

# Upper Basic Stage Students' Perspectives on the Importance of Using Story in Learning English

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**Abstract**—This study shed light on the perspectives of the upper basic stage students toward the importance of using the story in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Jordan. The methodology adopted in investigating the students' perspectives was mainly based on distributing a questionnaire to 400 students of both genders from three basic upper grades; 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup>. Before administering the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted to check the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The study findings were based on three domains of the questionnaire and appeared as follows: first, students revealed their awareness of the importance and benefits of using stories to improve their learning of EFL; second, the majority of the students strongly agreed on the fact that using stories has proven helpful in improving the basic skills of language learning; third, the students' perspectives showed variance concerning the difficulties that the students faced when reading the stories. The study concludes with the recommendation that further research should be conducted on a larger sample that comprises all education levels in Jordan.

**Index Terms**—basic upper classes, learning English as a foreign language (EFL), storytelling, story reading, language skills

## I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to speakers of English at the primary stages is essential because the focus is to develop the language's four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, the innermost part of language learning is vocabulary, which might help students polish their skills in the target language. To help students acquire new vocabulary and develop their English language, teachers can use the story in the method of teaching that may enable the EFL learners to learn the language better. Miller (2011) argues that storytelling and story-reading, along with discussing and retelling stories, can assist students in improving their understanding of grammar and enriching their vocabulary.

It has been noticed that most EFL learners seemed to show dissatisfaction and uneasiness towards learning a new language in general and English in particular. This particular effect has manifested itself, especially when such learners are asked to write, speak, or read specific extracts of the language at hand. When learners of English listen to or read a story, it helps them to make sense of the meanings of the language. Miller (2011) suggests that the report can utilize language learning. When teachers read or tell stories to their students and retell them back in groups, this practice can help the learners improve their language abilities. Moreover, students learn to listen to others by taking turns in speaking.

Many educators assume that students of EFL are usually bored because their books do not include stories that may attract their attention in class. As a result, teachers do not use stories that may help students learn language skills. In Jordan, very little is known about this phenomenon, and almost no studies have investigated the reasons behind the lack of the use of stories in the classroom as a tool for teaching English. On the other hand, research in other countries on the use of the story showed that the story is an essential element to be used in the classroom for English language learning.

### A. Significance of Stories in Language Learning

It is of paramount importance for students and teachers to incorporate some time for reading stories because stories are a fundamental part of all human culture. Besides teaching and learning a language, teachers and learners of a specific language get exposed to the cultural aspects of the language under scrutiny. Therefore, completely dismissing stories from the allotted time for teaching would be inexcusable. Furthermore, because of this innate adherence between language and culture, stories can help students establish connections and guarantee that they can compare the stories from various cultures.

In addition to the facts mentioned earlier, stories play a significant part in social interaction (Ochs & Capps, 2009) and are considered helpful in several contexts. Accordingly, they are defined as social activities that are necessary building blocks of social connection. Because of this, learners at different levels who aim to improve their communicative competence should pay attention to reading as a tool and should also exert all efforts to develop reading skills that can lead to better comprehension. As an essential language skill, it is to be argued that storytelling, narrating,

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and other related skills should be taught chiefly in native language classrooms. However, there must be a stipulated justification for why foreign language learning should not tap into and attempt to improve storytelling skills and abilities.

### *B. Benefits of Using Stories and Storytelling in Language Learning*

Studies on using stories in teaching have revealed that learners believe using stories is exciting and motivating. Following this premise, learners find it easy to get involved in the learning material and recall it better if stories are concerned. Stories, in general, and personal ones, told by teachers and students, can be utilized for many learning benefits. Teachers often use personal stories and anecdotes to make their points clearer. Godwin and Perkins (2013) also highlighted children's personal, linguistic and conceptual development as the three significant benefits of using stories.

#### *(a). Personal Development*

Stories play a significant role in enabling students to develop their instincts for learning. Additionally, stories are important for nurturing feelings and emotions (Godwin & Perkins, 2013). Hence it can be deduced that stories can provide the growing minds with an imaginary world, fabricated by language that students can engage and enjoy (Cameron, 2001).

