

The Effect of Summarizing Short Stories on Iranian EFL Learners' Vocabulary Learning

Dr. Parviz Ajideh

English Department,
Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages,
University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

Dr. Mohammad Zohrabi

English Department,
Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages,
University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

Tannaz Nouazad

English Department,
Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages,
University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

Abstract: *Regarding second language vocabulary acquisition, researchers have tried to determine whether explicit attention to vocabulary is absolutely necessary in vocabulary learning or not. A number of studies have investigated the effects of memory strategy instruction on vocabulary learning. Many studies in Iran have investigated vocabulary learning strategies from different perspectives, but few have surveyed the effects of summarizing strategy on vocabulary learning. The main concern of the present study is to probe the effects of summarizing short stories on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning. To this end, 40 participants were selected from a private English Language Institute in Tabriz. The participants were randomly assigned to an experimental group that received instruction on using summarizing strategy and a control group which received no treatment. In order to guarantee the participants' homogeneity, a pretest (PET test) was administered to them. After the treatment, a posttest was administered to the participants to find out the effectiveness of the instructed strategy. For analyzing the findings, a T-test was employed. It is hoped that the results of this study provide significant empirical evidence together with theoretical insights for vital areas of vocabulary research.*

Keywords: *vocabulary learning, memory strategy, social strategy, cognitive strategy*

1. INTRODUCTION

For many EFL learners, reading is a suffocating slow process. One of the most important reasons for this problem is the learners' lack of vocabulary knowledge. Due to this limitation, they often give up trying to understand the meanings of the texts or skip reading if sentences or entire paragraphs contain a small number of unknown words. These encounters suggest that some learners might not have the knowledge to handle words they do not understand. Although vocabulary knowledge has been recognized as a critical determinant of one's reading ability, yet not much research has focused on investigating the strategies learners employ to learn vocabulary. In this study an attempt is made to test the effect of summarizing short stories on Iranian Elementary EFL learners' vocabulary learning.

2. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Vocabulary learning process is triggered by various factors including not only explicit and implicit techniques or individual and group based activities but also motivation and learning strategies (Coady, 1997b; Nation & Newton, 1997). Vocabulary learning strategy (VLS) is an approach which facilitates vocabulary learning and has attracted considerable attention. Moreover, it is a movement away from teaching-oriented approach toward one that is interested in

seeing how actions of learners might affect their acquisition of vocabulary (Schmitt, 2002). Strategies can help learners both in discovering the meaning of a word and consolidating it, moreover they are specially needed when learners are encouraged to learn independently (Celce-Murcia, 2001). One of the problems that students mostly face is that they easily forget the newly learned words. To solve this problem, researchers have attempted to examine different VLSs (vocabulary learning strategies).

O'Malley and Chamot (1997, p. 203) state that learning strategies are "the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information". Oxford (1990, p. 1) defines them as "actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques students use, often unconsciously, to improve their progress in apprehending, internalizing, and using the L2". The main benefit gained from all learning strategies, including strategies for vocabulary learning, is the fact that they enable learners to take more control of their own learning so that students can take more responsibility for their studies (Nation, 2001; Scharle & Szabó, 2000).

In learning vocabulary items, acquiring definitions of words is vital. Many teachers believe that defining words before reading a text is an effective instructional technique to support vocabulary growth and enhance reading comprehension. However, research indicates otherwise. For example, the popular practice of requiring students to find definitions of words and write those words in sentences before reading appears to have little apparent impact on their word knowledge and language use, and has not improved student comprehension of texts that contain those words (Kameenui, 1991). Similarly, Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) found that instructional methods that provide only definite information about each word to be learned or that involve multiple repetitions of definitional information about a target word do not appear to have reliable effects on reading comprehension.

Allen (1999) identifies three reasons why strategies that focus on word definitions are not effective: (1) a word can have multiple definitions and meanings depending on the geographic location in which a person lives, (2) a word can have a definition that may not be correct in a particular context, and (3) definitions of words often lack adequate information for students to use them correctly. These findings suggest that learning vocabulary is more complex than simply memorizing definitions of words; rather, it involves seeing, hearing, and using words in meaningful contexts. Strategies that "focus on word recognition, and word use in meaningful contexts are most likely to positively affect vocabulary growth" (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004, p. 13).

M.C. Denial and Pressley (1989) believe that new vocabulary items are taught by one of three methods: keyword, semantic context, and no-strategy control. The semantic context method involved presenting verbal contexts for subjects from which they might infer the meanings of the words, followed by explicit provision of the definitions. After a vocabulary definition acquisition phase, subjects in all conditions read a text in which some of the newly acquired vocabulary was embedded, with half of the texts providing richer contextual clues to the meaning of the target items (embellished text) than the other texts (unembellished text). Reading times did not differ as a function of acquisition condition, nor did one acquisition condition consistently elicit better performance than the others across text comprehension/memory measures.

