

**Evaluating the effectiveness of Short Stories as teaching tools on
Sixth-Preparatory Students' Language Proficiency in Iraqi
Schools.**

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Abstract

This study investigates the efficacy of integrating short stories into the curriculum of sixth-grade English classes to enhance English language proficiency among students in the Basra Governorate Center. It also explores the challenges encountered by teachers in teaching short stories. Eighty-nine experienced English language teachers participated in the study, responding to a questionnaire comprising ten questions, including seven closed questions and three open ones. Findings reveal that short stories significantly contribute to vocabulary expansion, language skill development, and critical thinking enhancement among students. Nevertheless, teachers face challenges such as time constraints, curriculum density, students' low proficiency levels, creativity deficiency, and inadequate lesson preparation, culminating in psychological and physical strain on teachers. These challenges have a negative relationship with each other, each one amplifying the effect of the other, culminating in an escalated negative effect on both the teacher

and student. Based on the study results, the study suggests providing communication and cooperation between teachers and providing training courses for teachers on time management and allocating time effectively for teaching subjects.

المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة فعالية دمج القصص القصيرة في منهج دروس اللغة الإنجليزية للصف السادس الاعدادي لتعزيز مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية بين الطلاب في مركز محافظة البصرة. كما تحاول الدراسة استكشاف التحديات التي يواجهها المعلمون في تدريس القصص القصيرة. شارك في الدراسة الحالية تسعة وثمانون مدرسا و مدرسة لديهم خبرة في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية، حيث اجابوا لاستبيان يتضمن عشرة أسئلة، بما في ذلك ثلاثة أسئلة مفتوحة و سبعة مغلقة. تشير النتائج إلى أن القصص القصيرة تساهم بشكل كبير في توسيع المفردات وتطوير مهارات اللغة وتعزيز التفكير النقدي بين الطلاب. ومع ذلك، يواجه المعلمون تحديات مثل قيود الوقت وكثافة المنهج ومستويات ضعيفة من الكفاءة للطلاب ونقص الإبداع والاستعداد الدراسي غير الكافي، مما يؤدي إلى الإجهاد النفسي والجسدي على المدرسين. تتعامل هذه التحديات مع بعضها البعض بشكل سلبي، حيث يزيد كل منها من تأثير الآخر، مما يؤدي في النهاية إلى تفاقم التأثير السلبي على المعلم والطالب على حد سواء. استنادا إلى نتائج الدراسة، تقترح الدراسة توفير التواصل والتعاون بين المدرسين وتقديم دورات تدريبية لهم حول إدارة الوقت.

1. Introduction

In today's interconnected world, being proficient in English has become more than just a skill—it's a gateway to personal growth, academic success, and professional opportunities (Brown & Yule, 1989). In the preparatory stage, especially the sixth stage of preparatory school, which is the focus of the study, both the student and the teacher are interested in fully understanding and completing the curriculum because this stage represents a pivotal stage and at the same time represents a transitional stage from school study to university study, which every student aims to achieve. The English language curriculum for the sixth grade of preparatory school is full of linguistic and literary concepts that aim to develop the student's awareness through mastering the basics of the English language and linguistic vocabulary. This is because the ministerial exam at this stage determines the university or college that

the student will go to after graduating from preparatory school. The ministerial exam is prepared by the Iraqi Ministry of Education to include all sixth-grade students in the various governorates of Iraq, except for the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

One of the effective ways of teaching English as a foreign language is by employing short stories in the school curriculum. Using short stories in teaching languages provides an ideal platform for learning interestingly and effectively. By reading short stories in English, learners can expand their vocabulary and improve their understanding of sentence structures and linguistic expressions. In addition, short stories can expose learners to English culture, norms, and values that enhance their deeper learning and understanding of the language. By using short stories as a teaching tool, learners can also improve their writing skills by trying to write their own stories in English, which promotes interaction and overall learning. Short stories are a great way to learn English, providing an opportunity to expand vocabulary and develop reading and writing skills in a fun and stimulating way. By reading and writing short stories, learners can become familiar with sentence structures and the variety of styles and expressions in the English language practically and interactively. Short stories also help in understanding English culture and traditions and enhance interaction with the language interestingly and directly (Abu Zahra & Farrah, 2016).

This study aims to take a close and accurate look at the English language curriculum, specifically the short stories of the curriculum and its impact on the student's linguistic proficiency, in addition to the difficulties that the teacher faces in teaching this aspect of the curriculum in the Basra Governorate Center. The study aims to shed light on the effectiveness of the literary aspect, namely short stories, in developing student skills and the difficulties facing the teacher in teaching this aspect, ultimately creating more useful and effective experiences and studies. The study aims to know the effect of short stories, which are *The Story of the Swing* by the Iraqi writer Muhammad Khudair and *The Story of the Canary* by the New Zealand writer and critic Katherine Mansfield, on the English language proficiency of sixth preparatory school students from the point of view of teachers. By analyzing the responses of experienced teachers on this issue and knowing the challenges facing the teacher in teaching the literary aspect, this study

can contribute to creating useful ideas for the educational process. Thus, this study sheds light on one of the most important issues that concern science and learning and can provide some suggestions and inquiries that help improve teaching methods and develop the educational process.

2. Research Questions

The study concentrates on two main research questions

1. How does the implementation of short stories (the Swing and the Canary) in the English language curriculum of sixth-grade students in preparatory affect the English language proficiency of the students, as perceived by teachers?
2. What are the challenges influencing the implementation and success of the literary component of the English curriculum in Iraqi schools, as reported by teachers?

3. Objectives

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of the short stories of the English curriculum in enhancing sixth-grade students' English language proficiency in Iraqi schools, as perceived by teachers.
2. To identify the challenges influencing the implementation and success of the literary component of the English curriculum in Iraqi schools, as reported by teachers.

4. Hypotheses

The study presupposes two hypotheses

1. The implementation of short stories in the English curriculum significantly improves sixth-preparatory students' English language proficiency in Iraqi schools.
2. Various challenges significantly influence the successful implementation of the literary component of the English curriculum in Iraqi schools.

5. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies, first and foremost, in the critical role of the preparatory stage in shaping the educational trajectory and prospects of students in the educational system in Iraq. The sixth grade in the preparatory school represents a critical transition period and a key developmental stage for students in Iraq as they prepare to enter higher levels of education. The sixth stage of preparatory school is considered the most important stage in a student's life because it is a stage that determines the university and college to which the student will belong and through which the professional life is determined. The preparatory stage is the top of the pyramid in school studies in Iraq and is the beginning of another life. Therefore, allocating this stage to study, specifically the English language curriculum leads to an understanding of the effectiveness of educational curricula to ensure a smooth transition and lay a strong foundation for success and academic excellence in the future. Through studying, evaluating, and taking a closer look at the short stories in the English language curriculum, this study can provide valuable future insights into the effectiveness of the curriculum in developing student proficiency and thus achieving some educational goals and enhancing the goals of education in general and teaching the English language in particular.

Literary stories encourage creative thinking and provoke new ideas and questions, which contributes to the development of imagination, innovation, and critical thinking. The results of this study can benefit the evidence-based decision-making process in curriculum development. Through this study, we also identify the obstacles and difficulties that the teacher faces in general, which can stand as a stumbling block in the way of the progress of the educational process, and deal with them rationally by treating them in an effective therapeutic manner to ensure better success for students and educational opportunities in the long term, and thus support Students' academic achievement. Presenting and discussing a story from a local writer such as Mohammed Khudair and another from a New Zealand writer such as Kathrine Mansfield can contribute to enhancing students' understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity, broadening their horizons, and

stimulating their curiosity about the world and different cultures.

6. Definitions of Basic Terminologies

Defining these basic terminologies will provide a clear understanding of key concepts and terms used throughout the study

a. Short Story: “a brief fictional prose narrative that is shorter than a novel and that usually deals with only a few characters and it is usually concerned with a single effect conveyed in only one or a few significant episodes or scenes” (Friedman, 1958).

b. Language Proficiency: According to Jackson, et al.(2020) “Language proficiency relates to a person's ability to produce and understand a particular language. Proficiency test scores reflect the level at which a person can communicate in the language that they test in. Your proficiency level reflects how well you can read, write, and respond in a given language”.It also refers to an individual's ability to use language effectively and accurately in various contexts, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

c. Sixth Grade: Denotes the sixth year of preparatory education, typically occurring at around the age of 18-21, and representing a critical stage in students' educational journey.

d. Effectiveness: refers to the degree to which the use of short stories in the English Curriculum achieves its intended goals and objectives in enhancing students' language proficiency and other desired outcomes.

7. Learning through story

In its general sense, a story is a narrative that is characterized by having features such as setting, conflict, characters, time, and resolution. These features help the story convey a sequence of events that usually attract the attention of the reader. A story is considered one of the oldest forms of literature that humans use to share experiences, ideas, emotions, and even culture (Friedman, 1958). The story has many forms and types such as novels, drama, and short stories. A short story is a type of storytelling characterized by its focus on a single theme or plot and often contains a specific number of words from a few hundred to a few thousand words (Shaw, 2014).

A short story can be used as an educational tool to enrich the knowledge of the learner and students intensively and extensively. It helps students and learners of foreign languages achieve more valuable knowledge and improve many skills that the learner wants to improve such as speaking reading listening and writing. It also enhances global understanding and contributes to building bridges and cooperation between different cultures and provides an ideal platform for learning languages such as English interestingly and effectively. In addition, short stories can expose learners to English values and traditions, enhancing their understanding of the language and deeper learning of the language structure and functions (Cortázar, 1999). By reading short stories in English, learners can expand their vocabulary and improve their understanding of sentence structures and linguistic expressions, and their writing skills by trying to write their own stories in English. Using short stories in the classroom is considered one of the effective tools in teaching. In this way, the teacher takes on the role of narrator and the student in the role of recipient (Abu Zahra, & Farrah, 2016).

For this reason, using stories to teach foreign languages is a valuable resource when it comes to demonstrating authentic language use through active communication. Additionally, this tool also provides a leisure activity and can not be used by teachers in the classroom, but can also be extended to home, as long as parents have English skills. As studies indicate, learning English should be supported by real-time teaching (Abdalrahman, 2022; Saka, 2014). That is, it is not enough to expose the child to a series of vocabulary and grammatical rules to memorize, but how to use them in a real environment. Utilizing short stories in learning English means that the reader can delve into the depths of the language, understand it, and live within it. Thus, "stories are one of the most important ways and means of passing on meaningful information or valuable ideas that add a lot to the recipient (Upreti, 2012).

As for telling a story, it is an interactive process between the teacher who is telling a story and the audience of learners who are listening to it. It is a process of participation and communication that leads to the development of mental perceptions and imagination in the learner (Erkaya, 2005; Ceylan, 2016). The importance of using the story method in education comes from the fact that the secret of learners' love, whether children or adults, is the enjoyment they find not only in the story that

they listen to and are in a state of anticipation and eagerness to reveal its course and the behaviors of its characters; But also in the character of the teacher, which he cuts and transforms with his voice and movements to get closer to the learners. The story unleashes the learner's imagination and sparks the others' feelings such as sadness, happiness, and pleasure. Therefore, it is considered one of the best teaching methods that a teacher can resort to (Pardede, 2011).

