Criteria for Selecting the Content of Short Stories in the English Textbook for the Third Level of Primary Education

Mustafa Abdulkareem Mukheef

College of Food Sciences, Al-Qasim Green University, Babylon 51013, Iraq
mustafa.a@uoqasim.edu.iq

معايير اختيار محتوى القصص القصيرة في كتاب اللغة الإنجليزية للصف الثالث الابتدائي

م.م. مصطفى عبد الكريم مخيف

جامعة القاسم الخضراء/ كلية علوم الاغذية

Abstract

Short stories are a significant educational tool, both linguistically and in various developmental areas. This study investigates the appropriate criteria for selecting the content of short stories and assesses their implementation in the 3rd primary English textbook. To accomplish this, the researcher created an analytical tool comprising 10 criteria, based upon the educational objectives of this stage, the characteristics of the learners, and other findings from previous works. The researcher employed a descriptive content analysis method, which combines qualitative and quantitative techniques to guarantee validity and reliability.

The analysis of the selected stories indicates a general alignment with educational and linguistic principles, notably in language learning. They also emphasize human values, themes, and morals. Repetition is well implemented as a pedagogical technique to promote long-term language acquisition. However, there are certain challenges in how they deal with individual differences, lexical simplicity, the use of visual aids, and promoted interaction. The study shows that the stories follow the recommended requirements well enough, but they need a more systematic way when implementing the future textbook design to be more inclusive, engaging, and visually helpful.

Keywords: Short Stories, Content Analysis, English Language textbook, Third primary, Selection Criteria.

الملخّص:

تُعد القصص القصيرة وسيلة تعليمية مهمة ليس فقط على المستوى اللغوي بل تتعدى ذلك لتشمل جوانب اخرى كثيرة. حيث تبحث هذه الدراسة في معايير اختيار محتوى القصص القصيرة المضمنة في كتاب اللغة الإنجليزية للصف الثالث الابتدائي. وتهدف إلى تحديد معايير الاختيار المناسبة وتقييم مدى تطبيقها في الكتاب الحالي. ولتحقيق ذلك، صمم الباحث تصنيفًا من عشرة معايير تحليلية، اعتماداً على الأهداف التعليمية لهذه المرحلة، وخصائص نمو المتعلمين، ورؤى من الدراسات السابقة. واستُخدمت منهجية تحليل المحتوى الوصفي، التي تدمج المنهجين النوعي والكمي لضمان الصدق والموثوقية.

أظهر تحليل القصص المختارة توافقًا عامًا مع المبادئ التربوية واللغوية، لا سيما في مجال تعلم اللغة. كما أنها تُركز على القيم الإنسانية والمواضيع والأخلاق. وقد تم توظيف التكرار بنجاح كتقنية تربوية لتعزيز اكتساب اللغة على المدى الطويل. ومع ذلك، وُجدت بعض التحديات في كيفية تعاملها مع الفروق الفردية، وبساطة المفردات، واستخدام الوسائل البصرية، وتعزيز التفاعل. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أنه في حين تُظهر القصص مستوى مرضيًا من الامتثال للمعايير المقترحة، إلا أن هناك حاجة إلى نهج أكثر منهجية وتوازناً لتحسين الشمول والمشاركة والدعم البصري في تصميم الكتب المدرسية في المستقبل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القصص القصيرة، تحليل المحتوى، كتاب اللغة الإنكليزية، الثالث الابتدائي، معايير الاختيار.

1.1 Introduction

First of all, it is interesting to consider why we might tell stories. In settings where English is the language of instruction, storytelling is invaluable in order to use shorter, simpler sentences, where intonation and prosody are clear. This, in turn, enhances learners' comprehension and strengthens the link between sounds and spelling. Furthermore, with the right selection and activities afterwards, stories would be engaging and entertaining. Storytelling can highlight creativity, linguistics, and areas that align with national curricula (Bilal et al., 2013).

