



Students' Perception on Using Short Story to Develop Vocabulary at SMP Regina Caeli Cileungsi

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Abstract

Short stories are believed to be a powerful educational tool and play critical roles in EFL classrooms as they provide advantageous authentic learning material, facilitate language development, offer cultural enrichment, and boost personal involvement. This study aimed at describing students' perception of using short stories to develop vocabulary. Employing a cross-sectional survey design, the study was conducted at SMP Regina Caeli Bogor in April 2020 and involved 59 eighth graders. Data was collected using an online questionnaire. The findings showed that the participants had a positive perception of using short stories to develop vocabulary. Thus, the majority of students at SMP Regina Caeli Cileungsi viewed the use of a short story as interesting, useful, and easy to develop English vocabulary.

Keywords:

EFL, perception, vocabulary learning, short story

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is an important element of language teaching as it is the most crucial factor in the mastery of the four language skills. Griva and Stavropoulou (2009) posited that vocabulary learning is considered fundamental and cannot be separated from the language teaching area as students cannot master these skills if they lack vocabulary. Without vocabulary mastery, students also will not be able to express their communicative needs such as ideas, emotions, desires, and thoughts to somebody else. Folse (2004) claimed that people do not know the right vocabulary to use in their utterances or sentences, the most common error will occur. Flohr (2010, p. 2) accentuated this by stating that students should learn vocabulary because otherwise, they will not be able to express and articulate

themselves into the required language in a way that other students can accept and understandable.

To develop students' vocabulary, teachers should employ appropriate ways, among which the most common ones include listening to English songs, watching English movies, reading short stories, and practicing with English native speakers. A short story is a work of fiction usually written in prose, often in a narrative format. According to Abuzahra & Farrah (2016), short stories are considered as one of the literary genres that can be used in EFL classrooms to improve language skills, motivate students, and increase their cultural awareness and tolerance. Pardede's (2021) review on various action researches using short stories to boost EFL learners' performance revealed that short stories use is effective to develop students' reading comprehension, vocabulary, listening, writing, and learning motivation. In another review focusing on experimental research on short story efficacy in EFL classrooms, Pardede (2021) found, among others, that short stories can be effectively used as the main or as supplementary tools/materials to optimize EFL students' learning and performance, short stories can be used to help students develop six areas of EFL learning and teaching: language skills, language components, communicative competence, cultural awareness, memory, and critical thinking skills, and that short stories are more effective for language skills development and language components learning than other materials or tools that do not use short stories.

Various studies on the use of short stories in EFL learning and teaching have been conducted. The majority of the studies investigated short stories use in language skills development (Frimasary, 2015; Bartan, 2017), short stories use in language components learning (Laadi, 2014; Arjmandi & Aladini, 2020; Sentürk & Kahraman (2020).), short stories use for communicative competence and critical thinking skills enhancement (Crumbley & Smith, 2010; Heidari, Tabrizi, & Chalak, 2020). Many studies focusing on the effectiveness of short stories use for vocabulary development (Ahmed, 2017; Bhatti, Arshad & Mukhtar, 2020) have also been conducted. However, studies on students' perceptions of short story use in EFL classrooms are still meager, whereas students are at the center of the learning process so their perception is critical to consider to facilitate successful learning. Pardede (2011) did investigate students' perception of the use of short story to in language skills development. However, it was conducted at the higher education level. To the current researcher's knowledge, studies on this topic involving secondary school students have never been involved. This study aimed to explore the secondary school students' perceptions on using short stories to develop vocabulary. It is set to find out the following queries

1. Do students view the use of short stories to develop vocabulary interesting?
2. Do students think using short stories to develop vocabulary is easy?
3. Do students think the use of short stories to develop vocabulary useful?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perception

