

The Effect of Storytelling on Iranian EFL Learners' Vocabulary Retention

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Received: September 8, 2016 Accepted: September 22, 2016 Online Published: October 7, 2016

doi:10.22158/selt.v4n4p416 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/selt.v4n4p416>

Abstract

This paper presents the results of a study on utilizing two storytelling techniques, summarizing and strip story arrangement, in an EFL context. It focused on exploring which type of storytelling technique was more effective and thus could help EFL learners master the new words better. It was carried out in a private language school in Tehran, Iran. The participants were 105 learners who were selected from 160 elementary learners based on their performance on Oxford Placement Test as the test of homogenization. Three groups were formed, two experimental and one control group with 35 subjects in each. The learners in the summarizing group used the new words to summarize the stories in their written and spoken tasks and the learners in the other experimental group, strip story arrangement group, were asked to arrange some split sentences in their personal drafts. After thirty treatment sessions, the learners were given the posttest. The three groups' performances on the posttest were compared by one way ANOVA. The results showed that the learners in summarizing group performed better than strip story arrangement group and both groups outperformed the control group.

Keywords

storytelling, summarizing tasks, strip story arrangement tasks, EFL learners, vocabulary retention

1. Introduction

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in all EFL/ESL classrooms. It also has a pivotal role in four language skills, reading, writing, speaking, and listening and is essential for successful communication. Indeed, research suggests that lexical errors impede communication and comprehension more than grammatical errors and native speakers believe in lexical errors as more serious (Ellis, 1994). So it can be said that by employing effective strategies to teaching lexical items, EFL learners' proficiency level can be enhanced greatly in four language skills consequently. As Wilson and Anderson (1986) has rightly put it, without grammar very little can be conveyed but without vocabulary nothing. Due to its vital role in language acquisition and organization of syllabuses, various techniques have been employed to teach

vocabulary and each technique approaches teaching vocabulary from a different point of view. In this regard Nation (2001) argues that vocabulary is acquired best through fully contextualized activities. Short stories can provide contextualized tasks to enhance vocabulary learning. Employing short stories in EFL/ESL classrooms is a technique which has been addressed in various studies (Garvie, 1990; Wodinsky & Nation, 1988; Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). Traditional approach to vocabulary teaching has been to present learners with a list of words, then to present them in a context and provide activities to reinforce the lexical items. However, research supports that instead of this traditional approach, learners can acquire new lexical items through stories either by hearing or reading them (Cho & Choi, 2008; Elley, 1991; Krashan, 2004; Vivas, 1996; Wang & Lee, 2007). Employing stories in the classroom setting can maximize students' involvement and make them more engaged in the process of learning. Stories provide a problem solving approach to vocabulary learning and by doing so; they make retention of the information possible for longer periods of time. According to Craik and Tulving (1975) retention depends on the elaborateness of the final encoding, with material more likely to be remembered when information is more deeply processed. The benefits of using stories in an EFL/ESL setting are twofold. It makes students to get more involved in the process of learning through a problem solving path and it also maximizes the chance of shifting attention from teacher to students and make them use their own imagination and accept responsibility for their own learning.

Employing story telling techniques in L2 classrooms can create a positive and challenging learning environment and provide a meaningful and comprehensible input. Language learners can easily benefit from storytelling strategies since they can aid them to develop the skills required for understanding the language and engage in thinking abilities. It can sharpen their memory; provide them with the opportunities to speak the language while integrating creative thinking, information, and imagination. Since stories are repetitive in nature, this can additionally maximize and reinforce the acquisition of new words.

The present study was carried out in order to implement two storytelling strategies- summarizing and strip story arrangement- for teaching vocabulary items to female elementary learners in a private language school. The main objectives of this study were to find out whether these strategies were effective in teaching the lexical items to EFL learners and if so, which one was more effective than the other.

2. Review of the Related Literature

Vocabulary teaching has evolved a lot through its entire history in the domain of language teaching and learning, with any method giving its own premises regarding what vocabulary teaching means. With an increased emphasis on reading skills as the major goal of language learning, large scale investigations were conducted in 1920s and 1930s to develop principles of vocabulary teaching and learning. As Celce-Murcia (2001) states, vocabulary teaching was neglected since it was taught that it could simply be left to take care of itself. However by the late 1970s and 1980 this view was challenged seriously.

Chomsky's (1957) rejection of behavioristic notion of habit formation and later on with the introduction of sociolinguistics and pragmatic aspects to the field of EFL/ESL which was followed by the concept of communicative competence, teaching and learning of vocabulary have taken a different path than the past. This trend was also reinforced by computer-aided research and discourse studies into the field of language teaching.