Short stories are written prose narratives that are shorter than novels. They are ideal narratives for readers, especially for children, because they have only a plot. There are characters, settings, events that lead to a climax, and finally a resolution. Short stories can be categorized into nursery stories, fairy tales, fables, folk tales, etc., which are more closely related to fiction. Fiction aims to tell stories that appeal to readers' beliefs and feelings concerning real life within an imaginary world or events' concretization in fiction content. For children, short stories are written, a fictive narrative that has only one plot or event briefly told. Based on the narrative, for little readers most short stories are adapted from fables and folk tales which are simple and easy to understand, such as Treetop Tales and Happy Little Bunny series (Bilal et al., 2013).

In selecting short stories for language teaching and learning, there are several criteria that can be considered, such as level of difficulty, story's theme, interesting plot, vivid illustration, literary quality, unity and completeness, well-arranged content, and length ideal for a reading. Based on skill, attitude, and interest, several criteria for children's stories are appropriate word choice for development of every aspect, limited characters, single plot, uncomplicated syntax for comprehension retrieval, and repetition for memory rehearsal. The fit stories to the stated criteria lead children to enjoy English and even make them keen on handwriting stories in English (Howell, 2010).

Woodfin and Plaut (2017) state that the learners at this age are flexible problem solvers, concerned with fairness and justice, individually and collectively and are energetic and hard-working. So, they have a tendency to push themselves to their limits.

In light of the above, the researcher claims that the selection of the short stories in the third primary level should be governed by specific criteria that fit their cognitive, emotional and social development.

1.2 Research Questions

In the current study, the researcher attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the criteria that should be considered when selecting the content of the short stories in the English textbook of the 3rd primary stage?
2. Are these criteria considered when choosing the short stories for this stage?

1.3 Objectives and Scope

This study seeks to analyze the content of the short stories of the English textbook of the 3rd primary stage "English for Iraq" by Sally Etherton and Sarah MacBurnie (2023) relying on an analytical tool that is based on specific criteria, so as to:

a. know to what extent the designed criteria have been considered to fit the requirements of this stage, and

b. investigate the distribution of these criteria in each short story, and then make a qualitative analysis in light of these statistics.

1.4 The Value of this study

a. The good content of the short story would be valuable as it allows learners through written language to engage with distinctions similar to those made in spoken communication. These include the relationships between speaker/writer and listener/reader, as well as the features of co-presence, representation, perspective, and the ability to construct and control a shared imaginative world.

b. The analysis of these short stories according to the suggested criteria provides the curriculum designer with theoretical analysis of their content to design the best instruction forms (linguistically and contextually).

1.5 Procedures

To accomplish the objectives of the present study, the following procedures will be undertaken:

1. Employ content analysis methods to examine the selected *short stories* in accordance with established criteria.

2. Develop a taxonomy of criteria to serve as an analytical tool, which will be reviewed and validated by a panel of experts in the field to ensure its reliability and validity.

3. Analyse the short stories of the textbook by using a coding framework that incorporates the validated taxonomy.

4. Deduce precise inferences from the collected data and present a detailed description of the findings and conclusions derived from the analysis.

2 Literature Review and Previous Works

2.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis is described as a research methodology whereby inferences are drawn based on messages through identifying specific characteristics in a systematic, objective, and replicable manner. Content analysis is not restricted to text documentation, although it is applied as a pattern of human communication in varied formats (Stemler, 2001). It serves as an effective research tool that allows experts to

analyze and make sense of different data sources in different educational areas (Gavora, 2015).

Content analysis in an operational manner can be defined as a basic research technique through which it is possible to effectively combine two empirical approaches, qualitative and quantitative, in an efficient manner in order to deduce accurate inferences that can be drawn from human interactions from various forms. Through content analysis, it is possible to examine data from both subjective and objective perspectives, which enhances the rigor and depth of analysis.

2.2 The Content

Content refers to an essential aspect of the curriculum and comprises a range of resources of knowledge that are crucial to guaranteeing its effectiveness. Content is used as one of the essential tools through which educators attain wider educational goals that incorporate elements like thoughts, intentions, and actions (Null, 2011).

