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**Investigating the Effect of Reading English Short Stories  
in Developing EFL Students' Vocabulary.**

**The Case of First Year LMD Students at the University of Ghardaïa**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Master Degree in  
Didactics**

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## **Dedication**

*This thesis is dedicated to my dear parents, whose unyielding support and encouragement have been the cornerstone of my academic journey. Their sacrifices, love, and unwavering belief in my potential have inspired me to strive for this academic work.*

*To my wife and my brothers who brought me up with love, encouragement and all the support.*

*To all my colleagues and friends who have supported me to complete this humble work. Thank you for your encouragement, support, and for making this journey a memorable one.*

*To all of you, I gladly dedicate this work and these words.*

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*Without their cooperation, this research would not have been possible.*

## **Abstract**

The current study aims to investigate the effect of reading short stories in developing EFL first year LMD students' vocabulary acquisition at the University of Ghardaïa. The purpose of this dissertation is to achieve a shared understanding and awareness of the importance and impact of reading short stories in education, particularly in learning English as a foreign language. Therefore, we hypothesize that reading English short stories is a useful strategy for improving students' capacity to grasp new vocabulary. To confirm this hypothesis, we select to use a descriptive study derived from the results obtained from a teachers' and students' questionnaire. The tools used to achieve these objectives are questionnaires administered to English Language teachers and first year LMD students at the University of Ghardaïa. This study comprises three main chapters. The first two chapters is the theoretical part, including overview of the literature. The first chapter examines vocabulary and second language acquisition, while the second focuses on reading and short stories. The third chapter involves the presentation and discussion of data obtained from questionnaires administered to both students and teachers.

***Key words:*** *vocabulary acquisition, short stories, EFL learners, reading.*

## **List of Abbreviation**

**LMD** : License - Master – Doctorate

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# **General Introduction**

## **Introduction**

Undeniably, vocabulary plays an important role in language teaching and learning without which learners will not be able to develop other skills successfully, since knowledge of vocabulary is the raw material for all thoughts and feelings to be expressed and conveyed through the medium of language. Harmer (1991) argues that “If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh” (p. 153). He overemphasizes the importance of acquiring vocabulary and states that very little can be expressed without grammar, while without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. Hence, assisting learners to acquire a wide range of vocabulary knowledge seems to be indispensable for any language teaching program. Therefore, designing a structured and effective approach to enrich learners’ knowledge of vocabulary has to be considered as the first priority. Most of EFL learners suffer from lack of sufficient knowledge of vocabulary and get frustrated by not knowing the meaning of key vocabulary items in a passage, consequently, they find the task of reading comprehension and other skills as tiresome, laborious and tedious job and soon give up the task. In order to help our learners not to get frustrated easily and assist them enjoy the language learning tasks we should find ways to enrich their knowledge of vocabulary, one of which is using authentic materials such as short stories that make it possible for the learners to widen their vocabulary and develop their competence and become more autonomous learners. To alleviate the problem, it seems to be of utmost importance for language educators and materials designers to provide learners with most interesting redundant materials that challenge learners and at the same time familiarize them with wider scope of vocabulary. To do so, researchers should take the first steps to pioneer new methods and techniques to make our learners as much competent to communicate in the foreign language as other EFL learners are.

Having felt this necessity, the researchers have been motivated to probe into the issue and find out if implementing short stories can help learners enhance their vocabulary learning. The results of the current study can assist teachers to move in the direction of recognizing the importance of learning vocabulary and providing them with as much knowledge of vocabulary as they need to feel confident enough to take on the task of language learning more easily. Since in modern methods and approaches a greater weight has been given to vocabulary instruction than before, this research will be of great help for teachers and learners and our language teaching materials designers to incorporate more authentic sources into language teaching curriculum.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of reading short stories on improving first year university students' vocabulary knowledge. More specifically it investigates the impact of reading short stories to enhance student's vocabulary and tries to provide more information about the effectiveness of short stories as a teaching instrument in learning vocabulary.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the importance of vocabulary acquisition in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, many Algerian EFL learners, particularly those at the University of Ghardaïa, face significant challenges in developing their vocabulary knowledge. The current methods of vocabulary instruction, which rely heavily on rote memorization and decontextualized word lists, have been shown to be ineffective in promoting long-term vocabulary retention and usage.

Furthermore, the lack of exposure to authentic language and vocabulary in context has been identified as a major obstacle to vocabulary acquisition among Algerian EFL learners. The use of short stories, which provide a meaningful context for

learning and promote learner engagement, has been shown to be an effective way to improve vocabulary knowledge. However, the use of short stories in EFL vocabulary instruction has received relatively little attention in the Algerian context.

### **Research Questions**

This research tries to answer the following questions:

1. How can reading short stories help EFL first year LMD students to acquire new vocabulary knowledge?
2. To what extent does reading short stories affect EFL first year LMD students in their educational development?

### **Research Hypotheses**

To answer the research questions, it is hypothesized that :

1. Integrating short stories in EFL first-year LMD classes will significantly enhance students' vocabulary acquisition.
2. Reading short stories is a useful strategy for improving students' capacity to grasp new vocabulary.

### **Research Objectives**

This research aims to :

1. Investigates the effect of reading short stories to develop student's vocabulary.
2. Provides more information about the effectiveness of short stories as a teaching instrument in learning vocabulary.
3. Identifies the challenges and limitations of using short stories in EFL vocabulary instruction from the perspectives of teachers and learners.

### **Rationale**

The rationale for this study stems from the practical need to enhance vocabulary acquisition among first-year LMD students at the University of Ghardaïa. By

investigating the effectiveness of English short stories as a pedagogical tool, this research aims to provide educators with evidence-based strategies to improve vocabulary instruction. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of more engaging and effective teaching practices, ultimately benefiting students' language proficiency and academic success.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

This study is structured into three main chapters with general introduction and general conclusion. The first chapter provides a theoretical foundation, exploring recent research on vocabulary acquisition. It covers the definition of vocabulary, breadth and depth of word knowledge, vocabulary acquisition, the importance of vocabulary, types of vocabulary, vocabulary teaching strategies (planned and unplanned), vocabulary learning strategies, and strategies for vocabulary development.