Every person may have a different perception of a particular phenomenon because people perceive everything based on their response and prior knowledge or experience to stimulate, interpreting to make meaning. Robbins (2011) said that perception not only creates the experience of the world, it also allows us to act within our environment. In the perceptual process, one gains information about properties and elements of the environment critical to our survival. He also stated that perception is the recognition and

interpretation of sensory information. Perception is also the sorting out, interpretation, analysis, and integration of stimuli carried out by the sense organs and brain. Perception occurs when we "integrate, organize, and interpret sensory information in a meaningful way" (Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2013, p. 88). So, every single person has a perception of everything in this world. But besides that, individuals perceive something in different ways. According to Solso (2008), perception involves an advanced cognitive level in the interpretation of sensory information. Perception refers to the interpretation of things that people sense. Any experience of the sensory stimuli that occurs was going to be processed according to people's knowledge, culture, hope, even according to the person with whom people were. Those things gave meaning to people's simple sensory experiences.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the language component that is concerned with words and meanings. Vocabulary is all the words known and used by a particular person while a word is a single unit of language, which has meaning and can be spoken or written. It is estimated that the number of English vocabulary will be multiplied from time to time because vocabulary serves to increase a person's quality to think and express his ideas. The number of English vocabulary is estimated to be approximately 600.000 words. Although a lot of vocabulary is included in dictionaries, nevertheless, there are no dictionaries that preserve all of vocabulary and words completely. Moody (2005) stated that the words and vocabulary in our world could not be fully included in the biggest dictionary. New words will always increase and appear over time and as science and knowledge progress. Additionally, new technical terms and slang keep on emerging as the currency of its use in the environmental, situational, and societal.

Vocabulary is classified in several ways. Nation (2008), based on how widely it occurs, divided it into four levels: high-frequency words, i.e., a group of words that occur very frequently in all kinds of uses of the language; academic words which consist of a word family that occurs for academic purposes; technical words that are very important for anyone who specializes in a particular area; and low-frequency words, i.e. those which rarely occur. Thomas (in Hasby, 2007, p. 13) classified vocabulary into four kinds. First, oral vocabulary, i.e. the one consisting of words that are actively used in speech. They are words that are close to being conversational. Second, writing vocabulary, or the words commonly used in writing. Third, listening vocabulary, the words whose meaning can be understood while listening to others. Fourth, reading vocabulary, or the words one responds to in the writing of others.

Since all languages have words and vocabulary is a very important part of language learning (Nation, 1990; Nunan, 2003). Similarly, Schmidt (2000) stated that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write. Thus, learning vocabulary is a part of language learning because learners learn vocabulary first before they master a more complex structure. Nobody can speak and write without vocabulary.

Vocabulary mastery makes learners effective speakers while their lack of vocabulary can cause failure to publish and create difficulties in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and speaking. Having a low vocabulary can also put EFL students in a vicious circle because EFL students cannot read further texts and can cause missed opportunities in successfully achieving learning strategies. Therefore, every effort needs to be made to increase the vocabulary of EFL learners.

Short Story

Short stories are works of fiction that are shorter in length than novels. A novel consisting of 40,000 words is meant to be read over several days because the word count of a short story is up to 7,000 words. Whereas a novelette is longer than a short story but shorter than a novel. The word count is usually between 7,500 words and 17,500 words. A novella is longer than a novelette and is sometimes called a long short story or a short novel consisting of 17,000 - 40,000 words. A short story always focuses on one plot, one main character (with a few additional minor characters), and one central theme due to the shorter length. Whereas a novel can tackle multiple plots and themes because the novel contains more words than a short story. Short stories have a variety of choices for different interests and tastes.

Short stories have many types. Ryandi (2010) differentiated them into ancient tales, humor, satire, fantasy, biography, education, local color, and history. Ancient tales are a story about ancient events or stories that never happened known as imaginary stories whose truth is hard to believe. An example is fairy tales, which are told mainly for entertainment that contains lessons (moral). Fantasy stories are nothing but the fair combination of the old tales tradition and the supernatural details. Humor is a story with perceptual qualities that can make us happy even though we are feeling sad. Satire is a story that usually acts like a tragedy of crime, corruption, sarcasm, or parody, which occurs in the community. An education story is such stories revolve about education or education main character to add insight into the science. The historical story tells past events that happened or the history of hereditary origins. Local color is a type of storytelling about local values resulting from the cultivation of the people of an area that are naturally formed and obtained through a learning process over time.