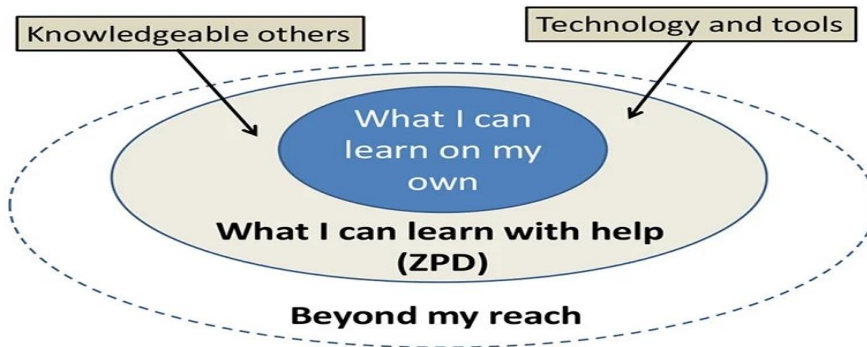
8. Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory

In the early twentieth century, Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) incubated one of the most prominent theories in cognitive psychology: The Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development (STCD). It basically depends on the idea that the child evolves their cognitive abilities by social interaction with others particularly those "others" who are characterized by having more knowledge and skillful humans. Vygotsky opines that the learner constructs knowledge gradually and that social learning comes and evolves before cognitive abilities. (Verenikina, 2010). This theory, thus, focuses on the role and importance of society and social interaction in developing cognitive abilities and consequently the evolving of human learning and its relations with culture. Vygotsky opines that the learning process has both chronological and psychological axes, asserting: "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, logical memory, and the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals." Thus, according to Vygotsky, social learning precedes cognitive development. That's why this theory is sometimes known as The Social Development Theory (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2012).

As an important concept of Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory, the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) comes as one of the significant features in the theory. According to Vygotsky, the MKO is the person who has a higher level of understanding and good abilities than the learner regarding certain concepts, tasks, processes, or activities. The MKO could be a coach, teacher, tutor, or even a peer who gives guiding ideas and modeling that significantly help the learner to acquire some skills within the zone of Proximal Development (the distance between

what the learner could do autonomously and with what the learner can achieve with the help of guidance. The MKO also concentrates on active interaction with others because it increases the number of skills, the quantity of information, and consequently the evolving of a high order of mental functions and reasoning. Through engaging in challenging and meaningful activities, the learner not only develops cognitive abilities but also can gain cultural and personal abilities. According to Vygotsky, the MKO can be not only a human being but also an electronic tutor who can guide students by attracting their attention through organized and beneficial programs and activities (Clabaugh, 2010).

ZPD and scaffolding



Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory

On the other hand, the Zone Proximal Development (ZPD) is very much related to the previous concept, i.e. the MKO because they are intertwined with each other (Langford, 2004). The ZPD is defined as the gap or distance between what the learner can do independently (his actual level) and what the learner can do with the help of more competent and advanced individuals. In ZPD, social interaction enhances the learners' cognitive abilities by guiding them to an advanced level of reasoning (Hall, 2007). Social dialogues have a critical corner in ZPD because they have two main features: intersubjectivity and scaffolding. The former refers to a situation within which two persons have somewhat different ideas about a particular issue and they arrive at shared knowledge after adjusting the perspective of others (Tzuriel & Tzuriel, 2021). On the other hand, scaffolding is a concept that refers to a situation

where adults give direct instructions but the learner controls the tasks and then the adults recede. The most effective and sensitive guidance instructions should be cared for because they give chances to the learner to develop skills and consequently their mental functions.

Language, according to Vygotsky, can be developed through social interaction because language is a critical tool in human communication. Initially, children use speech mainly for social interaction, but as they grow, language becomes intertwined with their thinking process, both internally and externally. The social environment deeply influences how children learn and reason (Penuel& Wertsch,1995). Vygotsky also stressed the impact of culture on cognitive development, highlighting how social interactions shape a child's intellectual growth from infancy through early childhood.”In the cognitive development process, language has two fundamental roles: transmitting information and intellectual adaptation (Moll,1990; Haenen, J., Schrijnemakers, H., & Stufkens, J. (2003).). He also classified language into three forms each of which has its main function: social speech (used as an intellectual tool), private speech(directed to the self), and private speech goes underground(self-regulating function and inner speech). Socio-Educational Development explains consciousness as the result of social situation because the child first utters his first words for communication purposes and then masters them. These words become part of his mental vocabulary and become internalized in the mind and allow the inner speech system (Freeman, 2010; De Valenzuela,2014).

In recent years this theory has attracted the attention of many researchers and policymakers in the context of education and psychology because it asserts the acknowledgment in these fields. Vygotsky’s theory shifted the interest of researchers from the individual to bigger social interaction units such as brother and sister, parents and child teacher and student, etc, and how this theory can be put into practice, especially in the educational and [psychological world. Grasping the stages of ZPD can be beneficial for both educators tutors and students(Daneshfar &Moharami,2018). However, policymakers should first understand and rely on the current level of students so that they can offer the applicable instructions that help overcome the weaknesses of the learner’s capabilities. In the first stage, the learner may need some help from the

teacher and adults but eventually, their ZPD will be developed and expand gradually (Verenikina,2003; Jaramillo,1996).

9 . The Sixth-Preparatory Curriculum

The English language book for the sixth-grade school includes many skills and linguistic rules that will develop and help develop the English language for the sixth grade of middle school. Among the book's contents are two short stories: The Story of “ The Swing” by Muhammad Khudair and the story of “The Canary” by Katherine Mansfield.

As for Muhammad Khudair, he is an Iraqi novelist and storyteller known at the Arab level. He was born in the city of Basra in 1942 and was able to obtain a literary status due to the many creative contributions he made to literature in general and the short story in particular. Therefore, he is called “the Iraqi narrative icon”. The story of the Swing is one of his most famous stories, as the writer excelled in presenting it to the reader in a high style and distinctive writing. It revolves around the character of a man who suffers from psychological fluctuations and internal conflicts during his life. Muhammad Khudair uses the swing as a symbol of these fluctuations and changes facing this person and how he adapts to life, by employing the rise and fall of the swing.

The second story is The Story of the Canary by New Zealand writer Katherine Mansfield. The writer was born in 1888 and died in 1923. This writer is distinguished by a distinctive style, an ability to express herself attractively, and a beautiful way of describing the character. The story of the canary deals with one of the most prominent issues that concern society, which is the issue of power and society. The stories presented by this writer carry a purposeful message because they address important issues for society, and the message carried by the Canary story carries a message about internal conflicts and evil ambitions.

10. Participants

A sample of teachers agrees to participate in the questionnaire. The total number of the participants is eighty-nine teachers including males and females. Those teachers teach the English language curriculum from the intermediate level to the preparatory stage and all of them teach the English curriculum in the sixth preparatory in the schools of Basra. The selection of this sample of teachers is made for practical reasons.