#### *(b). Linguistic Development*

The ability of educators to utilize stories in their teaching can inevitably expose learners to various linguistic arrangements (Cameron, 2001). Students, for instance, can reflect on imaginative language usage to convey vivid figures of speech (Godwin & Perkins, 2013). Furthermore, students can enrich their vocabulary in a natural context (Laine, 1997).

#### *(c). Conceptual Development*

Students may be exposed to ingenious concepts and information through stories, contributing to their conceptual development and cognitive abilities. Students are also introduced to various sets of cultural, traditional, and historical norms of their society (Godwin & Perkins, 2013).

Laine (1997) suggested that students with low motivation to learn a foreign language or those considered low achievers can benefit greatly from stories. She added that such benefits could be achieved only if these stories were chosen carefully. This, in turn, can help change their attitudes toward language learning because they will perceive learning a language as an intriguing and beneficial process.

### *C. Statement of the Problem*

The scarcity of stories in the textbooks that the Ministry of Education designs for EFL learners makes it very difficult for the students to use the story as a tool for learning the language. Therefore, the lack of using stories in the English class seems to affect the students' use of this genre in learning the language. Although this phenomenon of using the story in language learning is popular, it is still not investigated here in Jordan.

### *D. Purpose of the Study*

This study scrutinizes the effect of using the story in learning the language. Moreover, the study aims to investigate students' difficulties while using the story in the classroom. Finally, the study aims to determine the specific language skills that are mostly developed by the use of the story.

### *E. Questions of the Study*

The data to be collected for this study was used to answer the following questions:

1. What is the degree of the student's awareness of the importance of using the story in learning English as a foreign language?
2. What are the language skills that the use of the story may develop mostly?
3. What difficulties do students encounter when using the story to learn the language?
4. Are there any statistically significant differences at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$  in the mean scores of the subjects that can be attributed to the grade level?

### *F. Study Significance*

The findings of this study may give perception into students' awareness of the importance of using the story in language learning. Therefore, the results are expected to enhance the teachers' repertoire of tools that develop students' learning. In general, this study may be considered important for the following reasons:

1. Students will learn English according to the whole language approach rather than in a discrete way.
2. English will be taught using authentic material rather than pre-contextualized texts.
3. Students will learn not only the text of the language but also other social and cultural concepts.
4. Teachers will have a new tool to present the language in which students will participate more and learn better.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Woodruff (2000) investigated the effects of story exposure, instructional group size, and pre-kindergarten experience on story comprehension and perceptive vocabulary in kindergarten. The findings of the study showed that children with pre-kindergarten experience had significantly higher outcomes for both story comprehension and receptive vocabulary. Multiple story exposure and larger instructional groups showed higher means for perceptive vocabulary.

Jenkins (2002) studied the influences of mothers' stories on the vocabulary and syntax of African-American children with or without language impairment. The results of the study showed that the mothers used low-frequency vocabulary and complex syntax when they told their children and those with specific language impairments. In addition, kids, in turn, used minimally one of their mothers' complex syntax and low-frequency words.

Maqabilah investigated the effect of teachers' storytelling out loud on the reading comprehension of 120 students from two schools. The researcher conducted the effects of the storied program on the reading comprehension of 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students. Tests and analysis of results indicated that the subjects of the experimental group significantly increased their comprehension when being exposed to systematic story reading aloud by the teacher.

Collins (2004) conducted a study in which he studied ESL preschoolers' English vocabulary acquisition and story comprehension from the storybook reading of 80 preschool-aged students who were native speakers of Portuguese. The findings showed that a strong effect of treatment on EFL learners enhanced vocabulary acquisition. Opposite to the expectations, this study showed that story comprehension was not very strong, but there was a significant impact of the performance-oriented discussion style on children's comprehension.

