NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES EMPLOYED IN COMPREHENDING SHORT STORIES IN ENGLISH: THE CASE OF KURDISH LEARNERS

MASTER THESIS

PEHSAWA JALAL MOHAMMED

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Approval of the Graduate School of Educational Sciences

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I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis submitted by Peshawa Jalal Mohammed, titled "CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES EMPLOYED IN COMPREHENDING SHORT STORIES IN ENGLISH: THE CASE OF KURDISH LEARNERS", and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES EMPLOYED IN COMPREHENDING SHORT STORIES IN ENGLISH: THE CASE OF KURDISH LEARNERS

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The aim of this study was to investigate the mental processes university students followed while reading short stories. It also sought to find the common problems in reading and understanding short stories and how linguistic and extra-linguistic factors formed those challenges. The total number of the participants was 15 (seven males and eight females) in three public universities in Northern Iraq. The data was recorded and collected among second year university students who were enrolled in an English short stories course in the second year of their studies in the 2014-2015 academic year. To collect the data, a think-aloud protocol was developed and questions about the text were answered verbally by the participants. A qualitative approach was adopted to analyse the obtained data descriptively.

The results indicated the fact that some reading strategies were employed by the learners, these strategies were not adequate for them to fully analyse the text in a literary manner. More specifically, they attempted to answer literary questions in the same way that they answered general reading comprehension questions. The analysis of the data also revealed that lack of vocabulary was a major issue for the learners' inability in answering questions correctly. It was also found that the learners were influenced by their own cultural backgrounds and the social norms that they have been exposed to while reading and analysing short stories. It is suggested that further studies should be conducted to see whether teaching and utilization of vocabulary learning strategies can be effective in improving the way that literary texts are handled by EFL learners. In addition, further research should be conducted on cultural issues other than the ones identified in this study that may influence the reading processed of literary texts.

Key words: Short story, reading comprehension, thinking process, EFL learners.

ÖZ

İNGİLİZCE KISA HİKAYELERİ ANLAMADAKİ GÜÇLÜKLER VE UYGULANAN STRATEJİLER: KÜRT ÖĞRENCİLERİN DURUMU

Peshawa Jalal Mohammed
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Danışman: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Çise Çavuşoğlu

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Bu çalışmanın amacı üniversite öğrencilerinin kısa hikaye okurken takip ettikleri zihinsel süreçleri araştırmaktı. Çalışma ayrıca, kısa hikaye okuma ve anlamadaki yaygın sorunları ve sözel ve sözel olmayan etkenlerin bu zorlukları nasıl oluşturduklarını ortaya çıkarmayı da hedefliyordu. Veriler, 2014-2015 akademik yılında Kuzey Irak'taki üç devlet üniversitesinden 15 (yedi erkek ve sekiz kadın) ikinci sınıf öğrencisinin katılımıyla toplandı. Veri toplamak için bir yüksek sesle düşünme protokolü geliştirildi ve sunulan kısa hikayeyle ilgili sorular katılımcılar tarafından sözel olarak cevaplandırıldı. Elde edilen verilerin tanımlayıcı bir şekilde analiz edilmesi için nitel bir yaklaşım kullanıldı. Sonuçlar, öğrenciler tarafından bazı okuma stratejileri uygulanmasına rağmen, bu stratejilerin, metinleri edebi bir şekilde analiz etmeleri için yeterli olmadığını göstermiştir. Daha net olarak, katılımcılar edebi sorulara da genel okuduğunu anlama soularına cevap verdikleri şekilde cevap vermeyi denemişlerdir. Yapılan analizler, öğrencilerin soruları doğru bir şekilde cevaplayamamasında kelime bilgisi eksikliğinin büyük bir rolü olduğunu da ortaya çıkarmıştır. Öğrencilerin kısa hikaye okurken ve analiz ederken, kendi kültürel geçmişleri ve maruz kaldıkları toplumsal normlardan etkilendikleri de ortaya çıkmıştır. Kelime öğrenme stratejilerinin öğretilmesinin ve kullanılmasının, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen öğrencilerin edebi metinlerilerle baş etme yollarının geliştirilmesinde etkili olup olamayacağının anlaşılması için daha fazla araştırma yapılmasının gerekli olduğu öne sürülmektedir. Ek olarak, bu çalışmada belirlenenlerin dışındaki edebi metinlerin okuma işlemlerine etki edebilecek kültürel konularda da daha fazla araştırma yapılması önerilmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: kısa hikaye, okuduğunu anlama, düşünme süreci ve yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrencileri.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This chapter covers an introduction about the importance of using literature in general, short stories and reading short stories in particular, in learning and teaching English language at the university level. It sets out the problem statement, the purpose of the study and its significance as well as the research questions that guided the study and the limitations.

Background of the study

Using literature and its collaboration with language is not something new in language teaching with the aim of improving language skills. It has been used as a tool in teaching foreign languages widely, especially from the 20th century onwards (Erkaya, 2005). In the time of the Grammar Translate Method (GTM), literary works were well-thought of material in English as foreigner language teaching, but when Structuralism Approach and Audiolingualism were later used as substitutes for GTM, literature was downplayed as they concerned with the correctness of grammatical form and teaching speaking and listening rather than reading and writing (Collie & Slater, 1987). Later on, with the advent of the Communicative Approach, literature was neglected again. Dialogues and conversations were mostly aimed because the approach focused on using more practical materials and helping students in spoken language skills (Pardede, 2010). In the 1980s, literature returned to EFL (Duff & Maley, 1991). The integrating and using literature in foreigner language curriculums were firmly suggested by many study results (for instance, Hill, 1986; Collie & Slater, 1987; Lazar, 1993; Cook, 1994). Brumfit and Carter (1986) argued that there are some possible reasons for using

literature in English language teaching. Literature could be highly motivating for the students. For instance, a powerful emotional response may be yielded from students by literary genres, such as poems. Literature can also be considered as a way to access the cultural background of the author(s) or the background to the stories they have been writing. Nunan (2003) pointed out that reading literature provides the students with a lot of information about behaviour and reaction of people in different situations in different places because reading is building meaning by combining information from a text and the readers own background knowledge.

Lazar (1993) explained that literature develops students' interpretive abilities. A good source for developing student's abilities to form meaning and to make interpretations is literature. Literary texts are rich in multiple levels of meaning. Sometimes a word in a short story has a figurative meaning beyond its dictionary definition. Thus, by encouraging students to understand the multiple ambiguities of the literary text, teachers can help to develop their capacities to form meaning. Furthermore, using literature to teach a foreign language has not only the linguistic benefits, but may also have a wider educational purpose in the classroom in that, it can help to stimulate the imagination of students, to develop their critical abilities and to increase their emotional awareness (Lazar, 1993).

Tso (2014) pointed out that sometimes the teachers are anxious in using literature with their students because they believe that it is exposing wrong uses of language since it breaks most of the grammatical rules and common use of vocabulary. There are many examples which we can see how the rules are broken in literary texts. Lazar (1993) explained that the point here is that this kind of writing expands students' awareness about the language and encourages them to think about the norms of language use (i.e understanding sophisticated language helps the learner to master

common use of language). The sensitiveness of the students to the features of language will grow with that.

Chastian (1988) stated that short stories are the most suitable literary genre for teaching as students can follow the story lines and there is usually one plot, one setting and few characters. But poetry is not easy to grasp because it includes a lot of figurative of speeches, novels are too long to finish and dramas needs acting out which may be difficult to do in a crowded and time limited classes.

Ghasemi and Hajizadah (2011) pointed out that one of the privileges of short stories is enhancing students' reading proficiency. They sometimes make students feel awkward since there are hidden meanings which are left to the readers to draw implications not just reading lines and decoding them that is one of the features of non-literary materials.

Short stories can provide English as a Foreign Language /English as Second Language (ESL) learners with an appropriate study resource which is enjoyable and educational to improve their reading comprehension (Tso, 2014). Thus, a variety of strategies are put to make the teaching of the short stories pleasurable and dramatically which gain a rich experience in assisting reading comprehension (Ghasemi & Hajizadah, 2011). They also state that these strategies include the design and implementation of motivation building techniques which aid and simplify overall reading comprehension, listening and spoken skills.

Ahmad (2012) explained that short stories can offer intellectual encouragement. They have a beginning and an end so they have a complete experience in themselves. Their shortness and story line keep the interest of readers without losing their patience. In fact it is because of their lengths that they so readily lend themselves to the teaching

of the reading skills that students need in their studies of literature. Teaching students to read for pleasure helps then in developing their reading skills.

The English programs in Northern Iraq include some simplified stories and in high schools, there are three stories for the grades. The stories are originally novels, which have been shortened and simplified to be suitable for the students' levels of English. These stories are Around the World in Eighty Days by Jules Verne for grade 10, Great Expectations by Charles Dickens for grade 11 and Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson for grade 12. Those stories are studied as a part of the curriculum and they are given to the students to be read and translated. Thus, reading comprehension is supposed to be taught and the students are required to understand it and be prepared to the exams as the stories are included. During my experience in teaching high school students what I have noticed is that students usually concentrate on translating the literary texts and their linguistic features. This prevents interacting with the English culture in the texts and the awareness about the different elements of literary texts such as characters, settings and themes. Using the traditional method by teachers and unawareness about useful strategies to comprehend the texts by students might be the reasons for that.

After completing high school students are welcomed at university colleges. There are four different English departments which students take chairs in to study their bachelor degrees. Those four departments are college of languages/ English school, college of education/ English school, college of basic education/ English department and college of translation/ English school. The graduates of the two colleges of education are supposed to be English teachers in schools. In the colleges of education, the first year students (freshmen) have a course on English literature. The course covers an introduction about English literature and its history in general. In the second year, the students study short stories as a course. The stories are chosen by the ministry of high

education. The study of the course requires deep understanding of stories and a good ability of reading comprehension to absorb the literary terms like theme, climax, and symbolism and so on. Further, other requirements like discussion of the ideas, characters, and memorising quotations are vital.