Experience and long history in teaching sixth preparatory students are used as a criterion for the choice of this group of teachers. The participants in this study are a group of distinguished teachers from Basra Governorate. These teachers were carefully selected based on a basic characteristic, which is that they have long experience in the field of teaching in general, in addition to their extensive experience in teaching the English language curriculum for the sixth grade of middle school. The participants are also distinguished by being specialists in teaching the English language. These teachers are all from the center of Basra city.

11. Ethical Considerations

While conducting the study, many ethical considerations were taken to ensure the integrity of the research and respect for the rights of participants. Official approval was obtained from the teachers in Basra schools before the start of the study, and the consent to participate in the research was confirmed. Confidentiality of information and anonymity of participants in any results or reports were emphasized, in addition to informing participants of the objectives of the study and responsibly using their data. All aspects of the study are explained transparently, including the research methodology and analysis methods used. The local culture in Basra Governorate was respected and interacted with positively. Finally, the results of the study will be used in an ethical manner that benefits society and contributes to improving teaching and learning in the region.

12 . Questionnaire design

After defining the goals and questions to be achieved, the researcher designed an online questionnaire on Google Forms. In its initial form, the questionnaire contains 15 questions but after checking the validity and reliability, it sets on 10 questions. The content validity is established by consulting several experts in the field. The experts were familiar with teaching and learning strategies because they all teach in Iraqi universities and one of them has a nice experience teaching outside Iraq. The leading role of the experts is to recommend some adjustments concerning the questionnaire items. The questionnaire contains 10 questions, including seven closed questions and three open questions. The questionnaire was distributed to eighty-nine teachers from various

regions of Basra, with assurance of confidentiality and speed of response. After distributing the questionnaire, responses were collected and all questions were verified to be completed. Closed questions include seven closed questions using the four Likert scale, focusing on students' understanding of literary content and its impact on their English language skills. For closed questions, data was analyzed by using percentages to understand the quantitative results and arrive at clear conclusions. Open questions include three open questions that focus on the challenges the teacher faces in teaching the literary aspect, the role of technology in teaching it, and any suggestions the teacher makes to develop the teaching process.

For the open-ended questions, data was analyzed qualitatively by classifying and analyzing answers to understand patterns and information that is not quantitative. Based on the results of the analysis, conclusions will be drawn about the impact of the literary aspect of the English curriculum on students' language proficiency and the challenges that teachers face in teaching it. The questionnaire was subjected to initial and final piloting. Piloting the questionnaire is a crucial step to make sure that it is applicable, relevant, clear, and easy to answer (Dörnyei, 2003: 64). the questionnaire was tested on a small sample (20 participants) drawn from the same target population and ruled out from the final sample. In this final piloting, the aim was to discover whether the questionnaire has any difficult or ambiguous items, whether the items are relevant and clear, and to measure the amount of time required to answer the questionnaire, in addition to confirming that all items are set to yield related responses.

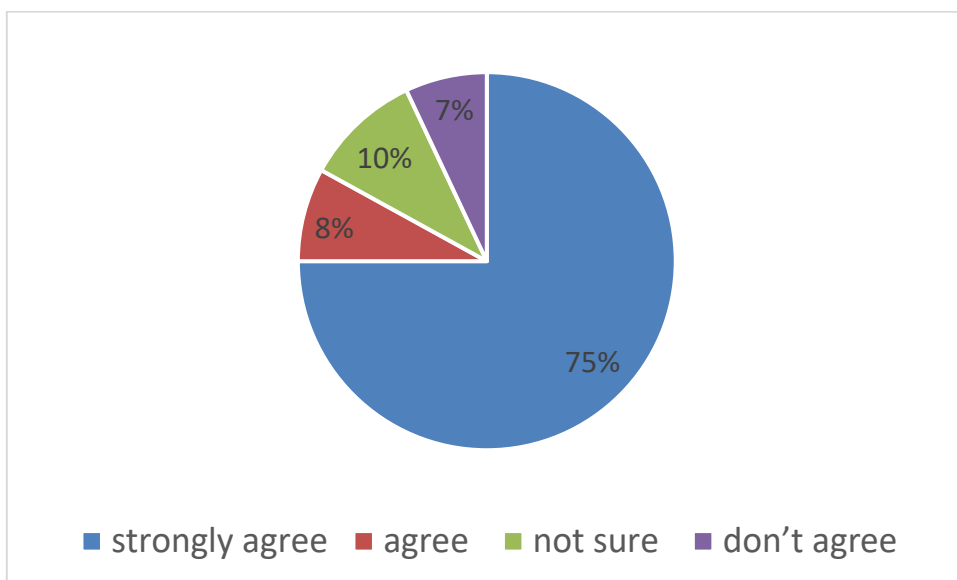
13. Results and Discussion

The research survey gathered data through student input and made use of several Likert-type scale systems

Results of the first question:

Question: As an English language teacher, do you feel that short stories are important for understanding students and enhancing their English language skills?

