were given a three-part pretest that featured a range of target words that would be encountered throughout the study, alongside some distracter words that were similar in nature to those featured in the short stories. The purpose of these distracters was to prevent participants from overly focusing on the target vocabulary words contained in the main study's reading material. By incorporating these distracter items, the likelihood of participants recalling any of the target words from the vocabulary pretest while reading the narratives was reduced. In the first section, students were required to fill in the blanks of ten sentences using words from a given box. These sentences were tailored to their level, making it necessary for them to have an understanding of the correct word to use. The words provided in the box were of different parts of speech, including nouns and verbs. In the second section,

there were twenty multiple-choice questions that focused on meanings, synonyms, antonyms, and parts of speech. Finally, the third section involved a matching exercise in which students were asked to match twenty words from the first column with their corresponding meanings in the second column.

The procedure lasted 60 minutes and the pre-tests were collected. The aim was to test the participants' prior knowledge of the target words and they were given a point for each correct answer. The results would then be compared with the post-tests.

Post-Reading Tasks

In order to support students in comprehending and appreciating a chosen short story, suitable post-reading activities were selected by the teachers. These activities were aimed at promoting the development of various skills, including language proficiency, critical thinking, cultural awareness, and creativity, as students engaged with the narrative. The activities utilized in the study comprised of both individual and group tasks and were divided into in-class and after-class activities.

Following the completion of a short story, teachers have the opportunity to design a plethora of activities to enhance students' learning experience. One approach to developing these post-reading activities is by incorporating the different levels of thinking skills present in Bloom's Taxonomy, as revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). These levels include remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating, which involve tasks such as recognizing characters and events, interpreting plot developments, applying story lessons to real life, comparing and organizing story ideas, critiquing the story's success, and generating new ideas based on the narrative.

The above-mentioned tasks entail students to work across several levels of the revised Bloom's Taxonomy. They are a combination and modification of follow-up activities for short stories mentioned on the Oxford University Press website, in the teachers' resources part, and from Learning English through Short Stories module Regional Coordinating Team.

Post Reading Activity 1: Reading Circle Task

Reading Circles are discussion groups centered around student reading. Once students have finished reading their respective stories, they are divided into groups of five to engage in a conversation about the story they just read. Reading Circles encourage students to build

strong reading habits and work independently since the abilities of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are naturally combined. This task allows students to have an enjoyable, exciting discussion about the short story and the worksheets that are given to students make real discussion in English an achievable goal. In the Reading Circle, each student has a role in the debate. The prominent roles are:

The Discussion Leader's role is to read the story and prepare at least five general questions about it. The leader also starts the discussion in the group by asking the questions and makes sure everyone has a chance to speak. The leader also calls on each member to present their prepared part and guides the discussion.

The Summarizer's role is to read the book and write down notes on the characters, events, and themes. Find the critical details that everyone needs to know in order to comprehend and remember the story. Also, retell the story to the group as a short summary (one or two minutes).

The Connector's role is to read the story and look for connections between the story and the outside world. The connector needs to make at least two possible connections from the story to their experience or friend's or families' or the world outside. The Connector tells the group about these connections and asks the group for their comments or questions. The Connector also asks the group if they can think of links themselves.

The Passage Person's role is to read the story and choose at least three passages from the book that he thinks are difficult, important or interesting. S/he makes notes about these passages and asks the group one or two questions about the passages. The Passage Person can ask the other members to read the passages aloud. This grants everyone more speaking time and helps the group focus on context and work out the meaning of these passages together.

The Character and Author Analyzer's role is to read the story and provide information about the author such as their life and other interesting facts. The character analyzer also chooses three characters from the book and makes a description of them. The group members need to guess the characters. The analyzer also asks the rest of the members to talk about who their favorite and most minor favorite character is by giving examples of why they think that way.

To prepare for their Reading Circle roles, students are provided with a Role Sheet by the teacher. The Role Sheet breaks down reading into smaller sub-skills, assigning each student

a particular approach to the text. After reading the story from their assigned perspective, students convene in the Reading Circle to discuss the story, using their role sheets as conversation prompts. Students need to work in and out of the classroom on this task, which involves individual and group effort. This method enables learners to improve their reading abilities in a more collaborative and engaging manner.

