



Enriching Students' Vocabulary through Reading Short Story
Case Study of the 1st Year Student at Faculty of Education,
Souphanouvong University

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate (1) the enrichment of students' English vocabulary through reading short story technique of the first-year students at Department of Language Pedagogy, Faculty of Education, Souphanouvong University, Luangprabang Province, Laos, in academic year 2019-2020, and (2) the students' reaction toward the use of short stories in enriching their English vocabulary. The participants of this study were the first-year students with the total number of 28 students. Pre-test and post-test and observation were employed to be the instruments of this study. The mean score, percentages and T-values for both pre-test and post-test were calculated through the SPSS program. The result of data analysis was clearly shown with the mean score of the pre-test was 17.03 and S.D was 4.59 while the mean score of the post-test was 22.42 and S.D was 4.20. Based on the result of the data analysis, the mean score of the post-test was greater than the mean score of pre-tests. Also, the observation results showed that students enjoyed and engaged in the reading activities provided while and after using this technique. This can be concluded that the use of short stories is one of the effective techniques that would be useful in classes, and is also be able to engage learners to learn English - vocabulary with an interesting and effective way in Learning English.

Keywords: *enrichment, vocabulary, short story technique*

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1. Introduction

English language is a great requirement in the world. It is used as an international Language in many countries around the world. English has played an important role in education, economics, science, technology, tourism, medicines, etc. In Lao PDR, English is used as a foreign language for communication. Since 1997 Laos has been a number of ASEAN. The Lao government has played more attention to education especially teaching and learning English. Therefore, English has been determined to be the compulsory subject in curriculum in all parts from primary school until the university (Souriyavongsa, Rany, Abidin, & Mei, 2013). Knowing English increases their chances of getting a great career and can continue the next level of education.

Vocabulary is a main role in Language teaching and learning. It is the most significant component to cover in the four skills: writing, reading, listening and speaking. Therefore, it's a key feature that makes people understand the language and vocabulary is the raw material for all thoughts and feelings to be expressed and conveyed through the medium of language. Krashen, (1981, p.12). It means that learning a language cannot be separated from learning its vocabulary. Vocabulary is important to introduce it as a basic step to children in order to help them to understand utterances and to make up them to learn English in the next level. According to Richard and Rogers (2001, p.17), "Vocabulary is one of the important first elements of language proficiency that becomes the basis of how well learners speak, write, listen and read. In the past, vocabulary teaching and learning were often given little priority in second language programs". Whereas, without a good mastery of vocabulary, learners may be

discouraging in using the language learning in daily activities such as watching English program, listening to the radio, reading English books, English short stories and so forth. Therefore, English teacher needs to enrich students' vocabulary efficiently and effectively. One of the methods that can be used in teaching vocabulary is reading short story technique.

Short story is one of activities that can be used in teaching vocabulary to the learners. Mofarch (2015). To argue that the acquisition of a sufficient vocabulary is essential for successful second language use because without an extensive vocabulary, it is difficult to use structure and functions learned for comprehensible communication. The teacher of English as a second language should know very well how important vocabulary is. Wilkins (1972) claimed that the fact is while language without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. Therefore, the English teacher especially, teachers who teach English as a foreign language should use many different teaching techniques to teach and promote students' foreign language. These might be great ways to help students improve their English vocabulary.

There are many problems faced by both teacher and students such as teacher's teaching techniques are use traditional teaching method especially in the past may not have supported or encouraged students to learn vocabulary very well in class. The students have problem with the language skills mastery because they lack of vocabulary and they also felt reluctant to follow the teaching learning process of English because they got difficulties in the grapping and memorizing of the words. According to the researchers' teaching experience all most fourteen years have observed that students seem

not active learning in class they can't read, speak fluently and they also lack of motivation in learning (Souriyavongsa et al., 2013; Xaypanya, Ismail, & Low, 2017).

Based on the problems above the researcher was interested to do research under the topic: Enriching students' vocabulary through reading short story in teaching vocabulary to the year 1 students at Language Pedagogy, Program of English, Faculty of Education, Souphanouvong University. The researcher would like to see whether this teaching technique can help to improve students' English vocabulary or not. Moreover, the researchers assumed that creating activities using short story could keep the form and meanings of words in students' mind directly and stand longer. The purpose of this research was to find out the important improvement of the students' English vocabulary by employing reading short stories technique and also to investigate the students' reaction toward the use of short story in enriching their English vocabulary.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 The population and sample group

The population of this study consisted of 28 students including 12 females from the Program of English, Department of Language Pedagogy, Faculty of Education.