Concerning vocabulary learning, Read (2004) distinguished two approaches to the learning of lexical items; incidental and intentional. Most works focus on the former and aim to explore to what extent learners can learn vocabulary items incidentally while engaged in other language learning tasks. Read (2004) argues furthermore that to maximize incidental vocabulary learning in EFL/ESL classrooms, teachers can provide students with the target lexical items through tasks and ask them to read only the texts that include the target vocabulary. In this regard, stories can provide rich contextualized sources for learners to learn vocabulary. Short stories equip teachers with the pedagogical tools which can be utilized to aid the four language skills. Pesola (1991) suggested storytelling as one of the most powerful tools for surrounding young learners with language. And Wilson (1997) recommended that by adding stories and storytelling in the curriculum, the level of learning can be improved in all four language skills.

As Goodman (1982) has stated story recalling is both a research tool since it yields large amount of data to give insights into readers' comprehension processes and it also functions as an instructional strategy that can lead to improvement in various language skills. In fact various scholars support using stories in EFL/ESL settings. Wright, Betterlidge and Buckby (1984) support using tales to teach vocabulary in EFL contexts. They believe by using tales teachers can create language-rich contexts where students are supposed to use the language for communicative purposes.

Murdoch (2002) states that if short stories selected and exploited appropriately, they can provide quality texts which can greatly enhance ELT courses for intermediate learners. He further provides activities such as writing dialogues or other writing tasks which instructors can create based on these stories. Lao and Krashen (2000) in their study at a Hong Kong university presented two groups of students with literacy and non-literacy texts. The group who had read literacy texts, showed better improvement in terms of reading skills and vocabulary.

Stories have also been used in digital format to enhance learners' listening skills. In a study conducted by Ramirez and Belmonte (2007) learners were exposed to digital stories in an EFL class. The results showed that learners in experimental group outperformed the control group in subsequent tests. The frequency with which new lexical items appear in the stories may also be a determinant factor in learning vocabulary through stories. Robbins and Ehri (1994) carried out a study on thirty kindergarten children to examine the effects of stories on learning new words where children were supposed to listen to an adult reading stories containing new words. The findings showed that the children learned the words contained in the stories more significantly than the words which have not been mentioned in stories. The results suggested story reading as an effective tool for building vocabulary.

It is not just language skills which can be positively affected by stories, short stories can motivate learners at all levels of language proficiency. Elliot (1990) contends that literature is “motivationally effective” if learners can be engaged with its thoughts and emotions and appreciate its aesthetic qualities. Of course to achieve this goal, stories must be in line with the learners’ language proficiency level to avoid frustrational reading (Schulz, 1981).

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Out of 160 learners, 105 of them were chosen based on their performance on the Oxford Placement Test (Appendix 1) and were divided into three groups: two experimental and one control groups. There were 35 learners in each group. Besides these participants, the Oxford Placement Test was piloted with 40 learners who had the same characteristics as the main subjects. The teacher-made test of vocabulary was piloted with 70 learners with the same characteristics. The participants’ age range was between 14-18, and all of them were female and had already covered the basic levels of the book series “PACESETTER” which at the time of study was taught at all Kish Language Schools in Iran. The class was held three days a week, two hours each day.

3.2 Instrumentation

The Oxford Placement Test: was piloted with 40 students prior to the treatment. With a reliability index of 0.86 ($KR-21 = 0.86$), the test was considered reliable enough to be used for the homogenization of the subjects. The time allocated to this test was 70 minutes and it consisted of three parts: 50 items of vocabulary and grammar, reading, and writing. All the items in the grammar and vocabulary and reading part were weighed by a single credit with no negative point for wrong answers (Appendix 1).

A teacher-made test of vocabulary which involved 60 vocabulary items from the book “Anecdotes in American English” written by L.A. Hill was piloted with 70 learners. The reliability of this test came out to be 0.90 ($KR-21 = 0.90$). This test was used both as the pretest and posttest of the study. The learners were supposed to write the meaning of the words either in Farsi or provide a synonym in English. This test was administered to ensure that the vocabulary items chosen for the study were unknown to the learners. The time allocated to this test was 40 minutes; each item was weighed by a single credit with no negative point for wrong answers.

Besides the book series “PACESETTER” written by Derek Strange and Diane Hall which was the main course-book, the book “Anecdotes in American English” by L.A. Hill was used in the class to teach the vocabulary items. Almost all the chapters were covered during the course. Each session, the teacher allocated 30 minutes to teaching of these items and treatment stage.

3.3 Procedure

The research started with piloting phase in which both the Oxford Placement Test and teacher-made vocabulary test were piloted. The reliability of the placement test was 0.86 and the reliability index of the vocabulary test was 0.90.

After piloting phase, the treatment phase started as sequenced below:

The Oxford Placement Test was given to 160 participants at the beginning of the course in order to choose the participants of the main study. The students whose scores fell one SD above and below the mean were considered as the main subjects of the study. That is, out of 160 learners who took the test, 105 learners were considered homogeneous enough for the purpose of the study. The subjects were divided into three groups: two experimental and one control groups with 35 learners in each.

The teacher-made vocabulary test was administered to the participants of the study (it is worth mentioning that all 160 learners participated in the study, however only the scores of those main participants were counted in statistical analysis). It was given the session after the administration of the placement test.