Problem statement

The reading skill always becomes the target of teaching professionals since reading plays an important role in learning and mastering another language, including English as a foreign language. Short stories as one of literary genres need more concentration and efficient reading than a simple text to understand them fully because they are written for native speakers not pedagogical purposes (Hismanoğlu, 2005). Studying short stories requires more than understanding stories alone. It requires the comprehension of figure of speech, symbolism, themes, plot and characters. Hassan (2013) explained that Kurdish EFL learners suffer many difficulties in studying short stories. According to his study, the fundamental challenges the students face are: mastering word meaning problem, obtaining equivalent words and rephrasing the texts as a result of deficiency in vocabulary and grasping cultural differences through studying and reading of short stories. Different backgrounds of literature would be didactic and value-challenging activity when the readers are disposed to read it. Brumfit and Carte (1986) argued that as a result of cultural molds to literature of different class, country and age, a big deal of meaning will be lost. These factors could lead to unsuccessful reading, difficulties and anxiety while reading texts for EFL learners. Furthermore, Sabir (as cited in Hassan, 2013) noted that Kurdish students mostly have deprived themselves of reading the original course books as a part of everyday assignments. Besides, they rely upon the summary of the short stories on the web because they find the original ones demanding to read. Furthermore, Lazar (1993)

argues that the issue of enhancing literary texts and reading them always needs more investigating as literary texts are different from the other texts because they break the rules of syntax, collocation and even cohesion. This may confuse the learners in understanding, interpreting and analysing the texts.

Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate the mental processes students follow while reading short stories and the difficulties among the second year university students in reading short stories. It aims to find out the most common problems in their reading and understanding process and how linguistic and extra-linguistic factors form those challenges. It also tries to find out what the reasons behind the challenges they face are. Because of the nature of the data collection method some problems may occur that the researcher has not expected. More specifically, the research aims at finding answers to the following questions:

1. What sort of questions do students find difficult to answer when reading short stories? What are the reasons behind these difficulties?

2. What major reading strategies do students employ

    a) while answering reading comprehension questions?

    b) while answering literary questions?

3. What extra linguistic factors affect the way that students answer reading comprehension and literary questions?

Significance of the study

Based on the problems mentioned above, investigating the students' difficulties and mental processes they follow in reading and comprehending short stories will be helpful for those who are interested in better teaching. The study will aid EFL learners by raising their awareness on the challenges of reading and studying short stories at universities. This may then lead them to follow or choose different strategies that are appropriate for them in the process of reading short stories. In addition, this study will be a relevant source to use when teachers require a reference on students' views and their difficulties when designing courses using short stories.

Limitation

This study is limited in four ways. First, in the number of participants, three different groups of students took part in the study, 5 students for each group 15 in total. Secondly, the level of the participants. The data were recorded and collected from second year university students because they have studied English literature in general in their first year and they have an English short story course in the second year of their studies. Thirdly, a specific short story was chosen for participants to be used in the data collection sessions. Finally, the data was collected in three different Kurdish public universities in three different locations which are were University of Sulaimani, University of Salahaddin, and University of Charmo. Therefore, the data is also limited to the participants who were studying at these universities at the time of the study.

Conclusion

It has been proved that because of universality, cultural enrichment, authencity and motivating material, literature is a beneficial material in EFL classes. As long as it is implemented appropriately, it would be a powerful instrument in achieving language

skills improvements and linguistic competences. One of the most effectual literary genres for EFL learners are short stories. Short stories are considered as a helpful material in raising cultural awareness and critical thinking. They also draw readers' attention more than other texts because they keep the interest of the readers, but needs a good effort of reading comprehension as they are written for native speakers and include unknown words and figurative speeches. Thus, reading short stories and comprehending them by EFL learners is a good subject for investigation. In this chapter, the problem, aim of the study, the research questions and limitations of the study have been introduced. In the second chapter, the literature related to reading courses and reading literary texts short stories in particular is discussed.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Reading as one of the fundamental skills of language has a crucial role in mastering the foreign language. According to Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995), the capability to read is a precondition for independent learning. Among reading texts, literary texts are a good channel through which the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners get information about the target culture and people as the majority of EFL learners do not have enough opportunities to contact with native speakers. Reading literary texts will provide them with opportunities to be informed about foreign ways of life and people. Lazar (1993) stated that, in addition to the delightfulness of literary works, they are considered as authentic sources. So, they are highly recommended as authentic materials to be used in EFL classes. As literary texts have rich content knowledge, they are more suitable texts to be read by learners in EFL classrooms (Khatib & Nasrollahi, 2012). The short stories' characteristics, briefness, diversity and authenticity make them the most appropriate material for EFL learners to use in EFL classrooms. According to Pourkalhor and Kohan (2013):

> In the short story, the readers try to draw implications. Therefore, it makes students sensitive to the hidden and implied meaning. While in reading non-literary material students learn to read the lines and decode the meaning, in reading short stories they learn to read between the lines. (p.53)

Moreover, in view of the fact that stories are about universal problems, it can associate to learners' situation. It can relate to readers' lives, this can lead to more integrating

with reading by the learners and encourage them to make more effort to understand it (Hismanoğlu, 2005).

Reading Comprehension

According to what educational researches have revealed, reading and academic success are correlated (Anderson, 1994). In other words, good readers are more likely to be successful in their fields. This is why the improving reading skills for learners is crucial and it helps them to do well in their studies. Reading as one of the four main language skills has been defined in various ways. Blake (1998) pointed out that "reading is a construction of meaning from written text. It is an active, cognitive and affective process" (p. 3). Gebhard (2006) defined reading as "discovering meaning in print and script, within a social context, through bottom-up and top-down processing, and use of strategies and skills" (p. 194). Alptekin (2006) explained that:

reading is an interaction of the reader's text-based and knowledge-based processes. In processing texts, readers combine literal comprehension, based on lower level cognitive processes of reading such as lexical access and syntactic parsing, with inferential comprehension, based on higher level cognitive processes such as the text base of comprehension (to understand what the text says) and the situation model of interpretation (to understand what it is about). (p. 494)

Harmer (2007) stated that "reading is useful for language acquisition. Provided that students more or less understand what they read, the more they read, the better they get at it" (p. 99). Moreover, Lilles, Griffiths, Lee, Cardenas, Chacko and Jimerson (2008) explained that "reading is a core academic skill that not only lays the foundation

for educational achievement, but also provides the necessary for life-long success" (p. 19). When learning another language, reading can be effectual and vital factor. Anderson (1994) believed that the most important tool for educational settings is reading.

The concept of reading comprehension has been discussed and focused on in different ways. Besides interacting with the passage and background knowledge, reading was seen as a passive skill. It was believed readers produce nothing and reading was dealt with words as isolated concepts by traditional approaches (Usó-Juan, Martinez-Flor & Palmer-Silveira, 2006). It was also believed reading has nothing to do with the social dimension of learning (Chastain, 1988). The view of reading as a passive skill has dramatically changed recently. In 1960s, environmentalist thoughts overwhelmed and emphasised that the learners reading skills were only restricted to making sense of printed words. With the development of Chomskyan speculations which clarify language learning on a cognitive premise, reading abilities were not restricted to the decoding skills. Reading comprehension research concentrated on reading as a reasoning procedure where the readers reform ideas as they read and comprehend the proposed mean of the writer. Readers are not regarded as uninvolved, but rather they are psychologically occupied with handling the author's expected significance. Usó-Juan, Martinez-Flor and Palmer-Silveira (2006) explained that this interactivist view also paid attention on the role of cognition in understanding reading texts, and additionally believed that text meanings are tied up with culture. So, socio-cultural factors have influences on the construction of meaning in texts.

The Three Stages of Reading

To promote readers to utilise successful techniques when reading in a foreign language, there are basic activities focused on procedures. These activities can be partitioned by the phases of reading.

According to Williams (1984), pre-reading (warm-up) exercises acquaint readers with a specific content, inspire or give suitable background information, and awaken necessary schemata. Seeing content with readers ought to stimulate their awareness and help them approach the content in a more significant and deliberate way as the discourse urges them to consider the circumstance or ideas that rise in the text. The pre-reading stage helps readers to have appropriate criteria for the focal subject of a story or any major argument in the targeted texts. Pre-reading exercises include pre-teaching vocabulary and concepts, motivating for reading, pre-questioning and linking the reading to learners' lives (Graves, Juel & Graves, 2001). Yiğiter, Sarıçoban and Gürses (2005) stated that pre-reading builds up a purpose behind reading, i.e., for what purpose the texts were initially written, reminds the readers experiences in relation to the subject, sometimes actuates the cultural knowledge and also familiarises them with some of the text language . Pre-reading work is a schematic preparation rather than anything else.

Graves, Juel and Graves (2001) explained that after acceptance the idea of reading as an interactive process, while-reading activities were employed to promote learners to be active during reading. Learners can be given different activities to follow while reading. For example, following the events or ideas in order, guessing the coming part of the text, reaction to ideas expressed, raising questions in mind, approving predictions and note taking can be some of such activities. While-reading activities can follow the events or ideas in order. They help readers create reading strategies, enhance

their control of the foreign language, and make sense of difficult texts. Helping readers to utilise strategies while reading can be troublesome in the light of the fact that different strategies are needed for readers. However, significant strategies can be identified by teachers and the strategies that readers need the most to practice can be identified, and activities as "guided reading" exercise sheets can be offered. Such practice activities include predicting word meanings by utilising contextual clues and word formation. On the other hand, the following are also part of the while-reading activities: considering language structure and sentence structure by noticing the syntactic elements of obscure words, dissecting reference words, and foreseeing content of the text, reading for particular information pieces, and figuring out how to use a dictionary successfully (Yiğiter, Sarıçoban & Gürses, 2005).