Chapter Two represents the second theoretical chapter and explores the role of reading short stories in language learning. It provides definitions of reading and short stories, discusses the importance of reading comprehension, the reading skill, types of reading (intensive and extensive), reading strategies, the characteristics of a good short story, the advantages of using short stories in EFL classes, and how short stories can enhance vocabulary acquisition.

The third chapter presents the practical component, detailing the research instruments used and analyzing the results obtained from students' and teachers' questionnaires. This analysis aims to determine whether reading English short stories has an effect on developing EFL students' vocabulary.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Our research faced several challenges. First, limited access to relevant primary sources in the university library forced us to rely on secondary and electronic sources.

Although exams student presence on campus, the overall academic workload and stress levels made some students less willing to participate in the questionnaire. Furthermore, as a teacher I as well was so busy with exams and other teaching assignments, leaving me with limited time to fully dedicate myself to the research.

# **Part One: Theoretical Part**

## **Chapter One : Vocabulary and Second Language Acquisition**

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Definition of Vocabulary

#### 1.2 Breadth and Depth of Word Knowledge

#### 1.3 Vocabulary Acquisition

#### 1.4 The Importance of Vocabulary

#### 1.5 Type of Vocabulary

#### 1.6 Vocabulary Teaching Strategies

##### 1.6.1 Planned Teaching Strategies

##### 1.6.2 Unplanned Teaching Strategies

#### 1.7 Vocabulary Learning Strategies

##### 1.7.1 Making Inference from Context

##### 1.7.2 Word Ignorance

##### 1.7.3 Dictionary Use

#### 1.8 Strategies for Vocabulary

##### Development

### Conclusion

## **Introduction**

Vocabulary acquisition is a fundamental aspect of second language learning, playing a crucial role in enabling learners to communicate effectively and accurately in the target language. The ability to understand and use vocabulary is essential for language learners, as it forms the building blocks of language comprehension and production. This chapter will explore the complex relationship between vocabulary and second language acquisition, examining the key theories, concepts, and research findings that underpin our understanding of vocabulary acquisition in a second language. By investigating the nature of vocabulary knowledge, the processes involved in acquiring new words, and the factors that influence vocabulary learning, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the role of vocabulary in second language acquisition.

### **1.1 Definition of Vocabulary**

McCarthy (1990, p.13) refers to words as “freestanding items of language that have meanings”. On the other hand, Schmitt briefly defines words as a combination of sounds or its representation in writing that symbolises and communicates a meaning. He argued by adding that in order to master a word, it is not sufficient to learn only its meaning, but also to learn its register, association, collocation, grammatical behaviour, written form, spoken form, and frequency. All these properties are known as word knowledge.

### **1.2 Breadth and Depth of Word Knowledge**

Vocabulary knowledge encompasses two key dimensions: breadth and depth. Breadth refers to the quantity of words a learner knows, often measured by word frequency (Hudson, 2007). In contrast, depth of word knowledge involves understanding various aspects of a word, including its pronunciation, morphology,

syntax, meaning, register, and frequency (Quian, 1999, cited in Hudson, 2007). As learners develop a deeper understanding of words, they also acquire knowledge of associated words, highlighting an interdependent relationship between breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge (Hudson, 2007). This means that a larger vocabulary repertoire enables learners to know words more thoroughly, and vice versa."

### **1.3 Vocabulary Acquisition**

The question of how we acquire words has long been a focus of research in applied linguistics, seeking to understand the cognitive mechanisms involved in first and second language acquisition. According to Laufer (2004), acquiring a second language is more complex than acquiring a first language, requiring greater attention. He suggests that most vocabulary in a second language is acquired through input, particularly reading, and advocates for extensive reading to facilitate vocabulary learning. Laufer also emphasizes the importance of massive exposure to the foreign language, which may be challenging to achieve in a classroom setting.

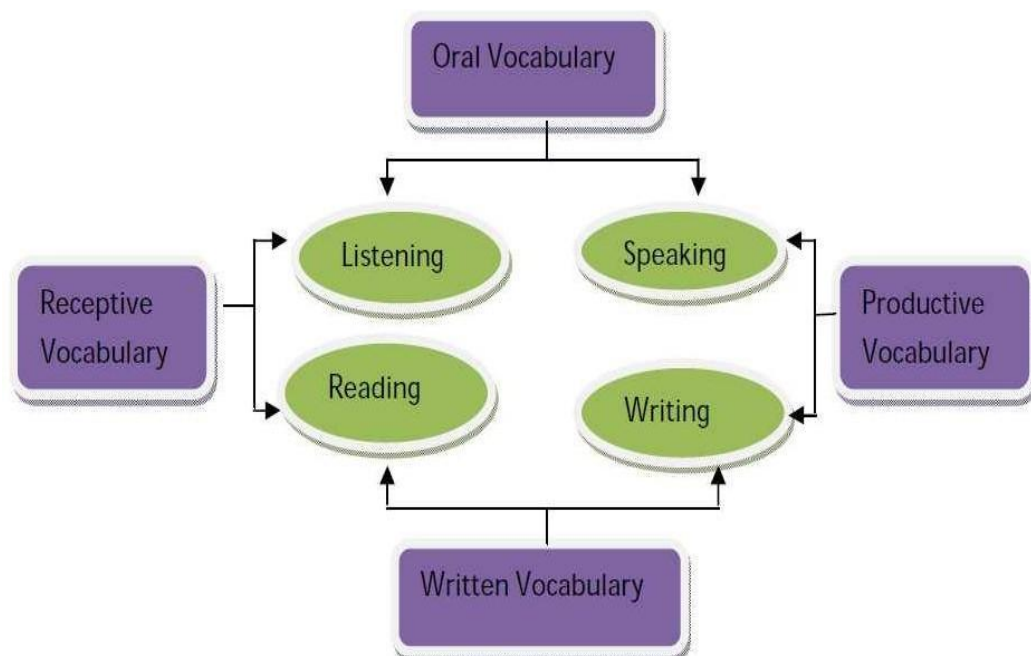
### **1.4 The Importance of Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is a crucial aspect of language learning, playing a central role in successful language acquisition. Researchers emphasize that vocabulary is the core component of language, connecting to phonology, morphology, syntax, and meaning systems (Daller, 2010). Vocabulary knowledge enables language use, and language use, in turn, increases vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 1997). Studies have shown that vocabulary is essential for reading achievement, communication, and language proficiency. Scholars argue that vocabulary acquisition is an ongoing process that requires time, practice, and exposure to the language. Unlike grammar, vocabulary is a daily practice that involves learning and using new words in context. Effective vocabulary acquisition can lead to increased confidence in language use, and students

prioritize vocabulary learning, often using dictionaries to aid their learning. As Wilkins (1972) famously stated, "Without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed," highlighting the importance of vocabulary in language learning.