In the current study, content is defined as all elements of the short stories contained within the English textbook of the 3rd primary. There are many aspects of content, ranging from scientific elements, appropriateness, methods of presenting content, elements of interactivity, and other relevant considerations.

2.3 Short Stories

Short stories for children are designed as simplified narratives that incorporate elements of language that help develop cognitive and linguistic skills of children, and are used as instructional tools and not just for entertainment (Ellis & Brewster, 2014).

According to the researcher, these narratives are not just entertainment, but rather educational tools that teachers and developmental psychologists use to scaffold early childhood learning.

2.4 The Criteria

Ali (2002) defines criteria as the set of demands and standards that should be met in a particular system to guarantee the production of high-quality outcomes.

In this research, these components are defined and measured through a list of ten criteria formulated by the researcher himself. In determining these criteria, scientific and systemic procedures have been followed, taking into consideration the education goals of primary education, characteristics of learners at this level, and previous research studies on this issue, aiming at assessing the fulfillment of these criteria through some short stories used as textbook content.

2.5 Previous Works
2.5.1 Howell (2010):

Howell (2010) asserts that the role of the teacher can be seen as an essential factor in storytelling. This means that students may think critically about the themes and

Criteria for Selecting the Content of Short Stories in the English Textbook for the Third Level of Primary Education

Mustafa Abdulkareem Mukheef

conventions in their stories when they use effective inquiry and peer review. This corresponds with the idea that reading and writing are social activities that show how culture functions in a larger scope. Telling stories is a means for learners to share their experiences and cultural traditions, which helps them become more effective readers and promotes their literacy skills.

2.5.2 Bartan, Ö. (2017):

This study uses the "Read for Writing model", a modified version of "Talk for Writing (proposed by Corbett, 2013)," to investigate how reading short stories enhances foreign language writing skills. The study has found that the "Read for Writing" model improves students' short narrative language, content, structure, and communication skills. The study recommends using narrative brackets and body language to engage young learners and to enhance interaction in storytelling. Attention should also be paid to the linguistic patterns of storytelling, which highlight the risks of language transfer when learners incorporate the grammar of their native language into the target language.

2.5.3 Marcelia, S. (2022):

This study focuses on the way pupils engage with short stories for vocabulary development. It has been implemented by using cross-sectional surveys. It indicates that participants enjoy using short stories to acquire vocabulary. Therefore, the majority of SMP Regina Caeli Cileungsi students have found short stories engaging, useful, and easy to utilize to improve English vocabulary. It also claims that short stories improve reading comprehension and growth. It suggests an alteration from rote memorization to literary art pedagogy. Students learn to think independently and understand better with this adjustment.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

In order to analyze the short stories incorporated within the third-primary English textbook, the present study implements a descriptive methodology that encompasses content analysis. Kulatunga et al. (2007) show that content analysis is beneficial in comprehending both explicit and implicit meanings in the text. In order to guarantee the validity of the analysis results, we have implemented a mixed method that integrates quantitative and qualitative analysis. In the same way, Stepchenkova (2012) suggests that qualitative analysis is predicated on inductive reasoning, whereas quantitative analysis generates statistically significant findings. In the social sciences, quantitative content analysis emphasizes the identification of thematic frequency as indicators of textual relevance, as stated by Neuendrof (2002).

3.2 Data of Analysis

In this process of data analysis, we have begun by identifying the population and sample of the research that are represented by the four short stories, which are both the population and the sample at the same time. Table (1) shows more details about the four short stories:

Table (1): The Description of each Short story

Story Title	Length	Topic/ Theme	Genre	Style	Language Level	Target Audience	Moral
The Clever Crow	/63 words Pages/ 2 Including images	Intelligence, problem-solving	Fable / Folktale	Third-person, simple, instructive	Basic–Intermediate	Children, EFL learners	Intelligence over strength
Sami's Messy Room	/42 words Pages/ 2 Including images	Cleanliness, responsibility	Realistic fiction	Third-person, simple, instructive	Basic–Intermediate	Children, EFL learners	Responsibility and organization
Ant and Grasshopper	115 2 /words Pages/ Including images	Hard work, responsibility	Fable	Third-person, instructive	Basic–Intermediate	Children, EFL learners	Value of diligence
The Greedy King	149 2 /words Pages/ Including images	Greed and consequences	Moral tale	Third-person, cautionary	Lower-intermediate–Intermediate	Children, EFL learners	Contentment over greed

