



INCORPORATING SHORT STORIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

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Abstract: This study investigates how short stories can be integrated into an English language curriculum in order to consolidate students' knowledge of the English language - grammar and vocabulary - and to promote their creative writing skills. The study was conducted with 21 Turkish university students receiving an English language preparatory program. A selection of short stories appropriate to students' language requirements was incorporated into the English language curriculum. A three-stage-model: presentation, exploration, and follow-up guided the use of each story with a special focus on student-centered learning, which required the students to take an active involvement in the learning process on the basis of given tasks. In order to obtain students' opinion concerning the use of story, each student was asked to keep a diary in which to reflect their views following the study of each literary text, and a portfolio where they could keep their writings. The data collected through the diaries and student writings were complemented by administering an end-of-the year story perception questionnaire in order to have an overall evaluation of the course. Findings indicated that the use of short stories contributed to students' reinforcing effectively and meaningfully their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary while it helped students to be more creative and imaginative in their writing in a way to free the students from the routine procedures occurring in the classroom. The article concludes with some pedagogical suggestions for the efficient exploitation of this literary genre in English language classes.

Keywords: Literature, short story, vocabulary and grammar, creative writing skills

Özet: Bu çalışma, öğrencilerin İngilizce dilbilgisi ve kelime bilgilerini pekiştirmek ve yaratıcı yazma yeteneklerini geliştirmek amacıyla, kısa öykülerin İngilizce müfredatına nasıl ilave edilebileceğini incelemektedir. Çalışma, İngilizce hazırlık programı almakta olan 21 Türk üniversite öğrencisiyle birlikte yürütülmüştür. Öğrencilerin dil gereksinimlerine uygun olan kısa öykülerden seçimler, İngilizce müfredatına ilave edilmiştir. Sunum, inceleme ve takip etme aşamalarından oluşan üç basamaklı model ile her öykü, verilen görevler çerçevesinde öğrencinin öğrenme sürecine aktif katılımını gerektiren "öğrenci merkezli öğrenme" yaklaşımına odaklanarak uygulanmıştır. Öykülerin derste kullanılması hakkındaki düşüncelerini almak için, işlenen her öykünün ardından, öğrencilerden görüşlerini yansıtacakları bir günlük ve içinde yazı çalışmalarını saklayacakları bir portfolyo tutmaları istenmiştir. Öğrencilerin günlüklerinden ve yazılarından edinilen bilgiler, dersin genel değerlendirmesini yapabilmek için uygulanan bir "yılsonu öykü algılama" sormacası ile tamamlanmıştır. Bulgular kısa öykülerin kullanımının, öğrencilerin dilbilgisi ve kelime bilgilerini güçlendirmede etkili ve anlamlı katkılar yaptığını ve öğrencilerin yazılarında daha yapıcı ve yaratıcı olmalarını sağladığını gösterirken öğrencileri sınıfın sıkıcı rutin ortamından uzaklaştırdığını göstermektedir. Makale, bu edebi türün İngilizce sınıflarında etkili biçimde kullanılabilmesi için bazı pedagojik önerilerde bulunarak sonuçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Edebiyat, kısa öykü, kelime ve dilbilgisi, yaratıcı yazma becerileri.

Introduction

Since the 1980s, the integration of literary works in English as a Foreign Language/English as a Second Language (EFL/ ESL) classes has attracted the interest of an increasing number of researchers due to several benefits offered by the use of literature (Collie & Slater, 1991; Lazar, 1996; Maley, 2001). First, literary texts can stimulate language acquisition process by providing authentic contexts. One major problem that language teachers face in the classroom context is the creation of an authentic situation. Language classrooms, especially those in EFL/ESL contexts are isolated from the context of events and situations which produce natural language. Literature can overcome this problem because the language in literary events creates a context of situation enabling it to transcend the artificial classroom situation

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(Littlewood, 2000). Hence, literary texts provide the students with real world experiences, relationships between people and society where the target language (L2) is spoken. Literature provides a model for language learners and helps them become familiar with different language forms and conventions (Collie & Slater, 1991; Ur, 1996). In addition, using literature in language classes provides cultural information about the L2. Literary texts increase foreign language learners' insight into the culture of the country and the people (Collie & Slater, 1991); hence, fostering learners' ability to interpret discourse in different cultural contexts (Savvidou, 2004). The world created in the work of literature is the foreign world, and literature is a way of assimilating the knowledge of this foreign world and of the view of reality, which its native speakers take for granted when communicating with each other (Rivers, 1981).