### 1.5 Types of Vocabulary

Researchers distinguish between two types of vocabulary knowledge: receptive and productive. Receptive vocabulary refers to the words that learners can recognize and understand when listening or reading, but may not necessarily use in speaking or writing. Productive vocabulary, on the other hand, consists of words that learners can use correctly in speaking and writing. According to Hiebert and Kamil (2005), vocabulary knowledge can be either receptive or productive, with receptive vocabulary being larger than productive vocabulary. Haycraft (1978) defines receptive vocabulary as words that learners can recognize but not produce, while productive vocabulary includes words that learners can understand, pronounce, and use constructively.



**Figure 1:** Al-Dersi (2013, p. 74) Types of Vocabulary

## **1.6 Vocabulary Teaching Strategies**

In an EFL classroom, learners may encounter difficulties understanding certain words, requiring teacher intervention. To address this, teachers employ various strategies, including planned and unplanned vocabulary teaching approaches. According to Hatch and Brown (2000), teaching strategies encompass all actions teachers take to facilitate learner understanding.

### **1.6.1 Planned Teaching Strategy**

Planned vocabulary teaching involves deliberate and explicit instruction, where teachers pre-determine what vocabulary to teach. According to Hatch and Brown (1995), this approach is referred to as "intentional vocabulary instruction". Seal (1991) identifies two key categories of planned teaching strategies:

- Presenting the meaning and form of new words
- Reviewing and consolidating previously taught words through recycling and practice.

### **1.6.2 Unplanned Teaching Strategy**

Unplanned vocabulary teaching refers to a teacher's spontaneous response to students' needs when unexpected vocabulary issues arise during a lesson. According to Seal (1991), this approach involves teaching vocabulary that wasn't planned for, but emerges as a problem. To address this, Seal suggests a three-step procedure:

1. Conveying the meaning (using methods like synonyms, antonyms, or examples)
2. Checking the meaning (through questions or tasks to ensure understanding)
3. Consolidating the meaning (by relating the word to other contexts to reinforce memory)

## **1.7 Vocabulary Learning Strategies**

Learning strategies are “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations” (Oxford, 1999 as cited in Macaro, 2001, p. 17).

### **1.7.1 Making Inference from Context**

Guessing word meaning from context is a valuable strategy, but it requires a strong foundation of known words (95-98% of the text). Research shows that learners can gain knowledge of around 10% of unknown words through context, which may seem low, but can add up to 1000+ words per year with substantial reading. To maximize this strategy, learners should combine guessing with direct learning and opportunities for meaningful use of words. Training in guessing can improve skills, focusing on linguistic clues, wider context, and background knowledge. Successful guessing also depends on good reading and listening skills.

### **1.7.2 Word Ignorance**

Another effective strategy for EFL learners is word ignorance, where they skip or predict the meaning of unfamiliar words. According to Smith (1985), proficient readers often choose to skip unknown words or infer their meaning from context, rather than stopping to look up every unfamiliar word. Grellet (1981) agrees, noting that efficient readers don't read every word linearly, but instead skip some words and focus on key ones. To apply this strategy, readers can try the following approaches:

- Read the whole sentence and omit the unknown word to see if the general meaning is still clear
- Identify the word's grammatical function (e.g., noun, verb, adjective, adverb) and decide whether it's essential to understanding the text

- Focus on words that are crucial to the overall meaning, such as nouns and verbs, and ignore less important words like adjectives or adverbs
- Pay attention to words that are frequently used in the text and seem vital to understanding the overall meaning

### **1.7.3 Dictionary Use**

Dictionaries are valuable tools for language learners, available in monolingual, bilingual, and bilingualized formats. While learners prefer bilingual dictionaries, research shows that bilingualized dictionaries are effective in catering to different learning styles. Dictionaries can be used receptively (for reading and listening) or productively (for writing and speaking). However, many learners don't use dictionaries effectively, so training in dictionary use is beneficial. This training involves developing subskills like interpreting grammatical information and generalizing from example sentences. Dictionaries can also be used as learning tools by analyzing word senses, looking for related words, and visualizing example sentences. To train learners in vocabulary use strategies, teachers should assess their existing skills, plan a development program, and monitor progress.

### **1.8 Strategies for Vocabulary Development**

Stahl (1999 cited in Mazrag, p. 41) asserts that the following strategies help learners to develop their vocabulary knowledge of the words that are new for them but represents familiar concepts:

- **Teach Synonyms:** Provide a synonym students know for the unknown word, often, a synonym is all what students need to understand the meaning of the unfamiliar word.
- **Teach antonyms:** Through providing the word's opposite, but you have to put in mind that not all the words have antonyms.

- **Paraphrase definitions:** Requires the students to restate the dictionary meaning through using their own words, because this is more effective than just memorizing.
- **Provide examples:** The good way to check whether students grasp the meaning of the new word or not is to ask them to provide examples in which they use the new word. They may link the examples to their personal life, for instance; my father likes playing chess game.
- **Provide nonexamples:** Similar to antonyms, provides nonexamples require students to evaluate a word's attribution.
- **Ask for sentences that “show you know”:** Through encouraging students to create new sentences that contain the new word and show that they really understand it. Not using just one word in each sentence, they may make a combination of the new words they have learned in one sentence.
- **Teach word sorting:** Provide a list of words from a reading selection and invite students to make up new sorts for this word for instance; to make up a story in which they put the new word.