The one significant difference in comprehension favored the keyword method. The usual superiority of the keyword method for recall of definitions given vocabulary items was also replicated. Despite theoretically motivated concerns that the keyword method acquisition of definitions might inhibit comprehension of vocabulary in discourse relative to a semantic context method, none of the reaction time (RT) or performance analyses reported supported those hypotheses. A subsidiary finding was that text embellishments increased comprehension (as indexed by recall measures), a result suggesting that certain kinds of contextual support can enhance comprehension of new vocabulary. All these studies clearly reveal that different strategies can have positive effects on vocabulary learning.

Calls for helping learners improve the way they go about learning vocabulary have been made on a number of grounds. Sokmen (1997, p. 225) argues for helping learners learn how to acquire vocabulary on their own, noting that it is "not possible for students to learn all the vocabulary they need in the classroom". Cunnings Worth (1995, p. 38) regards helping learners develop their own

vocabulary learning strategies as “a powerful approach”, which can be based on sensitization to the systems of vocabulary, encouragement of sound dictionary skills, and reflection on effective learning techniques.

Many teachers would assume that vocabulary learning stems mainly from the direct teaching of the words in the classroom. However, vocabulary learning needs to be more broadly conceptualized than this belief. It is worth to mention the four strands of vocabulary learning:

- A. Learning vocabulary from meaning-focused input (listening & reading)
- B. Learning vocabulary from meaning focused output (speaking & writing)
- C. Deliberate vocabulary learning
- D. Developing fluency with vocabulary across the four skills.

The major concern of the current study would be learning vocabulary through listening and reading which means from meaning-focused input.

Zimmerman (2000) believes that vocabulary is central to language learners. Hung (1988) claimed that more diversified lexical knowledge will in fact help development of other language skills.

The basic access to a language is vocabulary. It is like foundation of pyramid, without words there would be no language structures. Vocabulary plays a crucial role in communication. For beginner language learners, communicating would stop if they hear or read words that fail to understand (Scott, Jamieson-Noel & Asselin, 2003). Moreover Punch and Robinson (1992) considered words as the fundamental elements of communication, and argued that they should be enhanced in the classroom. They further noted that vocabulary instruction is a vital focus for teaching at the elementary level. However Oxford (1990) found that "language learners have a serious problem remembering the large amount of vocabulary necessary to achieve fluency".

Lin (2001) indicated that Taiwanese children had inadequate spelling skills and short retention of learned English vocabulary. He further argued that learning difficulties of English vocabulary would hinder the students' learning of English in all four skills. Therefore dealing with their vocabulary learning difficulties is a big concern.

Memory strategies, one kind of language learning strategies, are considered vital in vocabulary learning (Nation 1990). Oxford (1990) argued that memory strategies are regarded as powerful mental tools to language learners in coping with vocabulary learning difficulties, because they make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations. Another parallel study which focused on the use of memory strategy was conducted by Jonson and Obi (1993). They claimed that the use of mnemonic strategies may help disabled students in the area of spelling and improve their long-term memory of vocabulary. Research evidence also indicated that students' English performance is related to the use of language learning strategies (Li, 2005; Nisbet, Tindall & Arroyo, 2005; Park, 1997; Yang, 1996) and that, strategies could be taught (Brown 2000; Dornyei, 1995; Nation, 1990; Oxford, 1990).

It is important to recognize that the above strategies can be used to facilitate learning, or can be used to facilitate comprehension. As an example, a learner can employ the memory strategy of grouping in order to learn vocabulary items more quickly and more effectively. Likewise, grouping can also be used to facilitate the understanding the meaning of words. Furthermore, such strategies will vary depending on the language area or skill to be mastered. In more sophisticated terms, task requirements help determine strategy choice; learners would not use the same strategy for writing an essay as they would for engaging in informal conversation in a second language. Language learning strategies have been identified to help student become effective and autonomous learners (Cohen, 1998; Oxford, 1990; Yang, 2003), and have attracted the attention of language researchers and professionals in the past two decades (Woodrow, 2005).

Dickson (1987) also asserted that learning strategies are mainly important for raising learner autonomy, since the adoption of appropriate strategies makes learners more responsible for their own learning. Furthermore, Warton (2000) noted that considerable research suggests that appropriately used learning strategies influence language achievement, leading to an overall gain in L2 proficiency. August, Carlo, Dressler and Snow (2005) pointed out that there was a need for

English language learners to have a sustained learning regarding vocabulary. Since language learning strategies could deal with learning difficulties (Oxford, 1990), a need to develop the learning strategy research on vocabulary was suggested by O'Malley and Chamot (1990).