Literature can also help students master the vocabulary and grammar of the language and promotes the four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Povey, 1967; Stern, 1987). Carter and Long (1991) acknowledge that both literature and language involve the development of a feeling for language, of responses to texts - in the broadest sense of the word that is used both in written and spoken discourses. Similarly, Widdowson (1983) states that literature should be viewed as discourse, which indicates that the student's aim should be to learn how the language system, the structures and the vocabulary used in communication.

This article illustrates incorporating short stories, as a literature genre, into an English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum of adult learners receiving an intensive English language preparatory program. First, the article deals with the use of short stories in EFL/ESL classes. Then, it illustrates the framework guiding the incorporation of short stories into the EFL curriculum. This section also describes criteria for the selection of short stories and the research tools used to collect data. In the ensuing sections, the contribution of short stories to reinforce students' knowledge of language and to promote their creative writing skills, as well as its enjoyment value are discussed on the basis of the research findings. A sample writing produced by a learner is included to demonstrate how the efficient exploitation of this literary genre can maximize learner creativity before the article concludes.

Using short stories in EFL/ESL classes

Short-story is defined "as a narrative that can be read at one sitting of from one-half hour to two hours, and that is limited to 'a certain unique or single effect,' to which every detail is subordinate" (Poe cited by Abrams, 1970: p. 158). Since it is short, and aims at giving a 'single effect', there is usually one plot, and a few characters. Therefore, it is easy for the students to follow line of the story.

Several researchers support the use of short stories as one of the most suitable literary genres in ELT by explaining its advantages: According to Collie and Slater (1991), short stories are practical as their length is long enough to cover entirely in one or two class hours. Second, short stories are not complicated for students to work with on their own. In addition, short stories can be used with all levels and all ages of learners as they appeal to different interests of learners. Ellis and Brewster (1991: pp. 1-2) confirm that "as stories are motivating and fun, they can help students develop positive attitudes towards the foreign language and enrich their learning experiences".

How relevant are stories to adults learning of English as EFL/ESL?

King (2001) lists different ways in which stories help students to learn: First, stories enhance the memory through the identification of patterns, the stimulation of the imagination and

emotions, and the association of ideas. Second, language is modeled and reinforced through the rich grammatical mix offered by stories, their chronological nature, and their rhythmic qualities. Furthermore, stories encourage participation and student-centered learning; students may interact with each story through a series of activities. Finally, stories are flexible in that they may be suitable for all types and different levels of students. King (2001) also notes that stories may operate as vehicles, and a powerful and motivating source for helping students consolidate and practice language (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation), and to foster certain values and beliefs.

In the English language classrooms it is common to observe boredom, lack of interest, a negative attitude towards learning, an absence of stimulation to actively use the L2. According to King (2001), using stories may offer solution to such problems, as stories enable a non-threatening learning situation, inducing a relaxed atmosphere and allowing for enjoyment and more learning to take place. As also supported by Murdoch (2002), all these indicate that “short stories can, if selected and exploited appropriately, provide quality text content which will greatly enhance ELT courses” (p. 9).

Short story and creative writing

Stories can also help to improve students’ creative writing. The use of short stories serves as a useful source of input and a powerful springboard for student writing, offering valuable ideas in terms of food for thought, and containing lessons which are highly relevant to student lives. This is not only due to the more indirect, metaphorical and subtle nature of stories, but also because the story provides a stimulus to the imagination as well as supplying a convenient initial frame of reference which may be readily understood and appreciated by all the participants (Kings, 2001).