Choices	Strongly agree	agree	Not sure	Don't agree
Percentage %	75%	8%	10%	7%



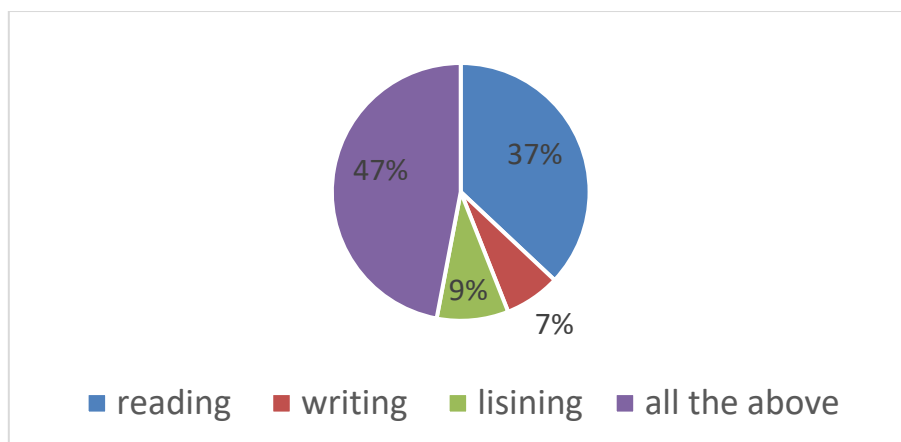
It appears that most teachers(75%) consider short stories to be very important in understanding students and enhancing their English language skills which implies that there is a strong desire to use literary parts such as short stories as educational tools. However, (8%) of the participants agree on the importance of the literary aspects, but they are not as strongly enthusiastic but they still have some value. There might be some reservations or convictions. While(10%) of the teachers feel that they are not fully committed to the idea of the importance of the literary aspects. They might need more information or training to understand how literary aspects can help in language teaching. Few teachers (7%) believe that short stories are not fundamental in the English curriculum. These teachers may believe that focusing on the academic or linguistic aspect is more important without the need for literature.

Based on these results, there is an emphasis on the importance of recognizing the role of the literary aspect in teaching English to students and emphasizing its inclusion in the curriculum in a balanced manner with other linguistic and academic aspects. It may be useful to provide exercises and activities that support this aspect to achieve maximum

educational benefit for students. The results show that most teachers opine great importance in the literary aspects of teaching English, which indicates that they can be effective in enhancing students' understanding and language skills. However, some teachers are not sure or do not see the importance, which implies the importance of providing training and support to these teachers to increase the effectiveness of using short stories in education.

Analysis of the second question:

Question: Literary pieces contribute to increasing the student's skills in: R, L, W, and all the above				
Choices	reading.	listening	writing	all of the above.
Percentage %	37%	9%	7%	47%

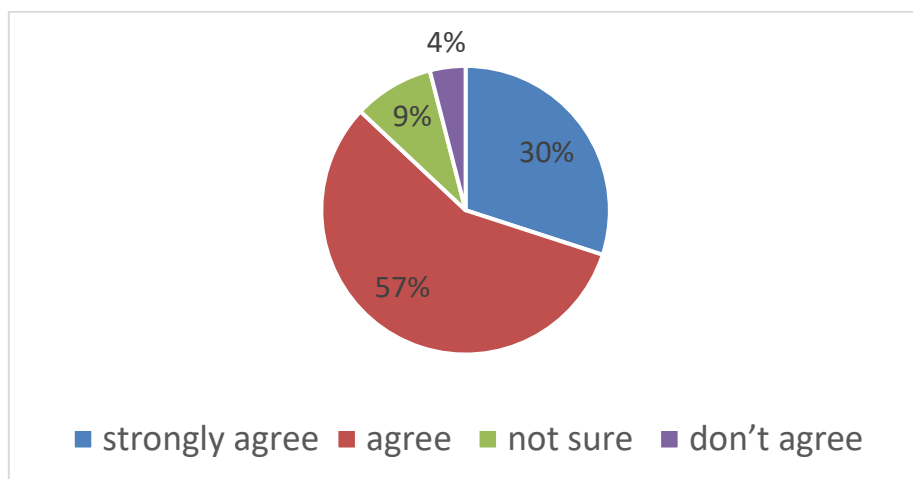


This result shows that most teachers (47%) believe that literary pieces contribute to increasing students' skills in all the mentioned areas (reading, writing, and listening), which indicates the effectiveness of literary aspects in improving English language skills in general. Reading (37%): This percentage indicates that reading is the skill that teachers believe literary pieces mainly contribute to improving. Reading is an important way to increase vocabulary and enhance linguistic understanding. Writing (7%): A low percentage of teachers believe that literary pieces contribute to improving writing skills. This may have to

do with the emphasis on reading and linguistic comprehension without an emphasis on written expression. Listening (9%): This percentage is also low, indicating that teachers do not see a significant impact of literary pieces on listening skills. This may have to do with the literature pieces not including enough listening exercises or their focus on other teaching methods for improvement. The results indicate that literary pieces play an effective role in improving English language skills, especially in reading. However, there is a need to strengthen the focus on writing and listening skills through the use of literary aspects in education. These findings can be used to encourage the use of literary pieces as an effective means of enhancing all aspects of students' English language skills, especially in developing reading skills. Activities focusing on listening and writing can also be included for more comprehensive benefits for students.

Discussion of the third question:

Question: The teacher notices that there is active participation in class if the lesson contains literary stories.				
Choices	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Don't agree
Percentage %	30%	57%	9%	4%



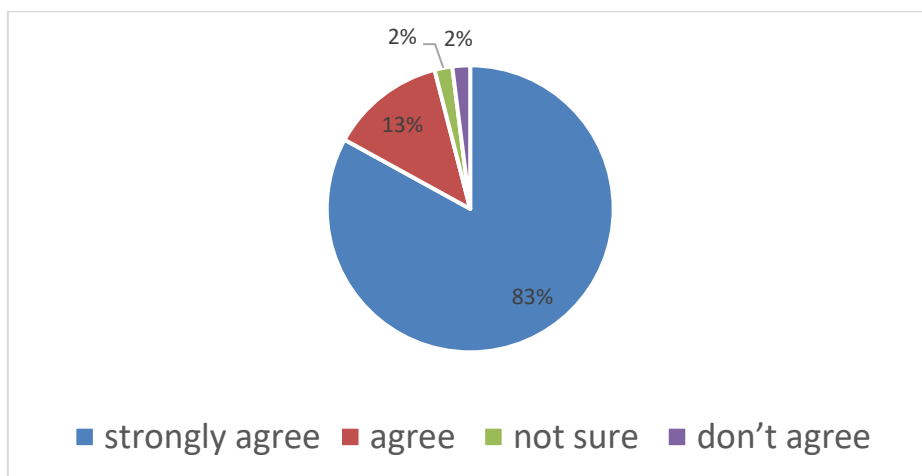
The majority of teachers (57%) believe that short stories help stimulate students' active participation in class discussions but may not always be effective or active. This could be due to the cultural excitement and interesting content in literary stories that motivate students to participate and discuss. Additionally, (30%) reflect teachers' confidence that literary stories play a major role in stimulating students' active participation, indicating that they see it as an effective tool in enhancing classroom interaction. This can be related to the belief that literature sparks interest and dialogue and encourages students to participate and interact. While a small percentage of teachers (9%) are not fully committed to the idea and may have doubts or reservations about the relationship between literary stories and student participation in discussions. Only (4%) of the participants believe that literary stories do not significantly affect students' participation in discussions. They may have a different experience or view of why students participate in discussions and this may indicate that these teachers perceive a lack of active participation or interest in the literary aspect from students