Erkaya (2005) conducted a study that dealt with the benefits of using short stories in an EFL context. This study investigated the effectiveness of using literature in language instruction. The results of the study showed that short stories might help EFL students to learn skills efficiently because the motivational benefit is embedded in the stories. Also, with short stories, instructors can teach culture, literacy, and higher-order thinking skills.

Hişmanoğlu (2005) investigated teaching the English language through literature as an important technique for teaching basic skills for teaching both basic skills and language aspects, like grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The results of the study showed that literature could play a major role in English programs in non-English-speaking countries. Also, using literature can enhance the student's ability to acquire a native competence in English, express themselves in good English, and teach the features of how the English linguistic system is used in communication. In addition, using drama in language teaching helps the learners' awareness of the target language and culture.

Cleven (2006) investigated the results of a six-week intervention program on mentoring and story-sharing training. A highly significant difference was depicted among the gained scores of children in training and mentoring versus no training and no mentoring groups on the retelling rubric during the interpretation of the data. The variance analysis also showed a substantial difference between the groups on the story reading post-test behaviors of childcare providers. As for receptive vocabulary, no apparent difference was attested between the groups.

The efficacy of the usage of short tales in a Hong Kong junior secondary ESL classroom was studied by (Yang, 2009). According to the findings of the research, employing short tales increases students' interest in English if the stories are engaging and the language used corresponds to the level of the learners. The results also showed that students' confidence in using English could not be bolstered within a short period of time and that stories can alter the attitudes of students to be motivated in the foreign language.

The impacts of physical movement during story time on vocabulary acquisition of primary students in grades K1 (Kindergarten) of one school were investigated by (Hammett, 2009). The findings of the study revealed significant vocabulary gain scores for the children in the experimental group. Qualitative results showed that most kids who participated in physical activity during story time chose the active method of engagement in read-aloud activity when they were given a choice.

Uddin (2009) investigated implementing counseling techniques, role play, and storytelling in teaching second language vocabulary to adult second language learners. The results of the study showed that all of the participants made an improvement. Storytelling and role play can help adult English learners to enrich their vocabulary and communication skills. The results of this study revealed that both techniques (storytelling and role play) were shown to be promising and successful by all the students.

Likewise, Pardede (2011) conducted a study that focused on using short stories to teach language skills. The findings of the study showed that using stories can develop listening skills, as well as writing skills. In general, the results showed that short stories could enhance students' language learning.

Lorenzo (2012) investigated the impacts of storytelling and play on vocabulary acquisition and retention of young children. The findings of the study showed that the children expressed interest in the play materials that they were given, but that did not increase their retention significantly.

Uchiyama (2011) investigated reading versus telling of stories in the development of English vocabulary and comprehension among young second language learners. The results of the study revealed that character imagery was to be significantly higher in enhancing both comprehension and vocabulary development. Listening to the story has been shown to be beneficial for learners' developing English proficiency.

Khorashadyzadeh (2014) conducted a study in which he showed the reasons for using short stories in speaking and listening classes for 172 students. The results of the study showed that this study might help the students to improve their independent English language learning skills of participants in their oral skills through reading short stories. The

results of the study were beneficial for EFL teachers who look for useful ways to enhance their students' speaking and listening skills.

The above-mentioned reviewed research showed that stories are important tools for learning EFL. Some of the advantages of using the story inside the classroom were related to the development of vocabulary, others to writing, speaking, listening, and other language elements. To sum up, the story has been seen by many researchers as an effective tool in language learning.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of students in the upper basic stage who learn EFL in private schools in Amman. The sample of the study comprises approximately 400 students of the population of the study. The participants were selected from several schools assigned from different private schools in Amman.

#### B. Instruments

To collect the data for the study, the researcher developed a questionnaire covering all aspects of students' awareness of the use of the story in learning EFL. The questionnaire consists of three different domains that aim at covering the four language skills which are to be learned by the students, as well as a major domain that covers the difficulties that the students might encounter when learning the language through stories. Each domain included varying questions, which were designed carefully and based on a consultation of experts in the field of TEFL in Jordan. In order to check the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher adopted the application of Pearson's correlation coefficient.