As was mentioned before, there were two experimental groups- summarizing and strip story arrangement group- and one control group with 35 learners in each. In the treatment stage, the teacher started the session with teaching the new words (teaching of the new words lasted 24 sessions with one or two chapters for each session). Some aspects of the new words such as pronunciation and parts of speech were also taught to ensure maximum learning.

In one experimental group, namely strip story arrangement group, the teacher split some sequenced sentences of the story which involved the new vocabulary items which had already been taught to the participants. The subjects in this group were required to arrange the sentences in their personal drafts. In the other experimental group, summarizing group, the learners were to summarize the stories with the new words included. The teacher collected the writing tasks in both groups and later provided them with some feedback.

After the treatment sessions were over, on the 30th session, the posttest was administered along with the students' final exam. There was a two-week gap between the end of the treatment and the administration of the vocabulary retention posttest. The control group did not receive any treatment.

There was no random assignment or selection of the participants, so the research enjoyed a Quasi-experimental design with summarizing and strip story arrangement tasks as the independent variables and vocabulary retention as the dependant variable. The proficiency, gender, and age of the participants were control variables. One-way ANOVA was run to analyze the data. The statistical analysis is discussed in the coming section.

4. Statistical Analysis

This study aimed to explore the following research questions:

- 1- Does summarizing task have any significant effects on vocabulary retention of Iranian EFL learners?
- 2- Does strip story arrangement task have any significant effects on vocabulary retention of Iranian EFL learners?

3- Which is more effective- summarizing or strip story arrangement-on enhancing Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary retention?

To answer these questions, the following null hypotheses were posed:

H₀₁. Summarizing task does not have any significant effects on vocabulary retention of Iranian EFL learners.

H₀₂. Strip story arrangement task does not have any significant effects on vocabulary retention of Iranian EFL learners.

H₀₃. There is not any significant difference between the effects of summarizing and strip story arrangement tasks on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary retention.

The above mentioned hypotheses were analyzed using one-way analysis of variances (one-way ANOVA) which has two main assumptions; normality of the data and homogeneity of the variances of the groups. The latter will be discussed when reporting the main results, although if the sample sizes are equal—as is the case in this study—there is no need to worry about the violation of this assumption (Bachman, 2005; Pallant, 2011; Field, 2013). The normality of the present data was probed through Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS Test) and skewness and kurtosis ratios.

As displayed in Table 1, the results of the KS Test ($p > .05$) indicated that the assumption of normality was met.

Table 1. Tests of Normality; Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Group		Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Strip Story	Pretest	.093	35	.200	.984	35	.891
	Posttest	.102	35	.200	.947	35	.090
Summarizing	Pretest	.123	35	.199	.981	35	.780
	Posttest	.101	35	.200	.965	35	.313
Control	Pretest	.146	35	.057	.945	35	.080
	Posttest	.108	35	.200	.969	35	.427

The ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors were lower than the absolute value of 1.96 (Table 2) indicates the normality of the present data.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Group		N	Skewness			Kurtosis		
			Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error
Strip Story	Pretest	35	.179	.398	0.45	-.311	.778	-0.40
	Posttest	35	.418	.398	1.05	-.858	.778	-1.10

Summarizing	Pretest	35	-.191	.398	-0.48	-.287	.778	-0.37
	Posttest	35	-.333	.398	-0.84	-.712	.778	-0.92
Control	Pretest	35	.128	.398	0.32	-.944	.778	-1.21
	Posttest	35	.091	.398	0.23	.006	.778	0.01

The analysis is presented as it has appeared in the methodology section, starting with the piloting phase then moving to the treatment phase.

4.1 Piloting of Oxford Placement Test

Table 3 displays the results of the OPT piloting. The KR-21 reliability index was .86.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics; Piloting OPT

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
OPT	40	26.85	8.977	80.592
KR-21	.86			

4.2 Piloting of Vocabulary Test

Table 4 presents the results of the vocabulary piloting. The KR-21 reliability index turned out to be .90.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics; Piloting Vocabulary

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Pilot-Vocab	70	19.06	10.592	112.200
KR-21	.90			

4.3 Oxford Placement Test (Homogenizing groups)

A one-way ANOVA was run to compare the strip story, summarizing and control groups on the Oxford Placement Test in order to homogenize them in terms of their general language proficiency prior to the administration of the treatment. Before discussing the results, it should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met ($F(2, 102) = .023, p = .977$) (Table 5).

Table 5. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.023	2	102	.977

As shown in Table 6, the strip story ($M = 18.89, SD = 3.93, 95\% CI [17.53, 20.24]$), summarizing ($M = 19.57, SD = 3.81, 95\% CI [18.26, 20.88]$) and control ($M = 18.80, SD = 4.11, 95\% CI [17.39, 20.21]$) groups had almost the same means on the OPT.