Pathan (2013) described three categories of benefits of using of short-stories in EFL classrooms: linguistic, socio-cultural, personal, and emotional. Short stories are highly recommended, as one of the best methods in EFL classrooms due to the infinite linguistic benefits embedded in their use. Short stories can serve as a model to aid language learners to be familiar with different forms and conventions in the target language because they contain language intended for native speakers. and use 'natural' sentence structures and vocabulary used in context. What is more, short stories offer a variety of choices for different interests and tastes so that teachers can select works to suit their students' mastery level, needs, and interests.

Stories have long been an effective method of transmitting morality, values, principles, and common sense. Thus, viewed from socio-cultural aspects, short stories are an effective tool for inculcating values and cross-cultural understanding as they have "powerful images and symbols and operate on both conscious and unconscious levels, conveying intellectual and emotional meaning" (Kirschenbaum, 1995, p. 68).

Short stories essentially reflect life. Consequently, people have an innate instinct to enjoy listening to and telling stories. While reading or listening to a well-told story, students can be inspired and then imitate the virtuous behavior of the hero in the story. This causes short stories to inherently to have effective emotional, educational, and social appeal.

The cognitive benefits of using short stories in EFL classrooms are based on the belief that every language learning (including EFL) is a process involving cognitive strategies that enable the learners not only to master the target language easily but also to develop various individual learning strategies. While listening to or reading short stories,

EFL learners can try to get the general meaning by predicting and guessing. Dealing with short stories also offers an imaginative experience, that helps develop one’s creative powers (Mourão, 2009) and can support his higher-level thinking skills development.

METHOD

Research Design

This study used a cross-sectional survey design, i.e. a study in which data was collected from many different individuals at a single point in time.

Participants

The population of this research was the students of SMP Regina Caeli Cileungsi, while the sample was taken purposively by asking the whole 59 eight-graders (29 males and 30 females) at the school to participate in the study. This selection was made because these students had just already learned English vocabulary using short stories.

Instruments

The data was collected using a set of an online questionnaires. The questionnaire consists of 23 items using the Likert Scale. The questionnaire should be responded to by choosing one of the four options provided, i.e., 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; 4=strongly agree. The questionnaire was adapted from the instrument developed by Trimastuti, Santy Christinawati (2018), and Nazara (2019). It was modified by the researcher to meet the study’s condition. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach’s Alpha Test.

Data Analysis

To analyze the collected data, the researcher used descriptive statistics, an analysis technique to find the percentage and the mean of the questionnaire. The degree of the participants’ responses was determined using the scale presented in Table 1 (Nurkancana and Sunartana, 1992).

Table 1. *Four Relative Norm Formula Scales*

Formula	Description	Result
$MI + 1,5 (SD) \leq \bar{X} < 4$	Very Positive	$3.25 \leq \bar{X} < 4$
$MI + 0,5 (SD) \leq \bar{X} < MI + 1,5 (SD)$	Positive	$2.75 \leq \bar{X} < 3.25$
$MI - 0,5 (SD) \leq \bar{X} < MI + 0,5 (SD)$	Neutral / Neither	$2.25 \leq \bar{X} < 2.75$
$MI - 1,5 (SD) \leq \bar{X} < MI - 0,5 (SD)$	Negative	$1.75 \leq \bar{X} < 2.25$
$1 \leq \bar{X} < MI - 1,5 (SD)$	Very Negative	$1 \leq \bar{X} < 1.75$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

a. Students' Interest in Using Short Story to Develop Vocabulary

Table 2 showed that the students feel their vocabulary increased after they learned it using short stories (M=3.22). They also feel that reading a short story is an interesting way to learn vocabulary (M=3.15). Furthermore, the students feel interested in learning vocabulary when the teacher uses the short story as teaching media (M=3.14). The students think reading a short story is an appropriate way to learn vocabulary (M=3,12). The students like to learn vocabulary by using a short story (M=3.2). They also feel Learning vocabulary through a short story is fun (M=3.2). The students find it easier to remember vocabulary using a short story (M=3.1). Learning vocabulary with a short story supports their learning style (M=3.05). They plan to learn new vocabulary through a short story (M=3.05). The cumulative mean of responses (\bar{X}) in this section is 3.12. Based on the Four Relative Norm Formula Scales, his finding indicates that the participants' interest in using short stories to develop vocabulary positive.