A number of models for teaching learning strategies in both first and second language contexts have been developed (e.g. Chamot et al., 1999; Cohen, 1998; Graham & Harris, 2003; Grenfell & Harris, 1999; Harris, 2003; O' Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Pressley, El-Dinary, Gaskins, Schuder, Bergman, Almasi & Brown, 1992). It is believed that these instructional models share many features. All agree on the importance of developing students' metacognitive understanding of the value of learning strategies and suggest that, this is facilitated through teacher demonstration and modeling. In addition, they all emphasize the importance of providing multiple practice opportunities with the strategies so that students can use them autonomously. Among other things, all suggest that students should evaluate how well a strategy has worked, choose strategies for a task, and actively transfer strategies to new tasks. According to Ellis (2003), the study of vocabulary-learning strategies is a promising area of enquiry.

Several vocabulary learning strategy taxonomies has been proposed in the literature on language learning (e.g. Gu & Johnson, 1996; Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 1997). Nation (2001) in his taxonomy distinguishes the aspects of vocabulary knowledge, the sources of vocabulary knowledge and learning processes. In a similar vein he further classifies vocabulary learning strategies into three general groups, planning, sources, and process. Another noteworthy classification scheme has been offered by Stoffer (1995), who developed a Vocabulary Learning Strategy Inventory (VLSI) comprising fewer items compared to Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy. In Stoffer's (1995) classification scheme, the 53 items on the VOLSI are clustered into nine categories by factor analysis as follows:

1. Strategies involving authentic language use
2. Strategies used for self-motivation
3. Strategies used to organize words
4. Strategies used to create mental linkages
5. Memory strategies
6. Strategies involving creative activities
7. Strategies involving physical action
8. Strategies used to overcome anxiety
9. Auditory strategies

There is stunning evidence that two of the most important findings related to vocabulary learning are (1) that reading is the single most important factor in increased word knowledge (Anderson & Nagy, 1991) and (2) that a rich vocabulary increases comprehension and learning (Manzo, Manzo, & Thomas, 2006; Robb, 2009). In other words, students develop extensive vocabularies not by completing worksheets, memorizing word lists, or using a dictionary or glossary to define unknown words but by the act of reading (Weir, 1991).

A number of studies have been conducted to find out the most effective method of vocabulary learning. Accordingly some types of approaches, techniques and exercises have been suggested in the field to teach vocabulary (Schmitt, 2000). Put briefly, it has been suggested that teaching vocabulary should not only consist of teaching specific words but also should be intended at equipping learners with strategies necessary to expand their vocabulary knowledge (Hulstijn, 1993, as cited in Morin & Goebel, 2001).

Chia-Wen Chuc (2008) examined the effects of memory strategy instruction on elementary school students' vocabulary learning. The results of this study suggested that after memory strategy instruction, participants in the experimental group applied memory strategies more frequently and their productive vocabulary performance improved. The results supported the positive influences of strategy training. That is, memory strategy instruction facilitated elementary school students' word spelling ability. In addition, both the more and less proficient learners' productive vocabulary ability significantly improved.

Nist and Olejnik (1995) investigated the impact of dictionary use on vocabulary growth and found that definitions in the dictionary were not very helpful to students and that they did not use them very productively, if at all.

McDaniel and Pressley (1989) compared the keyword technique, in which students learn words through the combination of an auditory and imagery link, with the context method and found the former to be significantly more facilitative to learning than the latter.

In another study, Zahedia and Addi (2012) examined the impact of imagery strategy on EFL learners' vocabulary learning, the result showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of English vocabulary mastering using this strategy.

Kaelin (1997) concluded that semantic mapping is effective for the vocabulary acquisition of beginning and advanced adult L2 language students. Similarly, Hippner-Page (2002) suggests that teachers should consider using semantic groupings to assist L2 elementary students learn new words. In order to test these findings Zahedia and Abdi (2012) set out studies which focused on the effect of semantic mapping strategy on EFL learner's vocabulary learning. The result showed a positive relationship between using semantic mapping strategy and vocabulary learning.

Aghlara and Nasrin Hadidi Tamjid (2011) investigated the effects of digital computer games on Iranian children's vocabulary retention in foreign language acquisition. The participants were 6 to 7 year old female learners with no prior knowledge of English. The results revealed that using such games in the classroom resulted in better motivation and facilitated the learning process of children and their cognitive achievement. As the researchers argued the learning process became much more enjoyable and engaging children in such games drastically reduced the stress involved in the learning process. The result supported that digital games have positive effects on the learning process.