Stories give students insights and help them write in L2 in a more imaginative way. Students become more creative by comparing their own point of view with that/ those of the main character(s) of the story. According to Oster (1989), “focusing on point of view in literature enlarges students’ vision and fosters critical thinking by dramatizing the various ways a situation can be seen” (p. 85). This could happen because when students read, they interact with the text. By interacting with the text, they interpret what they read. By interpreting what they read, they can work toward writing English more creatively.

Using short stories as a source of input, various writing activities can be created to help students develop their creative writing skills. Students can be asked to write dialogues or more complex writing activities in accordance with the nature of the story, objective of the lesson and the language proficiency level of the students.

Studies revealed that the use of short stories in EFL/ESL classes resulted in positive learning outcomes. Among several researchers, Strodt- Lopez (1996) used short stories with students above absolute beginner proficiency level to develop students’ interpretive processes related to listening and reading comprehension that involves students in analyzing and defending their interpretation of oral and written stories. She found that using short stories extends students’ interpretive strategies, develop their sensitivity to the differences between oral and written input, and enhances their ability to assess the written text helping students to interact productively with the written text. It also increases students’ confidence and enjoyment in reading. Pardede (2012) used short stories with Indonesian students to help students enhance the language skills, and found that the use of short stories enhanced students’ language

skills. Additionally, short stories are very useful in improving students' vocabulary, knowledge of grammar as well as four language skills (Murdoch, 2002: p. 9).

Khatip (2011) used the Reader Response Approach to teaching English short stories to Iranian EFL college students. The findings revealed that students directed with this approach were able to make significant differences in the level of vocabulary acquisition and degree of motivation in comparison with another group of students who did not receive the same implementation. Similarly, Kesen (2002; 2006) integrated Reader Response Approach and Personal Construct Theory in designing a short story analysis course for the Turkish student teachers of English to investigate the nature and content of student teachers' personal theories, the possible changes in their theories as a result of applying reflective and awareness raising activities in the classroom. Arikan (2009) investigated using visuals in the teaching of short stories with Turkish learners and found that using visual materials while teaching literature contributed to developing students' interest while fostering their remembering of key points in the story line.

In spite of the afore-mentioned studies, in many language classes, short stories are assigned as extensive reading activities rather than being systematically included into the ELT curriculum. But, all too often this kind of assignment is seen as an end in itself, rather than a tool for promoting students' language skills. The major reason for this, as stated by Brooks (1989), could be attributed to language teachers' lack of certainty as to how to introduce stories in EFL classes.

Aim of the study

The major aim of this study is to investigate the following research questions:

1. What are the students' perceptions of the use of short story in terms of its contribution to
 - a) their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary,
 - b) their creative writing skills?
2. To what extent does the use of short story, as perceived by the students, contribute to teaching and learning atmosphere of the classroom?

Methodology

In this study, short stories are integrated into the English curriculum with mastery of the language (vocabulary and grammar) with further development of the writing skills with a special focus on student-centered learning, which requires students' active involvement in the learning process on the basis of given tasks. In other words, literature has been incorporated into the ELT curriculum as an *aid* to studying English language.

Patton (1990) suggests that one way in which the study design can be enhanced is to diversify the data collection techniques. Hence, in the present study, a variety of data collection tools were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data in order to address the research questions.

Data collection tools

Student writings: The first data collection tool was to collect student writings which were produced by the students after studying each story.

Diary: In order to obtain students' opinion concerning the use of story, each student was asked to keep a diary to help them keep track of their progress as to what they had learned

and how they benefited from the stories, following the study of each literary text, and a portfolio where they could keep their writings.

Questionnaire: To enhance the data collected from student writings and diaries, a ‘story perception questionnaire’ was developed compatible with the purpose of the study. The questionnaire aimed to determine students’ opinion on the degree to which the use of stories has been effective in various aspects in learning English.