Post-reading activities first check readers' understanding and after that lead readers to a more profound analysis of the content. Since memorising authors' ideas or summarising text content are not the objectives of most real world reading, but instead it is to see into another personality, or to work new information into what one knows, foreign language reading must be more than reading comprehension drills to help readers perceive that different strategies are proper with diverse text sorts (Yiğiter, Sarıçoban & Gürses, 2005). For instance, scanning is a suitable strategy to employ with newspaper advertisements while guessing and following the text cohesion are successful strategies to use with short stories. By discussing in groups what they have followed, readers concentrate on information they did not fathom, or did not grasp effectively. This can lead the reader straightforward to the content analysis as class exchange continues from deciding facts to investigating more profound consequences of the writings. Post reading activities take students past the specific reading content in the following: a) by transferring reading abilities to different writings or b) by integrating reading skills with other language skills (Graves, Juel & Graves, 2001).

Clarke (1989) stated that post-reading activities depend on the text types. They ideally should relate to the goals of the reading. Readers usually make use of what they have taken from while-reading activities in a meaningful way, for instance, conferring the author's opinions, using notes for writing. In addition to that, a lot of activities can be prepared on the content of the text, or focusing on its language.

Reading strategies

Cheng (1999) clarified that "in the last few decades, the focus of both first and second language reading research has gradually shifted from the product of reading to the process of reading, i.e., strategies used by readers to accomplish various reading tasks" (p. 2). Most readers find numerous challenges to comprehend the significance of a text while reading. Because of that, readers look for some helpful reading methods to overwhelm their problems. For instance, readers use earlier information as a proper strategy to understand new information in a text (Ben, 2002). Moreover, Trabasso and Bouchard (2002) emphasise on readers' capacity to answer reading tasks successfully. Employing reading strategies to complete tasks is a key to find particular information in content. Dehnad (2005) claimed that reading strategies are vital for readers to encourage their learning and comprehension the significance of the entire text.

As indicated by Block (1992), to improve reading skills, reading strategies are vital. Employing reading strategies strengthens learners' reading comprehension if they are used properly. For instance, to monitor learners' reading comprehension, they can use meta-cognitive strategies which will be useful for EFL learners as well. Chamot (2005) discussed that learners are required to know enough reading strategies in order to use them in a complicated text while-reading.

Oxford (1990) classified the major reading strategies to four types: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, and social strategies. a) Memory strategies are those which the reader employed while intend to get the meaning of a word in a text. The examples of memory strategies are: using imagery, omitting unrelated parts of the text so as to recollect just significant words or expressions and linking ideas to the main points of the text and mechanical techniques like writing on the flash cards.

b) Cognitive strategy examples are: skimming, scanning, analysing expressions, taking notes, repeating words or sentences and writing summary of passages.

c) Compensation strategies are usually employed by the learners to compensate for their limitations. Using linguistic clues to find the meaning of unknown words and any other clues to predict the meaning of a text are considered as compensation strategies.

d) Social strategies include requesting for explanation or confirmation, readers employ to demand something from somebody when they don't exactly comprehend the meaning of a content. Cooperating with partners or group working and cooperating with new language user are also social strategies.

Short Stories and Reading Comprehension

A short story is defined by Poe as "a narrative that can be read at one sitting of from one half hour to two hours, and that is limited to a certain unique or single effect, to which every detail is subordinate" (as cited in Abrams, 1970, p.158). Welukar, Chandra and Harichandan, (2012), explained that short stories are short literature works and they are different form novels as they are brief and have less characters, typically written in narrative prose. They are generally concerned with a single effect conveyed

in only one or a small number of important episodes or scenes. Short stories have also few settings and the exclusion of a blurred plot. Cox (2008) defined a short story as a piece of writing that seeks to inform us a predefined idea of the world that we live in which plans to bring a single narrative effect with the best economy of means and amazing accentuation. Menrath (2003) stated that short stories for the most part demonstrate a critical picture of life and a preview of life. Their plot is not extremely complex as opposed to the novel, but rather it makes a bound together impression and abandons us with a vibrant memory instead of various recalled realities.

Making use of short stories and their role in developing reading comprehension skills has be mentioned and supported by Brumfit and Carter (1986), Collie and Slater (1991), Lazar (1993), and Murdoch (2002). According to Collie and Slater (1991) for the English language teachers, short stories are useful to utilise because their length is sufficiently long to be covered in a couple of sessions and they can be useful for creating EFL learners' self-reliance while learning a foreign language. Being the result of imaginative authors, stories are productive in language and can be perfect material for reading comprehension. Brumfit and Carter (1986) pointed out that the short stories catch the attention of the learners more than any other text because of their easiness to finish. Murdoch (2002) stated that selection and exploitation of the short stories properly is helpful to encourage learners integrate reading comprehension and other skills. Erkaya (2005) explained that despite helping students to be critical, short stories encourage students to keep reading because they are usually interesting and do not make readers discouraged. According to Moll (2001), reading short stories encourage the readers to use different strategies like linking personal experience with the text, rereading, making predictions and self monitoring to comprehend what they read.

Recent Studies on Short Stories in EFL Classrooms

In recent years, teaching and learning English through short stories have become the target of some researchers. The literature suggests that the foci of these studies were various. Işık's (2011) study, for example, investigated the effects of using short stories in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms on learners conducted in the Turkish context with university students, its findings showed that teaching EFL through short stories raised both social and language awareness of the learners. According to Kırkgöz (2012), who also investigated incorporating short stories in English language classes among Turkish university students taking an English language preparatory program, short stories have a significant role in reinforcing grammar and vocabulary knowledge among learners. They additionally help learners to develop their writing skills with respect to creativity since short stories increase learners' imagination.

In another setting, Pardede's (2011) study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using short stories to teach language skills in Indonesia. Findings indicated that the use of short stories contributed to mastery language skills in general as stories were the point of interest for the learners. Kharaghani's (2013) study also investigated the effect of employing short stories on reading comprehension ability in an EFL setting, namely with Iranian EFL learners. The study was conducted as an experimental study, where the control group received instructional reading-based text books and the experimental group received short stories. The two groups covered the texts in their courses and were tested. It was found that short stories increased reading comprehension ability more significantly than the other texts.

Furthermore, Ahmad (2013) aimed to investigate the impact of teaching vocabulary through using short stories in EFL classrooms in Northern Iraq. His research

results revealed that, compared to other literary genres, short stories were the most appropriate material to improve vocabulary among university students.

As it can be seen from this review, the majority of the studies investigated the role of short stories in improving specific or general language skills. What makes the present study unique is that, rather than looking at the effect of employing short stories as a teaching tool, it attempts to understand the thinking processes though which participant comprehend a short story by looking at how they answer some reading comprehension and literary questions.

Conclusion

In this chapter a review of the relevant literature was presented concerning reading comprehension, the three stages of reading, reading strategies and reading short stories. The chapter intended to bring into light whatever most related to the current study. In the next chapter, the design of the study will be presented.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, the methodological procedures of the study will be described. Information will be given on the research design, participants, setting, instruments used in data collection, the procedures followed in data collection and data analysis, the role of the researcher in the research and research etiquettes will also be presented.

Design

To investigate the students' foci and how they read short stories qualitative approach was adopted. The qualitative research aims to understand experiences and processes. Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008) explained that "qualitative studies explores what causes what and focus on why people think and act as they do" (p.80). A qualitative method can be used to discover problems that ELT learners challenge and to spot those strategies they use to solve their problems while reading short stories. Qualitative is the most suitable approach for the research since the subject matter of the research is how participants construct their understandings. To collect the data, a thinking aloud protocol was used. This is a method that allows the researchers to better understand the thought processes of the participants as they use a task, a product, a device or a manual. It also allows the difficulties, which the individual participants may be experiencing during the process, to be illustrated clearly (Van Someren, Barnard & Sandberg, 1994). In line with the qualitative nature of the study, the forms of questions used during the think aloud protocol were designed as open-ended questions and were based on verbal reports. As Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012) explained, open-ended

questions "permit qualitative analysis" (p. 11). Data collected through the think aloud protocol were then qualitatively analysed. Details of these procedures will be further explained in the following sections in this chapter.

Participants and setting

The participants of the present study were students of the English departments, Faculty of Education at the University of Sulaimani, University of Salahaddin and University of Charmo. They were studying a BA program in English language. The rationale for the choice of these participants was to find out the second year students' attitude from different universities for reading short stories. The number of participants was 15 students (seven males and eight females) in three public universities. The participants were assigned based on their willingness to share in the data collection process and their ability in speaking English as the process needed verbal reports. They were all Kurdish students and their educational background was homogenous, they were studying in the same school and at the public universities and all of them were second year students in English departments.

Instruments

A short story by Dorothy Parker entitled "You Were Perfectly Fine" was used in the experiment. The story was selected from a book titled "American Stories" (see Appendix A). Before selecting the short story, the short stories which were studied and included in the syllabus of the second year of English departments in North Iraq were provided and read by the researcher and then, they were compared to the short story that was used in the data collection. The exam questions on the short stories in different universities were collected to understand how the short stories were studied and have a better understanding about the short story course in the universities. The criteria for the

selection of this short story and the questions to be used were the period of the short story, its length, language, subject matter and number of characters involved. After careful consideration of the short stories studied and exams taken by the participants at their respective universities, it was decided that the short story "You were perfectly fine" was similar to those previously studied in terms of the preset criteria.

The short story was printed and given to the participants before they were asked to answer questions about it. They were given free time to read the story. After reading the short story, two printed pages of questions (see Appendix B) were given to the participants to be answered one by one. The questions were taken out from the book "American Stories". The book included reading comprehension and literary questions. Some of the questions which matched with the purpose of the study selected and then they were checked by the supervisor. The questions that held vague meanings were amended and checked again. They were also given to the lecturers of the short story courses at the three universities to be checked before they were used for the purposes of this study. In the final version of the think aloud questions, there were three parts. The first part included 17 reading comprehension questions. The second part had four matching expressions related to the content of the story and the third one included seven literary questions. The questions were based on the purpose of the study and selected as appropriate question to find the answer for the research questions and they were accurately examined by the thesis advisors.