Another study was conducted to investigate the role of rote learning (RL) in vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) of Burmese EFL students. The research addressed the need for a concrete understanding of the role of RL strategy in vocabulary learning as well as Burmese EFL learners' perspectives on RL strategy among other vocabulary memorizing strategies. Through two research instruments: a questionnaire for students and an interview for teachers, the data of this study were collected from 100 Burmese EFL learners who were from Yangon Institute of Education in Myanmar. The results of this study indicate that RL strategies are used more than other memory strategies (MSs) by Burmese students whose opinions mostly indicate that RL strategy is effective not only in initial stages, but also in higher stages of English vocabulary learning. In addition, creating mental linkage (CML) strategy was also used as a main collaborative strategy of RL in their vocabulary learning process. Considerably, the findings of this research suggest that RL strategies will continue to be applied in vocabulary learning by Burmese learners because of the five possible factors of the content analysis: Burmese cultural/educational background, EFL environment, traditional habit, national situation/examination demand, and failure to try out the best ways. The following research question motivated the conduct of this study:

RQ: Does summarizing short-stories have any significant impact on Iranian Elementary EFL learners' vocabulary retention?

Accordingly, the following null and research hypotheses are formulated for the above mentioned question.

NH: Summarizing short-stories has no significant impact on Iranian Elementary EFL learners' vocabulary retention.

AH: Summarizing short-stories have significant impact on Iranian Elementary EFL learners' vocabulary retention.

3. THE STUDY

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study were 40 female Iranian learners of English. They were learning English as a foreign language at a private English institute (Shukuhe Novin Institute) in Tabriz,

Iran. All of the participants spoke Turkish as their mother tongue. The mean age of participants was 13. They already had passed some English courses successfully. None of them had any background of residence in an English speaking country. The participants' English proficiency level had been assessed based on their final scores on the previous term's final exam. The participants were randomly assigned to two groups, that is, a control group and an experimental group based on their odd or even student numbers.

The selected lessons, especially the reading part which is the main focus of this study, were taught to the experimental group through summarizing strategy. However, the target vocabularies were taught only through reading to the control group. Then a posttest (a test administered by the institute with confirmed validity and reliability estimates during several semesters) was used to determine the participants' gain in vocabulary knowledge.

3.2. Materials

3.2.1. Vocabulary Items

Vocabulary items which were the main focus of this study consisted of all the new vocabulary items presented in lessons 1 to 4 of *Hip Hip Hooray 3* published by Pearson Education (2004). In this regard summarizing strategy was taught to the experimental group while the control group was taught the reading part just by usual reading and providing the definitions of words by the teacher.

3.2.2. Pretest

The pretest which was used to gain information about the vocabulary knowledge and reading abilities of the participants was *PET test*. In an article by Capel (2010) the reliability of this test was determined to be acceptable. The *PET test* mentioned above was also used for determining the homogeneity of the participants in both of the groups.

3.2.3. Posttest

The posttest had the format of the productive vocabulary knowledge tests consisting of five separated parts. The parts were named as follows, part A 'fill in the blank', part B 'circling the correct answer', part C 'True/False questions', part D 'matching', and the last part E was a 'short reading' consisting of some words, in which students in the experimental group used the learnt strategy to answer the related question. The posttest was administrated after covering the whole four lessons. There was no need for pilot testing since its reliability and validity estimates had been determined during the previous semesters.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Proficiency Test (pretest)

Before the treatment, a pretest (*PET test*) was given to the participants in order to guarantee their homogeneity and determine their reading ability and vocabulary knowledge. The test which consisted of ten questions separated in five different parts was administrated to both groups. The students' individual scores on the proficiency test (20 scores for the experimental group and 20 scores for the control group) are listed in table 1.

Table 1. The Raw Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups on the Pretest and Posttest

Pretest		Posttest	
Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group
16	13	20	16
14	14	15	18
15	13	20	17
15	17	18	15
13	18	18	14
13	15	16	13
17	16	19	16
14	15	18	15

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12	13	16	15
15	17	18	15
15	17	18	16
14	14	19	18
13	18	16	19
18	15	19	13
13	12	17	16
18	19	18	18
17	14	19	19
13	18	16	15
17	15	20	18
15	15	18	17

The following figure illustrates the comparison of the mean values of both groups on pretest and posttest.