3.3 Research Tool

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, and since there are no specific criteria describing the quality and content characteristics of short stories for third-primary students, the researcher has designed a taxonomy of ten analytical criteria to analyse the selected stories as illustrated in Table 3. These criteria were developed based on the following:

1. The cognitive features of nine-year-old learners.
2. The educational objectives were established by the Iraqi Ministry of Education.
3. Perspectives derived from previous research and related literature.

3.4 Research Tool Validity

The taxonomy's validity was affirmed by a panel of experts in curricula and pedagogy to assess its suitability as an analytical tool. Revisions were implemented based on their feedback, adopting only items that achieved an average of 80% agreement among experts, while excluding those that fell below this threshold (Gavora, 2015).

3.5   The Analysis and its Steps

1. Perform a comprehensive examination of each section of the short stories under investigation to identify evidence that corresponds to the items listed in the ten criteria.
2. Coding scheme: it involves evaluating the content of the selected stories in relation to each criterion specified in the taxonomy that has been constructed. The codes (S1–S4) on the coding sheet stand for the stories that are being investigated.
3. After that, the frequency of each item is determined so that the data can be converted into measurable statistical results. Frequencies, Percentages, and the Holsti equation are the statistical methods that are used in this study.

3.6 Reliability of the Analysis

Reliability is the degree to which different researchers obtain the same results (results consistency) when they conduct research under the same settings (inter-rater reliability; Bruin, 2010). In this study, the unit of analysis was the coding category assigned to each story element (e.g., theme, narrative style, moral lesson, etc.).

To assess inter-rater reliability, a random sample of 10% of the coding units from the selected stories was independently analysed by the researcher and a second-trained analyst. The level of agreement was calculated using Cohen's kappa (κ), which is a standard measure for nominal coding data (0.61- 0.80: Substantial), (0.81-1.00: Almost Perfect).

According to methodological guidelines, κ values of .80 or higher indicate strong inter-rater agreement (Gavora, 2015). As presented in Table 2, the inter-rater reliability coefficient was κ = more than .80, indicating a high degree of coding consistency and supporting the reliability of the content analysis procedures.

Table (2): Ratings of Reliability.

	Agreement Type	*Consistency Verification Method*	*Constancy*
1	The researcher's findings are compared across different points of time	The same researcher reanalysing the data after a three-week interval (Inter-rater statistical method)	95. 55
2	The researcher's statistical findings compared with those obtained by an independent analyst.	Assessment of Equivalence Between the Researcher and an Independent Analyst (Inter-Rater Statistical Method)	87.73

4. Results and Discussion

The presentation of results provides answers to the research questions previously stated by the researcher, as outlined below:

4.1 What are the criteria that should be considered when selecting the content of the short stories in the English textbook of the 3rd primary stage?

To address this question, the researcher developed a taxonomy comprising a set of criteria that should be reflected in the *selected stories* of the third primary stage, as shown in Table 3.

The construction of this taxonomy was handled by an extensive review of disciplines that correspond to the primary school curriculum as well as many relevant resources, including previous studies emphasizing the significance of storytelling and content analysis.

4.2 Are these criteria considered when choosing the short stories of this stage?

To address this question, the researcher has analyzed the content of the short stories for the third primary stage based on the established criteria. The following table presents the results of this analysis.