#### C. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

A group of EFL experts (professors, MA holders, and EFL supervisors) comprised a panel for validating the questionnaire in terms of clarity, comprehensiveness of the questionnaire according to the domains to be covered, relevancy of the items, and linguistic accuracy. The reliability of the questionnaire is to be established based on Pearson's correlation coefficient.

### IV. PROCEDURES

- i. The present study was conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2017-18 in private schools in Amman. The schools were selected randomly and at the convenience of the researcher so as to fit the aim of providing at least 400 students of the upper-level, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. Additionally, the schools were selected based on the gender of the student so as to ensure the equal availability of the students. The level of the students, as well as their proficiency, were disregarded for the sake of applying the study as they were deemed insignificant in terms of electing the student's perspectives on the importance and impact of stories on their learning of English.
- ii. The researcher developed a questionnaire based on the importance of the story in learning the language. The questionnaire is based on three major domains; the importance of the story, the language skills to be developed by the story, and the difficulties that the students might encounter when learning the language. Each domain included a number of questions that were to be answered by the respondents. The number of questions in each domain varied; accordingly, in the first domain, there were 32 questions, the second domain included 30 questions, and the third domain included 14 questions.
- iii. A panel of 10 EFL professors, supervisors, and experienced teachers were consulted to validate the questionnaire. The feedback from them is essential in approving the questionnaire and hence important for the end state of the results.
- iv. A permission letter was obtained to distribute the questionnaire to the subjects in the various schools in Amman.
- v. A pilot study was conducted in order to check the validity and reliability of the data. In order to check the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher adopted the application of Pearson's correlation coefficient. The application of this correlation is conducted by applying the questionnaire to the same students twice with a three-week interval so as to check the consistency, the degree of steadiness, the average covariance between item-pairs, and the variance of the total score in their answers to every single item that appeared in the three domains.
- vi. Based on the results of the pilot study, a large-scale study was conducted that comprised 400 students so as to investigate their perspectives on the impact of reading stories on their learning of EFL.
- vii. The same questionnaire was distributed to the 400 students at the convenience of the researcher and in a time span of three weeks. The main aim of this move is to demonstrate the validity and reliability of the questionnaire based on the answers of the respondents. The students were not notified or informed that they were subjected to the same questionnaire and were mainly asked to fill out a questionnaire similar to the previous one. Basically, they were not helped by anyone and were free to decide on the answers they felt comfortable with.
- viii. The data were collected from the subjects and then keyed in an excel sheet so as to code them according to the variables of the study. The sheet included the number of the student, the gender of the students, the grade, and the

- response (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree), which were coded as A, O, S, B, and R, respectively.
- ix. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to establish the reliability of the questionnaire; following that, Cronbach alpha will be used to measure the means, covariance, and other statistical measures so as to check the statistical significance of the study based on the impact of teaching stories to the subjects of the study.
  - x. The results were stated and discussed accordingly.

## V. DISCUSSION

In order to have a clear understanding of the impact of reading stories on the students, the analysis of the data was based on dividing the research work into the following three domains:

### A. Domain One

Table 1 summarizes the responses of the students towards their perspectives with regard to their awareness of the importance of using the story in learning English. The responses averaged between (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree).

TABLE 1  
STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF USING THE STORY

Response	Average (32 questions)	Percentage
Strongly Agree	210	52.2 %
Agree	125	31.25 %
Undecided	40	10.00 %
Disagree	15	3.75 %
Strongly disagree	10	2.50 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

In essence, the table shows that almost a great number of the students reflected positive perspectives on the impact of reading stories in improving their English. This appeared clearly in the frequency of the students who selected the categories *Strongly Agree* and *Agree* in their responses. Apparently, 83.4 % showed such inclination. Nonetheless, a relatively small number of the students who answered the questionnaire appeared to *Disagree* and *Strongly Disagree* believe in the impact of reading stories for the sake of developing their English. The numbers in the table clearly demonstrate this result in which only 25 students showed such a reality.