In addition to the printed materials used during the think aloud sessions to assess the participants' reading processes, an audio-recorder was also used to record their verbal responses as they answered the relevant questions. These recordings were later transcribed to be analysed in detail.

Validity and Reliability

In the current study, the questions were adapted from a book called "American Stories'' with little amendments. The questions were chosen from the book and based the aim of the study. They were revised several times and some of them were deleted because they were repetition and those were fit to the aim of the research and answer the research questions were kept. The questions were also evaluated by supervisors and they confirmed that the questions are suitable considering the aim of the study.

For the reliability, the common themes, making codes and common difficulties of the participants in the pilot study were dealt with to analyse. Then they were confirmed by the supervisor. These steps were helpful in fine tuning the procedures and assisted me in revising the process.

Pilot study

Following the development of the instruments, a pilot study was carried out with five students, who were 4th year students at Near East University in North Cyprus. The participants were volunteers and they participated in the pilot study during the spring semester of the 2013- 2014 academic year. There were three male and two female students.

The pilot test was a preliminary action before collecting data among second year university students in North Iraq. The process was helpful for me to clarify the procedures I would need to follow in data collection later on and also to point to any necessary changes in the instruments or the procedures for validity and reliability reasons. The think aloud sessions were done individually and each session was recorded separately. I was present during the session in the same room with them. I paid extra attention to my role in these sessions and was very careful in my conduct with the participants in order not to interfere as possible as I could. The participants were given

free time to read the short story and do the tasks, thus I could find the necessary limited time for the participants later on.

The results of the pilot study showed that the students' responses indicated that they regard the title of the short story as the indicator of time and when the events happened in the story. The students skipped those words their meanings were not clear to them and guessed their meanings according to the context. They tried to judge on the behaviours of the short story characters according to their own standards and social background. Visualisation for the circumstances in the short story and the character personalities was a theme that emerged from the think aloud sessions.

Regarding the matching task, the participants mostly used the prediction strategy to find out the real meaning of the expressions by using the background knowledge and tried to skip those words they did not know their meanings.

The section related to the literary questions appeared to be confusing for some of the participants in the pilot study compared to the other sections. While responding to the questions, they tried to narrate the story without analysing or studying the questions and their answers resembled their answers to the reading comprehension questions.

Procedures

The following steps were taken in the process of the data collection in this study. In the first step, I took written permission from the heads of the English language schools at the University of Sulaimani, University of Salahaddin and University of Charmo (see Appendices C, D & E). Next, five volunteering students in each university were asked to participate. The participants were selected based on their willingness to share in the data collection process and their ability in speaking English since the thinking-aloud sessions needed long verbal reports. These were then provided with explanations about the aims and procedures of the study and the thinking aloud

protocol. Then, the short story was given to them. The session of each participant was completed within maximum 40 minutes. The limited time was decided based on the pilot study. They were then asked to answer the questions given to them verbally, spelling their answers and reasons for their choices out loud. Each think aloud session was carried out with individual participants in the same room. The participants' answers for the questions were recorded by using an audio-recorder and later transcribed to be analysed. While transcribing "[…]" for pauses in speaking and "…." for missing parts of the participants' verbal reports were written. The experimenter impinged as little as he could with the thought process to avoid influencing the sessions. The researcher also introduced thinking aloud protocol and the tasks to the participants and familiarised the instruments to them. During the think aloud sessions the researcher encouraged the participants to verbalise what they were thinking about by using phrases like "what are you thinking now?" and to make sure the participants the questions are open-ended questions. The questions like these were asked to help them elaborate "I was wondering why you said…..", "why do you think….."

Data analysis

After obtaining the data via the think aloud sessions with students, the important sections of the data were marked when the researcher went through the text and open coding was used as descriptive names were added. The data compared to each other to find relations, similarities then the data marked with appropriate codes for further analysis. The data was analysed descriptively to reveal the strategies the students are using and what they focused on while reading short stories.

Conclusion

In this chapter the methodology followed in the current study was explained. A study using a think aloud protocol to analyse the strategies that the participants used while reading short stories was designed with a qualitative approach. Then, information about the participants and the setting of the study was provided. Next, data collection instruments and data collection procedures were presented. This chapter ended with the methods of data analysis used and in the next chapter the result of the analysis will be presented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

   This chapter will present and discuss issues that have emerged from the thorough analysis of the thinking-aloud sessions. First, those questions which were found to be difficult to answer by the students will be analytically presented. This is followed by a thematic analysis and discussion of the thinking-aloud sessions. The aim of the study was to explore the students' strategies while reading short stories and thought processes that they employ while reading short stories as well as the effect of the cultural background of the readers on these processes. The analyses in this chapter are guided by the following research questions introduced in chapter one of the study:

1. What sort of questions do students find difficult to answer when reading short stories? What are the reasons behind these difficulties?

2. What major reading strategies do students employ

  a) while answering reading comprehension questions?

  b) while answering literary questions?

3. What extra linguistic factors affect the way that students answer reading comprehension and literary questions?

Questions that participants found difficult

   An initial analysis of the questions that the participants found difficult to answer revealed that direct questions were found difficult by the participants. Twelve participants out of fifteen answered those questions which were direct incorrectly or

they were initially answered incorrectly and later turned to be correct after checking the text again. (see Appendix F)

Participants also found the reading comprehension questions which were about very specific information (time, place and person) challenging. They thought that some elements of the short story did not need to be focused on to understand the story itself because those events and characters did not change the direction of the events in the story. In other words, while reading short stories, the participants did not pay significant attention to specific information such as when something has happened. They seemed to ignore such details while reading. For example, when Hemin read question 6 in section A, which read "What time did the young man get up? Why?" he said, "I don't remember. I think he usually gets up late. I didn't notice that in the story." Similarly, Srusht pointed out that she noticed that it was not "a usual time" but that she does not "know why, he may be drunk."

The setting of the central events in the story was a hotel. There were also other places mentioned throughout the story but the participants seemed to have focused on the main setting and the results showed that most of them did not remember the other places in the story. For instance, when Amal read question 14 in section A, which read "Where did Peter and the young woman go in the taxi?" she simply stated that she could not remember. Similarly, Diar pointed out that he knew that the young woman felt love for him and they had a romantic time but he did not "remember exactly where did they go."

Besides the major characters in the story, there were also some minor characters. It was revealed that while answering the questions, the minor characters were not paid enough attention by the participants. Question 9 in section A was *"Why was Elinora a tiny little bit annoyed?"* Omed commented on the question and explained that he did not know what the role of the character Elinora was in the short story. Rather than trying to

answer the question, he said: "I don't know the function of the character." Narin thought that she did not know the answer of this question because "by once reading you can't get everything in any story." Rebaz and Hoshya said that they did not know the answer and Raman's and Diar's answers were turned to be correct after getting back to the story and checking their answers. These answers tell us that on the first reading, the participants seem to focus on the general gist of the story, rather than the specific details. However, some were able to locate the correct information in the story after going back to it for the second time. Focusing on the central setting, the main character(s) and not paying enough attention to other minor details may relate to the students' previous experiences with the exams that they take in short story courses in their syllabi. During the preparation of the questions for the current research, I obtained different exam papers from different universities in Kurdistan region to examine what students are usually assessed on. I noted that the main characters, themes, literary definitions, symbolism and important quotations were regularly included in the exam questions. Thus, the fact that many participants failed to locate the correct answers for such direct questions that asked for minor details in the story may be due to their prior training and expectations from questions on short stories. One can also say that for the participants' level, absorbing all the information in the short story may not be easy for the readers by reading once. So, they may not have been able to grasp all the details. It seemed that reading once was not enough for them to understand the text completely due to the possibility of having a poor proficiency level in reading comprehension or problems in reading comprehension in general. In line with this point, Andringa's (as cited in Janssen, Braaskma and Rijlaarsdam, 2006) study which investigated literary reading strategies revealed that less qualified readers focused mostly on the main story events and tended to view the story from one viewpoint only, while more proficient readers were able to perceive multiple viewpoints.

The weak points of the participants such as, lacking information about all the reading strategies available and the possibility of not being frequent story readers out of the syllabus should be taken into account in a better understanding of the results of these findings. Such reasons may indicate why the participants did not focus on the minor characters and setting of the short story, which is beyond the scope of this study.

The Importance of Vocabulary

Nash and Snowling (2006) described vocabulary as "the knowledge of words and their meanings," while Sesnan (1997) defined vocabulary as "total number of words we know and are able to use" (p. 123). Vocabulary is an essential element for reading instruction. It is clear that vocabulary and reading comprehension are closely associated to each other. From the data obtained in the present study, the results showed that low vocabulary proficiency was one of the disadvantages that the participants encountered while reading the short story. They either claimed that they did not know the words' or expressions' meanings or that they could not be certain about performing the task correctly. One of the most difficult tasks for the readers during the think aloud sessions emerged was the matching expression task. The participants claimed that the words that they were expected to match were either "archaic" or they have never heard them before. While completing this specific section, Hoshya asked whether she could leave this section blank and Srusht said that she "matched the expressions but I am sure about only one because I don't understand them good [*sic*]." Soz thought that "most of those expressions are archaic" and she has heard one of the expressions "to make amorous advance" in movies before. Maryam stated that it was not easy to guess them "because they are took out the text now [*sic*]." Among the expressions in section B to be matched by the participants, the third one seemed to be easier for them because they explained that the meaning of "off" and "give up" were familiar for them.

Matching Expressions Section

1. you **made too much fuss over here**	A. paid excessive attention to
2. was I **making a pass at** her	B. to behave recklessly
3. I am **off the stuff for life**	C. to make an amorous advance
4. I **made such a fool of myself**	D. to give something up

 Thus, in relation to the vocabulary issues that the participants had, the result indicated that they were relatively more comfortable when the unknown words were not taken out of the text, and hence their context, because this gave an opportunity to the participants to find the meaning of the words or expressions by guessing from the context. As Harmon (2002) states, "many students continue to struggle with comprehension because of the vocabulary knowledge and ineffective strategies" (p. 606). It was noticed that there was a good correlation between vocabulary proficiency and guessing strategy as those participants with better vocabulary proficiency had better performance in guessing. It was also explained by Lubliner and Sementana (2005) that " readers with larger vocabularies find reading easier, read more widely, and do better in school" (p.163).