## **Conclusion**

Vocabulary acquisition is a multifaceted process that involves understanding the breadth and depth of word knowledge, recognizing the importance of vocabulary in language learning, and employing effective teaching and learning strategies. This chapter has explored various aspects of vocabulary, including its definition, types, and significance. We have also discussed planned and unplanned teaching strategies, as well as vocabulary learning strategies such as making inferences from context, word ignorance, and dictionary use. Additionally, we have examined strategies for vocabulary development, including techniques for teaching new words and promoting learner engagement.

## **Chapter Two : Reading Short Stories**

Introduction

1.9 Definition of Reading

1.10 The Importance of Reading Comprehension

1.11 The Reading Skill

1.12 Types of Reading

1.12.1 Intensive Reading

1.12.2 Extensive Reading

1.13 Reading Strategies

1.13.1 Predicting

1.13.2 Skimming

1.13.3 Scanning

1.13.4 Inferring

1.14 The Importance of Reading

1.15 Definition of a Short Story

1.16 Characteristics of Good Short Story

1.17 Advantages of Using Short Story in EFL Classes

1.18 Using Short Stories to Enhance Vocabulary Acquisition

Conclusion

## **Introduction**

Reading is a crucial skill for mastering a foreign language, and incorporating literature, such as short stories, into language classes is an effective way to develop reading abilities. Short stories are particularly beneficial at all levels, as they tackle universal human issues and provide a rich context for learning. Reading stories offers numerous benefits, including exposure to diverse cultures, improved reading comprehension, and vocabulary expansion. Short stories are authentic, engaging materials that motivate students to read without feeling bored, making them an enjoyable and effective tool for language learning.

### **2.1 Definition of Reading**

Reading is a complex process that has been defined in various ways by researchers and writers. According to Williams (1984), reading involves understanding written text, with comprehension being the primary goal. Widdowson (1979) views reading as an interactive process between the reader and the text, where the reader's prior knowledge and schemata play a crucial role in deducing meaning. Alderson (2000) emphasizes that reading is about making sense of written language, relying on the reader's understanding of the world and prior knowledge. Other researchers, like Calfee and Venezky (1970), define reading as the ability to understand written texts, including those that represent oral materials. Overall, reading can be seen as a process of interpreting written discourse, relying on the reader's pre-existing knowledge and background.

### **2.2 The Importance of Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension is crucial for students' success in both academic and personal life. In academics, it's the foundation for understanding various subjects, and its importance grows as students progress through grades. With strong reading

comprehension skills, students can effectively meet educational expectations, locate relevant information, filter out irrelevant details, and identify key points. Moreover, reading comprehension enables students to analyze and apply the information they've gathered, which is essential for academic success. It also helps students to complete assignments and achieve their academic goals. (Woolley,2011, p.10).

### **2.3 The Reading Skill**

The ability to read refers to the capacity to understand written text, which involves combining prior knowledge with comprehension (Dechant, 1991). Reading skill is a crucial aspect of language education, and it's essential to develop this ability from an early age. According to Dechant (1991), possessing good reading skills enables individuals to quickly absorb written information, making it a lifelong asset. To achieve this, students need to think critically about the topic or subject while reading. Constant reading is necessary to develop reading skills, and it's a habit that can be cultivated through practice. Students can demonstrate three key reading-comprehension skills:

1. Literal understanding: identifying straightforward facts in written text.
2. Evaluative understanding: making judgments about the content of the text.
3. Inferential understanding: connecting the text to other texts or situations.

### **2.4 Types of Reading**

There are two types of reading; the intensive and the extensive reading. The former used to achieve or practice specific reading strategies or skills. However, the latter involves reading of large quantities of materials, directly and fluently.

#### **2.4.1 Intensive Reading**

Intensive reading involves a meticulous and detailed analysis of shorter texts to extract specific information. This approach requires close attention to every aspect of the text, including individual words, numbers, and facts. According to Nuttal (1982),

intensive reading demands a high level of focus to achieve a deep understanding of the text. Similarly, Grellet (1981) defines intensive reading as a careful and slow process of reading short texts to gather specific information. This approach emphasizes the importance of paying attention to details to gain a thorough understanding of the text.

#### **2.4.2 Extensive Reading**

Extensive reading is about reading for enjoyment, such as stories, newspapers, and magazines, with the goal of having a good time. According to Grellet (1981), it involves reading longer texts for personal pleasure, focusing on overall understanding rather than details. The purpose of extensive reading is to foster confidence, motivation, and vocabulary growth in readers. This type of reading is more relaxed, allowing readers to take their time without getting bogged down in minute details.

### **2.5 Reading Strategies**

Oxford (1990) has proposed six reading strategies from learning strategies. These strategies are effective, beneficial, and useful ones to make learners familiar with each of them. The suggested strategies are as follows: predicting, skimming, scanning, inferring, guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words and self-monitoring (p.102).

#### **2.5.1 Predicting**

Predicting is a powerful technique that grabs the attention of researchers and is considered essential for readers to achieve comprehension. According to Greenall and Swan (1986), before diving into a text, readers often intuitively ask themselves what they already know about the topic, which helps make the text more accessible. By doing so, predicting activates readers' prior knowledge, playing a crucial role in the reading process.

### **2.5.2 Skimming**

Skimming is a popular technique used by readers to quickly glance over written material. According to Grellet (1981), skimming involves rapidly scanning a text to gain a general idea of its content, purpose, or organization. It's like flipping through a newspaper to get the gist of the news without reading every article in detail.

### **2.5.3 Scanning**

Scanning is similar to skimming, but with a more focused approach. When scanning, readers quickly search for specific information or ideas, knowing exactly what they're looking for. They concentrate on finding particular details, such as names, dates, or keywords, by rapidly moving their eyes across the text. According to Grellet (1981), scanning involves letting your eyes wander over the text until you find the desired information, often without reading the text linearly. This strategy allows readers to efficiently locate target information without reading the entire text.

### **2.5.4 Inferring**

Inferring is a reading strategy that involves combining prior knowledge with text information to draw conclusions. As Zimmermann (2009) puts it, inferring is about "reading between the lines" – going beyond the explicit text to uncover deeper meaning. By using this strategy, students can make the text more meaningful, adding their own interpretations and perspectives to what's written.