The results show that literary stories are effective tools for stimulating class participation and increasing interaction among students. High confidence in these tools as a means of promoting engagement may be due to their ability to capture student interest and spark rich, multifaceted classroom discussions. Based on these results, it can be recommended to develop activities and strategies that encourage students to actively participate in classroom discussions related to the literary aspect. Interactive teaching methods can be used, and guided discussions can be launched that motivate students to think, analyze, and participate.

Discussion of the fourth question:

Literary pieces enhance the English vocabulary of the sixth-preparatory student and add other new vocabulary.

Question: Literary pieces enhance the English vocabulary of the sixth-preparatory student and add other new vocabulary.				
Choices	Strongly agree	agree	Not sure	Don't agree
Percentage %	83%	13%	2%	2%



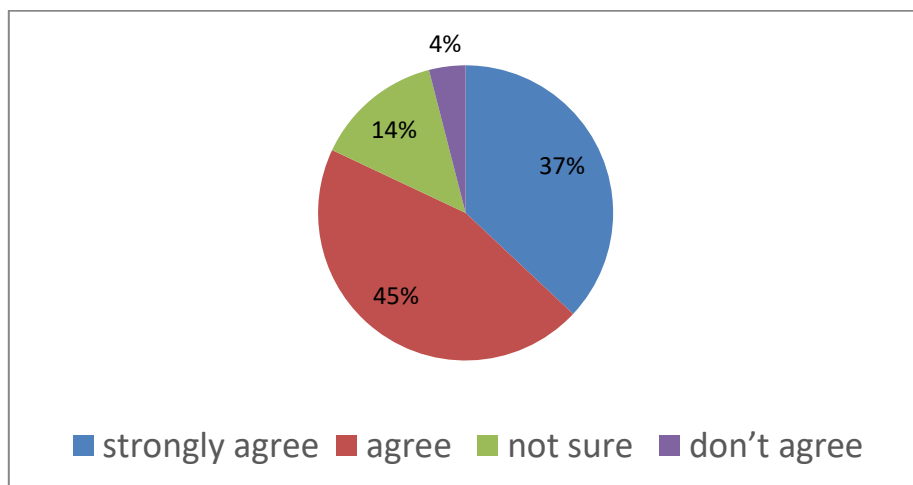
This question focuses on the role of literary pieces in enhancing and enriching students' English vocabulary. A very high percentage of teachers (83%) strongly believe that literary pieces contribute significantly to enhancing students' English vocabulary and adding new vocabulary to them. This indicates the importance of literary stories as a teaching tool in expanding students' vocabulary and improving their use of language. Also (13%) of teachers believe in the importance of literary pieces, but are not as enthusiastic as those who said “totally agree.” They may have slight reservations or a different view of the matter. A small proportion of teachers (2%): are not fully committed to the idea, and may have some doubts about the effectiveness of literary pieces in enhancing vocabulary. Additionally, (2%) of teachers believe that literary pieces do not contribute significantly to enhancing students' English vocabulary. They may believe that some other methods or resources can be used to improve vocabulary.

The results show that literary pieces are effective tools for enhancing and expanding students' English vocabulary. Great confidence in these tools indicates their ability to motivate and guide students toward using and enhancing their vocabulary in an unconventional and inspiring way. The results strongly indicate the importance of literary pieces in enhancing students' English vocabulary. Literature provides students with real contexts for using words and can help stimulate deeper interest and engagement with language. Therefore, literary pieces can be relied

upon as an effective tool in teaching and enhancing students' English vocabulary.

Discussion of the fifth question:

Question: When the lesson on short stories comes, I feel that the student is eager to hear them and wants to participate in them more than reading that does not contain a story.				
Choices	Strongly agree	agree	Not sure	Don't agree
Percentage %	37%	45%	14%	4%



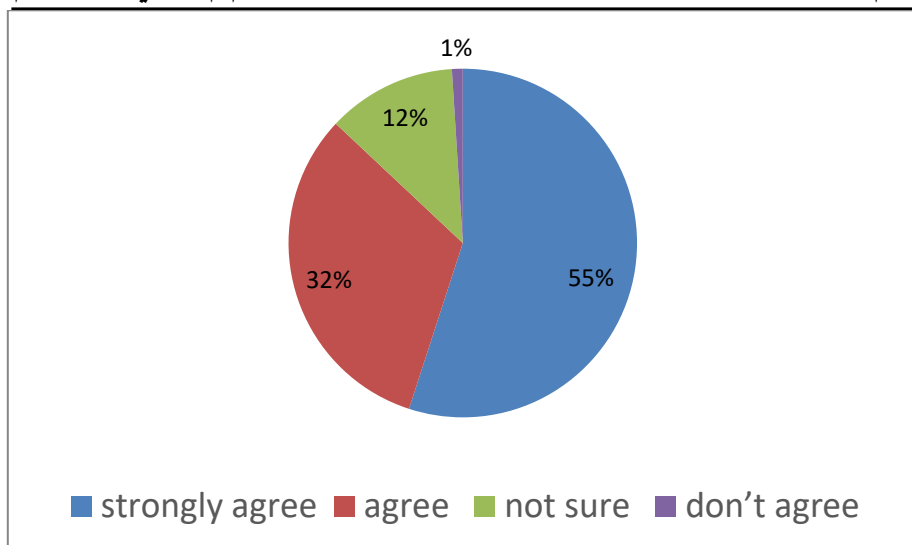
The question focuses on the extent to which literary stories stimulate students' interest and desire to participate compared to non-story reading pieces. The results indicate that approximately half of the teachers (45%) believe that students show more enthusiasm and interest when the lesson includes short stories compared to reading without a story. This may indicate that this part of the book has a special appeal that motivates students to participate and listen. The teachers who strongly agree (37%) are convinced that students show more enthusiasm and willingness to participate when the lesson includes literary stories. They may have previous experience that shows this type of interaction in the class. While (14%) of These teachers aren't entirely sure about the difference in enthusiasm level between fiction and non-story reading. They may have

had a diverse experience with students or may want more data to determine this. A small percentage of the teachers (4%) believe that students do not show a significant difference in the level of enthusiasm between literary stories and non-story readings. They may believe that other factors influence how well students engage with educational materials.