Criteria for Selecting the Content of Short Stories in the English Textbook for the Third Level of Primary Education

Mustafa Abdulkareem Mukheef

Table (3): The Coding Scheme Based on the Designed Criteria, Frequencies and Percentage (Pct.) for each Item in the Taxonomy

N	Criterion	S1	S2	S3	S4	Total	Pct.
1	It takes into consideration that words are simple and set appropriately.	✓	✓			2	50%
2	Age appropriateness. Short stories are appropriate for learners in terms of language, structure, style and culture.	✓	✓		✓	3	75%
3	Individual differences. The Ability and the mental levels of the learners are considered when choosing the content of the short stories.	✓	✓			2	50%
4	It includes clear visual aids alongside the narrative and illustrative texts to clarify the meaning of the new and difficult words.	✓		✓		2	50%
5	It incorporates interactive and engagement factors through a multiform structure that provide a range of actions and outcomes, helping the reader to actively engage with the story.	✓		✓	✓	3	75%
6	It focuses on such themes as human values, family relations, adjustment with environment and provides insights about individuals and human experiences.	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	100%
7	It implements repetition as a pedagogical technique that enhances future linguistic engagement through cumulative knowledge to support long-term language acquisition.	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	100%
8	It takes into consideration the learners' social, emotional, and intellectual demands.	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	100%
9	The style of presenting the content stimulates interpretation and conclusion regarding their level of understanding.	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	100%
10	It incorporates themes and morals. (A theme represents the central topic and underlying message of the story, while a moral signifies the lesson derived from it, which may be implied or explicitly stated).	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	100%

Graph (1). Assessing short stories against pedagogical criteria
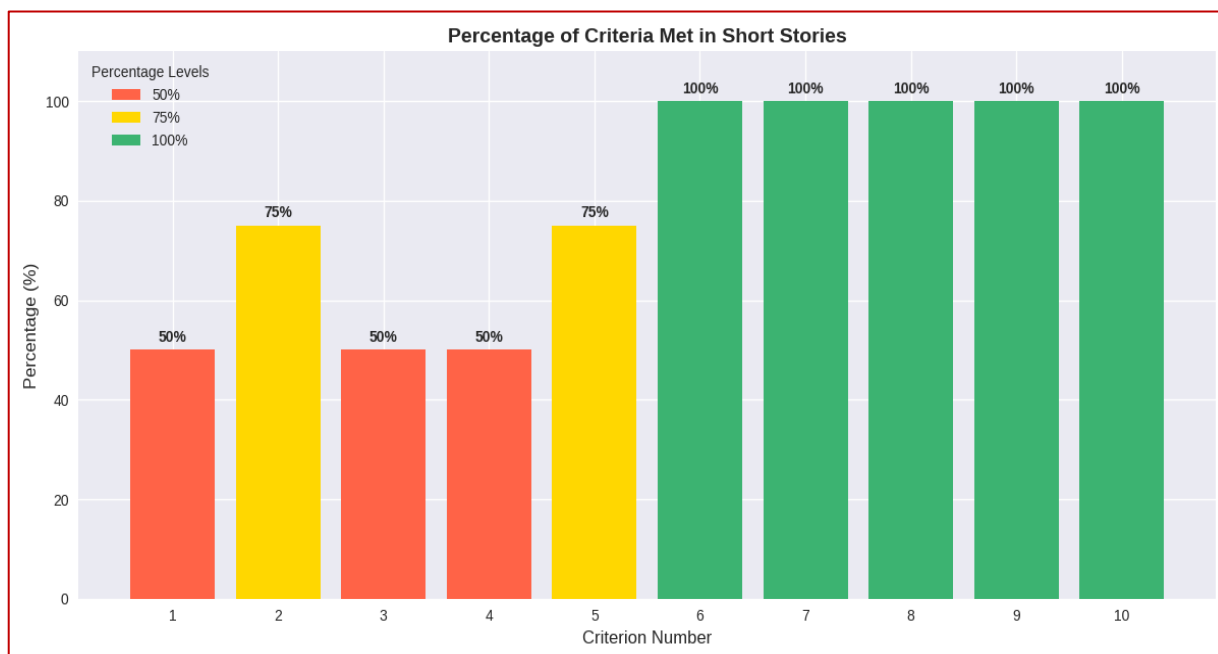
The results from the analysis of the short stories using the 10 criteria illustrated that they were in line with the educational or developmental objectives for learners in the third primary level. However, there was some difference in the degree to which these stories were in agreement with specific areas of emphasis pertaining to linguistic or educational concerns. The following represents how each criterion is distributed:

4.2.1 Language Simplicity

The basis of language simplicity is observed on a simple vocabulary and sentence structures based on the level of the learners. According to Schmidt (2000), vocabulary is crucial to language proficiency and helps learners speak, listen, read, and write. Individuals learn vocabulary before acquiring a more complex structure, therefore vocabulary is part of language learning. Nothing can be said or written without vocabulary. He also claims that the used language should be appropriate for the intended learners. Hence, depending on the results, two of the four stories meet the criterion for linguistic simplicity. Sentence structures and vocabulary that are easily understood by learners were employed in the first and second stories. This point is worth noting because it emphasizes the fact that the textbook designers have considered the language proficiency levels of the learners.

Despite this, it has been found that this element is not fully achieved in the third and fourth stories. The third one "Ant and Grasshopper" for example has abstract or less common words like "penalty, collect, relaxing" which may not be immediately familiar to the learners in the third primary unless explicitly taught. Also, the story does not provide definitions, synonyms, or visual cues for harder words. It contains past tense

and question inversion phrases like "Why didn't you collect food in the summer?". Which can be grammatically challenging at this level. The fourth story "The Greedy King", it contains about 149 words and some of them are new, abstract or less common and somehow difficult like "trapped", "lonely" and "wisely". It indicates a necessity for improving consistency in the implementation of linguistic simplification processes throughout all the materials. This does not mean that the four stories have no simple words or structures and are not ideal for early learners, but need more support and practical activities.

4.2.2 Age Appropriateness

The age-appropriate criterion for language, structure, and cultural relevance has been achieved at a satisfactory level in three short stories. They use short, simple sentences and basic vocabulary with visual storytelling, repetition of key words, follow a clear liner sequence and no sensitive or inappropriate content is present. All these elements make them accessible to the learners. These stories encouraged comprehension and engagement by using familiar scenarios and characters that corresponded to the learners' developmental stages. However, some of these elements are not achieved at an appropriate level in the fourth story for the reasons that have been mentioned before in the previous criterion, the fact that it could affect learners' motivation or cultural connection with the text.

4.2.3 Consideration of Individual Differences

Solso (2008) (as cited in Marcelia, 2022), states that everyone has an individual style of understanding things. According to that, perception requires a complicated mental procedure for the interpretation of sensory information. The way that people understand the stimuli they are exposed to is known as perception. Every sensory stimulation experience is evaluated according to the individual's knowledge, age, culture, expectations, and even the people they are interacting with. So, considerations such as the mental abilities, a variety of learning styles, cultural and social backgrounds of the learners, gradual progression in complexity and diversity in content and enhancing moral values and practical skills, should be implemented in the content of such stories to address individual differences. Among these short stories, only two demonstrated an awareness of individual differences among learners. For example, the third story has no tiered vocabulary or scaffolding. It doesn't offer simplified glosses for those needing support, lack of repetition or patterned phrasing, it lacks cultural references that could make it more relatable to Iraqi learners or reflect lived experiences. The fourth story, on the other hand, has limited linguistic differentiation; it doesn't offer alternative phrasing or glossed terms for learners with stronger language skills or those needing

support. It also lacks repetition of the new phrases. It follows a static format which makes the comic strip passive; it doesn't include promotion for role-play or hands-on engagement, which is important for kinesthetic learners. This partial completion shows that although attempts have been made to meet different abilities mentally and linguistically, there is a lack of adaptation in these stories. Going forward, stories with content that can meet different learners' needs in terms of abilities and pacing should be considered.

4.2.4 Use of Visual Aids

Visual aides were implemented at a satisfactory level in the first two stories to enhance understanding. It is noted that they have been used effectively in these stories to explain word meanings whether they are new or difficult. This is especially important for young learners. However, the visual support used in the third and fourth stories is static; it does not include clickable elements or activities that invite learners to engage with the images directly. This implies that textbook designers have not made effective use of pictures for pedagogical purposes that clarify the meaning of new vocabulary. More relevant pictures can greatly increase understanding.