The results of the current study were consistent with Brashdi's (2000) study which investigated reading problems and strategies among Arab English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners. She found that those participants who had sufficient vocabulary showed a better performance in reading comprehension than the other participants. Farley and Elmores' (1992) study on the relationship of reading comprehension to critical thinking skills, cognitive ability, and vocabulary in a sample of underachieving college freshmen revealed vocabulary knowledge to be a significant predictor of content than most other variables, including cognitive ability. It can be

argued that recognising more words in the story will improve the probability that the readers will grasp what they are reading and consequently perform better. So vocabulary has a significant impact on the capacity to understand what is read. Their impact can be direct, for example, comprehending information of the subject, and additionally indirect, for example, the capacity to resolve issues when the meaning is missed.

Reading Strategies used for Comprehension

This section illustrates the most common strategies used by the participants of the study while reading. The strategies are guessing the meaning of words, guessing from the title, repeating words/expressions from the story and visualisation. It also discusses the findings and the possible reasons behind the results.

Guessing the meaning of words from the context. The analysis of the reading strategies employed by the participants while answering the reading comprehension section showed that the most common strategy used was guessing the meaning of the words from the context. The participants used this strategy while they were directly asked about the meaning of words. At the point when they had multiple choices to find the correct meaning of a word or its synonym, they were more successful in finding the correct answer than in questions which provided no choices. The participants seemed to believe that the multiple choice questions helped them to find the correct answer.

The results of the current study also showed that some advantageous vocabulary learning techniques were created and exploited by learners to guess unknown words in the content and thereby understand the content. Content oriented speculating is one of these techniques. This strategy is a key learning aptitude for managing low-frequency vocabulary, especially in reading authentic texts (Celce-Murica, 2001). Similar to the

current study, Yousif (2014) claimed that one of the strategies that Kurdish EFL learners used frequently was understanding the meaning of unknown words from the contextual clues. This strategy was specifically employed by some participants to answer question 2 in section A:

"Tell me, was I very terrible last night?" "Oh, goodness," she said, "everybody   was feeling pretty high. You were all right." "Yeah," he said. "I must have been

dandy. Is everybody <u>sore</u> at me? "Good heavens, no," she said. "Everybody thought you were terribly funny…"

What does 'sore' mean in the passage above?

.   *a. shocked   b. angry   c. surprised*

Chomana pointed out that *"the right one is angry"* and thought that *"sore"* also could be considered as the synonym of other options like *"shock"* because they were not just angry, *"they were shocked also."* This shows that she has employed contextual guessing to find the correct answer unlike Soz, who employed grammatical clues to find the correct answer. She said that "angry, is the right answer" because the word *"at is used with angry just like sore."* Ranjbar (2012) who investigated the relationship between grammatical knowledge and the ability to guess word meaning revealed that there was a strong relationship between them. Hence, Soz's strategy of looking at the grammatical structure to guess the meaning is a strong one among EFL learners who are predominantly taught by traditional methods of language teaching, focusing on grammatical structures rather than communication.

Question 3 in section A was similar to the previous question but no options were given to the participants:

I did think that maybe you were a little <u>tight</u> at dinner—oh, you were perfectly

all right, and all that, but I did know you were feeling pretty gay."

What do you think "tight" means?

It was obvious that the participants used different forms of the guessing strategy to find the correct meaning of the word "tight" in the short story and they explained that the exact meaning of the word was not clear for them but from the contextual clues, they tried to construct the meaning. Hoshya stated that, "tight may be means bad or not all right, […] because he says I didn't think you were a little tight at dinner and then she says "oh you were perfectly fine." The uncertainty of the participants can be noticed more than in the previous questions in replying to this question as they kept repeating "maybe." Diar also said tight "means you were unmovable…you didn't move at all, may be." This shows that having a low proficiency in vocabulary prevents the reader to understand and integrate with the text fully. The uncertainty of the reader and his/her thinking about the meaning of the words or expressions may also create difficulties for the thinking process and solving problems, such as understanding the flow or the main idea of the text while reading.

Guessing from the title of the short story. From the data collected, it emerged that the title of the short story had an important role in understanding the short story and attracting the reader to be involved in reading. The title of the short story was also used by the participants to guess the main idea and the content of the short story. Similar to the current study, Ahmadi (2011) demonstrated that the title of a text has a powerful impact on the reader's comprehension. In addition, in his study on teachers' and students' perceptions towards improving vocabulary through using short stories in the EFL classroom, Hasan (2013) states that the those readers who would pay attention to the title of a story would learn more vocabulary form it. According to Cameron (2001), the titles may attract the readers' attention based on their age, gender and culture and the readers' interest for reading mostly changes according to these variables. Most of the participants emphasised that they guessed what might happen in the short story from the title of the short story. The title had the story's first impression. The title also made

them think about the main idea and the summary of the short story. They explained that the title was the starting point of their judgment on whether they would enjoy the story or not. Thus, the title brought them to the world of the short story and captured their attention and leads them to read on. Rebaz, for example, pointed out that:

> I think it describes the whole theme of the story because he thinks that he has done something terrible that night before because he was unconscious and he had no idea what to do but the young woman tells him he was perfectly fine that is same of the story

According to his quotation, Rebaz's understanding of the short story lied in his perception of the title because the title contained the whole message of text and he combined his interpretation of the title with the main idea of the text. Similarly, Bnar pointed out that he was inspired by the title that *"*something bad happened to a person and it's about that the person was fine before and completely all right." Bnar's interpretation suggested that she had prior knowledge about the significance of titles of the short stories in understanding them as she said "The title of many short stories are important. It can tell you the main idea of the short story and what the story about [*sic*]." Diar had a different view about the importance of the title and besides his emphasis that the title "gives you a clue what it is about" he also said that the title "is important because it makes you curious to read the short story. If you have interested title, it can make the reader curious to read it." Most of the participants agreed that the title of the short story is a good and very first tool to follow the sequence of events. Their awareness of the importance of this tool seemed to suggest that their prior training in reading and analysing short stories helped them in completing the think aloud sessions for the current study.

Repeating words/expressions from the story. It was observed that the participants repeated words and expressions that caught their attention in the story

immediately after reading the story as they tried to answer questions. While answering a question, Rebaz quoted "Peter is stuffy and foolish" and Narin told me about the main character of the short story saying that "He was a society pet and comical." Raman also replied a literary question jokingly and said "oh dear, oh dear, I don't remember that hahaha" to express that he does not know the answer. Moreover, Omed used the word "tight" in his comment on the effect of alcohol on the themes of the short story and it seemed that he did not know the exact meaning of the word but he used it instead of "reclusive." He said "alcohol make him unconscious so not being tight is one of the themes of the short story [*sic*]." The expressions "stuffy," "society pet," "oh dear oh dear" and "tight" were expressions that were used by the author in the short story. The expressions they have repeated were from the main character or showed negative feelings about him. This could indicate that the participants were emotionally involved while reading the text. This also shows that those linguistic items that catch the attention of the readers while reading the story are easily retrieved and immediately put in use. While doing that, the participants used an effective strategy, which includes readers' emotions, interests and attitudes towards the text content.

Repeating words and expressions can be seen as improving vocabulary. The participants tried to take some new words and expressions from the short story and use them in their answers and comments. Repeating words and expressions can be due to learning new words from the short story or lacking vocabulary on the part of the participants and compensating it by using the words which are still in their short memory. This result is consistent with Rashidi and Adivi (2010), who investigated incidental vocabulary learning through comprehension-focused reading of short stories using short stories to enrich students' vocabulary. The study was conducted among Iranian EFL learners. Their results indicated that the short stories can enrich the students' vocabulary. Hassan (2013) states that his findings showed that students encountered challenges in mastering

the meaning through studying short stories, but also learning vocabulary through short stories helped them to improve their vocabulary knowledge. So, the short stories can encourage learners to try to learn new words or expressions and utilise them in speaking. The emotional involvement of the readers could be considered as one of the beneficial strategies to be employed by the learners to comprehend the texts better.

Visualisation. After analysing the data to find out the most frequent strategies that were used by the participants, it was found out that visualisation is one of them. The participants created mental images to talk about or confirm their answers. It was found that some of readers used visualisation strategy while reading about the characters, their actions and their surroundings. They seemed to have created a visual picture of what they had read based on the text. I also noticed that those who created mental images in their answers were more successful in doing the tasks and answering the questions about the short story. Diar pointed out that the place "they go around and around then to the park to look the stars … that's so beautiful." Not all of what Diar said was included in the text. For example, the word "star" and "beautiful" did not exist in the text but she used these to form her mental imagery. Similarly, Srusht, on Q13 in section A, which read *"What happened on the side walk?,"* answered "Peter fell down. The weather may be is winter and the street covered with snow and white [*sic*]." After answering the question about what happened, she immediately depicted the setting by her explanation. She could be inspired by the sentence *"There was that nasty stretch of ice on the side walk"* in the short story to create the images. It could also be that this visual mental imagery has given her more encouragement to convince herself and me on the reason why Peter fell down and supported the correctness of her answer by the depiction in a better way. Saying "winter" and "snow on the street" is more likely to be an inspirational imagery taken from the text.

The visual images were not only used by the participants to imagine settings but they also visualised the characters. On the main character of the short story, Soz said "the young man is pale with a messy face, looks like so ugly." It seemed that the picture that Soz visualised for Peter was based on her feelings or attitude towards Peter's appearance as described by the author since *"messy face," and "ugly"* were not included in the text. To back her own interpretation, this participant and others have repeated the same attitude in different situations.