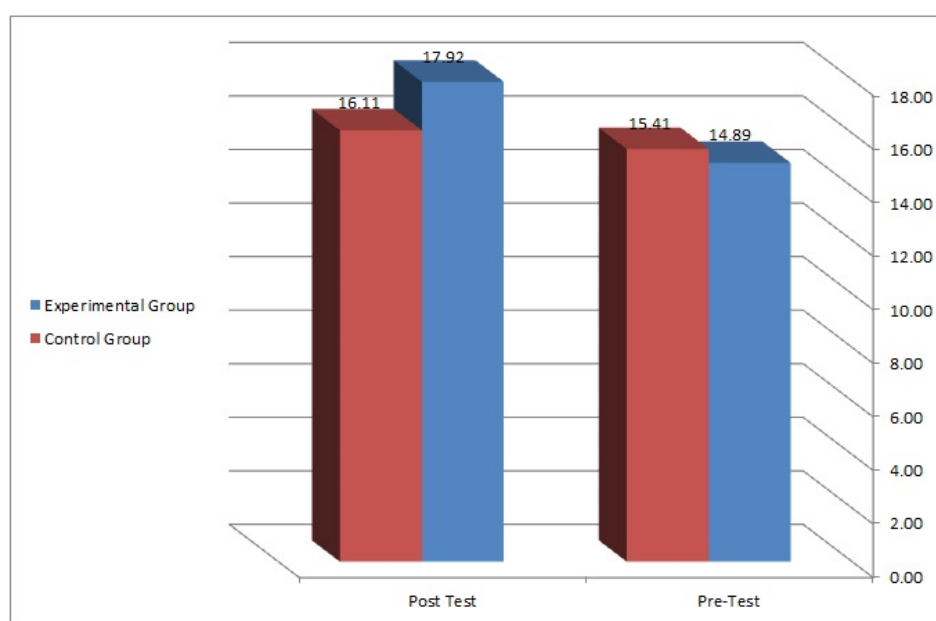


Figure 1. Comparison of the Mean Values of both Groups in Pretest and Posttest

According to Figure 1, the performance of the experimental group was better than the control group. There is a significant difference between their mean values after the treatment. The following figures illustrate comparison of the mean value, SD and spread of scores of control group in both pretest and posttest.

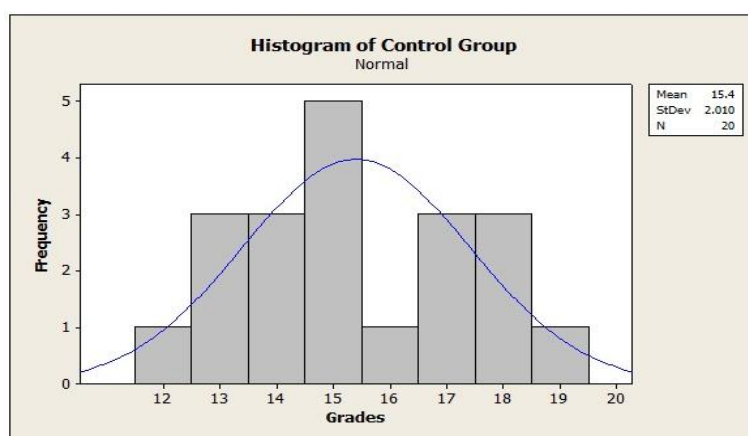


Figure 2. The Mean Value, SD and Spread of Scores of Control Group in Pretest

According to figure 2, we have the mean value of 15.4 and a standard deviation of 2.01 for control group in pretest.

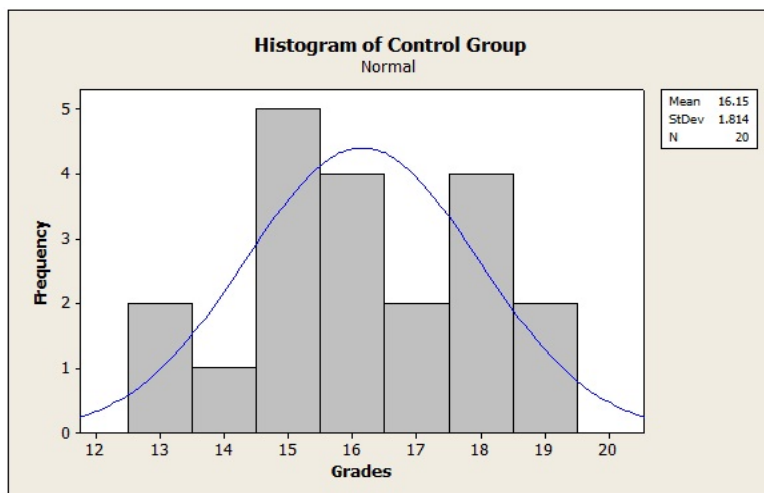


Figure 3. The Mean Value,SD and Spread of Scores of Control Group in Posttest

According to figure 3, we have the mean value of 16.15 and a standard deviation of 1.81 for control group in pretest. As it is clear from the result, there is a slight difference in increasing of mean value and decreasing of SD. The following figures illustrate comparison of the mean value, SD and spread of scores of experimental group in both pretest and posttest.