The 13-item survey questionnaire comprised four sections (See Appendix 1 for the questionnaire). Section one asked the students’ opinion concerning the contribution of short story to grammar knowledge through four statements. Section two aimed to elicit the students’ opinion concerning the contribution of short story to vocabulary knowledge through three statements. The aim of section three was to identify students’ opinion whether the short story contributed to their writing skills, through three statements. Section four aimed to identify students’ opinion whether the use of short story contributed to teaching and learning atmosphere in the classroom.

Students were asked to indicate their answers on a five-point Likert scale, on which value 1 represented ‘never’, and value 5 ‘always’. The questionnaire also included an open-ended question, where respondents were invited to express any other idea related to this issue. The questionnaire was administered at the end-of-the year to have summative evaluation with regard to the use of stories in English lessons.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was employed in the analysis of the data derived from the questionnaire to obtain frequencies and percentages. Content analysis was applied to the data obtained from the open-ended section of the questionnaire and the students’ diaries. Students’ writings were analyzed with a focus on creativity.

Participants

The study was conducted with 21 Turkish university students; 10 female, and 11 male, with an average 19-year-old. The students were receiving an English language preparatory program at the Centre for Foreign Languages of Çukurova University, and it lasted over one semester. The students majored in non-literature subjects, and they were at the low intermediate level corresponding to A2 in Common European Framework (CEF).

Framework for integrating short stories into the ELT curriculum

As the objective of the study was to incorporate stories within the framework of the English language curriculum while following the regular syllabus, special attention was paid to the selection of short stories so that each story would consolidate language items specified by the syllabus in a meaningful way.

Selection of stories

In using short stories in EFL/ESL classes, story selection plays an important role. Choosing a story short well enough to handle within the teaching hours helps the students to complete a given task and give the students a feeling of achievement and self-confidence. Besides the length, Hill (1994: p. 15) recommends considering three other criteria in story selection (1) the needs and abilities of the students; (2) the linguistic and stylistic level of the text, and (3) the amount of background information required for a true appreciation of the material. Spack (1985) suggests that the interest value of the story be also considered. McKay (2001) and Rivers (1981) point out that students read and enjoy a text if the subject-matter is relevant to

their life experience and interests. Similarly, Loukia (2006) recommends choosing stories with appropriate language level (vocabulary, structures), content (interesting, fun, motivating, memorable, encourages participation), motivation (develop imagination, arouse curiosity, draw on personal experience), and one that has language learning in terms of potential for skills development, language practice, recycling, and learning the target and other cultures.

Considering the afore-presented criteria, in the present study, eight short stories were selected by the author of this study from various sources including the book “Discoveries in Literature” (Farrell et al., 1983), and “American Patchwork” (Taska, 1985) taking into account length of the story, linguistic density, students’ interest, needs, and cultural significance of the subject matter. Since students were not literature specialists, it was essential that the actual language use of stories should not be far removed from the current English. Regarding the length, attention was paid to selecting a complete text but not excessive in length.

Each story had a different aim to accomplish within the parallel syllabus depending on its content, language features and writing tasks to be performed. Since the literature was intended to reinforce the language items, both grammar and vocabulary, each literary text was chosen with specific learning points in mind, and matched the instructional objectives in the on-going syllabus to enable students to reinforce the language. An average of two or three periods a week was devoted to practicing this literary genre. The framework illustrating the incorporation of short stories into the on-going syllabus is illustrated in Appendix II.

The procedures for introducing stories: Presentation, exploitation and follow-up

The method of teaching stories as a supplementary to reinforcing language knowledge and creative writing skills involved three stages: presentation, exploration, and follow-up, each with a variety of tasks. The same method was used in a previous study, which involved integrating poetry into the ELT syllabus and produced positive outcomes in reinforcing students’ knowledge of language and promoting creativity in their writing skills (see Kırkgöz, 2008 for details).

Presentation

The aim of this stage is to introduce the story and motivate the students in order to make the literary text comprehensible through various pre-reading tasks. Students were assisted to activate their schema, and relate the story to their own experience by various techniques, such as brainstorming events, characters, feelings, etc., and predicting the content of the story from the title. The creation of “mental set” at this stage facilitates access to the literary genre to be studied (Maley & Duff, 1987).