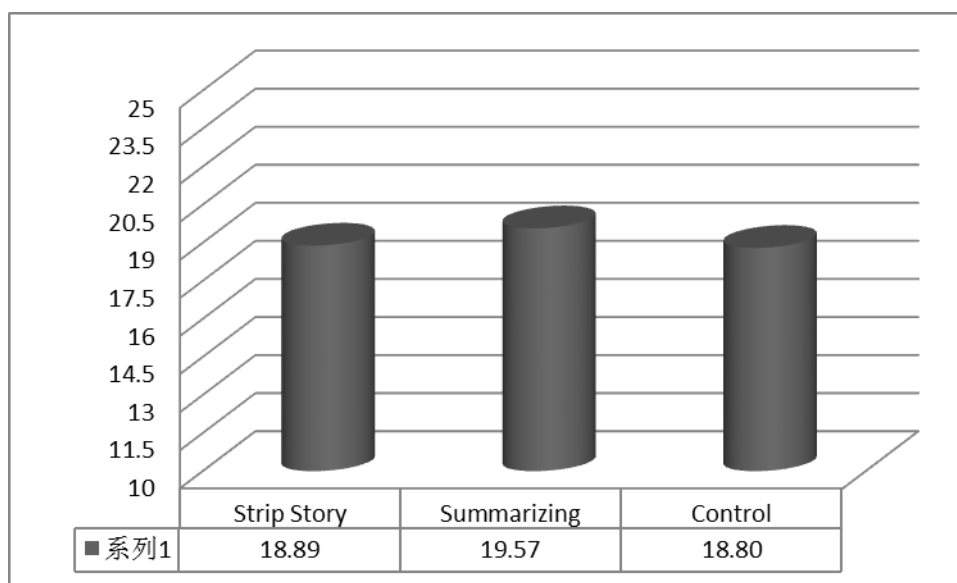
Table 6. Descriptive Statistics; Oxford Placement Test by Groups

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Strip Story	35	18.89	3.939	.666	17.53	20.24
Summarizing	35	19.57	3.814	.645	18.26	20.88
Control	35	18.80	4.115	.695	17.39	20.21
Total	105	19.09	3.935	.384	18.32	19.85

The results of one-way ANOVA ($F(2, 102) = .399, p = .672, \omega^2 = .012$ representing a weak effect size) (Table 7) indicated that there were not any significant differences between the three groups' means on the OPT. Thus it is safe to assume that they were homogenous in terms of their general language proficiency prior to the administration of the treatment.

Table 7. One-Way ANOVA; Oxford Placement Test by Groups

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.514	2	6.257	.399	.672
Within Groups	1597.714	102	15.664		
Total	1610.229	104			

**Figure 1. Means on Oxford Placement Test**

4.4 Pretest of Vocabulary

A one-way ANOVA was run to compare the strip story, summarizing and control groups on the pretest of vocabulary in order to homogenize them in terms of their vocabulary knowledge prior to the administration of the treatment. Before discussing the results, it should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met ($F(2, 102) = .418, p = .660$) (Table 8).

Table 8. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.418	2	102	.660

As shown in Table 9, the strip story ($M = 7.74, SD = 2.85, 95\% CI [6.76, 8.72]$), summarizing ($M = 6.69, SD = 3.06, 95\% CI [5.63, 7.74]$) and control ($M = 8.11, SD = 2.62, 95\% CI [7.21, 9.01]$) groups had almost the same means on the pretest of vocabulary.

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics; Pretest of Vocabulary by Groups

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Strip Story	35	7.74	2.853	.482	6.76	8.72
Summarizing	35	6.69	3.066	.518	5.63	7.74
Control	35	8.11	2.621	.443	7.21	9.01
Total	105	7.51	2.889	.282	6.96	8.07

The results of one-way ANOVA ($F(2, 102) = 2.36, p = .099, \omega^2 = .025$ representing a weak effect size) indicated that there were not any significant differences between the three groups' means on the pretest of vocabulary. Thus it can be said that they were homogenous in terms of their vocabulary knowledge prior to the administration of the treatment.

Table 10. One-Way ANOVA; Pretest of Vocabulary by Groups

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	38.457	2	19.229	2.364	.099
Within Groups	829.771	102	8.135		
Total	868.229	104			