Readers usually try to employ different strategies to have better performance in reading. Griffiths' (2003) study investigated language learning strategy use and proficiency at a private language school in New Zealand. The results of his study showed that the participants used mental images at a high level. These results are also in line with Yousifˋs (2014) study. He states that the most frequent memory strategy used by his participants was visualisation.

Employing this strategy may be seen as an indicator to distinguish skilful readers and unskilful readers because skilful readers are able to visualise and there is a positive correlation between fluency and comprehension (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). The results of the current study also showed that visualisation was one of the characteristics of successful readers. Visualisation cues might be helpful self-check items for readers for comprehension. In other words, readers ought to see a motion picture going through their brains when reading. In case the motion picture or brain pictures stop, then the content is excessively troublesome or the reader is not actively involved in the process (Jensen, 2010). Hence, lower levels of achievement in comprehension.

Reading strategies employed while answering literary questions

It was noticed that while answering the literary questions, majority of the participants tried to provide answers similar to reading comprehension questions and

this showed that they did not have deep understanding of the short story and the questions. It seemed that most of them could not construct meanings on their own and draw conclusions explicitly. They also seemed to have a shallow understanding of the text. The participants tried to retell the story, not announcing their literary analysis while answering literary questions. Trying to find the answers of the literary questions in the passage without analysing and not being able to combine the related events well revealed the similarity of their answers to reading comprehension questions and literary questions. For instance, Q1 in section C read: *"How are the young man and the young woman described in the beginning of this story? What do these descriptions tell us?"* Soz quoted that "the young man is pale and the young woman with her eyes that is […] the woman with her starry eyes looking at him and telling him a story. I think she is pretty with clear eyes." This is a description of the complexion of the two characters and it lacks any analytical statements about the references to the two characters' descriptions. Amal's answer for the question was different from others as she linked her answer with literature but failed to answer the question correctly. It seemed that when she realised that the question was a literary one, she tried to answer it in a literary way. She quoted that:

> I think, his character is round character, round character I mean that character has problems and he has a conflict in the story and after the climax, he /she face a problem and solution. Here that man has a problem and he can't control his feeling and he talk to the girl about himself [*sic*].

She mentions one of the types of the characters in short stories, i.e. the "round character," and then plots the elements while her quote doesn't in fact relate to the question. This suggests that she was aware of the requirements of the question but still failed to deliver a valid analysis and hence the correct answer.

The participants' quotes about the contribution of alcohol on the themes of the short story were not analytical and literary answers as well. For example, Bawan pointed out that "drinking is not a solution to get rid of sadness." Here, the participant could not combine alcohol contribution to the main themes and did not create an analytical statement about joining the single elements to the whole story. She could not pull all of this information from the text together to create an analytical statement. This means that she was not able to answer the question correctly because the themes are not usually expressed plainly by the authors; the reader must question and analyse the story's points of interest to open it. Since Bawan employed the reading strategies she used for comprehension to answer literary questions, her conclusion failed to reach the correct answer.

As described in Chapter I, the participants of this study did not have enough literary background in literature in general and in English literature in particular. In the previous years, they had not studied any course related to analysing literature except for studying a general review of English literature. The course study included poetry, drama, short story and novel in their first year of English departments. This might have been a reason that precluded them to understand the text differently from what was required and they could not differentiate between the literary texts and non-literary texts. Moreover, Janseen, Braaksma and Rijlaarsdam (2006) pointed out that "making sense of a literary text requires time to reflect. Meanings may not occur on the first reading of a story, but might be generated only later through rereading and retrospection" (p. 47). It is also worth mentioning that having vocabulary issues and not enough awareness about reading strategies would influence the answers given because mastering the text and understanding it fully is essential to answering literary questions correctly.

The Effect of Cultural Background on Reading Short Stories

The analysis of the current data also revealed that culture related issues influenced the understanding and reading processes of the participants. The participants interpreted and mentioned the actions of the characters and their personalities in a way that could be interpreted to be biased. This emerged specifically as the participants were answering literary questions more than the reading comprehension questions because the literary questions required them to talk more on the personality of the characters. Literary questions generally transcend the literal meaning of the texts. This led the participants to be more open in the terms of giving verbal reports on culture and religion. For example, Chomana said:

> The man, Peter, his personality is not bad but he is drunk and get wasted. In my opinion everybody who drinks is a bad person because it will reach to something that no one like to do. You do something that make others feel bad of you or annoyed. For the girl, she was honest with him, she was frankly with him. May be she loved him. She didn't hide anything from him so she is honest. Every girl who has a husband or boyfriend ... it's like rare to a woman to love such a guy or be with him. Every woman hates that. For example in our culture most of the people don't like drunken men [*sic*].

In the quote above, the participant shows her point of view on those who drink alcohol. In her quote she links her society's standards and her emotions to understand the short story. Her references to "no one like to do" and "every woman hates that" show that she is actually referring to some predetermined criteria. At the end of her answer, she refers to the basis of these criteria as "our culture." Her words can be read as a bias here and the reason for her bias appears to be her understanding of how "most people" in her culture do not like drinking and drunk men. When Soz comments about Peter, the main character, and says "he slipped on the ice, thank God!" her answer also holds different

implications. Her expression "thank God" can be interpreted in two ways here: First, she is glad to see Peter slipping because she is sympathetic towards the woman and hates drunk men. Second, she may be a devout Muslim as Islam is the predominant religion of the Kurdistan region. Many Muslim Kurds usually may not call themselves religious in the matter of praying five times a day, however, in the Kurdish culture, secondary practices of Islam have a fortification and many do follow Islamic food restrictions and avoid alcohol. In both cases, Soz's exclamation regarding Peter's fall indicates that she did not approve of his drinking behaviour and her cultural background had an impact on this judgment.

Concerning the same topic, Amal said "I say alcohol isn't a solution. The young man isn't true for this. It's bad for society and religion." So, again, religious and social values have a great role in the life of the individuals of the society. It sometimes seemed that those values has exerted influence on the participants' lives, as Narin quoted "I have heard stories like that before how those men had bad affect on family and hit their wife [*sic*]." Her use of the reported stories indicates that this is not a personal experience and she has not seen it around similar to Soz, who quoted "it's said that alcohol brings joy." In other words, their judgment is steered by stories they have heard rather than personal experience, which confirms the interpretation that social rules and cultural values dictate their judgments when moral issues are concerned.

The literature on the relationship between reading comprehension and cultural background suggests that one of the elements of understanding a text well is general knowledge of the world. The result of the current study showed that the cultural differences influenced the students' answers and because of limited knowledge of the target culture or personal experience in the matters discussed, they read and analysed the text according to their own cultural and social norms. Erten and Razı (2009), who

investigated the effects of cultural familiarity on reading comprehension in the Turkish

context, revealed that:

> although reading activities do activate schematic knowledge and promote
>
> strategic reading behaviours, the influence of cultural familiarity remains intact.
>
> Therefore, if readers lack the relevant cultural schema, reading activities cannot
>
> fully compensate for the discrepancy or help readers comprehend a text (p. 71).

Similar to this study, Al-Mahrooqi's (2013) study revealed that familiarity with culture

facilitates understanding literary texts and allows for deeper involvement in the texts.

The lack of cultural familiarity sometimes leads to misinterpreting texts. So, knowledge

of the target culture is a factor that can facilitate reading comprehension. Al-Hassan's

(1992) study on the effects of culture and schemata on reading comprehension of

university readers found out that there was a significant difference in the scores gained

by those students having positive attitudes and those having negative attitudes towards

western culture. The correlation coefficient of such students demonstrated that the

degree of relationship was highly positive, and that students with positive attitudes had

a tendency to perform essentially better than those with negative attitudes. These

findings support the results of the current study where cultural background emerged as

an important issue in determining the way students related to the text and the characters

as well as impacting their understanding of the text itself.

The impact of their religion on their answers was significant. This was similar

to Lipson's (1983) study where he found an effect of religious affiliation on reading

comprehension. It was also discovered that the participants were integrated to the world

of the short story and showing sympathy and the feeling of hate to characters by them is

an evident. Ghasemi and Hajizade (2011) argue that short stories can make students

more engaged by the influence of emotion offered in them and their involvement with

the text and their experiences. In this respect, short stories may provide the opportunity

and the context to discuss cultural and social norms, making the topic more relevant to the readers' lives. This may lead to a better interaction with English culture. So short stories may provide contact with culture that other EFL learners may not have.

Conclusion

In this chapter, data obtained through the think aloud sessions was analysed descriptively to explore the techniques that participants employed and issues they focused on while reading short stories. The most common strategies used by the participants were prediction and visualisation. They seemed to have vocabulary issues. These may be due to poor vocabulary proficiency reasons. In the next chapter, these conclusions drawn from the analysis will be summarised and recommendations for further research will be discussed.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, a short summary of the findings of the present research concerning reading short stories and the thinking process involved in reading them will be presented. Based on these findings, recommendations will also be given for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and further research.

This study investigated the students' thinking processes while reading a short story. It attempted to locate how the readers were trying to establish mental representations of the characters, events and settings and uncover the fundamental processes that were involved in reading short story. This investigation about reading short stories as literary texts had its own significance in understanding students' mental processes. It also helped to see a bigger picture regarding the EFL learner's difficulties and main strategies they employed during the reading process. As the findings and given knowledge have a potential in shaping better teaching, learners can be directed to achieve better improvement in their reading comprehension skills and enjoy literary texts. According to Janseen, Braaksma and Rijlaarsdam (2006):

> most models of text comprehension focus on the cognitive aspects of the reading process. However, literary reading encompasses both cognitive and emotional aspects. Feelings, sensations, emotional and aesthetic reactions play an important role in literary reading; they are part of the process of understanding. (p. 36)

In this respect, revealing emotional factors involved in the reading process was one of the achievements of the study.

Summary of the findings

The present study found that as a consequence of poor skills in reading comprehension, students ignored some parts of the text as they were reading it. The general gist of the story caught the attention of the participants rather than the specific information because they regarded direct and very specific questions as difficult questions and not easy to be comprehended by reading once. Concerning this point, vocabulary was discovered as a disadvantage that the students encountered while reading the text. The participants found the words and expressions difficult in terms of understanding their meanings when they were taken out of the content. This problem lead to hesitations in indicating the exact meaning of words and predicting.