Exploration

At this stage, students’ attention is directed to a study of the theme and the language of the literary genre through various student-centered activities (Collie & Slater, 1991) in order to make the students appreciate the meaning of the story. In analyzing the stories, the kind of technique utilized depended on the characteristics of each text. Each story was exploited in a more communicative or student-centered manner, and students were encouraged to ‘participate in the creation of meaning’ (Tannen, 1989).

Follow-up

This stage comprises various writing tasks. Students were provided with a focused purpose to help them imagine that they will, later, produce a writing task relevant to the theme of the story.

Therefore, each story was extended with some follow-up tasks to consolidate the students' language knowledge, improve their creative writing skills, and to enable the students to connect the story with their own lives, practicing grammar and vocabulary needed. Writing tasks revolved around the central theme of the story, ranging from character description, relationships, identity, conflict, which are of most concern to adult students, all of which were among the objectives of the ELT curriculum. (See the third column in the framework in Appendix II). The following section illustrates findings from the study.

Findings

Students' perceptions of the contribution of short story study to grammar and vocabulary knowledge

As seen in Table 1, through the questionnaire, approximately, 95.3% (n=20) of the respondents reported that the stories helped them realize *the particular use of language* (14.3% always and 81% often). According to all the students (52.4% always and 47.6% often) *short stories helped them to reinforce the grammar that they learnt in the lessons much better*. As perceived by all the students (14.3% always and 76.2% often), *short stories helped them become familiar with different language structures*. Students (23% always and 76.2% often) also agreed that *they used grammar in a more meaningful way*, through the use of stories.

Table 1. *Students' perceptions of the contribution of short story to grammar*

Statements	Always		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>I realized the particular use of language.</i>	3	14.3	17	81.0	1	4.8	-	-	-	-
<i>I reinforced the grammar subjects much better that I learnt in the course.</i>	11	52.4	10	47.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>I got to know different language structures.</i>	3	14.3	16	76.2	2	.5	-	-	-	-
<i>I used grammar in a more meaningful way.</i>	5	23.8	16	76.2	-	-	-	-	-	-

As far as the students' perceptions of contribution of short story to vocabulary development was concerned, the students (n=21), as seen in Table 2, unanimously agreed that *stories helped them to reinforce the words that they encountered in the course books* (38.1% always and 61.9% often) and that *they also learnt words that differed from those they met in the course books* (52.4% always, 42.9% often and 4.8% sometimes). The students also reported that *they could retain the new words easily as a result of studying stories in English lessons* (23.8% always, 71.4% often and 4.8% sometimes).

Table 2. Students' perceptions of the contributions of short story study to vocabulary

Statements	Always		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>I reinforced the words I met in the course books.</i>	8	38.1	13	61.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>I learned words that differed from those I met in the course books.</i>	11	52.4	9	42.9	1	4.8	-	-	-	-
<i>I could retain the words easily since I used them in a meaningful context</i>	5	23.8	15	71.4	1	4.8	-	-	-	-

Diary analysis confirmed the findings obtained from the questionnaire. Content analysis of student diaries revealed that the use of short stories acted as a useful vehicle to practice specific language, both grammar and vocabulary, effectively and meaningfully. Below are students' diary excerpts: (slightly edited for grammatical correctness)

- *I've come across many words that I had learned in my English coursebook. This helped me to remember the new words better. I have also learned many new words that I had not seen before. By reading short stories I have also increased my vocabulary knowledge.*
- *I've practiced grammar better for example, adverbs, adjectives and tenses and I have also learned how to use the grammar correctly.*
- *I have learned how to use the words in appropriate places*
- *I have found an opportunity to learn more words. This way my vocabulary knowledge expanded*

Students' perceptions of the use of short story to writing skills

As far as the students' perceptions of the contribution of short story to writing was concerned, as seen in Table 3, the students stated that *stories enabled them to be more creative* (28.6% always and 71.4% often), the use of stories *enabled them to be more aware of the use of English language* (4.8% always and 95.2% often), and that *they could express their feelings more easily by means of short stories* (33.3% always and 66.7% often).

