Lexicon Amelioration of Feminine Learners through Short Stories: A Rural/ Urban Perspective

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Abstract

It is a great effort. i have tried my best to find the best outcomes

Introduction:

Language learning is of prime importance in almost every walk of life. Without sufficient vocabulary, one faces difficulty in the expression of views. A lot of work has been done to devise different novel and interesting teaching methodologies to improve vocabulary. Use of literature in language teaching has been appreciated by a lot of researchers especially by Maibodi (2008) and Vaughnetal (2004). Nasreen (2010) further strengthens this view by saying that "short-stories" will create a marked difference while teaching language to build vocabulary.

Pakistani school students are taught English from the very first class but most of graduates are unable to use English fluently and correctly which is the result of rote-learning system. To cope with this situation, a number of changes are being introduced in the field of education which is quite evident from the conversion of Urdu medium schools into English Medium by Government of Pakistan. Waqas (2011) further supports it by saying that Punjab government has felt the importance of English language by making it a compulsory subject from class one. Government teachers are regularly trained to teach English efficiently. Present study is designed to do a comparative analysis of rural and urban students regarding vocabulary enhancement through short stories. It was hypothesized for the present study that short stories will prove to be an effective tool in vocabulary enhancement of both rural and urban students. It was also to be tested that for which group this methodology was more suitable. Moreover, it is an effort to reduce tension and anxiety among students as it is really useful not only for teachers but also for students, parents and policy makers to use new techniques in language teaching.

Number of Vocabulary Items Learners Must Know

Many researchers have tried to estimate the number of lexical items that native speakers of any language know to assess that how many words other than non-native speakers must know to learn the language. For a native speaker, this estimate varies between 12,000 to 20,000 words depending on the level of education (Goulden, Nation and Read, 1990). Exposure of a few words can lead to greater comprehension for non-native speakers. For instance, the students who have the knowledge of common20, 000 words can comprehend around 80% of them in a normal text and if the vocabulary is 50,000, words then learner's understanding is increased to 88.7% (Francis and Kucrera, 1982). For spoken language 1,800 words make up over 80% of the spoken corpus.(Mc Carthy and Carter, 2007).

Vocabulary Enhancement through Short Stories

Short stories are also considered to be very powerful teaching tools especially for vocabulary enhancement. According to Pesola (1991), storytelling gives more fruitful results with young language learners than anyone else. Isbell (2002) further elaborates it by saying that children enjoy only those stories which include repetitive phrases and unique words. Meyer (2000) is also of the view that stories contain cultural values which indicate the way of integrating culture and language relevant to cultural knowledge which is meant to know meanings in order to contribute in activities. Students should know not only the words but also cultural background and they should learn the vocabulary in context.

Short stories also help children to recall or reread the story to build their conceptual knowledge. Stories help learners to improve understanding regarding new words, handouts and books too evaluating learners' present language stages (Morrow, 2001). Students' language proficiency is also developed with the help of such practices. Richgels (2000) is of the view that story repetition gives a chance to the students to organize the order of events, to utilize word items present in the story and to improve learners' understanding of the world too. Story revision is not only a research tool for the researchers as it gives a lot of data to gain insight into learner's understanding processes (Goodman, 1982) but also a guiding strategy that has potential to improve many literary skills.