The sample group of this research was the year 1 students from the Program of English, Department of Language Pedagogy, Faculty of Education, in academic year 2019 – 2020, which consisted of 28 participants including 12 females. In this research the researchers used the convenience sampling. The technique was selected from the sample group. It was based on the Convenience of opportunity sampling and it is the most common type of sampling in some

studies, Dornyei (2007).

2.2 Research instrument (tool)

Pre – test and post-test and observation were employed to be instruments of this research. The tests were created from short stories chosen for the experiment. There were five short stories.

2.2.1 Pre-test

Pre –test was used to test the level of the students' English vocabulary knowledge before the use of short stories in teaching. The pre- test consisted of three parts with 25 questions. Part 1 was for translating English words into Lao words, it consisted of (10 items/10 points), part 2 was to match English words with definition in Lao language (10 items/10 points) and part 3 was to write scramble words to be the correct words (5 items/10 points). The test took about 50 minutes.

2.2.2 Post – test

Post –test was used to measure the students' ability in learning English vocabulary after short stories. It consisted of 25 questions, there were three parts, the same as the pre-test, but some new words in the test were changed based on the vocabulary that they have learnt in the short stories. It took 50 minutes to complete. The full score was 30 points. The tests were created from the stories of the Bear and two friends, the Rabbit and the turtle, and the Poor family. Both pre-test and post – test were quite similar.

2.2.3 Observation

The researchers also used observation techniques to observe students' behavior toward the use of short stories in teaching. Observation has long tradition in the social science, it has been extensively employed by education researcher, (Punch & Oancea, 2014). Based on Punch and Oancea (2014), observation as the

data collection technique can be structured and unstructured. Therefore, the researchers decided to use unstructured technique. The researcher recorded students' attitude each time conducting the technique.

2.3 Data Collection

After the instruments had been prepared, they were checked by three teachers who have experience on doing a research more than 10 years. The researchers wrote a request form to inform the Dean of the Faculty of Education to collect the data. The experiment was conducted in the first semester of the academic year 2019-2020. To evaluate students' abilities in English vocabulary, pre-test was used to measure the students' English vocabulary before the short story. The post-test was used after the short story in teaching technique to improve students' English vocabulary during two months of course experiment. At the same time, the researchers observed students' attitudes while teaching with short story technique to see if they enjoyed and were engaged in learning.

2.4 Data analysis

The use of the Microsoft Excel 2010 was applied to collect students' scores from pre-test and post-test and then the scores in the tests were entered into the program IBM SPSS version 21.0 (Statistical Package for Social Science) which calculated the Mean score (X), Percentage and Standard Deviation (S.D). Statistic was used to analyze the information in step on the test. The formula of analyzing and comparing the score results of pre-test and post-test was used and then the results were calculated in percentage.

2.4.1 The criteria of students' vocabulary achievement

According to Wimmer & Dominick (2000), the test scoring criterion as 1-10, student

who got 1-9, meant very poor, 25-30 meant excellent. Based on this, the researchers applied this format of important scoring to give point and mark the students level of pre-test and post-test for student at The program of English, Department of Language Pedagogy, Faculty of Education in the table below:

Score	Level
1-9	Poor
10-14	Average
15-19	Good
20-24	Very good
25-30	Excellent

❖ The value of score:

- If students get 1-9, that means they are poor in English vocabulary.
- If students get 10-14, that means they are average in English vocabulary.
- If students get 15-19, that means they are good in English vocabulary.
- If students get 20-24, that means they are very good in English vocabulary.
- If students get 25-30, that means they are excellent in English vocabulary.

3. Results

3.1 Result of the Pre-test

The results of the data analysis were exhibited in the following tables 1 and 2. From table 1, it shows the mean score of pre-test was 17.03 and standard deviation was 4.59. From table 2, the majority of students were at good and very good levels. It shows that 12 students completed 15-19 points that meant they were good (42=85%); 7 students achieved 20-24 points (25%) it meant they were at a very good level. 6 learners got 10-14, which meant they were at an average level (21.42%). A few students got 0-9, which meant they were at a poor level (7.14%). A student perfectly

achieved 25-30 (3.575). Therefore, it could be summarized that the majority of students were at good level.