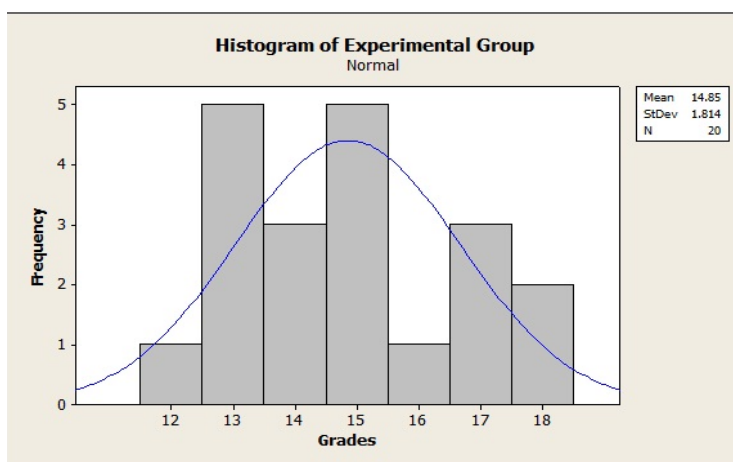


Figure 4. The Mean Value,SD and Spread of Scores of Experimental Group in Pretest

According to figure 4, we have the mean value of 14.85 and a standard deviation of 1.81 for experimental group in pre-test.

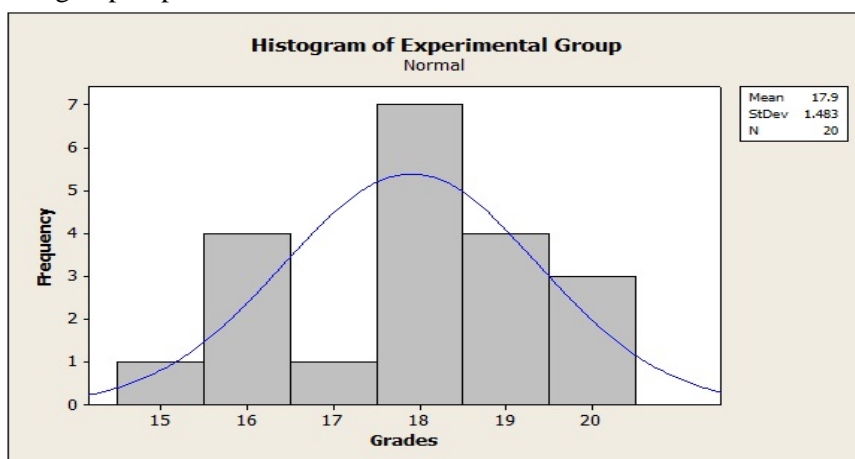


Figure 5. the Mean Value, SD and Spread of Scores of Experimental Group in Posttest

According to figure 5, we have the mean value of 17.9 and a standard deviation of 1.48 for experimental group in posttest. The result indicates that SD of 1.4, shows a smaller spread of scores than SD of 1.8 also the mean value has increased significantly. By comparing the mean value and SD of the experimental group in both pretest and posttest, we can conclude that our strategy has been helpful and that our students' knowledge in learning vocabulary has been improved.

4.2. The T-Test

The t-test assesses whether the means of two groups are *statistically* different from each other. This analysis is appropriate whenever you want to compare the means of two groups, and especially appropriate as the analysis for the posttest-only, two-group randomized experimental design.

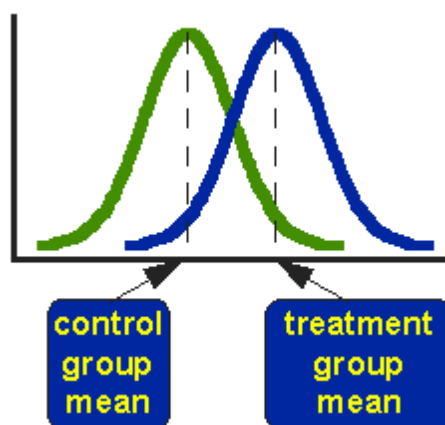


Figure 6. Idealized Distributions for Treated and Comparison Group Posttest Values

Figure 6 shows the distributions for the treated (blue) and control (green) groups in a study. Actually, the figure shows the idealized distribution -- the actual distribution would usually be depicted with a histogram or bar graph. The figure indicates where the control and treatment group means are located. The question the t-test addresses is whether the means are statistically different.

What does it mean to say that the average scores for two groups are statistically different? Consider the three situations shown in Figure 4.7. The first thing to notice about the three situations is that *the difference between the means is the same in all three*. But, you should also notice that the three situations don't look the same -- they tell very different stories. The top example shows a case with moderate variability of scores within each group. The second situation shows the high variability case. The third shows the case with low variability. Clearly, we would conclude that the two groups appear most different or distinct in the bottom or low-variability case. Why? Because there is relatively little overlap between the two bell-shaped curves. In the high variability case, the group difference appears least striking because the two bell-shaped distributions overlap so much.