Table 3. Students' perceptions of the contributions of short story to writing

Statements	Always		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>It enabled me to be more creative.</i>	6	28.6	15	71.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>It enabled me to be more aware of the use of English language.</i>	1	4.8	20	95.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>I could express my feelings more easily by means of short story.</i>	7	33.3	14	66.7	-	-	-	-	-	-

By analyzing student diaries and writings of stories, it was found that stories provided a useful and motivating source of input for the kind of writing students were assigned to

produce. It also provided a stimulus to the imagination and a convenient initial frame of reference.

Below is a sample creative writing task that came out of the story writing, which was produced by a student. The objective of this task is to reinforce second conditional, past tenses, use of vocabulary and letter writing. The first story selected was “*I’ll Give You a Law*” by Molly Picon. This is a story of Mrs. Ostrow. One day Mrs. Ostrow finds a lavalier, which she takes to a nearby police station. There, she is told that if the lavalier were not claimed within 90 days, she would be its legal owner. However, the owner of the article turns up after 90 days. According to the law, although Mrs. Ostrow has the right to claim the article, her attitude is to return it to its owner. There is a moral implicit in the story, which implies that “there are laws of the human heart more important than the laws of courts”.

Presentation: The following questions were asked:

- With reference to the title, make prediction about the content of the story.
- Have you ever lost a valuable item; when and how did you feel about it?
- What did you do about it? Report it to the police?
- What does the Turkish law say about the lost and found property?
- Have you ever found something valuable? If so, what did you do with it?
- What do you think a person who has found a valuable item should do?

Exploration: Students are encouraged to guess the meaning of the vocabulary using contextual cues in the story.

Students were invited to find in the stories examples of expressions that demonstrated character’s feelings, and thoughts of tolerance to be used for subsequent writing. They were required to speculate what their own emotions would be if they were in situations experienced by the main character in the story through such questions:

- What would you do if you were in the situation of the grandmother?
- How would you feel and why?

The objective of addressing such questions was to direct students attention to the theme of the story, not to test their memory (Leki, 1986).

Follow-up: What moral/lesson can you draw out of this story? What insights have you gained? Write a letter to Mrs. Ostrow, expressing your feelings.

Most students expressed their appreciations to Mrs. Ostrow, concerning her attitude and congratulated her, as in the following sample letter written by a student:

Dear Mrs.Ostrow,
I am very pleased that I read this story and got to know you. I’d like to congratulate you for two things. First, after you found the jewelry you took it back to the police station. You couldn’t take it to the police station. For example, you could hide it or you could sell it and make a lot of money. But you did not do this, so I congratulate you for this. Secondly, you gave the jewelry back to its owner. You could not give it to her because after 90 days it was legally yours. But what you did was you gave it to her. You are such an honest, respectable and kind person. Therefore, I congratulate

you for this, as well. Maybe not everybody would do that. I think you did the right thing. You are such a rare person. I must say I was affected by your behavior.

Sincerely,

Yunus

As seen above, letter writing gave the students an opportunity to project their feelings freely by assuming the roles of “real people in the context of real feelings” (Cottrell, 1987: p. 71). It is also clear that the writing task can be highly constructive and creative when the medium is emotionally and personally involved. During the course of this study, each student responded to the story and completed a variety of tasks, which provided a rich bank of activities that practiced the L2 in a meaningful context. The extension tasks such as those illustrated above to short stories proved to be both enjoyable and personally meaningful to students. They evoked strong emotional responses in the students, and helped them come to terms with essential parts of human experience like personal problems, internal conflicts, relationships and love.