4.2.5 Interactivity and Engagement

The first two stories have interactive and interesting aspects because they use different narrative structures, have dynamic scenes, and give readers chances to guess what would happen and talk about it. The third and fourth stories have a static comic strip; learners only read and look at pictures. They don't include prompts, questions, or activities within the text that could limit the extent to which learners could become involved in interpreting it. These characteristics correspond with constructivist ideas that promote active engagement of learners. Despite the fact that some stories lack specific factors that promote interaction and engagement, the four stories succeeded in employing colorful illustrations, stimulating moral conflict, and giving the teacher opportunities in guiding interaction within the stories.

4.2.6 Thematic and Humanistic Values

In this regard, the four stories address themes related to human values, family relationships, and environmental adaptation such as intelligence, problem-solving, cleanliness, responsibility, hard work, greed and consequences, as shown in Table 1. These themes foster the moral and emotional growth of learners and play a significant role in promoting empathy and awareness. The researcher believes that the consistent presentation of these themes throughout all the stories is commendable and contributes greatly to the learner's character development.

4.2.7 Use of Repetition

It is found that the repetition of words and phrases was employed in all four stories. It is employed in the third and fourth stories to a moderate and purposeful extent,

Criteria for Selecting the Content of Short Stories in the English Textbook for the Third Level of Primary Education

Mustafa Abdulkareem Mukheef

serving both narrative clarity and moral reinforcement like the repetition of characters and roles. For example, the ant appears as the hardworking, forward thinking character and the grasshopper is repeatedly shown as carefree and later regretful. The "King" is repeatedly touching objects (sofa, table, food, daughter) and each turn to gold, this repetition builds a pattern that emphasizes the unintended consequences of his wish. Also, there is a repetition of emotional states like "regret, happiness, sadness and accomplishment". Therefore, the regular use of words, phrases, or sentences can be considered a noteworthy technique for enhancing memorization. This idea is supported by Nation (1990), who explained the way by which vocabulary is classified and acquired. He categorized words into four frequency levels: high-frequency words, which occur frequently in all language uses; academic words, which occur for academic purposes; technical words, which are important for specialists; and low-frequency words, which occur rarely. Thus, the effectiveness of this technique and its rational use for language purposes become clear.

4.2.8 Consideration of Learners' Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Demands

The analysis shows that the four short stories address these aspects within this criterion. These stories reflect scenarios that evoke empathy and self-awareness, problem solving, stimulate critical thinking, elicit emotional responses and language development. These conditions promote overall cognitive and emotional development. This corresponds with Arias (2017); he regarded short stories as effective tools for reflecting different perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, investigating various narratives enhances cultural awareness as well as empathy, thereby contributing to students' linguistic and social growth.

4.2.9 The style of presenting (Stimulation and interpretation)

Short stories should be presented to encourage interpretation and conclusion about learners' understanding. The researcher illustrates that the four stories were presented to foster interpretation and critical thinking, logical reasoning, self-awareness and reflective dialogue. According to Can and Sapar (2010), learners develop critical thinking and writing skills and are highly motivated, supporting the positive association between reading and writing. Finally, the analyzed stories had open-ended plots that encouraged critical thinking and comprehension.

4.2.10 Incorporation of Themes and Morals

Through the analysis, it is noticed that the themes and morals were effectively conveyed in the four stories, both directly and indirectly such as "intelligence over strength, responsibility and organization, value of diligence and contentment over

greed." These are important aspects for encouraging learners to reflect on what they have learned and form their own values. The evident moral integration in most of the stories promotes the application of literature in consistent moral learning environments.