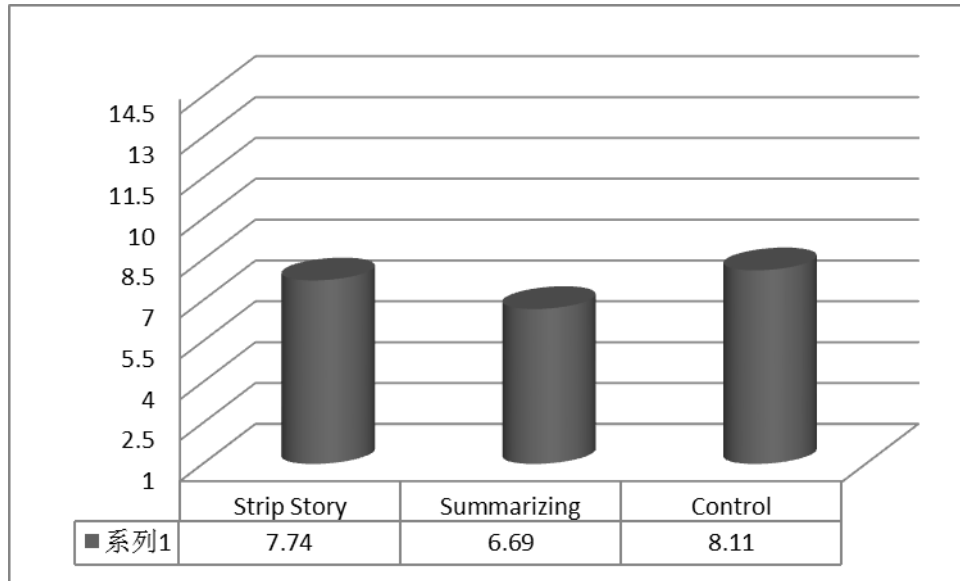


Figure 2. Mean Scores on Pretest of Vocabulary by Groups

4.5 Posttest of Vocabulary

A one-way ANOVA plus post-hoc Scheffe’s tests were run to compare the strip story, summarizing and control groups on the posttest of vocabulary in order to probe the null-hypotheses posed in this study. Before discussing the results, it should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not met ($F(2, 102) = 9.83, p = .000$) (Table 6). As it was mentioned above, there was no need to worry about the violation of this assumption because the samples sizes were equal; although to be on the safe side, the results of the Brown-Forsythe’s test was also reported.

Table 11. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
9.833	2	102	.000

As shown in Table 12, the strip story ($M = 26.57, SD = 7.06, 95\% \text{ CI } [24.14, 29]$) had the highest mean on the posttest of vocabulary. That was followed by the summarizing ($M = 22.43, SD = 7.02, 95\% \text{ CI } [20.02, 24.84]$) and control ($M = 11.31, SD = 3.50, 95\% \text{ CI } [10.11, 12.52]$) groups had the lowest mean.

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics; Posttest of Vocabulary by Groups

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Strip Story	35	26.57	7.064	1.194	24.14	29.00

Summarizing	35	22.43	7.022	1.187	20.02	24.84
Control	35	11.31	3.504	.592	10.11	12.52
Total	105	20.10	8.851	.864	18.39	21.82

The results of one-way ANOVA ($F(2, 102) = 58.62, p = .000, \omega^2 = .523$ representing a large effect size) (Table 8) indicated that there were significant differences between the three groups' means on the posttest of vocabulary.

Table 13. One-Way ANOVA; Posttest of Vocabulary by Groups

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4357.162	2	2178.581	58.621	.000
Within Groups	3790.686	102	37.164		
Total	8147.848	104			

The results of post-hoc Scheffe's test (Table 9) indicated that;

A: The summarizing group ($M = 22.43$) significantly outperformed the control group ($M = 11.31$) on the posttest of vocabulary ($MD = 11.11, p = .000$). Thus the second null-hypothesis as summarizing task did not have any significant effects on vocabulary retention of Iranian EFL learners **was rejected**.

B: The strip story group ($M = 26.57$) significantly outperformed the control group ($M = 11.31$) on the posttest of vocabulary ($MD = 15.25, p = .000$). Thus the first null-hypothesis as strip story arrangement task did not have any significant effects on vocabulary retention of Iranian EFL learners **was rejected**.

Table 14. Multiple Comparisons; Posttest of Vocabulary by Groups

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Strip Story	Summarizing	4.143*	1.457	.020	.52	7.76
	Control	15.257*	1.457	.000	11.64	18.88
Summarizing	Control	11.114*	1.457	.000	7.49	14.73

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

B: The strip story group ($M = 26.57$) significantly outperformed the summarizing group ($M = 22.43$) on the posttest of vocabulary ($MD = 4.14, p = .000$). Thus the third null-hypothesis as there was not any significant difference between the effects of summarizing and strip story arrangement tasks on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary retention **was rejected**.