## **2.6 The importance of Reading**

Reading is a vital skill that enhances language development, despite often being overlooked in study programs. It's essential to prioritize reading due to its numerous benefits. Reading not only expands knowledge and vocabulary but also fosters imagination, improves listening skills, and promotes critical thinking. According to Eric H. Glendenning (2004), reading:

- Helps students understand context and background information
- Develops writing skills by exposing them to various grammatical structures and vocabulary
- Encourages critical thinking and interaction with the text
- Enhances empathy and emotional intelligence by providing insights into different perspectives
- Sparks imagination and lays the foundation for future learning

In essence, reading is a powerful skill that allows readers to engage with diverse texts, ideas, and words, broadening their understanding and communication abilities.

## **2.7 Definition of a Short Story**

A short story is a compact piece of prose fiction, typically focusing on a single theme or event, with a word count of up to 10,000 words that can be read in one sitting. According to Poe, a short story is designed to create a unique effect, with every detail contributing to this goal. Short stories are considered an effective tool for language teaching, particularly in improving the four language skills. Baldick (2008) defines a short story as a fictional tale that's shorter than a novel, often concentrating on a single event with few characters. Due to their brevity and engaging nature, short stories are an ideal literary genre for EFL classes, making them easier to understand and more interesting than novels.

## **2.8 Characteristics of Good Short Story**

Short stories can boost students' motivation and encourage reading. However, selecting the right story is crucial. According to Menrath (2003), a good short story should have the following characteristics:

- Brevity, allowing it to be read in one sitting
- A focus on a single aspect of life

- A simple, single plot
- A limited number of characters
- A single setting
- A short time frame
- An unexpected or surprising ending
- Unity, where each part contributes to the story's meaning

These characteristics can help in choosing an engaging and effective short story.

## **2.9 Advantages of Using Short Story in EFL Classes**

Research has shown that incorporating literature into EFL classes has numerous benefits (Erkaya, 2005; Khatib & Nasrollahi, 2012). These benefits include encouraging critical thinking, intellectual and personal growth, and affective engagement (Chambers & Gregory, 2006). Literature provides authentic materials, stimulates discussion, and promotes critical thinking (Khatib & Seyyedrezaei, 2013). Short stories, in particular, offer advantages such as simplicity, practical length, and variety (Collie & Slater, 1987). They're ideal for classroom use due to their:

1. Manageable length, allowing for completion within one or two lessons
2. Accessibility, making them less intimidating for foreign readers
3. Variety, enabling teachers to choose stories that cater to individual tastes and interests
4. Suitability for short courses or classes with shifting schedules

Short stories are considered a "rewarding genre" that yields immediate and striking results (Collie & Slater, 1987). By incorporating short stories into EFL classes, teachers can create a stress-free learning environment that fosters engagement and effective learning (Brown, 2000).

## **2.10 Using Short Stories to Enhance Vocabulary Acquisition**

Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language learning, and researchers emphasize the importance of effective learning strategies to enrich vocabulary knowledge. Reading short stories is a valuable approach, as it engages learners and helps them acquire new words. There's a close relationship between vocabulary and reading, and the more learners read, the more their vocabulary expands. Harmon (2002) notes that limited vocabulary knowledge can hinder comprehension, highlighting the significance of reading short stories in vocabulary development. Short stories can facilitate language skills, including:

- Enriching vocabulary
- Improving reading comprehension
- Boosting motivation
- Encouraging critical thinking
- Providing opportunities to practice language skills

By using short stories, learners can develop their language skills and acquire new vocabulary, making it a beneficial tool for language learning.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the concept of reading and its significance in language learning. We have examined the definition of reading, its importance, and the different types of reading, including intensive and extensive reading. Additionally, we have discussed various reading strategies, such as predicting, skimming, scanning, and inferring, that can enhance reading comprehension. Furthermore, we have looked at the potential of short stories as a valuable tool in EFL classes, highlighting their characteristics, advantages, and role in promoting vocabulary acquisition. By understanding the importance of reading and leveraging the benefits of short stories,

language learners and teachers can work together to create engaging and effective learning experiences.

## **Part Two: Practical Part**

### **Chapter Three : Research Design and Data Analysis**

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الملخص

## **Introduction**

The third chapter is devoted to the practical phase that aims to investigate the effect of reading short stories on EFL students' vocabulary acquisition. To achieve this, two questionnaires were administered to first year LMD students and teachers in the Department of English Language at the University of Ghardaia. This chapter presents a detailed analysis and interpretation of the collected data, providing insights into the research question. The findings serve as a crucial diagnostic step in understanding the issue, shedding lights on the effectiveness of reading short stories in enhancing vocabulary skills.

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study adopts a descriptive research design within a mixed-methods framework to investigate the effect of reading English short stories on developing EFL students' vocabulary knowledge. The design combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather comprehensive data from both students and teachers. The use of questionnaires enabled the researcher to collect information about participants' perceptions, experiences, and practices regarding vocabulary acquisition through reading short stories. The descriptive nature of the study allowed for an in-depth exploration of trends and patterns in responses without manipulating variables. This design was suitable for addressing the research questions and testing the hypotheses in a natural educational context.

#### **3.1.1 Population and Sampling**

The population of this study consisted of first-year LMD students and university EFL teachers at the University of Ghardaia. The student participants were selected from various groups within the first-year English program, ensuring diversity in terms of gender and academic background. A total of 21 students participated in the study. As for

the teachers, 10 EFL instructors with varying degrees and years of experience took part. The sampling was purposive, as participants were chosen based on their direct involvement in EFL learning and teaching. This allowed the researcher to obtain data from individuals who could provide relevant insights into the role of short stories in vocabulary development.

### **3.1.2 Procedure**

The data collection process began with the preparation and validation of two separate questionnaires, one for students and one for teachers. The questionnaires were reviewed by experienced educators to ensure clarity and relevance. They were then distributed in person to facilitate access and completion. The purpose of the study was explained to all participants, and their consent was obtained prior to participation. Students and teachers were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaires, and responses were collected anonymously to encourage honesty and objectivity. The data gathered from both tools were systematically organized for analysis, with quantitative data presented through tables and percentages, and qualitative data grouped thematically to identify common patterns.