Table 2. Students' Interest in Using Short Story to Develop Vocabulary.

No	Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean
		F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	
1	I like to learn vocabulary by using a short stories.	1 (1.7)	1 (1.7)	42 (71.2)	15 (25.4)	3.2
2.	Learning vocabulary with a short story supports my learning style.	0 (0)	10 (16.9)	36 (61.0)	13 (22.0)	3.05
3.	I prefer learning vocabulary by using a short story.	3 (5.1)	11 (18.6)	27 (45.6)	18 (30.5)	3.02
4.	Learning vocabulary through a short story is fun.	0 (0)	3 (5.1)	41 (69.5)	15 (25.4)	3.2
5.	I am interested in learning vocabulary when the teacher uses a short story as teaching media.	1 (1.7)	6 (10.2)	36 (61.0)	16 (27.1)	3.14
6.	I think reading a short story is an appropriate way to learn vocabulary.	0 (0)	7 (11.9)	38 (64.4)	14 (23.7)	3,12
7.	Reading a short story is an interesting way to learn vocabulary.	0 (0)	6 (10.2)	38 (64.4)	15 (25.4)	3.15
8.	I feel my vocabulary increased after learning by using a short story.	0 (0)	7 (11.9)	32 (54.2)	20 (33.9)	3.22
9.	I find it easier to remember vocabulary using a short story.	1 (1.7)	8 (13.6)	34 (57.6)	16 (27.1)	3.1
10.	I plan to learn new vocabulary through a short story.	0 (0)	13 (22.0)	30 (50.8)	16 (27.1)	3.05
	$\sum f$	6	72	354	158	590
	$\sum \%$	1.02	12.2	59.97	26.76	99.99
	\bar{X}					3.12

b. Students' Perception of the Ease of Using Short Story to Develop Vocabulary

As shown in Table 3, most students made a new vocabulary list when reading a short story and wrote the translation in Indonesian (M=2.85). They feel that a short story is an efficient tool to improve vocabulary (M=3.29). They believed that vocabulary learned

from a short story (3.19) is easy to memorize. The students also found it easier to get new ideas and knowledge from a short story ($M=3.14$). It can be concluded that students viewed that using short stories to develop their vocabulary is easy (\bar{X}). The cumulative mean of responses (\bar{X}) in this section is 3.04. Based on the Four Relative Norm Formula Scales, his finding indicates that the participant's perception of the ease in using short stories to develop vocabulary is positive.

Tabel 3. Students' Perception of the Easiness of Using Short Story to Develop Vocabulary.

No	Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean
		F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	
1.	I find it easy to get new ideas and knowledge from a short story.	0 (0)	8 (13.6)	35 (59.3)	16 (27.1)	3.14
2.	I find it easy to memorize vocabulary from a short story.	0 (0)	10 (16.9)	28 (47.5)	21 (35.6)	3.19
3	I make a new vocabulary list when reading a short story.	2 (3.4)	22 (37.3)	23 (39.0)	12 (20.3)	2.76
4.	I translate my word list into Indonesian.	3 (5.1)	19 (32.2)	21 (35.6)	16 (27.1)	2.85
5.	Short story is an efficient tool to improve vocabulary.	0 (0)	4 (6.8)	34 (57.6)	21 (35.6)	3.29
	$\sum f$	5	63	141	86	295
	$\sum \%$	1.7	21.36	47.8	29.14	100
	\bar{X}					3.04

c. Students' Perception of the Usefulness of Using Short Story to Develop Vocabulary