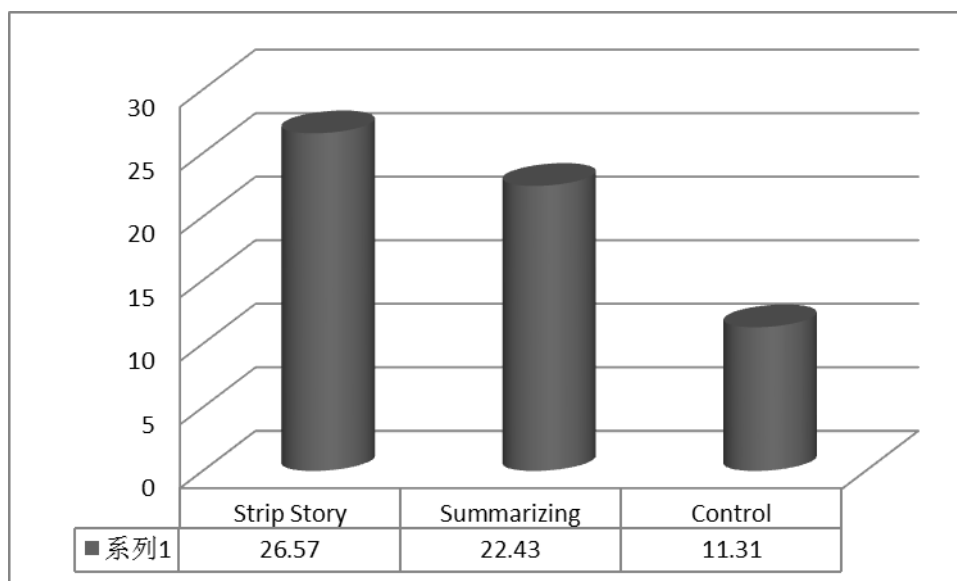


Figure 3. Mean Scores on Posttest of Vocabulary by Groups

Brown-Forsythe's Test

Brown-Forsythe's test ($F(2, 83.32) = 58.62, p = .000$) also indicated significant differences between the three groups' means on the posttest. Table 15 presents the results in this regard.

Table 15. Robust Tests of Equality of Means

	Statistic ^a	df1	df2	Sig.
Brown-Forsythe	58.621	2	83.320	.000

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of two storytelling strategies—summarizing and strip story arrangement—on vocabulary retention of female elementary EFL learners. It also aimed to determine which strategy leads to more improvement regarding vocabulary learning and thus yields better learning outcomes.

Based on the data analysis and the findings, enough evidence was observed to reject the null hypothesis which stated that there is not any significant difference among the effects of using summarizing and strip story arrangement tasks on EFL learners' vocabulary retention. It means that the two story making tasks proved to be effective on vocabulary retention of two experimental groups. It must be mentioned that strip story group significantly outperformed summarizing group and both experimental groups outperformed the control group. According to the results, it can be noted that storytelling techniques can benefit teachers and equip them with sound tools to make learning of new vocabulary items more meaningful and effective.

Each research faces limitations which may affect its generalizability. However, there is always room for improvement and better studies. Concerning the limitations of this research, some ideas can be suggested for further works. This study focused on female elementary learners in a private language school in Iran. Similar studies can be carried out with male learners, or learners with other language proficiency levels or in public schools. From a myriad of storytelling techniques just two of them were utilized in this study. Other techniques can also be studied to examine if they yield the same or different results. And the last but not least, the researcher applied a quantitative method to gather the data of the study. Utilizing qualitative methods may shed more light on the findings and open new doors for further studies from a different perspective.

6. Conclusion

Lack of vocabulary means lack of meaningful or successful communication. In this regard, employing effective strategies to approach vocabulary teaching is of utmost importance. It can be stated that the pivotal role of storytelling in EFL classrooms cannot be denied. It was proved that using storytelling techniques in EFL classroom can assist learners with the retention of the lexical items. So storytelling is a powerful pedagogical tool which, if employed properly, can lead to successful vocabulary learning and retention. Stories can provide meaningful, comprehensible, and interesting input for language learners and the strategies which make use of stories such as summarizing and strip story arrangement, can aid learners expand their vocabulary knowledge. As the researcher observed, during the tasks the focus was more on students than on teacher and the class enjoyed a student-centered rather than a traditional teacher-centered environment. Incorporating summarizing and strip story arrangement tasks in EFL settings require learners to work collaboratively and use all their linguistic resources to do the tasks. I believe this is the most precious implication that this study may have for EFL/ESL teachers and syllabus designers.

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Appendix 1

Solutions

Introduction

This placement test is intended to help teachers decide which level of *Solutions*, Elementary, Pre-Intermediate or Intermediate, is the most suitable for their students. It should be given at the beginning of the school year.

Solutions placement test has been developed after consultation with teachers and is designed to assess students' knowledge of the key language as well as their receptive and productive skills. This will enable teachers to have a greater understanding of what level their students are at.

The test contains:

- 50 multiple choice questions which assess students' knowledge of key grammar and vocabulary from elementary to intermediate levels.
- A reading text with 10 graded comprehension questions.
- An optional writing task that assesses students' ability to produce the language.

The 50 multiple choice questions and the reading task are designed to be done together in a 45-minute lesson. The writing task can be done in the following lesson and should take approximately 20 minutes.

Interpreting scores

	Total	Elementary	Pre-Intermediate	Intermediate
Grammar & Vocabulary	50	0-20	21-30	31+
Reading	10	0-4	5-7	8+
Writing	10	0-4	5-7	8+

This table acts as a guideline for teachers when choosing which level of *Solutions* is suitable for their students. Reading and writing scores are included separately so that teachers who choose not to include these tasks in the placement test can still make an accurate assessment of their students' abilities.