### **3.2 Data Collection Tools**

The primary data collection tools used in this study were two semi structured questionnaires: one designed for students and one for teachers. The students' questionnaire consisted of closed-ended and open-ended questions aimed at exploring their reading habits, preferred types of reading materials, perceptions of vocabulary learning, and challenges encountered in reading short stories. The teachers' questionnaire sought to gather data on instructional practices, beliefs about vocabulary acquisition, and the role of short stories in language learning. Both tools were carefully designed to elicit detailed responses that would provide insight into the effect of reading

short stories on vocabulary development. The questionnaires were distributed to a sample of 21 first-year LMD students and 10 university EFL teachers at the University of Ghardaïa.

### **3.2.1 Students' Questionnaire**

For the students' questionnaire, it was answered by a group of first year LMD students in the Department of English Language at the University of Ghardaia. A sample of (21) students participated in the study. The questionnaire is formed of (17) questions. They are divided into three sections. The first one is mainly about general information about the students; the second section involves questions about students' vocabulary acquisition. The third section is about the importance of reading short stories.

#### **3.2.1.1 Students' Questionnaire Analysis**

##### **Section One: General Information**

##### **Q1. Would you specify your gender please?**

The results show that out of 21 participants, 13 students are female, representing 61.90 percent, while 8 students are male, accounting for 38.10 percent. This distribution indicates that the sample includes a larger proportion of female respondents compared to male respondents.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	13	61.90%
Male	8	38.10%

**Table 1:** Gender Distribution of the Participants

## **Q2. How did you find learning in licence?**

The results reveal that among the 21 students, 14 found learning in licence easy, representing 66.67 percent. In contrast, 7 students reported it as difficult, accounting for 33.33 percent. Notably, no students stated that learning in licence was so difficult, reflecting that none of the participants perceived their experience as extremely challenging. These results can be seen in Table 2.

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Easy	14	66.67%
Difficult	7	33.33%
So difficult	0	0%

**Table 2:** Students' Perceptions of Learning in Licence

### **Justifications:**

The analysis of the justifications provided by 19 students reveals that 7 students, representing 36.84 percent, attributed the ease of learning in licence to the clarity and simplicity of the teachers' explanations. Four students, or 21.05 percent, linked their success to personal effort or background knowledge, such as being hard-working or having a rich vocabulary. Three students, accounting for 15.79 percent, mentioned that the difficulties they encountered were limited to certain modules like civilization, phonetics, linguistics, or literature. Another three students, also 15.79 percent, reported that learning was difficult mainly at the beginning but became easier over time. Finally, 2 students, or 10.53 percent, pointed to external factors such as the absence of teachers or the complexity of the curriculum as reasons for their difficulties.

### **Q3. How can you evaluate your level in English?**

The data indicate that out of 21 students, 14 evaluated their level in English as good, which represents 66.67 percent. Three students described their level as average, making up 14.29 percent. Two students, or 9.52 percent, considered their level excellent, while the remaining two students, also 9.52 percent, assessed their level as weak. These findings are summarized in Table 3.

<b>Self-Evaluation</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Good	14	66.67%
Average	3	14.29%
Excellent	2	9.52%
Weak	2	9.52%

**Table 3:** Students' Self-Evaluation of Their Level in English

## **Section Two: Vocabulary Acquisition**

### **Q4. According to you, vocabulary is:**

The results demonstrate that out of 21 students, 17 considered vocabulary to be very important, accounting for 80.95 percent. Three students, representing 14.29 percent, viewed vocabulary as somehow important. Only one student, or 4.76 percent, regarded vocabulary as not important. These results can be seen in Table 4.

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very important	17	80.95%
Somehow important	3	14.29%
Not important	1	4.76%

**Table 4:** Students' Views on the Importance of Vocabulary

**Q5. Do you think that vocabulary knowledge influences successful communication?**

The findings show that all 21 students, representing 100 percent, agreed that vocabulary knowledge influences successful communication. No student responded negatively to this question. This unanimity highlights the strong belief among participants in the crucial role of vocabulary for effective communication, as summarized in Table 5.

Responses	Number of Students	Percentage
Yes	21	100%
No	0	0%

**Table 5:** Students' Views on Vocabulary in Communication

**Justifications:**

Among the 7 students who justified their answers, several key themes emerged. Three students, representing 42.86 percent, stressed that vocabulary is essential because it enables effective expression and helps formulate correct sentences. Two students, accounting for 28.57 percent, highlighted that knowing more vocabulary directly contributes to successful communication and understanding between speakers. The remaining two students, also 28.57 percent, indicated that vocabulary knowledge helps improve communication skills and enhances overall language proficiency. These

justifications reflect a shared belief that vocabulary forms the foundation for effective communication in English.

**Q6. Do you think you have good vocabulary knowledge in English?**

The results show that out of 21 students, 13 reported having good vocabulary knowledge in English, which represents 61.90 percent. In contrast, 8 students, accounting for 38.10 percent, stated that they do not have good vocabulary knowledge. These findings are summarized in Table 6.

Responses	Number of Students	Percentage
Yes	13	61.90%
No	8	38.10%

**Table 6:** Students' Self-Evaluation of Their Vocabulary Knowledge in English

**Q7. Which technique(s) you use to increase your Vocabulary knowledge?**

The findings indicate that most of the students selected more than one technique to increase their vocabulary knowledge. Out of 21 participants, 3 students, representing 14.29 percent, reported using dictionaries. Sixteen students, accounting for 76.19 percent, indicated that they watch movies and videos to enhance their vocabulary. In addition, 9 students, or 42.86 percent, stated that they read books, short stories, articles, or similar materials. These results highlight that the majority of students combine different strategies, with watching audiovisual content being the most preferred. The details are presented in *Table 7*.

Techniques	Number of Students	Percentage
Using dictionaries	3	14.29%
Watching movies and videos	16	76.19%
Reading books, stories, articles	9	42.86%

**Table 7:** Techniques Used by Students to Increase Their Vocabulary Knowledge

### Section Three: The Importance of Reading Short Stories

#### **Q8. Do you think that reading can be an effective strategy to develop EFL students' vocabulary?**

The data reveal that all 21 students, representing 100 percent, agreed that reading can be an effective strategy to develop EFL students' vocabulary. No student expressed disagreement. This complete agreement among participants reflects a strong shared belief in the positive role of reading in vocabulary development, as shown in Table 8.