This is supported by the diary entry of several students, as illustrated below:

- *I have learned many useful things. I have personally found the lessons when we produced writings as a follow-up to studying stories very productive. I mean it was like learning through games. Also such writings helped us to bring out our inner feelings and emotions.*
- *Since I started writing stories, I believe that I've made great progress in my writing. I have also felt more confident and become more creative than before.*

The contribution of short story to teaching and learning atmosphere of the classroom

The students' opinion about the possible contribution of short story study to teaching and learning atmosphere of the classroom was also highly positive. As demonstrated in Table 4, through the integration of short stories into English lessons, the students reported that *they enjoyed the lesson more* (9.5% always and 90.5% often); *stories enabled them to study in an enjoyable and comfortable setting* (8.6% always and 71.4% often) and *stories increased the students' interest and motivation toward the lessons* (14.3% always, 81.0% often and 4.8% sometimes).

Table 4. Students' perceptions of the contributions of short story to teaching and learning atmosphere of the classroom

Statements	Always		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I enjoyed the lesson more.	2	9.5	19	90.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
It enabled me to study in an enjoyable and comfortable setting.	6	28.6	15	71.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
It increased my interest and motivation toward the lessons.	3	14.3	17	81.0	1	4.8	-	-	-	-

Diary analysis confirmed findings from the questionnaire. One major theme that emerged from the student diaries was that stories were very beneficial in offering the students a relief from the routine procedures in the classroom. The students found the use of stories inspiring

and relieving from the routine procedures in the classroom, as reflected in the following student diary entries:

- *We not only learned a lot but also got entertained while studying short stories and writing about them.*
- *In each story we learned very useful things, and we got a lot of new ideas.*

Discussion

The first outcome of the study was to make grammar practice and vocabulary learning more meaningful. Reading a story offered a wonderful opportunity for the students to see the past tense in action, to observe modal examples of the use of past progressive or modal auxiliaries based on authentic texts. Unlike mechanical grammar activities extensively practiced by language teachers, e.g., fill-in the blank, stories produced by learners demonstrated how the efficient exploitation of this literary genre, by engaging learners in meaningful and enjoyable classroom activities, can maximize learner involvement and creativity. The students all agreed that stories played a positive role in practicing effectively and meaningfully what they had learned about L2. The use of stories in English classes also led to a growth in the students' repertoire of lexical knowledge. The findings suggest that stories help students add to or improve what they have learned in language classes about English, such as grammar and vocabulary.

With regard to writing, writing is considered as a neglected skill and one of the difficulties experienced by EFL teachers is to have students produce an interesting and creative writing. It is also generally claimed that students find writing boring and uninteresting. The present study has clearly revealed that this problem can be solved by using short stories which provide a rich source of input by giving students opportunities and a "reason to communicate in a meaningful context" (Maley & Duff 1987). In addition, stories provided a *purpose* for writing. When writing was practiced as a follow up to reading a story, students were able to reflect on their inner thoughts and feelings in different forms such as summarizing the story, adding more familiar variations from their background experiences. These activities provided a starting point for their writing and each story centered on the structure analyzed in the story (Carter, 1982).

Furthermore, students were exposed to a range of ideas, characters, and the subject matter; each new story provided them with a foreign territory. It has been found that provided that they are guided well, each student can enter the imaginary world of a story and associate himself/herself with the characters. Story-based classroom activities were found to be highly motivating for the students in terms of eliciting strong emotional reactions from learners. Unraveling the plot of a story, writing a letter to a character, summarizing a story is more than a mechanical activity. It demanded a personal response from the students encouraging them to draw on their own experiences. By so doing, the students have become personally and emotionally more invested in the process of language learning.

Short stories also had a potential for enjoyment. Most students enjoyed working with stories. The use of short stories brought variety and innovation to traditional course bound EFL teaching. What is more, efficient exploitation of stories in connection with language learning objectives has provided adult learners of English with more challenging language education than the restricted provision of language training.

In light of the findings from the present study, some pedagogical suggestions are proposed for the integration of this particular literary genre in EFL/ESL settings:

- Encourage students to make any guesses the title suggests to activate their schemata,
- As a pre-reading activity, determine 4-5 important issues emerging from the text, and ask them to students to relate to their own similar experiences,
- While reading the story, ask students specific questions to direct their attention to the text (Leki, 1986), to help them predict the next part to sustain their interest, i.e., what do you think will happen next and why?
- Encourage the students to use guessing strategies based on grammatical functions, word formation rules, and using context clues in coping with the meaning of unknown words, etc.
- Help students imagine feelings of the characters, the setting, etc., to form a mental picture,
- As a follow-up, devise writing tasks according to the theme of the story, such as narrating the story from a different character's point of view or telling the same story with different endings, in a different setting, and so on.