There were some reading techniques which students employed frequently while reading the short story employed in this study. Predicting word meanings was one of them. The participants used contextual clues and grammatical clues to find the meaning of the unknown words. It was found that when the words were unknown and could not be predicted, made the integrating text difficult. They created difficulties for the participants to make engagement with the text. Furthermore, the participants used mental imagery to clarify their answers. This visualisation was a helpful strategy for a better performance in reading comprehension. It was revealed that their visualisations were based on their feelings or attitudes to characters, characters' actions and surroundings. Besides these strategies, the findings indicated that the participants' emotional involvement lead to learning of new words or expressions and utilising them in speaking immediately after reading.

The participants mostly could not develop their own analytical statements and build their own analysis. Their attempts in making sense of the literary text were not successful enough. It was noted that the participants employed the same strategies which they used to answer reading comprehension questions while they were trying to

answer literary questions. So, there was a big similarity between answers given to reading comprehension questions and literary questions. Both of them were mostly in the form of storytelling.

The participants appeared to have answered some of the questions under the influence of their cultural background. This means that their cultural values, perceived social rules and religion had important roles in understanding the story, which was written in a western context. These standards caused emotional reactions in the participants while answering the questions.

Recommendations for Practice

The findings of the current study delineated different aspects of the reading process including students' thinking processes, issues while reading and reading strategies. To discern students' issues and the way they read short stories is meaningful for teachers. When teachers have deeper and wider knowledge about while reading processes, they are able to design better activities to teach reading and deal with the issues they may be facing with their students more competently.

According to this study, EFL learners confronted some issues with reading short stories. They focused on the major elements of the story and ignored or skimmed some elements which they thought were not important. This prevented them from comprehending the text fully. Therefore, specific reading strategies should be taught more explicitly to raise awareness among Kurdish EFL learners for the sake of better comprehension. For example, providing learners with more knowledge about employing skimming and scanning strategies and how these strategies can be used for different purposes while trying to understand a text through shifting. Shifting strategies relies on the sort of text the reader is reading (Harmer, 2003).

Through the results, it was revealed students have difficulties in comprehending the text due to lack of vocabulary. In a study on vocabulary learning strategies and their contribution to reading comprehension of EFL undergraduate students in Kerman Province, Kafipour and Naveh (2011) found that vocabulary learning strategies have a significant role in understanding texts. Therefore, teachers need to expand ways to improve vocabulary through reading and other skills during teaching short stories or they need to carry out vocabulary work before teaching short stories, so as to develop students' receptive vocabulary as well. Al-Sadık (2014) stated that sometimes instructors used limited vocabulary learning strategies and they did not have enough background knowledge about vocabulary learning strategies. Concerning the same point, it appeared in the findings that students used limited reading strategies and failed to use any vocabulary learning strategies. The memory strategies like predicting and compensation strategies such as visualisation were used frequently. Therefore, other possible vocabulary learning strategies should be taught to be employed by EFL learners while reading short stories.

The results indicated that the students faced difficulties in terms of literary analysis. So, to overcome this problem prior knowledge on literary analysis is necessary. Students ought to be taught how to analyse literary texts and what is needed to analyse short stories. This can be fulfilled by providing more practice about literary analysis in short story courses. In other words, in addition to studying short stories as reading texts, students should be taught about methods of literary analysis.

Regarding the impact of the cultural background on the students' answers, it was shown that the cultural background had a negative role in understanding stories because the cultural factors made the students to think in only one direction. To solve this problem, students should be exposed to different perspectives regarding cultural issues and stereotypes. This may help to reduce learners' ethnocentricity and increase their

tolerance as well as raising their cultural awareness. Taking this into consideration can help students better understand and analyse the text without bias.

Recommendations for further research

The participants of the current study were limited to15 university students from three different universities in Kurdistan region. It is difficult to generalise the findings. Therefore, to further enhance the reliability of the findings presented in the present study, more studies need to be conducted with a higher number of participants. A questionnaire can be developed using the findings of the current study and then this can be used to collect data about learners' reading processes. In this way, findings can be generalised to a larger population and other factors that might be related to how the learners read short stories might be investigated as well.

The current study was conducted with second year university students. However, Kurdish EFL learners are introduced short stories in grades 10, 11 and 12 for the first time. In those classes, these texts are treated as reading texts rather than literary texts and are not usually analysed. This may be the reason why university students face such difficulties in analysing texts in a literary way. Therefore, a similar study can be conducted with the high school students to investigate whether there are differences between university students and high school students with regard to the way they respond to literary texts. Such a study could identify the learners' reading issues and help teachers to design appropriate activities to help them be prepared for further literary analysis. This would then help learners to be readier for the next stage of their studies in the universities.

Cultural issues appeared to be significant factors while learners read short stories. This is due to the fact that short stories are situated in a specific cultural and

social setting and that they are not necessarily meant to be read by language learners as a learning material. In the current study, religion and attitudes towards drinking were the issues that emerged as significant issues impacting students' comprehension. Identifying such sensitive issues for Kurdish EFL learners through an empirical study can help lay the grounds for better selection of short stories and planning relevant learning activities around literary texts.

As it was mentioned earlier, this study aimed to investigate the while reading stage of the reading processes. Further research studies should investigate the other stages to determine how the three stages of reading (pre-reading, while-reading and post reading) are related and how they affect each other, not only for reading short stories but for other texts as well. Such a study might clarify whether reading without activation of the three stages is effective or not.

Finally, it would be beneficial to conduct a study to investigate the effectiveness of using certain vocabulary learning strategies as a pre-reading activity for short stories to see whether this would help with decreasing the limitations caused by vocabulary problems of the learners.

Conclusion

The present study investigated the reading and thinking processes employed by university students during reading a short story. Its findings and recommendations are targeting at better teaching and learning in EFL classrooms. It is hoped that by understanding the students thinking processes, teachers will be more informed about how students read short stories and therefore developed better lesson plans to help them understand such literary texts.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

The short story (You Were Perfectly Fine)

<u>YOU WERE PERFECTLY FINE</u>

By: Dorothy parker (1893 –1967)

The pale young man eased himself carefully into the low chair, and rolled his head to the side, so that the cool chintz comforted his cheek and temple.

"Oh, dear," he said. "Oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear. Oh."

The clear-eyed girl, sitting light and erect on the couch, smiled brightly at him.

"Not feeling so well today?" she said.

"Oh, I'm great," he said. "Corking, I am. Know what time I got up? Four o'clock this afternoon, sharp. I kept trying to make it, and every time I took my head off the pillow, it would roll under the bed. This isn't my head I've got on now. I think this is something that used to belong to Walt Whitman. Oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear."

"Do you think maybe a drink would make you feel better?" she said.

"The hair of the mastiff that bit me?" he said. "Oh, no, thank you. Please never speak of anything like that again. I'm through. I'm all, all through. Look at that hand; steady as a humming-bird. Tell me, was I very terrible last night?"

"Oh, goodness," she said, "everybody was feeling pretty high. You were all right."

"Yeah," he said. "I must have been dandy. Is everybody **sore** at me?"

"Good heavens, no," she said. "Everybody thought you were terribly funny. Of course, Jim Pierson was **a little stuffy**, there, for a minute at dinner. But people sort of held him back in his chair, and got him calmed down. I don't think anybody at the other tables noticed it at all. Hardly anybody."

"He was going to sock me?" he said. "Oh, Lord. What did I do to him?"

"Why, you didn't do a thing," she said. "You were perfectly fine. But you know how silly Jim gets, when he thinks anybody is making **too much fuss** over Elinor."

"Was I **making a pass at** Elinor?" he said, "Did I do that?"

"Of course you didn't." she said." You were only fooling that's all. She thought you were awfully amusing. She was having a marvelous time. She only got **a little tiny bit annoyed** just once, when you poured the clam-juice down her back."

"My God," he said." Clam-juice down that back. And every vertebra a little Cabot. Dear God. What'll I ever do?"

"Oh, she'll be all right," she said." Just send her some flowers, or something. Don't worry about it. It isn't anything."

"No I won't worry," he said." I haven't got a care in the world. I'm sitting pretty. Oh, dear, oh, dear. Did I do any other fascinating tricks at dinner?"

"You were fine," she said." Don't be so foolish about it. Everybody was crazy about you. The maître d'hôtel was a little worried because you wouldn't stop singing, but he really didn't mind. All he said was, he was afraid they'd close the place again, if there was so much noise. But he didn't care a bit, himself. I think he loved seeing you have such a good time. Oh, you were just singing away, there, for about an hour. It wasn't so terribly loud, at all."

"So I sang," he said." That must have been a treat. I sang."

"Don't you remember?" she said." You just sang one song after another. Everybody in the place was listening. They loved it. Only you kept insisting that you wanted to sing some song about some kind of fusiliers or other, and everybody kept shushing you, and you'd keep trying to start it again. You were wonderful. We were all trying to make you stop singing for a minute, and eat something, but you wouldn't hear of it. My, you were funny."

"Didn't I eat any dinner?" he said.

"Oh, not a thing," she said." Every time the waiter would offer you something, you'd give it right back to him, because you said that he was your long-lost brother, changed in the cradle by a gypsy band, and that anything you had was his. You had him simply roaring at you."

"I bet I did," he said, "I bet I was comical. Society's Pet, I must have been. And what happened then, after my overwhelming success with the waiter?"

"Why, nothing much," she said." You took a sort of dislike to some old man with white hair, sitting across the room, because you didn't like his necktie and you wanted to tell him about it. But we got you out, before he got really mad."

"Oh, we got out," he said." Did I walk?"

"Walk! Of course you did," she said." You were absolutely all right. There was that nasty stretch of ice on the sidewalk, and you did sit down awfully hard, you poor dear. But good heavens, that might have happened to anybody."