Attitudes towards Vocabulary Enhancement through Short Stories

It is proved by research that students have a positive attitude towards short stories methodology. Maibaodi (2008) conducted a study on learning English through short stories on 200 female adult, Persian speaking university undergraduates and found that they showed positive attitude towards short stories. Erakaya (2003) is of the view that short stories enable the learners to use four skills of English language. Lao and Krashen (2000) conducted a study between two groups. The results of first group showed their improvement through reading literary texts and the other group showed results of non-literary texts. Oster (1989) also affirms the importance of "literature by saying that literature enables learners to write more creatively" (p. 85). Nasreen (2010) also conducted a study on higher school level students and found a positive response of research population towards this strategy. Khatib (2011) conducted a study at Allameh Tabataba'i University Iran with 24 students in one group and 21 in other group. This study suggests that short stories remained effective in improving student's linguistic skills regardless of the way used to teach to students. Kirkgoz (2012) conducted a study on 21 Turkish university students regarding their responses towards short stories. The results of this study suggested that short stories contribute so much in the overall understanding of the students. Strodt-Lopez (1996) used short stories to improve comprehension skills of the students. Findings signify the importance of short stories. Pardebe (2012) also used short stories on Indonesian students to improve their linguistic proficiency and the findings of this study suggested that utilization of short stories improved students' language proficiency .Murdoch (2002) is of the view that short stories enhance the linguistics and paralinguistic competence of the students. Ellis and Brewster (1991) are of the view that stories motivate the students towards learning English as a foreign language.

Research Question

Does rural / urban setting affect vocabulary enhancement and to what extent can vocabulary be enhanced through short stories in rural and urban settings?

Hypothesis

Location does affect the learning of the students.

Research Methodology

Participants

As mentioned earlier that out of 100 students, only 40 selected students of class 9th participated in this study. Out of these forty students, twenty belonged to rural site i.e. GG High School SherGarh District Okara and twenty belonged to GG High School Hujra Shah Muqeem District Okara. It was kept in mind

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that accumulative score of both groups in pre-test was almost the same which showed that students of both groups were almost of the same intellectual level.

Instruments

Pre-test, containing 10 MCQs out which five were related to antonymous and 5 were related to synonyms. The lexemes were selected from the textbook of class 8th that has been read by both rural and urban students.

Post-test also contained same number of questions on the same pattern that was used in pre-test. The difference was that now the content of the post test was selected from the short stories which were taught by the researcher.

Research Design

Before the actual start of the study, formal consent of the students was sought. 100 students took pretest and the result of pre-test marks enabled the researcher to select twenty students from rural and twenty from urban site. On the very first day of commencement of classes, every student was provided with a short story and it was read aloud in the class room. Students were asked to underline unfamiliar words while reading and they were explained these difficult words with the help of TPR (total physical response) along with contextual clues, key word method. One week was spent on each story. Short stories were available in the class room for students. Their availability in the classroom facilitated the students for self study. The rest of the four short stories were taught to both rural and urban group students through the same methodology as explained above. At the end of the whole intervention, all the students appeared in a very formal post-test session at their respective sites.

Data Analysis

Does rural / urban setting affect vocabulary enhancement and to what extent can vocabulary be enhanced through short stories in rural and urban settings?

Results of pre-test showed that mean score and standard deviation in pre-test for rural group were 6.80 (2.419) and for rural group mean score and standard deviation were 6.60 (1.429). These results showed that both groups had almost the same results. The detail of this data is showed in table 1.

Table 1: Mean score and standard deviation in pre-test of both groups

Variable	Group	No. of Students	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	Rural	20	6.80	2.419
	Urban	20	6.60	1.429

Results of independent samples t-test proved no huge difference in the pre-test mean scores as t (38) = 0.352, p = 0.727, α = 0.05 (See Appendix A).

Post-test marks of both urban and rural groups showed that there was an improvement in the mean score and standard deviation of both groups. Mean score and standard deviation for rural group was 7.65 (1.089) and for urban group, mean score and standard deviation in post test were 7.85 (0.988). So increase in mean score of post-test for rural group was from 6.80 to 7.65 (difference = 1.00) and this increase for urban group was from 6.50 to 7.85 (difference = 2.35). Table 2 and 3 proved that both groups had performed better than before.