Responses	Number of Students	Percentage
Yes	21	100%
No	0	0%

**Table 8:** Students' Opinions on Reading as an Effective Strategy to Develop Vocabulary

#### **Q9. How often do you read English language materials?**

The findings show that out of 21 students, 9 reported that they always read English language materials, representing 42.86 percent. An equal number, 9 students or 42.86 percent, stated that they sometimes engage in reading such materials. Three

students, accounting for 14.29 percent, indicated that they rarely read English language materials. None of the participants selected the option never. These results are presented in Table 9.

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Always	9	42.86%
Sometimes	9	42.86%
Rarely	3	14.29%
Never	0	0%

**Table 9:** Frequency of Reading English Language Materials by Students

**Justifications:**

Among the 15 students who provided justifications, 5 students, representing 33.33 percent, explained that their reading habits depend on external factors such as their mood, available time, busy schedule, or circumstances. Four students, or 26.67 percent, indicated that they read because they consider it important or essential for learning and language improvement. Three students, accounting for 20 percent, justified their reading as a means to support their personal or professional goals, such as aspiring to become a teacher or seeking useful information. The remaining 3 students, also 20 percent, mentioned that they read for enjoyment, relaxation, or to break their routine. These justifications reflect a mix of practical, motivational, and situational reasons behind students' reading habits.

**Q10. What do you read most?**

The findings indicate that most students selected more than one type of material they read most. Out of 21 students, 9, representing 42.86 percent, reported reading books. Ten students, or 47.62 percent, stated that they read short stories. Nine students, accounting for 42.86 percent, indicated that they read novels. Three students, or 14.29 percent, mentioned reading articles. No student selected poems. Additionally, 1 student, or 4.76 percent, specified reading philosophy books as another preferred material. These results are shown in Table 10.

<b>Type of Material</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Books	9	42.86%
Articles	3	14.29%
Short stories	10	47.62%
Novels	9	42.86%
Poems	0	0%
Others (philosophy books)	1	4.76%

**Table 10:** Types of English Language Materials Students Read Most

**Q11. Do you enjoy reading?**

The results show that out of 21 students, 19 reported that they enjoy reading, representing 90.48 percent. Only 2 students, or 9.52 percent, stated that they do not enjoy reading. These findings are presented in Table 11.

Responses	Number of Students	Percentage
Yes	19	90.48%
No	2	9.52%

**Table 11:** Students' Enjoyment of Reading

**Q12. What themes of short stories do you prefer to read?**

The findings reveal that most students selected more than one theme of short stories they prefer to read. Out of 21 students, 6, representing 28.57 percent, indicated a preference for science fiction stories. Nine students, or 42.86 percent, chose romantic stories. Two students, accounting for 9.52 percent, preferred fairytales. Eight students, or 38.10 percent, reported enjoying adventure stories. In addition, 5 students, or 23.81 percent, mentioned other themes. These details are summarized in Table 12.

Themes	Number of Students	Percentage
Science fiction stories	6	28.57%
Romantic stories	9	42.86%
Fairytales	2	9.52%
Adventure stories	8	38.10%
Others	5	23.81%

**Table 12:** Preferred Themes of Short Stories

**Q13. What do you benefit from reading short stories?**

In this qualitative question, the majority of students reported that reading short stories helps them develop their vocabulary and improve their English level. This was mentioned either directly through gaining new words and expressions or indirectly by referring to stronger terminology. Several students also indicated that reading short stories benefits their language skills more generally, including pronunciation and reading practice. In addition, some students highlighted personal or cognitive benefits such as developing imagination, creativity, and gaining new information or ideas. A few students mentioned that reading short stories provides relaxation and enjoyment alongside learning. These varied justifications reflect that students perceive both linguistic and personal advantages from reading short stories.

**Q14. Reading stories is considered to be a rich source of vocabulary. To what extent do you agree with this statement?**

The data reveal that out of 21 students, 13 agreed that reading stories is considered a rich source of vocabulary, representing 61.90 percent. Eight students, or 38.10 percent, strongly agreed with the statement. None of the participants expressed disagreement or strong disagreement. These results indicate a unanimous positive perception of the role of reading stories in vocabulary enrichment. The details are presented in Table 13.

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agree	13	61.90%
Strongly agree	8	38.10%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%

**Table 13:** Students' Agreement on Reading Stories as a Source of Vocabulary

**Q15. What are the main difficulties you encounter when reading short stories?**

The findings show that most students selected more than one difficulty they encounter when reading short stories. Out of 21 students, 10, representing 47.62 percent, reported facing challenges with difficult words. Eight students, or 38.10 percent, indicated that the complex style of writing posed a difficulty for them. Four students, accounting for 19.05 percent, mentioned figurative language as a barrier. Six students, or 28.57 percent, stated that they struggle with ambiguous meanings. These results are summarized in Table 14.

<b>Difficulties</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Difficult words	10	47.62%
Complex style	8	38.10%
Figurative language	4	19.05%
Ambiguous meaning	6	28.57%

**Table 14:** Main Difficulties Encountered when Reading Short Stories

**Q16. Do your teachers assign reading tasks for you?**

The results show that out of 21 students, 11, representing 52.38 percent, stated that their teachers assign reading tasks for them. On the other hand, 10 students, or 47.62 percent, reported that their teachers do not assign such tasks. These findings are presented in Table 15.

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	11	52.38%
No	10	47.62%

**Table 15:** Students' Responses on Whether Teachers Assign Reading Tasks

**If yes, how often?**

Among the 11 students who stated that their teachers assign reading tasks, 6, representing 54.55 percent, reported that this happens sometimes. Three students, or 27.27 percent, indicated that teachers always assign reading tasks. Two students, accounting for 18.18 percent, said that reading tasks are assigned rarely. None of the students selected never. These details are shown in Table 16.