"Oh, sure," he said." Louisa Alcott or anybody. So I fell down on sidewalk. That would explain what's the matter with my—Yes. I see. And then what, if you don't mind?"

"Ah, now, Peter!" she said. "You can't sit there and say you don't remember what happened after that! I did think that maybe you were a little **tight** at dinner—oh, you were perfectly all right, and all that, but I did know you were feeling pretty gay. But you were so serious, from the time you fell down—I never knew you to be that way. Don't you know how you told me I had never seen your real self before? Oh, Peter, I just couldn't bear it, if you didn't remember that lovely long ride we took together in the taxi! Please, you do remember that, don't you? I think it would simply kill me, if you didn't."

"Oh, yes," he said. "Riding in the taxi. Oh, yes, sure. Pretty long ride, hmm?"

"Round and round and round the park," she said. "Oh, and the trees were shining so in the moonlight. And you said you never knew before that you really had a soul."

"Yes," he said. "I said that. That was me."

"You said such lovely, lovely things," she said. "And I'd never known, all this time, how you had been feeling about me, and I'd never dared to let you see how I felt about you. And then last night—oh, Peter dear, think that taxi ride was the most important thing that ever happened to us in our lives."

"Yes," he said. "I guess it must have been."

"And we're going to be so happy," she said. "Oh, I just want to tell everybody! But I don't know—I think maybe it would be sweeter to keep it all to ourselves."

"I think it would be," he said.

"Isn't it lovely?" she said.

"Yes," he said. "Great."

"Lovely!" she said.

"Look here," he said, "do you mind if I have a drink? I mean, just medicinally, you know. I'm **off the stuff for life**, so help me. But I think I feel a collapse coming on."

"Oh, I think it would do you good," she said. "You poor boy, it's a shame you feel so awful. I'll go make you a whisky and soda."

"Honestly," he said, "I don't see how you could ever want to speak to me again, after I **made such a fool of myself**, last night. I think I'd better go join a monastery in Tibet."

"You crazy idiot!" she said. "As if I could ever let you go away now! Stop talking like that. You were perfectly fine."

She jumped up from the couch, kissed him quickly on the forehead, and ran out of the room.

The pale young man looked after her and shook his head long and slowly, then dropped it in his damp and trembling hands.

"Oh, dear," he said. "Oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear."

Appendix B

The think-aloud questions

Section A

Reading comprehension questions.

1. What do you think the significance of the short story's title is?

2. Read this passage:

> *Tell me, was I very terrible last night?"*
>
> *"Oh, goodness," she said, "everybody was feeling pretty high. You were all right."*
>
> *"Yeah," he said. "I must have been dandy. Is everybody <u>sore</u> at me?"*
>
> *"Good heavens, no," she said. "Everybody thought you were terribly funny…"*

What does 'sore' mean in the passage above?

    a. shocked   b. angry   c. surprised

3. "*I did think that maybe you were a little <u>tight</u> at dinner—oh, you were perfectly all right, and all that, but I did know you were feeling pretty gay.*"

- What do you think 'tight' means?

4. How does the young man feel at the beginning of the story? How do you know?

5. How do you think the young woman feels throughout the story? What evidence is there for this?

6. What time did the young man get up? Why?

7. What does the young man want to know about the previous evening?

8. According to the young woman, why Jim Pierson *a little stuffy?*

9. Why was Elinor *a tiny little bit annoyed?*

10. How long was the young man singing? How did the maître d'hotel react?

11. Why did the young man not eat anything?

12. Why was the young man taken out of the hotel?

13. What happened on the sidewalk?

14. Where did Peter and the young woman go in the taxi?

15. How does the young woman feel about what happened in the taxi?

16. Why do you think Peter asks for a drink?

17. How do you think Peter feels after the young woman leaves the room?

Section B

Match the expressions in the bold below with their definitions in the right-hand column.

1. You **made too much fuss over here** to	A. paid excessive attention
2. Was I **making a pass at** her?	B. to behave recklessly
3. I am **off the stuff for life**.	C. to make an amorous advance
4. I **made such a fool of myself**.	D. to give something up

Section C

Literary questions

1. How are the young man and the young woman described in the beginning of this story? What do these descriptions tell us?
2. In your opinion, what are the main themes covered in the story?
3. Alcohol consumption seems to play a significant role in the story. Discuss the ways in which it contributes to the themes of the story.
4. Is the atmosphere of the story light-hearted or is there a dark side to it? Give reasons for your answer.
5. *"Look at that hand; steady as a hummingbird. Tell me, was I very terrible last night?"*

-Identify the figure of speech in the sentence above.

6. Do you believe the young woman's version of events from the previous night. Why?
7. Most of the story consists of direct speech? What effect does this have on the reader?

Appendix C

Approval letter by Department of English/ School of Basic Education/ University of Sulaimani

Appendix D

Approval letter by Department of English/ School of Basic Education/ University of Salahaddin

حكومەتى هەرێمى كوردستان - عێراق
ئەنجومەنى وەزيران
وەزارەتى خوێندنى باڵا و تويژينەوەى زانستى
سەرۆكايەتى زانكۆى سەلاحەددين- هەولێر
كۆليژى پەروەردەى بنەرەتى
بەشى ئينگليزى

مـجلس الـسوزراء
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
رئاسة جامعة صلاح الدين- اربيل
كلية التربية الأساس
القسم الانجليزية

Kurdistan Regional government-Iraq \ Council of Ministers \ Ministry of higher education & scientific research
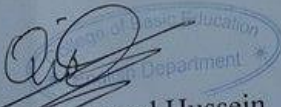Presidency of Salahaddin University-Erbil \College of Basic Education\English Department

| ٢٧١٥ / | / | كوردى: | ٢٠١٥/ | / | زايينى : | / | ژمارە : أ |

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is to confirm that Mr.Peshawa Jalal Mohammaed, an MA candidate at your institute, is permitted to collect in University of Sallahaddin, School of Basic education, Department of English. Mr. Mohammed has used "Thinking-aloud Method" to collect his research data.

Should you need any further information, kindly feel free to contact me.

Qismat Muhammad Hussein

Head of English Department

Email: qismat.zahawi@gmail.com

ناونيشان: هەولێر- شەقامى ٩٢/ بەرامبەر دەروازەى دى ى زانكۆ

تەلەفزن:٠٧٥٠٣٧٧٥٢ ١٥/٠٤/٢٨ احسان

Appendix E

Approval letter by Department of English/ School of Education/ University of Charmo

KURDISTAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT
Council Of Ministers
Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research
University of Charmo
College of Education

حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان
سـەرۆکایەتی ئەنجوومەنی وەزیران
وەزارەتی خوێندنی بالاو توێژینەوەی
زانستی
سـەرۆکایەتی زانکۆی چەرموو
کۆلێژی پەروەردە

No :
Date: 16 / 2 / 2015

بەشی ئینگلیزی
English Department

ژمارە :
ـنکەوت : 2015 / زاینی / /
/ 2714 / کوردی /

To: Whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to inform you that Mr. Peshawa Jalal Mohammed, one of your MA students at your institute, is allowed to collect data in Charmo University, School of Education, Department of English. Mr. Mohammed has used "Thinking-Aloud Protocol" to collect his research data.

Ibrahim M. Ali Murad
Head of English Department

Email: amurad8m@yahoo.com
Cell# 00964+07703578133

Appendix F

The table of the participants' answers

Participants	Reading Comprehension			Matching Expressions			Literary Questions		
	Correct answers	Incorrect answers	Incorrect turned to correct	Correct answers	Incorrect answers	Incorrect turned to correct	Correct answers	Incorrect answers	Incorrect turned to correct
Chomana	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12,13	15,16	10,14,17	2, 3	1, 4	_	2, 4	1,3,5,6,7	_
Amal	4,5.6,7,10,12,15,16,17	1,2,3,8,9.11,13,14	_	1,2,3,4	_	_	2,3,4,5,7	1,6	_
Amira	2,4,5,7,9,16	1,3,6,8,11,12,13,14,17	10, 15	_	1,2,3,4	_	2,4,6,7	1,3,5	_
Narin	1,3,5,6,7,13,14,15,17	2,4,8,9,10,11,12,16	_	1,2,3,4	_	_	3,4,5,7	1,2,6	_
Bawan	1,5,6,8,10,11,12,13,14,15,17	2,3,4,7,16	9	3	1,2,4	_	2,6,7	1,3,4,5	_
Omed	4,5,7,11,14,15	1,2,3,6,8,10,12,13,16	9	3	1,2,4	_	1,2,3,5,6,7	4	_
Raman	1,2,4,7,14,15,16,17	3,8,9,11,12,13	5,6,10	1,2,3,4	_	_	5,7	1,2,3,4,6	_
Rebaz	1,2,4,7,8,10,11,13,14,15,17	3,5,9	6,12,16	1,3	2,4	_	4,6	1,2,3,5,7	_
Hoshya	2,3,4,7,11,12,14,15,17	1,5,8,9,13,16	6,10	1,3	2,4	_	1,7	2,3,4,5,6	_

Hemin	1,2,7,10,12,13	3,4,5,8,9,11,15,16,17	6,14	_	1,2,3,4	_	5	1,2,3,4,6,7	_
Diar	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,11,12,13,15,16	17,14	9,10	3,4	1,2	_	2,5,6,7	1, 3,4	_
Soz	2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13	1,3,14,15,16,17	_	3	1,2,4	_	2,3,4,5,7	1,6	_
Srusht	1,2,4,6,9,10,11,13,14,15	3,5,8,12,16,17	7	1,2,3,4	_	_	4,5,7	1,2,3,5	_
Bnar	1,2,4,7,14,15,16,17	3,5,8,9,11,12,13	6,10	1,2	3,4	_	5,7,6	1,2,3,4	_
Maryam	2,12,14,15,16	1,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,11,17	6,13	2	1,3,4	_	6,7	1,2,3,4,5	_
Average	135	96	24	30	30	0	48	57	0