Post-reading Activity 2: Sequencing Activity — Understanding Plot Structure

Although the structure of various short stories may differ, certain terms can aid in describing the different components of the plot structure. These terms include Orientation (Exposition), Complication (Rising Action), Climax, and Resolution (Falling Action), and can be used to help students analyze and discuss short stories more effectively.

To teach this concept, the teacher uses a PowerPoint presentation to explain what plot structure is and provides a sample short story to demonstrate the activity. Afterward, students are given a worksheet and work in groups to discuss how they will arrange their answers to fit the plot structure. This group activity takes place in class and requires minimal instruction after the initial demonstration.

The Reader's Guide to Understanding Plot Development provides sample questions that can be used to aid in analyzing a story's plot. These questions include identifying the conflict in the story, the presentation of the problem between the protagonist and antagonist, events in the exposition and rising action, the climax, events in the falling action, how the conflict is resolved, and how the writer uses suspense to develop the plot.

Post-reading Activity 3: Short Story Poster presentation (out of class assignment)

After finishing all the short stories, the final activity is a poster presentation of the books. Each group is assigned one of the stories that were read in class. Students are told to imagine that the short stories are made into a movie. They need to create a movie poster for the short story that they are reading. Their poster should reflect the conflicts and themes of the story. They should also include the title, author, and characters on their poster. They also need to choose modern-day actors to portray the characters in the story and list those on the poster as well. On the poster (front or back), they need to write a paragraph explaining why someone should go to see the movie.

Presentations are shared in the classroom, where all groups have different projects to display.

Post-reading Activity 4: Keeping Vocabulary Notebooks (out of class assignment)

According to current research on teaching vocabulary, using a vocabulary notebook is a highly effective method to enhance vocabulary acquisition. These findings suggest that vocabulary notebooks can be an effective tool to be utilized in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Norbert Schmitt and Diane Schmitt (1995) stress the importance of learning vocabulary: "In order for students to be able to read an academic text, watch a movie, or read a newspaper, they need broader vocabulary, and using a vocabulary notebook is an effective tool to help them achieve this."

While students read their short stories at home, they are told to underline words that are unknown to them (at this point, they do not stop and look them up in a dictionary since it is against the nature of extensive reading). After they finish their stories, students are told to go back and analyze the words that they have underlined. Then they are told to create a vocabulary notebook to be used for the unknown words encountered while reading their short stories. Students record these words in their notebooks and regularly review them.

The idea of using these vocabulary notebooks as an activity came up as an idea because students in our groups do not get enough exposure to new vocabulary while they follow their textbooks. They specifically pay attention to words that appear as key vocabulary words at the beginning of every unit. Students know that their final exam vocabulary part will consist of these target words. However, most of these target words are high-frequency words, and many are usually known to the students. Making students keep vocabulary notebooks after reading their books enables students with an opportunity to learn more words and have control of their own learning.

The Reading Circle task and Vocabulary Notebook task were used with every short story as they were the core activities of the study. However, the other tasks were combined rotationally after the Reading Circle task. Each of the additional tasks had its benefits for the students, and using different tasks added to the element of fun and did not bore the students by using the same one each time. The teacher checked the vocabulary notebooks regularly to see if each student was working on them, and she monitored the rest of the activities by circulating the groups in class.

Post-Test

The teacher gave a test after the students finished reading the six short stories. It aimed to measure the students' knowledge acquired during the experiment. Thus, it helped the researcher to determine what the students learned after reading the six brief tales. The researcher created this post-test to supplement the pre-test. Both evaluations have the same objective, which is to investigate SEEU students' acquisition of vocabulary and their ability to use strategies to deduce meanings from various contexts. However, the post-test assessed the development of students' vocabulary awareness after reading the stories and completing post-reading exercises. To accomplish this objective, the post-test had the same scoring system as the pre-test. Both assessments were divided into three parts and followed the same format.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire is designed to gather information about the perception of task-based activities after reading short stories among language learners. The questionnaire is divided into two parts: Part 1 and Part 2.

Part1 consists of a series of statements that students were asked to rate their level of agreement using a 5-point Likert scale. The statements cover a range of topics, such as the effectiveness of task-based activities in helping learners understand the story better, improve their vocabulary skills, develop their critical thinking skills, and more. The Likert scale is a common rating system used in survey research or questionnaires, which permits participants to specify their level of agreement or disagreement with a statement. The scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with a neutral midpoint of 3.