Where there is a discrepancy in the level attained in the different parts of the test, a student's score for grammar and vocabulary should take precedence. Alternatively, a teacher may wish to conduct an additional oral interview to confirm the result.

Students whose scores fall on the borderlines should be placed according to the level of the rest of the class and monitored closely at the start of the course.

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford ox2 6dp

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.

It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide in Oxford New York.

Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

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2011 2010 2009 2008 2007

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Grammar and Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with the correct answers.

1 My sister ___very tired today.

A be B am C is D are

2 His ___is a famous actress.

A aunt B uncle C grandfather D son

3 I'd like to be a ___and work in a hospital.

A lawyer B nurse C writer D pilot

- 4 We ___like rap music.
A doesn't B isn't C aren't D don't
- 5 There ___a lot of water on the floor. What happened?
A are B is C be D am
- 6 He ___TV at the moment.
A watches B is watching C watched D has watching
- 7 Helen is very ___. She doesn't go out a lot.
A bored B confident C angry D shy
- 8 Did you ___to the beach yesterday?
A went B were C go D goed
- 9 Have you got ___orange juice? I'm thirsty.
A some B a C any D the
- 10 Let's go into ___garden. It's sunny outside.
A a B any C - D the
- 11 He's ___for the next train.
A looking B waiting C listening D paying
- 12 Mark ___his car last week.
A cleaned B did clean C has cleaned D is cleaning
- 13 I bought some lovely red ___today.
A cabbages B cucumbers C bananas D apples
- 14 Which bus ___for when I saw you this morning?
A did you wait B had you waited C were you waiting D have you waited
- 15 Where ___you like to go tonight?
A do B would C are D can
- 16 That's the ___film I've ever seen!
A worse B worst C baddest D most bad
- 17 My dad ___his car yet.
A hasn't sold B didn't sell C doesn't sell D wasn't sold
- 18 I've been a doctor ___fifteen years.
A since B for C until D by
- 19 Look at the sky. It ___rain.
A will B can C is going to D does
- 20 If I ___this homework, the teacher will be angry!
A am not finishing B won't finish C don't finish D didn't finished
- 21 This book is even ___than the last one!
A most boring B boringer C more boring D far boring
- 22 I'll meet you ___I finish work.

- A if B when C as D so
23 We're getting married ___ March.
A in B on C at D by
24 If you ___ steak for a long time, it goes hard.
A cook B are cooking C have cooked D cooked
25 I ___ you outside the cinema, OK?
A 'll see B am going to see C am seeing D see
26 I ___ not be home this evening. Phone me on my mobile.
A can B could C may D should
27 The criminal ___ outside the hotel last night.
A was caught B has been caught C is caught D caught
28 He asked me if I ___ a lift home.
A wanted B want C was wanting D had wanted
29 If I ___ older, I'd be able to vote in elections.
A had B am C were D have
30 You ___ go to the supermarket this afternoon. I've already been.
A mustn't B can't C needn't D won't
31 Kathy drives ___ than her sister.
A more carefully B more careful C carefully D most carefully
32 The ___ near our village is beautiful.
A country B woods C view D countryside
33 I'm ___ I can't help you with that.
A apologise B afraid C regret D sad
34 It was really ___ this morning. I couldn't see anything on the roads.
A cloudy B sunny C icy D foggy
35 Can you look ___ my dog while I'm away?
A for B at C to D after
36 If I'd started the work earlier I ___ it by now.
A would finish B had finished C will finish D would have finished
37 This time next year I ___ in Madrid.
A am working B will work C will be working D work
38 I wish he ___ in front of our gate. It's very annoying.
A won't park B wouldn't park C doesn't park D can't park
39 He said he'd seen her the ___ night.
A last B before C previous D earlier
40 I ___ agreed to go out. I haven't got any money!
A mustn't have B shouldn't have

C couldn't have D wouldn't have

41 It was good ___about her recovery, wasn't it?

A information B words C news D reports

42 I ___the report by 5.00 p.m. You can have it then.

A have finished B will have finished

C finish D am finishing

43 Because of the snow the teachers ___all the students to go home early.

A said B made C told D demanded

44 Thanks for the meal! It was ___.

A delighted B delicious C disgusting

D distasteful

45 Look! Our head teacher ___on TV right now!

A is being interviewed B is been interviewed

C is interviewing D is interviewed

46 It's ___to drive a car over 115 km/h in the
UK.

A unlegal B illegal C dislegal D legless

47 There's a lot of rubbish in the garden I need to get ___of.

A lost B rid C cleared D taken

48 I'm afraid it's time we ___.

A leave B must leave C are leaving D left

49 He wondered what ___.

A is the time? B the time was C was the time D is the time?

50 They ___our salaries by 5%.

A rose B made up C raised D lifted

Reading

Read the text.