Table 2: Mean score and standard deviation in post-test for both groups

Variable	Group	No. of Students	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
Post-test	Rural	20	7.65	1.089
	Urban	20	7.85	0.988

Table 3: Mean change in test-score for both groups

Variable	Pre-test	Pre-test	Post-test	Post-test	Change	Change
Post-test	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
	6.80	6.50	7.65	7.85	0.85	1.35

Post-test results proved that rural group had improved much more in its mean score of post-test. Further analysis of improvement in post-test of both groups was conducted by using paired samples t-test. Paired samples t-test discovered that there was a statistically great difference in post-test score of rural group as t(19), p = 0.163, α = 0.05 (See Appendix B).

Paired samples t-test found that there was an immense difference in the pre-test and post-test marks of urban group as t(19) = -2.37, p = 0.01, α = 0.05 (See Appendix C).

It clearly proves the hypothesis that location has an effect on the learning of the students. So, it can be concluded that in terms of statistical significance, urban group had improved much more than the rural group. All this change was due to the change in location of school. Short stories for vocabulary enhancement proved to be effective for both rural and urban groups but there was a greatt difference in improvements of rural and urban learners. One possible reason was the past exposure of urban students to short stories in the form of rhymes having short stories in them that they used to have at the beginning level of school. For rural students, it was quite a new methodology due to which they couldn't perform like urban students. It may also be concluded that we can have wonderful outputs from students by introducing short stories from the very beginning level at school.

Discussion & Conclusion

All the possible steps were taken to provide controlled environment to both rural and urban groups of this study. Hard copies of short stories were provided to each student but before leaving the classroom, after lecture they were asked to submit these copies. So that no group member can have any help from her home. This was done because urban students might have some help from their parents or tuition teachers but rural students are commonly not provided with such type of guidelines. So students were asked to do everything at their own honestly and were prohibited to seek any type of help except teacher. It was also tried at researcher's level best that all the rural participants should belong to purely rural areas. Same precaution was also taken into account for urban group. Most of the participants of this study found vocabulary enhancement through short stories an interesting methodology. These were the core after effects of this methodology. Yet there was a huge difference between the outputs of rural and urban groups. Rural students expressed a wish that this methodology should be introduced from the primary level. In an informal session, they said that teachers should be properly trained by government for successful implementation of this strategy. It can be concluded that vocabulary enhancement through short stories is an effective methodology and it enhances vocabulary of urban secondary level students more than the rural secondary level students. Government should take steps to introduce literature for language teaching not only at secondary level but also at beginning level.

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Appendix A: Independent Samples t-test

Group Statistics	Group Statistics	Group Statistics	Group Statistics	Group Statistics	Group Statistics
	pretest	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Marks	rural	20	6.80	2.419	.541
	urban	20	6.55	2.064	.462

Independent Samples Test	Independent Samples Test	Independent Samples Test t-test for Equality of Means Sig. (2-tailed)	Independent Samples t-test for Equality of Me Mean Difference
Marks	Equal variances assumed	.727	.250
	Equal variances not assumed	.727	.250

Independent Samples Test	Independent Samples Test	Independent Samples Test t-test for Equality of Means 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference

		Upper
Marks	Equal variances assumed	1.690
	Equal variances not assumed	1.691

Appendix B: Paired Samples t-test for Rural Group

Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test Paired Differences Mean	Paired Samples Test Paired Differences Std. Deviation	Paired Samples Test Paired Differences Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-.850	2.621	.586

Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test t	Paired Samples Test df	Paired Samples Test Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-1.450	19	.163

Appendix C: Paired Samples t-test for Urban Group

Paired Samples Statistics	Paired Samples Statistics	Paired Samples Statistics Mean	Paired Samples Statistics N
Pair 1	Pretest	6.60	20
	Posttest	7.85	20

Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test Paired Differences Mean	Paired Samples Test Paired Differences Std. Deviation
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	Pretest - Posttest	-1.250	1.970
Paired Samples Test	**Paired Samples Test**	**Paired Samples Test**	**Paired Samples Test**	**Paired Samples Test**
Pair 1	Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	Pretest - Posttest	Pretest - Posttest