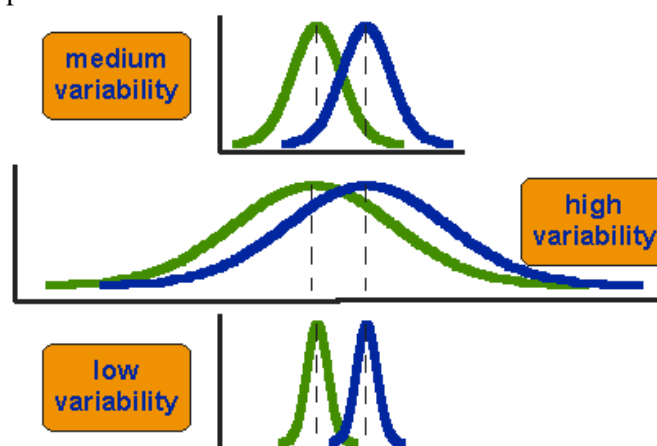


Fig 7.

This leads us to a very important conclusion: when we are looking at the differences between scores for two groups, we have to judge the difference between their means relative to the spread or variability of their scores. The t-test does just this.

4.2.1. Statistical analysis of the T-test

The formula for the t-test is a ratio. The top part of the ratio is just the difference between the two means or averages. The bottom part is a measure of the variability or dispersion of the scores. This formula is essentially another example of the signal-to-noise metaphor in research: the difference between the means is the signal that, in this case, we think our program or treatment introduced into the data; the bottom part of the formula is a measure of variability that is essentially noise that may make it harder to see the group difference. Figure 4.8 shows the formula for the t-test and how the numerator and denominator are related to the distributions.

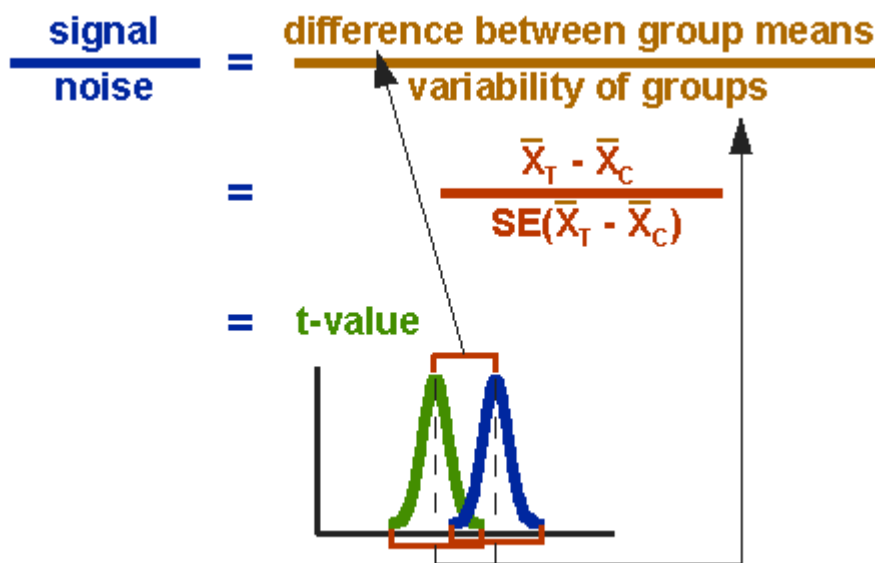


Figure 8. Formula for the t-test

The top part of the formula is easy to compute -- just find the difference between the means. The bottom part is called the standard error of the difference. To compute it, we take the variance for each group and divide it by the number of people in that group. We add these two values and then take their square root. The specific formula is given in Figure 4.9

$$SE(\bar{X}_T - \bar{X}_C) = \sqrt{\frac{\text{var}_T}{n_T} + \frac{\text{var}_C}{n_C}}$$

Figure 9. Formula for the Standard error of the Difference between the Means

Remember, that the variance is simply the square of the standard deviation.

The final formula for the t-test is shown in Figure 10:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_T - \bar{X}_C}{\sqrt{\frac{\text{var}_T}{n_T} + \frac{\text{var}_C}{n_C}}}$$

Figure 10. Formula for the t-test

The t-value will be positive if the first mean is larger than the second and negative if it is smaller. Once you compute the t-value you have to look it up in a table of significance to test whether the ratio is large enough to say that the difference between the groups is not likely to have been a chance finding. To test the significance, you need to set a risk level (called the alpha level).