Saucy dragons

Levi Roots, a reggae singer from Jamaica, has a big smile on his face these days. In case you missed it, Levi recently appeared on the famous reality show for people with business ideas, Dragon's Den. The participants have to persuade the team of business experts that their ideas are excellent and hope that two or more of the team will decide to invest money in their business idea.

Levi did just that!

The singer, who has been a successful music artist for several years, also sells something he calls "Reggae, reggae sauce". It is made using special secret ingredients from his grandmother and is a hot Jamaican sauce that is eaten with meat. Until now it has only been possible to buy the sauce from Levi's website or once a year at the famous Notting Hill carnival. But now, thanks to the TV

programme, that is all going to change!

Levi presented his business idea to the team and started with a catchy reggae song about the sauce to make them sit up and listen. He certainly got their attention! He then described his plans for the sauce. This part of his presentation didn't go so well. He made mistakes with his figures, saying that he already had an order for the sauce of 2 and a half million when in fact he meant 2 and a half thousand! But, the team were still interested and amazingly, two of the team offered to give £50,000 to the plan in exchange for 40% of the company. Mr Roots was ecstatic!

Levi is even happier today. It seems that two of the biggest supermarket chains in the UK are interested in having the sauce on their shelves. In addition to this, Levi is recording the "Reggae, reggae sauce" song and we will soon be able to buy or download this. "It's all about putting music into food", says Levi with a big, big smile on his face! And music and food will probably make him a very rich man indeed!

1 Are the sentences true or false?

- 1) At the moment Levi isn't very happy. _____
- 2) Levi sells something we can eat. _____
- 3) His song is a big success. _____
- 4) He sang his song on TV. _____
- 5) Some supermarkets want to sell his product.

2 Choose the best answers.

1) Dragon's Den is a show about

A cooking.

B new business ideas.

C famous people.

2) To make the sauce

A you have to go to Notting Hill.

B you have to ask a member of Levi's family.

C you need a good recipe book.

3) When Levi presented his idea

A he finished with a song.

B two and a half million people were watching.

C he talked about the wrong figures.

4) Some people on the team

A own supermarkets.

B didn't like the taste.

C bought part of Levi's company.

5) Today Levi

A is a millionaire.

B has two things he can profit from.

C prefers music to food.

Writing

Imagine you have just returned from a two-week holiday. Write an e-mail to your friend telling him/her about the holiday. Include information about the journey, where you stayed, what you did and the people you met.

Answer Key

Grammar and Vocabulary

1 C 2 A 3 B 4 D 5 B 6 B 7 D 8 C 9 C 10 D 11 B 12 A 13 D 14 C 15 B
16 B 17 A 18 B 19 C 20 C 21 C 22 B 23 A 24 A 25 A 26 C 27 A 28 A 29
C 30 C 31 A 32 D 33 B 34 D 35 D 36 D 37 C 38 B 39 C 40 B 41 C
42 B 43 C 44 B 45 A 46 B 47 B 48 D 49 B 50 C

Reading

1

2 T

3 F

4 T

5 T

2

2 B

3 C

4 C

5 B

Writing

Content (maximum 4 points)

- 1 point for each point included.
- 1/2 point if part of a point is included but not developed.

Form (maximum 2 points)

- 2 points for correct format.
- 1 point if only part of format is used.
- 0 points if format is not used at all.

Range (maximum 2 points)

- 2 points for using a good range of vocabulary and structures.
- 1 point for using a reasonable range of vocabulary and structures.
- 0 points for using a poor range of vocabulary and structures.

Accuracy (maximum 2 points)

- 2 points for accuracy over 80%.
- 1 point for accuracy between 70 and 80 %.

Appendix 2

Test of Vocabulary

Write the definitions of the following words (either in English or in Farsi) in the spaces provided.

- 1- Sign
- 2- Warning
- 3- Aisle
- 4- Carefully
- 5- Stay
- 6- Kindly
- 7- Fly
- 8- Curtain
- 9- Quickly
- 10- Dream
- 11- Laugh
- 12- Village
- 13- Church
- 14- Cemetery
- 15- Grave
- 16- Trick
- 17- Travel
- 18- Shake
- 19- Vacation
- 20- Trailer
- 21- Patient
- 22- Cross
- 23- Offer
- 24- Fix
- 25- Faucet
- 26- Plumber
- 27- Bill
- 28- Mustache
- 29- Step-brother
- 30- Proudly

- 31- Polite
- 32- Naughty
- 33- Shout
- 34- Wave
- 35- Step
- 36- Fight
- 37- Hit
- 38- Hold
- 39- Knock over
- 40- Bite
- 41- Photographer
- 42- Injection
- 43- Get into
- 44- Interesting
- 45- famous
- 46- frightened
- 47- bottom
- 48- reach
- 49- country
- 50- bathtub
- 51- straight
- 52- crowded
- 53- serve
- 54- terrible
- 55- present
- 56- matter
- 57- sailor
- 58- several
- 59- port
- 60- shallow