Part 2 consists of three open-ended questions that ask participants to provide their opinions and suggestions related to task-based activities after reading short stories. These questions are intended to elicit more detailed and nuanced responses from participants, allowing them to share their thoughts and insights in their own words.

Overall, the questionnaire is designed to provide a broad understanding of how language learners perceive the use of task-based activities after reading short stories, as well as their opinions on the advantages, disadvantages, and possible improvements of such activities.

Short Stories

The stories provided to the students were written by renowned writers and were of appropriate length, engaging themes, and suitable language for learners. These stories portrayed diverse cultures, societal customs, traditions, behaviors, clothing, and social relations. Most of the short stories were Graded Readers available at the SEEU Language Center Library, and some were simplified versions of famous stories.

RESULTS

In table 2, are the results for the research question about students' attitudes towards extensive reading and post reading tasks. A questionnaire was used, and the first column lists each question from the questionnaire. The second column shows the number of students out of 30 students who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement. The third column indicates the percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

Table 1: Questionnaire Results

Question	Number of Students	Percentage
Task-based activities help understand story	24	80%
Task-based activities improve vocabulary	21	70%
Task-based activities improve speaking	18	60%
Task-based activities develop critical thinking	19	65%
Task-based activities are interesting	22	75%
Task-based activities are enjoyable	24	80%
Task-based activities helpful in language learning	25	85%

Based on the responses from 30 students, the majority answered positively for each question in Part 1 of the questionnaire. For question 1, 80% of the students agreed that task-based activities helped them understand the story better. Similar results were found for question 2, where 70% of students said that task-based exercises helped them develop their vocabulary. Finally, 85% of students felt that task-based activities aided their language acquisition in response to question 7.

Many students in Part 2 emphasized the advantages of strengthening their language abilities, such as improved vocabulary and better comprehension, when asked about the advantages of utilizing task-based exercises after reading short stories. Some students also

stated how task-based activities increase their interest and involvement in what they are learning. Some students mentioned that certain tasks can be too difficult or time-consuming, while others thought they weren't sufficiently ready for the assignments. Task-based activities could be made improved by giving students more direction and instruction, allocating more time for group work, and facilitating opportunity for collaboration among students. Overall, the responses indicate that students view task-based activities after reading short stories as a beneficial and engaging approach to language learning.

Table 2: Vocabulary Post-Test Results:

Group	Average Number of Correct answers out of 50 Questions	Percentage of Correct Answers
Group A: (Task Based Reading)	38	76%
Group B: (Reading Only Approach)	26	52%

Table 2 indicates the results for the research question if different types of interaction following reading short stories affect vocabulary development? As it can be seen from the table 2, Group A performed higher than Group B, with 76% of the questions answered correctly compared to 52% for Group B. The difference between the two groups is 24 percentage points. The findings of this research paper suggest that assigning task-based activities to students after reading short stories is more effective in improving vocabulary knowledge than merely reading the stories and answering comprehension questions. The group that completed the assigned tasks performed significantly better on the vocabulary post-treatment test, the average of correct answers was 38 out of 50 questions, while the group that only read the stories and answered comprehension questions scored lower, with only 26 out of 50 questions answered correctly. Furthermore, it was observed that the students' active involvement in class, use of vocabulary notebooks, and the need to apply newly learned vocabulary items in group discussions all contributed to the retention of the vocabulary they encountered in the short stories. These findings suggest that a combination of task-based activities, student participation, and collaborative learning can effectively enhance language learners' vocabulary acquisition and retention. These results suggest that task-based activities, student involvement, and collaborative learning can successfully improve vocabulary learning and retention in language learners. Therefore, it is advised that language teachers use such strategies in their classrooms to help students improve their students' language skills.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study conclude that incorporating short stories followed by well-designed task-based activities to students, can significantly enhance their ability to develop their reading skills and vocabulary growth. The comparison between the two methods showed that the group that participated in task-based exercises after reading the short stories outperformed the group that only read the stories in the vocabulary tests, reported a more positive attitude toward reading, and felt more motivated. Additionally, the findings of the questionnaire given to of students showed that they felt the task-based method was more engaging and beneficial for improving their communication skills. The study also supports the idea of extensive reading because reading short stories can expose students to authentic language use, foster critical thinking, and improve their language ability as a whole. In order to facilitate successful language acquisition and cultivate a love of reading, language teachers are advised to incorporate short stories and task-based activities into their curricula.

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