On the awareness of the importance of using the story in learning English, the results of the analysis showed that the majority of the students revealed their high awareness of the positive impact of stories on their ability to learn the language at hand. The responses of the students wavered between *Strongly Agree* and *Agree* in almost all the responses they provided when they answered the questions of the first domain in the questionnaire. Following this fact, the majority of students, which averaged between 210 and 125, stated that reading stories has improved almost all of their cognitive skills, such as higher-order thinking skills, reading comprehension skills, and interactivity skills. As a reflection of this higher percentage of their perspectives, the students also indicated that reading stories have influenced their appreciation and comprehension positively. For example, 195 students indicated that they believe that reading always enables them to appreciate the language, whereas 206 students reflected that stories often helped them appreciate and enjoy the target language they are learning. On the same domain, and on answering questions about their awareness about the possibility in which reading stories can enhance and improve their communication and interaction successfully, almost all the students shared such awareness. The above analysis on the awareness showed congruency with the research in literature; for example, Hişmanoğlu (2005) clearly showed that using drama in language teaching helps the learners' awareness towards the target language and culture.

Secondly, similar to the above mentioned, most of the students reflected that reading stories has developed their linguistic capabilities at all levels, such as phonological, grammatical, nomenclature, and discursal ones. This was reflected in their answers in which they revealed that reading stories helped them to better understand the language structure (246-Strongly Agree and 139-Agree), helped them to acquire new English vocabulary words (297-Strongly Agree and 79- Agree), facilitated pronouncing certain words (241-Strongly Agree and 127-Agree), and provide them with contextual language at the level of discourse (201-Strongly Agree and 138-Agree).

Third, the analysis of the data showed that some aspects which surround learning a foreign language were shown to be impacted. Such aspects include the cultural, the pragmatic (contextual), and the psychological. On the cultural aspects, a high percentage of the students revealed that reading stories have enhanced their cultural awareness of different nations. This, in fact, appeared in three questions in the questionnaire (21, 21, 31). A thing that reflected the importance of the cultural dimension in learning the language. Similar to the cultural aspect, the pragmatic aspect seemed to score high among all the 400 students who indicated that their understanding of the contextual dimension had improved their awareness of the importance of such stories in helping them learn English. Finally, on the psychological aspects, almost more than half of the students (239 out of 400) stated clearly that reading stories had increased their confidence in using the language in and outside the classroom, helped them to develop positive attitudes towards the

language, offered richness in language learning, and enabled them to successfully express their emotions. This inclination was clearly reflected in the answers of 221 students.

In conclusion, the analysis of the responses of the 400 students that appeared in the questionnaire revealed that a high percentage of the students seemed to recognize and value fully the importance and the necessity of using stories in positively enhancing their learning of EFL.

### B. Domain Two

This section shows and explains the results of the analysis pertaining to how reading stories contribute to the development of improving the four skills of language learning. It is believed that teaching through the use of reading stories has the exceptional and extraordinary capability of improving various skills. The main linguistic skills under investigation are: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

The following Table 2 summarizes the average of the student's responses based on Domain Two.

TABLE 2  
STUDENTS' RESPONSES BASED ON DOMAIN TWO

Response	Average (23 questions)	Percentage
Strongly agree	215	53.8 %
Agree	115	28.7 %
Undecided	50	12.5 %
Disagree	10	2.50 %
Strongly disagree	10	2.50 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

On the second domain (skills that will be developed mostly by using the story), generally, most students indicated that their learning skills had been developed, which has led to better learning of the language at hand. This general view seemed to be supported by other views in the literature, such as Erkaya (2005), and Hişmanoğlu (2005) who showed that short stories might help EFL students to learn the four skills efficiently because the motivational benefit is embedded in the stories. The skills they developed are the following:

#### (a). Writing Skills

The analysis of the responses indicated that nearly all of the students share similar perspectives on the importance of reading in developing their writing skills, such as the mechanics of writing, writing accuracy, writing clearly, cohesion and coherence, and writing unity, among others. The responses of the students concerning the writing skills to questions 1-8 of the questionnaire appeared positive towards a rather good impact of the reading on developing and improving writing skills. These results appeared to agree with (Pardede, 2011), who showed evidence that using stories can develop listening skills as well as writing skills.