In most social research, the “rule of thumb” is to set the alpha level at .05. This means that five times out of a hundred you would find a statistically significant difference between the means even if there was none (i.e., by “chance”). You also need to determine the degrees of freedom (DF) for the test. In the t-test, the ‘degree of freedom’ is the sum of the persons in both groups minus 2. Given the alpha level, the DF, and the t-value, you can look the t-value up in a standard table of significance (available as an appendix in the back of most statistics texts) to determine whether the t-value is large enough to be significant. If it is, you can conclude that the difference between the means for the two groups is different (even given the variability). Fortunately, statistical computer programs routinely print the significance test results and save you the trouble of looking them up in a table.

The t-test, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and a form of regression analysis are mathematically equivalent and would yield identical results. According to the definition of T-test given above, we can give comprehensive data analysis for our findings. According to T-test difference and degree of freedom and based on the standard table of significance, the critical analysis for T-test is 2.03. The result of analyzing T-test for each part of pretest and posttest has been described in the preceding section.

Table 2. *T-Test Analysis of the Means of Two Groups in the Pretest*

Groups	\bar{X}	SD	Degree of Freedom	P-Value	T-Value	Critical	T-Test of difference
Experimental	14.85	1.81	37	0.328	0.99	2.03	0.05
Control	15.40	2.01					

For the scores gained from the pretest (*PET test*), the mean value was calculated. Mean for the control group was (15.40) and for the experimental group it was (14.85). Moreover a T-test was employed on these scores for hypothesis testing purposes. As the result of T-test suggests (P-value 0.32 being greater than 0.05), our null hypothesis is accepted since we have not applied the intended strategy. There is not significance different between two groups.

Table 3. *T-Test Analysis of the Means of Two Groups in the Posttest*

Groups	\bar{X}	SD	Degree of Freedom	P-Value	T-Value	Critical	T-Test of difference
Experimental	17.90	1.48	37	0.003	3.24	2.03	0.05
Control	16.15	1.81					

For the scores gained from the posttest (a valid test taken by institute), the mean value was calculated. Mean for the control group was (16.15) and for the experimental group it was (17.90). Moreover a T-test was employed on these scores for hypothesis testing purposes. As the result of T-test suggests (P-value 0.003 being less than 0.05), there is a meaningful difference between two groups. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis stating that “summarizing short-stories has a significant impact on vocabulary learning” is accepted.

5. DISCUSSION

This study sought to examine the effect of summarizing short stories on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning. The researchers aimed to investigate whether summarizing can enhance EFL learners' acquisition and retention of new words. In this section the researchers investigated the effect of summarizing short stories on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary retention. The overall gain in vocabulary acquisition will be explained. Furthermore, the researchers will compare participants' vocabulary retention over a one and a half month period.

As mentioned previously, the aim of this study was to determine the effect of summarizing short stories on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning. As we know, students need to recognize a large number of words automatically if they are to be fluent readers. Adam and Huggins (1985,

cited in Carter & Carthy, 1988, p. 101) state that “word recognition abilities are the single best class of discrimination between good and poor readers”.

As it was mentioned previously, the pretest consisted of 20 questions. The mean of scores of participants of control group in the pretest was ($X = 14.85$). The mean of the experimental group was ($X = 15.40$). After the treatment was applied a posttest was given which consisted of the same number of questions as the pretest. After finding out the means of both groups, a T-test was employed. The result of the T-test revealed the difference between the experimental group and the control group in the posttest. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis stating that “summarizing short-stories has a significant impact on Iranian EFL learners’ vocabulary learning” was accepted.

What was revealed in this study about the positive effects of summarizing short stories was in line with the findings of McGinley and Denner (1994) who argued that the *story impressions* strategy arouses students’ curiosity and enables them to use clue words associated with the setting, characters, and events in the story to help them write their own versions of the story prior to reading.

These results also concur with the study conducted by Senemo lu, (2001), who concluded that summarizing, which is one of the metacognitive strategies, leads to effective use of mental skills, and increases remembering and understanding. It helps students to comprehend knowledge, transferring it to long-term memory significantly because it leads students to a) reading to understand, b) to distinguish important ideas, and c) to express the information by using their own words. To sum up, the results presented above offer convincing evidence that summarizing stories has a positive effect on EFL learners’ vocabulary learning. The present findings expand the existing research in the area of vocabulary acquisition and vocabulary learning. However, to establish the results of this study into literature more follow up studies are needed.

6. CONCLUSION

Findings of this study may have implications for theory, practice, and research in second/foreign language learning, classroom interaction, syllabus design, and specifically oral language testing. This study has significant implications for the methodologists, teachers, trainers, and syllabus designers in curriculum planning and developing materials. The findings may also have implications for theories of second language acquisition and also for those involved in educational administration, program design and classroom teaching.

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