The results indicate that literary stories have a special ability to attract students' interest and motivate them to participate more than reading without a story. This highlights the importance of using literary stories as a teaching tool to enhance interaction and interest among students. The results indicate that literary stories have a particular power in arousing students' interest and desire to participate. These results may reflect the enrichment value of the narrative and dramatic elements in literary stories. Hence, teachers can rely more on literary stories as a teaching tool to motivate students and make them more engaged and interactive. The results indicate that literary stories have a particular power in arousing students' interest and desire to participate. These results may reflect the enrichment value of the narrative and dramatic elements in literary stories. Hence, teachers can rely more on literary stories as a teaching tool to motivate students and make them more engaged and interactive.

Discussion of the sixth question:

Question: The teacher can create an interactive atmosphere in literary lessons more than in any other lesson, such as explaining English grammar.				
Choices	Strongly agree	agree	Not sure	Don't agree
Percentage %	55%	32%	12%	1%



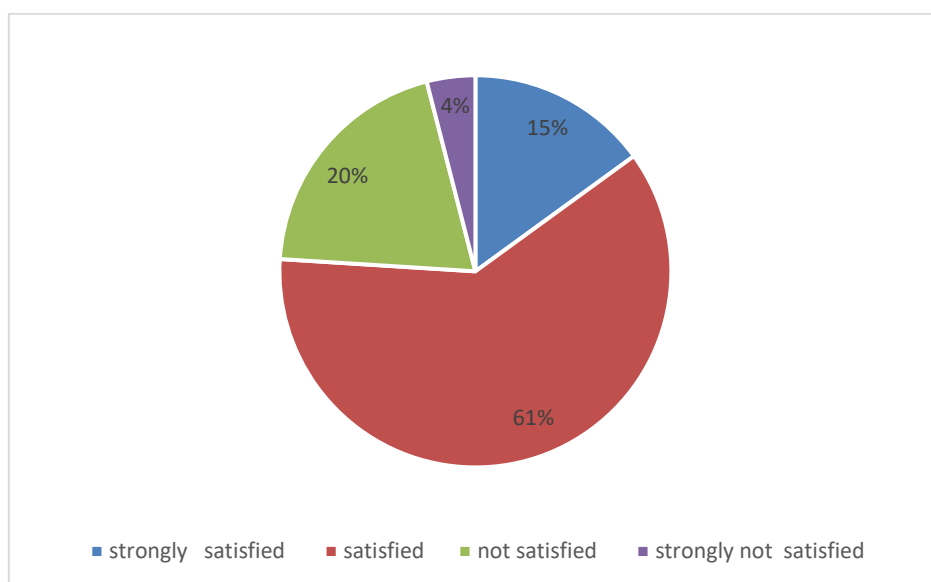
The question addresses the ability to create an interactive atmosphere in literary lessons compared to traditional lessons such as explaining grammar. A large percentage of teachers (55%) (more than half) believe that literature lessons can have a more interactive atmosphere than other lessons, such as English grammar lessons. This may imply that literature provides a richer environment for discussion and interaction. This indicates the special educational value of literary stories and reading in stimulating interaction and participation among students. The results also show that (32%) of teachers believe that literature lessons can have an interactive atmosphere, but they are not as convinced as those who “strongly agree.” They may have some reservations or see that other lessons could also be useful in achieving engagement. A moderate percentage of teachers (12%) are not fully committed to the idea. They may have doubts about the ability of literary lessons to attract attention and interaction. A very small percentage of teachers (1%) that is not significant believe that literary lessons cannot have a more interactive atmosphere than other lessons. They might think that other lessons such as the grammar lessons have an interactive atmosphere as well.

The results show that literary lessons enable the teacher to create an interactive atmosphere that is superior to other lessons. This reflects the unique ability of literature to stimulate thinking, discussion, and interaction in the classroom. The results indicate that many teachers see particular value in literary lessons in stimulating interaction and participation among students. However there is a certain percentage of

teachers who see challenges in this context. The challenge can be in creating an interactive atmosphere or believing that traditional lessons may sometimes be more effective

Discussion of the seventh question:

Question: How do you evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of short stories in the English language curriculum in the sixth preparatory book, and how satisfied are you with it?				
Choices	Strongly satisfied	satisfied	Not satisfied	Strongly-not satisfied
Percentage %	20%	61%	14%	4%



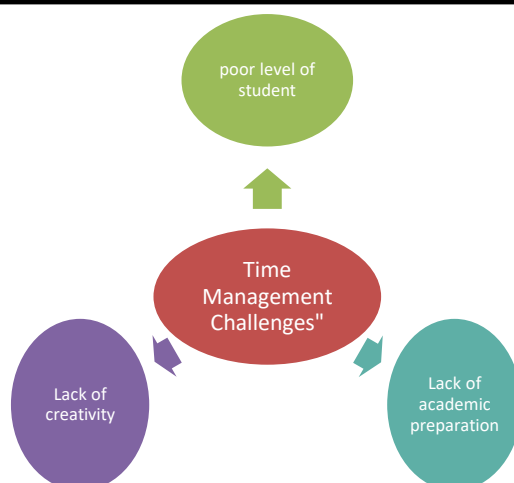
The question focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of the literary aspect in the English language curriculum for the sixth grade of middle school and the extent of teachers' satisfaction with it. A high percentage of teachers (61%) believe that they are satisfied with the effectiveness of short stories in the English language curriculum for the sixth grade. This reflects their belief that literature plays an important role in language teaching and that students benefit from it. Some teachers(15%) reflect

high satisfaction among teachers, as they believe that the literary aspect of the curriculum is very effective in achieving educational goals. While (20%) of teachers show some reservations or concerns among teachers about the effectiveness of the literary aspect of the curriculum. They may believe that there are challenges to using literature as a teaching tool or that there are areas that can be improved in the curriculum. A small percentage of teachers (4%) express very low satisfaction with the effectiveness of the literary aspect of the curriculum. These teachers may feel that literature does not play an effective role or that the way literature is presented is ineffective. The vast majority of teachers are comfortable or completely satisfied with the effectiveness of the literary aspect of the English language curriculum for the sixth grade of preparatory school, but they might face some difficulties or challenges.