5. Conclusions

This study seeks to identify an appropriate criterion for selecting the content of short stories, which incorporates various issues raised at the beginning of the study. As a result, incorporating these requirements would aid in the improvement of both the language and cognitive aspects of social development. The four short stories satisfied the evaluation criteria, particularly those related to human values, repetition, underlying themes and morals and the style of presenting the content that stimulates critical thinking and interpretation. Other parts, however, require additional enhancement, such as appropriateness for learners in terms of language simplicity and structure, the use of visual aids, the consideration of individual differences, and the interactive and engagement factors. Based on these findings, it is concluded that the chosen collection of stories is pedagogically accepted; nevertheless, planning and selecting stories with greater focus on all criteria would be more useful for maximising the positive effect of stories in primary school.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that the development of future English textbooks should implement a balanced approach that offers simplicity in terms of language use, comprehensiveness, use of more relevant visual supports, adopting role-play activities to support the connection between the narratives, as well as stimulation to ensure that short stories not only form the basis of linguistic learning but also facilitate holistic learning and the development of characters within the primary education stage.

References

Ahmad, Bilal, H., Rehman Tariq, A., Masood, A., Nasim, G., & Iqbal, A. (2013). Developing Second Language Reading Comprehension through Short Story.

Arias, G.L. (2017). Students' Language Skills Development through Short Stories. Íkala, Revista De LenguajeY Cultura, 22 (1), 103–118. https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v22n01a07

Bartan, Ö. Ş. (2017). The effects of reading short stories in improving foreign language writing skills. The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal, 17(1), 59-74.

Bruin, I. (2010). Exploring How Objects used in a Picture Vocabulary Test Influence Validity. University of Pretoria.

Can, D. T., & Sapar , V. (2010). (Re) Constructiong Little Red Riding Hood in a Writing Course. In D. Köksal, İ. H. Erten vd. (Eds.), The 6th International ELT Research Conference Procedings, (pp. 133-143). İzmir: Tubitak Nobel Yayın Dağıtım.

Criteria for Selecting the Content of Short Stories in the English Textbook for the Third Level of Primary Education

Mustafa Abdulkareem Mukheef

Ellis, G., & Brewster, J. (2014). Tell it again! The storytelling handbook for primary English language teachers (3rd ed.). British Council.

Gavora, P. (2015). The State of the Art of content Analysis. Research Centre, Faculty of Humanities, Tomas Bata University, Zlin, Czech Republic. gavora@fhs.utb.cz.

Holsti, O. R. (1968). Content Analysis in The Handbook of Social Psychology. Eds. G. Lindzey and E. Aronson. Reading, Mass: Addison. Wesley.

Howell, E. (2010). Telling stories: enhancing cultural literacy in the primary classroom.

Kulatunga, U., Amaratunga, R. D. G., & Haigh, R. P. (2007). Structuring the unstructured data: the use of content analysis. University of Salford Manchester. Available at : http://usir.salford.ac.uk/9857/.

Marcelia, S. (2022). Students' Perception on Using Short Story to Develop Vocabulary at SMP Regina Caeli Cileungsi. Universitas Kristen Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia. Journal of English Teaching. 8 (1), 145-155.

Nation, I. S. P. (1990). Teaching and learning vocabulary. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Neuendrof, K. A. (2002). The Content Analysis Guidebook. Sage Publications.

Null, W. (2011). Curriculum from Theory to Practice. Rowman and Littlefied Publishers, Inc.

Schmidt, N. (2000). Vocabulary in language teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stemler, S. (2001). An Overview of Content Analysis: Practical Assessment, Research& Evaluation A peer-reviewed electronic journal.1531-7714.

Stepchenkova, S. (2012). Content Analysis. Research Gate. http://www.researchgate.net/publication/286377564.

Woodfin, L., & (Author), Plaut, S. N. (2017). "*Your Curriculum Companion: The Essential Guide to Teaching the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*". EL Education Inc. - EL Ed Publications.

علي، نادية. (٢٠٠٢). تصور مقترح لتطوير نظام تعلم البنات بالمملكة العربية السعودية في ضوء معايير الجودة الشاملة، مجلة مستقبل التربية العربية، المجلد (٨) العدد ٢٧، الرياض.