Conclusion

In this study, short stories were incorporated into the EFL curriculum for adult Turkish learners in order to reinforce students' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, to promote their creative writing skills, and to bring enjoyment into the classroom atmosphere.

King (2001) puts forth the idea that “pleasure and learning go hand in hand, but pleasure leads the way”. The present study has combined the entertainment and educational value; the two essential elements of the use literature in an EFL classroom. The present research confirms the findings of Tomlinson (1986: p. 33) who acknowledges that using various forms of literature has contributed far more to the acquisition of language and the development of language skills than “a total concentration on the presentation and the practice of language items (1986: p. 42), and that of Salih (1986) who notes the positive impact of literature upon improving language skills of Arab students majoring in English, and also supports the findings of Obeidat who remarks that literature helped his students become more “creative, critical, and analytical learners” (1997: p. 32), among many other related studies.

Though the particular setting for this experience is a Turkish university, the procedure involved has universal application. Provided the objectives for the inclusion of and the selection criteria are well established, the use of stories can be included into the framework of an EFL curriculum in institutions of higher education on a larger scale in Turkey and in similar other EFL/ESL contexts. Short stories are highly beneficial to use in EFL/ESL teaching programs; however, the selection of short stories should be done with reference to the course objective, the learners' profile, and the story content in order to make the best of it owing to the unique nature of every teaching situation.

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Appendices
Appendix I

Story Perception Questionnaire

A	The contributions of short story study to grammar knowledge	Always (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (2)	Never (1)
1	I realized the particular use of language.					
2	I reinforced the grammar subjects much better than I learnt in the lessons.					
3	I got to know different language structures.					
4	I used grammar in a more enjoyable and meaningful way.					
B	The contributions of short story study to vocabulary knowledge					
5	I reinforced the words that I met in the course books.					
6	I learnt words that differed from those I met in the course books.					
7	I could retain the new words easily since I used them in a meaningful context.					
C	The contributions of short story study to writing skill					
8	It enabled me to be more creative.					
9	It enabled me to be more aware of the use of English language.					
10	I could express my feelings more easily by means of short story.					
D	The contributions of short story study to teaching and the learning atmosphere of the classroom					
11	I enjoyed the lesson more.					
12	It enabled me to study in an enjoyable and comfortable setting.					
13	It increased my interest and motivation toward the courses.					

If you have any different ideas related to this issue, please specify:

Appendix II

Framework for Incorporating Short Stories into the ELT Curriculum

Weeks	Course Objectives	Stories	Writing tasks
1-2	Description of a person	"A Man Who Had No Eyes" by MacKinlay Kantor	Comparing two characters
3-4	Adjectives and adverbs (good/well, quick/quickly)	"The Storyteller" by H. H. Munro	Writing a fairy tale using adverbs and adjectives
5-6	Past tense with when, while, as, during. Problem-solution pattern	"The Day the Sun Came Out" by Dorothy M. Johnson	Writing about a personal problem and solution
7-8	Relative clauses (who, which, where, that, whose) Autobiography	"Hunger" by Richard Wright	Narrating an experience from one's childhood
9	Letter writing	"I'll Give You a Law" by Molly Picon	Writing a letter to the main character in the story to practice 2 nd Conditional
10-11	Relationships, problems and conflict	"Nobody's Better off Dead" by Quentin Reynolds	Identifying internal conflict and its solution in the story. Writing on the conflict and how it was resolved.
12-13	Advantages and disadvantages, Contrastive connectives.	"The Eskimo Widow" by Louis Untermeyer	Pros and cons of having a pet
14	Revision of grammar	"Key Item" by Isaac Asimov	Summary writing