The data in Table 4 showed that the students feel short stories motivate them to improve vocabulary ($M=3.19$). Then they find it easier to master new vocabulary using a short story ($M=3.17$). Furthermore, developing vocabulary through a short story is useful ($M=3,2$). Then they feel that a short story is helpful to develop their vocabulary ($M=3,2$). They get a lot of vocabulary through a short story ($M=3,2$). Furthermore, they think learning vocabulary is much better by using a short story ($M=3$). They feel motivated to learn vocabulary using a short story ($M=3,07$). The students feel that though short story encourages them to focus on the learning process of vocabulary ($M=3,07$). The cumulative mean of responses (\bar{X}) in this section is 3.13. Based on the Four Relative Norm Formula Scales, his finding indicates that the participant's perception of the usefulness of using short stories to develop vocabulary positive.

Discussion

The findings in this study reveal that the participant's perception of the use of short stories to increase vocabulary is positive. The mean score of each indicator shows that short story usefulness is regarded the most positive for the respondents ($\bar{X} = 3.13$). It is followed by their interest in using short stories to increase vocabulary ($\bar{X} = 3.12$) and then their perception of the ease of using short stories ($\bar{X} = 3.04$).

The participants thought that using short stories to develop vocabulary is useful because for the majority of them the use of short stories helps and motivates them. Such positive perception of short story usefulness clarifies Nazara's (2019) finding that students believed that short stories are very useful as reading short stories helped them to develop their vocabulary and even stimulated them to find many vocabularies.

Table 4. Students' Perception of the Usefulness of Using Short Story to Develop Vocabulary.

No	Statement	SD F(%)	D F(%)	A F(%)	SA F(%)	Mean
1.	Developing vocabulary through a short story is useful.	1 (1.7)	5 (8.5)	34 (57.6)	19 (32.2)	3.2
2.	I feel motivated to learn vocabulary through short stories.	0 (0)	10 (16.9)	35 (59.3)	14 (23.7)	3.07
3.	Learning vocabulary is much better by using a short story.	2 (3.4)	11 (18.6)	31 (52.5)	15 (25.4)	3
4.	Using short stories motivates me to improve my vocabulary.	0 (0)	6 (10.2)	36 (61.0)	17 (28.8)	3.19
5.	Short story is helpful to develop my vocabulary.	1 (1.7)	4 (6.8)	36 (61.0)	18 (30.5)	3.2
6.	I get a lot of vocabulary through a short story.	3 (5.1)	2 (3.4)	34 (57.6)	20 (33.9)	3.2
7.	Short story use encourages me to focus on the vocabulary learning process.	2 (3.4)	8 (13.6)	33 (55.9)	16 (27.1)	3.07
	$\sum f$	9	54	272	137	472
	$\sum \%$	1.91	11.45	57.6	29.0	99.96
	\bar{X}					3.13

The finding that the participants found short stories use to increase vocabulary interesting conform to the finding of Pardede (2011) that the majority of pre-service EFL teachers of Universitas Kristen Indonesia found short stories interesting to use both as materials for self-enjoyment and of as components language skill classes. It also supports Nazara's (2019) findings that short stories are very interesting to use in vocabulary development. This finding indicates that short stories are an interesting tool that can be used to build vocabulary effectively.

The majority of the participants found short stories easy to use to increase vocabulary because the stories made it easy for them to get new ideas and the context help them memorize vocabulary. This is closely related to the fact that short stories are authentic materials that help students to see how words are used in real contexts. In other words, as Willis (as cited in Friedman, 2011, p. 126) accentuated, short stories provide real contexts which enable students "to gain an understanding of how lexis functions in real-world environments".

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the participants had a positive perception toward using a short story to develop their vocabulary, as shown by the mean score of the students' perception (3.09). Most of the students were interested in developing vocabulary by using a short story from these three indicators: interests, easiness, and benefits. Concerning that, English teacher is suggested to add learning activities using a short story to develop a vocabulary as they can cultivate students' curiosity, creativity, and interests.

This study has at least two limitations. First, it involved only students from a single school. Second, the data was collected only through a questionnaire. Future research is recommended to involve participants from various schools and employ multi-methods (questionnaire, interviews, observation) for collecting data.

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