3.2 The result of post-test

Table 3 shows that the post-test's mean score was 22.42 and the standard deviation was 4.20. Table 4 demonstrates that more students achieved and were at excellent level. The post-test as it shows that 12 students got 20-24 points (42.85%) which meant they were at very good level. 10 students perfectly achieved 25-30 points (35.71%) and that meant they were at excellent level. 5 students got 15-19 points (17.85%), which means they were at good level and only one student got 10-14 points (3.57%) and it meant they were at average level. Not many students got 0-9 points. As the results of the score, it could be seen that many students achieved at a high level than before, compared to pre-test which covered over 70 percent.

By comparing the result of the tests: between pre-test and post-test, it demonstrates that the students' vocabulary learning has been improved meaningfully in augmented after the short story in learning and teaching. Furthermore, the learners were developed in learning vocabulary.

3. Result from the observation

According to what the researchers had observed during teaching and learning through short story, it was seen that they were very attractive and enjoyed the lessons. They also participated actively in the lessons in guessing the content of the story and the main character involved. The use of body language (gestures and facial expressions), varying the teacher's voice for different characters and pointing to the relevant pictures in the story paper which helped the students to understand the story without having to use any Lao explanations. These also

made them feel enjoyable and listened to the story. The observers found that the teaching and learning process which was conducted by applying short story ran well. The situation in class was comfort and enjoyable. The students paid careful attention to the teacher's explanation and instructions. In addition, the students were active in asking questions about what they did not understand and felt interested to learn new vocabulary by implementing Short Story Method. It was observed that students had better knowledge in vocabulary mastery. Short story could stimulate them to learn English short story more. Seeing that the short story itself – its content, was interesting and could motivate students to attend class regularly.

4. Discussion

Based on the result of this research, the researchers could clearly see that the mean of pre-test and post-test had different mean score. The mean score of post-tests was greater than the mean score of the pre-test. It has shown that short story technique influenced improving students' English vocabulary in teaching year 1 students of the Program of English, Department of Language Pedagogy, Faculty of Education, academic year 2019-2020. The result of this study was consistent with David (2011), short story helps the students in understanding the English words easily and could improve the students' accusation in vocabulary. Also, it is in line with the study of Salija and Weda (2018). The author concluded that by using short story could improve the students' vocabulary in learning process. Also, students enjoyed and engaged in learning process. The research of Puspitasari (2020) also showed that the students' mean score of post-test is higher than the mean score of pre-test ($90.08 > 82.64$). As a result, there is significant improvement in

vocabulary achievement between the students who are taught English vocabulary by using short story. Based on the result of the research, the researcher concluded that short story can improve students' vocabulary. When comparing with the present research's result, it's showed that the result of Cindy's study is higher. In addition, Salija and Weda (2018) study found that the mean score of cycle 1 is 60 then improved to be 80 in cycle 2. They are higher than the mean score of diagnostic test is 49.66. And the standard KKM (75), that could be achieved after conducting cycle II. From these findings, the researchers concluded that by using short story could improve the students' vocabulary in learning process. Moreover, the study of Kizka (2018) concluded that the use English short story was effective as it could improve students' vocabulary. Hence, regarding the result of this study comparing with the different findings from different contexts, it can conclude that the use of short stories technique can definitely help students to improve their vocabulary learning. Also, this technique can engage students in learning because they enjoy and have fun during using this technique.

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Table 2 : The results of pre-test score

No	Interval	Level	Frequency	Percentage
1	0-9	Poor	2	7.14%
2	10-14	Average	6	21.42%
3	15-19	Good	12	42.85%
4	20-24	Very good	7	25%
5	25-30	Excellent	1	3.57%
Total			28	100%

Table 4: The results of post-test score

No	Interval	Level	Frequency	Percentage
1	0-9	Poor	0	0%
2	10-14	Average	1	3.57%
3	15-19	Good	5	17.85%
4	20-24	Very good	12	42.85%
5	25-30	Excellent	10	35.71%
Total			28	100%

Table 5: Comparing the results of pre-test and post-test

No	Test	Number of participants	Mean	S.D	T	Sig
1	Pre-test	28	17.03	4.59	8.98	0.00
2	Post-test	28	22.42	4.20		