14. Discussion of the Open-Ended Questions of the Questionnaire

Data were collected from the open-ended questions in the questionnaire to arrive at an effective answer to the second question of the study. Based on the analysis of data collected from 89 teachers at preparatory schools from the center of Basra Governorate regarding the challenges that teacher faces in teaching short stories, the researcher reached several points, the most important of which are:

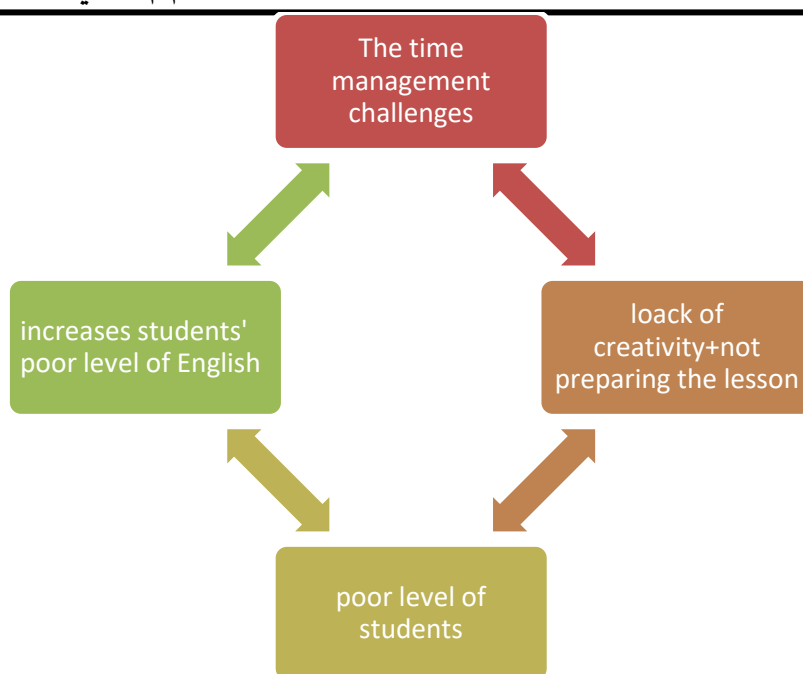
As shown in the figure below, the lack of time and the intensity of the curriculum are a major and familiar challenge. This can be called "Time Management Challenges". This pressure creates negative effects on the student and the teacher alike. Most teachers suffer from the lack of time available to fully cover the curriculum to meet the needs of the students and better prepare for the ministerial exam. The short story, despite its beauty in thought, requires more than one lesson to be comprehended and to provide the student with the opportunity to activate critical thinking, which in turn leads to intellectual creativity and understanding of the lesson.



The main challenges faced by English Teachers

Another challenge is the weak level of the student. Most teachers suffer from the fact that most of the students do not have an appropriate level that is compatible with the sixth year of preparatory school. This leads to a loss of enthusiasm and creativity in presenting scientific material effectively.

The other challenge, which is the third challenge, is the loss of creativity, which the researcher considered a natural product of the previous two challenges. The lack of time and the poor level of the student ultimately lead to the loss of creativity and critical thinking. The other challenge is also a result of the previous challenges, which is the lack of preparation for the lesson by the student. Many students come to class without knowing what the lesson will cover that day. This puts additional pressure on the teacher because of the student's total dependence on the teacher and his explanation of the material.



The relationship between the challenges

There is a negative relationship between the difficulties that teachers face in teaching the curriculum. Negative here means that the impact of each challenge on the other is in a way that increases the complexity of the situation in general, which makes it more difficult to improve the situation or achieve progress in the learning and teaching process. As the diagram shows the time management challenges and poor level of students can lead to a loss of creativity in teaching and students not preparing for lessons, which increases students' poor level of English. Likewise, a loss of creativity in teaching can lead to students not preparing for lessons, and so on. Therefore, teachers and educational administrators must work to mitigate these negative factors and balance various factors to improve the quality of learning and teaching and enhance the learning experience for students.

15. Conclusion

Based on the results obtained from the questionnaire, the study can reach the following conclusions. Most teachers focus on the importance of short stories in the English language curriculum for the sixth year of preparatory school because it contributes to improving and enhancing students' language skills. However, English teachers face multiple challenges in teaching the curriculum, including the time management challenges and density of the curriculum, students' poor level of English, loss of creativity in teaching, and students' lack of preparation for the lesson. The results indicate that there are interactive relationships between these challenges, with each challenge negatively affecting the other, which makes it necessary to adopt comprehensive strategies to improve the learning and teaching environment. These challenges indicate an urgent need to reconsider the language syllabus and provide support and training to teachers to meet these challenges.

16. Recommendations

Based on the research results, the study recommends the following:

1. It is also necessary to enhance communication and cooperation between teachers to exchange expertise and experiences and work to develop new teaching strategies that enhance the effectiveness of the use of literature in education.
2. Providing training courses for teachers on time management and allocating time effectively for teaching subjects.
3. Digital storytelling should be implemented supported by some pictures and some vibes of humor.
4. Developing new strategies such as critical thinking skills that encourage students to interact, participate, and be interested in literary materials.
5. Providing additional support to teachers on how to use technology in teaching the literary component.
6. Developing educational curricula that encourage creativity and diversity and motivate students to participate and interact.

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