Moreover, most students indicated that they believe (*Strongly Agree* and *Agree*) with the importance of practicing reading as a tool for improving writing. As can be noticed, two-thirds of the students reflected such inclination in their answers.

#### (b). Reading Skills

The process of comprehension when listening to spoken words is similar in many respects to understanding the written word. It is generally assumed that story-reading develops this skill because students who regularly listen and read stories improve their reading skills as they are inclined to reading other relevant stories. This indicates that reading interesting stories instills in students the willingness to read other materials. Generally, learners find it important to listen and read stories with pictorial information to furnish a context for a better understanding of the word.

Because of its innate relatedness to the subject matter of the current research, most students indicated clearly that they are totally aware of the importance of reading stories in enhancing and polishing their reading skills. In particular, most of the students revealed that reading had improved their cognitive abilities in comprehending the text, reading between, in, and behind the lines in their pursuit to decode and decipher the intended meaning, which is stated implicitly or explicitly in the reading material. This result was mainly based on the responses of the students to questions 9-13, in which a high percentage of the responses varied between *Strongly Agree* and *Agree*. These results seemed to agree with (Maqabilah) who stated that reading stories increased the student's comprehension when being exposed to systematic story reading aloud by the teacher.

#### (c). Listening Skills

Reading stories is highly believed to be contributing to the improvement of listening and consequently develop students' concentration and comprehension skills. When the educator uses the story as a learning tool in the classroom, students normally pay attention and try to understand the meaning of various words and their linguistic structures for the sake of comprehending the story as a whole. In fact, students reflect that they truly enjoy listening to stories many times. This inclination allows certain linguistic patterns to be acquired and reinforced. Listening can also be improved via careful usage of various activities in the classroom.

Similar to writing and reading, the perspectives of students revealed that their listening skills could be enhanced significantly by reading stories. In analyzing the responses of the students, most students stated that they believe and are highly aware that reading can improve and develop their listening comprehension in general, strengthen their listening skills, and enhance their ability to listen effectively. These attitudes appeared clearly in answering questions 14-18 of the questionnaire. Again, the responses wavered between *Strongly Agree* and *Agree*. The same view appeared to be in harmony with the results of Khorashadyzadeh (2014) who clearly showed that reading stories is beneficial for EFL teachers as well as students who are looking for ways to improve their speaking and listening skills of their students.

#### (d). *Speaking Skills*

It has been postulated that students feel encouraged and highly motivated when they start to learn a new language. Educators believe that it is important to maintain those advanced levels of motivation via reading stories. They also believe that stories can be used in a variety of approaches so as to improve students' oral and communication skills. Once they have heard a story, the students feel excited and motivated to engage themselves in a fruitful discussion that can boost their understanding of the story and link it to their stored experiences.

On reading or hearing the stories told to them, the language, the students get accustomed to hearing over and over again, a thing that makes the learning process easier. Nonetheless, this skill can be improved and developed through applying various activities in the classroom.

In addition, students need to be given a chance to engage themselves in speaking activities as soon as possible. In doing so, they will feel that they are making remarkable progress. Motivation is highly important when acquiring a second language. Story-reading is a good way of providing and increasing those speaking opportunities through utilizing various speaking activities.

Obviously, according to the analysis of the data, almost all the students indicated that their speaking skills are subject to improvement by reading stories. Accordingly, they stated that reading stories can develop the following:

- abilities to focus on the details
- speaking competency
- speaking accuracy
- speaking fluency
- speaking skills

Such responses were based on answering questions 19-23, and for the most part, the responses were *Strongly Agree* and *Agree*.

In a nutshell, the analysis of the responses of the second domain reflected that the attitudes of all the 400 students seemed to strike similarity in their agreement on the idea that is reading stories play a major role in improving all the skills of the language, namely, writing, reading, speaking, and listening.

#### C. *Domain Three*

In essence, domain three is about the difficulties that students encounter when using the story to learn the language. In this domain, the responses of the students seemed to show variance in their perspectives regarding the difficulties they encounter when reading stories. For example, the students showed dissimilarity in agreeing on the availability of stories in school. The main drive behind this variance is the differences in schools. Public schools generally tend to stick to the curriculum assigned to them by the Ministry of Education, and accordingly, they prefer not to provide such stories to the libraries. Additionally, some schools lack the financial assets through which they can buy such stories for the students. On this particular issue, it can be found that 117 students indicated that their schools do not provide such stories for them. However, the rest of the categories (*Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Undecided*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*) showed a relative approximation in the responses, as is shown in Table 3 hereunder.

TABLE 3  
STUDENTS' RESPONSES ON DOMAIN THREE

Response	Average (14 questions)	Percentage
Strongly agree	115	28.8 %
Agree	105	26.2 %
Undecided	80	20.0 %
Disagree	50	12.5 %
Strongly disagree	50	12.5 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

As per question 2, the students seemed to find control over the class as a problematic issue because they felt that the teacher lacked the ability to control the class. The responses of the students reflected this tendency in which the category *Strongly Agree* appeared in 226 responses and the category *Agree* appeared in 110 of the answers. On calculating these numbers, the sum comes to two third of the students' responses. Similar attitudes seemed to prevail when answering question 3, through which students indicated a lack of the time allotted to reading activities. On question 5, the students also seemed to agree on the difficulty they faced when reading the stories based on their level of English. Additionally, it appeared that 9<sup>th</sup>-grade students seemed better than 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students. Also, the 10<sup>th</sup>-grade

students seemed the best of all. Similar attitudes also appear in questions 8, 10, 13, and 15. Questions 9 and 12 clearly reflected the psychological aptness and preparedness of the students to accept such challenges. In this sphere, the responses of the students seemed to vary and approximate each other. A thing that reflects students' indecisiveness about their attitudes with regard to reading stories. Finally, 124 students, who constituted the majority of the informants, indicated that they rarely believe that most stories are part of the school curriculum.

In conclusion, the results of the analysis of this domain showed that students seemed to show irregularity in their perspectives toward the difficulties that they face in reading stories. The justification behind this dissimilarity is believed to be stemmed from the individual differences and capabilities that such students possess, not to mention their stylistic peculiarities. In reality, the difficulties that seemed to arise based on the analysis of the questionnaire ranged greatly across the students. This variation is due to some reasons that seemed to be beyond the control of the students, such as the availability of the stories, the firm control from the teacher's side on the class, the willingness of the Ministry of Education to accept them as part of the curriculum among others. On the other hand, the analysis revealed that they are some differences in the attitudes and perspectives of the students based on their psychological willingness and preparedness to challenge themselves to this seemingly arduous task.

The fourth question of this study is: "Are there any statistically significant differences at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$  in the mean scores of the subjects that can be attributed to the grade level?" The results of the analysis of the data based on the fourth question presented showed that there were no significant differences at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$  in the mean scores regarding the students' grade level. This implies that all grade levels practically share the same degree of awareness of the importance of the story as a tool for enhancing learning. Additionally, these results revealed that students showed agreement that using stories in EFL classes is important for developing students' language skills. However, concerning the difficulties that students may encounter in the classrooms, students showed variance in this regard. One of the interpretations for this could be that all students vary based on their individual capacities, their educational backgrounds, and their interest in enhancing their language learning capabilities.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The narrative format of short stories is supposed to facilitate fast comprehension by students, making them effective teaching aids for foreign languages. Young people who are underachieving or uninterested in a foreign language might change their mindsets with the help of a carefully designed story. The results of the current study show that using short stories won't necessarily increase students' interest in English unless they are engaging and the language used is appropriate for their level. A little bit of new language can be incorporated into the story, but not enough to make the kids uninterested in reading. Although their confidence in using English could not be increased over a short period of time, the researched class of students preferred this approach for storytelling since it made the stories simpler to grasp.

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