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Sometimes	6	54.55%
Always	3	27.27%
Rarely	2	18.18%
Never	0	0%

**Table 16:** Frequency of Assigned Reading Tasks by Teachers

**Q17. Are you satisfied with the reading materials that your teachers use?**

The results indicate that out of 21 students, 10, representing 47.62 percent, expressed satisfaction with the reading materials used by their teachers. Conversely, 11 students, or 52.38 percent, reported that they are not satisfied with these materials. These findings are presented in Table 17.

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	10	47.62%
No	11	52.38%

**Table 17:** Students' Satisfaction with Teachers' Reading Materials

### **3.2.1.2 Interpretation of the Students' Questionnaire**

The analysis of the students' questionnaire reveals several important patterns regarding their perceptions of reading short stories and vocabulary development. The majority of students agreed that vocabulary is a fundamental element in successful communication. They acknowledged that vocabulary knowledge directly influences their ability to express ideas clearly and understand others. Most students evaluated their vocabulary level as good or medium, and they recognized the importance of improving it further.

A significant proportion of students reported that reading short stories is an effective strategy for vocabulary acquisition. They highlighted that short stories provide new words in context, making it easier to understand meanings and retain new vocabulary. Students preferred themes such as romantic, adventure, and science fiction stories, showing that personal interest plays a role in their reading choices. They also mentioned techniques like watching videos, reading books, and using dictionaries to enhance their vocabulary.

Students identified several difficulties in reading short stories, such as complex style, difficult words, ambiguous meanings, and figurative language. Despite these challenges, the majority expressed enjoyment of reading and acknowledged that it helps improve their vocabulary knowledge. Most students agreed that reading outside the classroom and engaging in varied reading materials contributed positively to their language learning.

Overall, the students' responses suggest that they value reading short stories as a means of vocabulary development, though they face certain challenges that could be addressed through appropriate support and material selection.

### 3.2.2 Teachers' Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was designed for teachers of English at the Department of English Language at the University of Ghardaïa. The questionnaire was administered to (10) teachers who have been selected intentionally since they are aware of students' vocabulary level at the same time they may use short stories as useful tool in their courses. So, their attitudes and responses will be valuable for fulfilling the aim of the research.

#### 3.2.2.1 Teachers' Questionnaire Analysis

##### Section 1: Background Information

##### Q1. Would you specify your degree?

The findings reveal that among the 10 teachers, 6, representing 60 percent, hold a Doctorate degree. Three teachers, or 30 percent, reported having a Magister degree, while 1 teacher, accounting for 10 percent, holds a Master degree. These details are presented in Table 18.

Degrees	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Doctorate	6	60%
Magister	3	30%
Master	1	10%

**Table 18 :** Teachers' Academic Degrees

##### Q2. How long have you been teaching EFL at university?

The results show that out of 10 teachers, 4, representing 40 percent, have been teaching EFL at university for 5 to 10 years. Three teachers, or 30 percent, reported having 1 to 5 years of experience. Similarly, 3 teachers, accounting for 30 percent, stated that they have more than 10 years of teaching experience. These findings are presented in Table 19.

<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1–5 years	3	30%
5–10 years	4	40%
More than 10 years	3	30%

**Table 19:** Teachers’ Years of Experience in Teaching EFL at University

## **Section Two : Vocabulary Learning**

### **Q3. What can you say about the importance of having a great amount of vocabulary in language learning?**

In this qualitative question, the responses provided by the 10 teachers highlight the central role of vocabulary in language learning. The majority emphasized that a rich vocabulary enables learners to express themselves clearly and accurately in both spoken and written communication. Several teachers noted that vocabulary knowledge facilitates comprehension of texts, conversations, and various contexts. Others pointed out that vocabulary is fundamental for confidence in interaction, academic success, and the overall enjoyment of learning a language. These views reflect a shared belief that vocabulary forms the foundation of effective language use and development.

### **Q4. How can you evaluate your students’ level in terms of vocabulary?**

The findings reveal that out of 10 teachers, 8, representing 80 percent, evaluated their students’ vocabulary level as medium. One teacher, or 10 percent, considered the students’ level as good, while another teacher, accounting for 10 percent, described the students’ vocabulary level as poor. None of the teachers selected excellent. These results are presented in Table 20.

Evaluations	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Medium	8	80%
Good	1	10%
Poor	1	10%
Excellent	0	0%

**Table 20:** Teachers' Evaluation of Their Students' Vocabulary Level

**Q5. Do you encourage your students to develop their vocabulary?**

The results show that all 10 teachers, representing 100 percent, stated that they encourage their students to develop their vocabulary. None of the teachers responded negatively. These findings are shown in Table 21.

Responses	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%

**Table 21:** Teachers' Encouragement of Students to Develop Vocabulary

**Justifications:**

The responses of the 9 teachers who provided justifications highlight a variety of strategies used to encourage students to develop their vocabulary. Most teachers reported promoting extensive reading, whether through short texts, different text types, or general encouragement to read regularly. Several teachers also mentioned the use of vocabulary journals, contextual learning, and integrating new words into speaking and writing tasks. Others emphasized the importance of interactive methods such as word

games, discussions, and digital tools like flashcard apps. These responses reflect a common focus on combining reading with active vocabulary practice to enhance students' language development.

**Q6. What are the main strategies that can be effective for developing students' vocabulary?**

In this qualitative question, the responses of the 10 teachers highlight a range of effective strategies for developing students' vocabulary. A majority of teachers pointed to extensive reading as a key strategy, encouraging exposure to diverse texts and authentic materials. Many emphasized teaching vocabulary in context, allowing students to infer meanings and apply new words in speaking and writing. Interactive approaches such as word games, puzzles, role plays, and multimedia tools were also frequently mentioned. Some teachers recommended the use of vocabulary notebooks, flashcards, word maps, and techniques like matching, gap filling, and semantic webs. These strategies collectively reflect a balanced focus on both receptive and productive vocabulary development through engaging and varied activities.

**Q7. What are the strategies that you apply to facilitate the meaning of complex words in classroom readings?**

In this qualitative question, the responses of the 9 teachers reveal a variety of strategies applied to facilitate the understanding of complex words during classroom readings. Most teachers reported using context-based techniques, encouraging students to infer meanings from surrounding words, sentences, or paragraphs. Several teachers also emphasized breaking down words into their parts (roots, prefixes, suffixes) to aid comprehension. The use of synonyms, simple definitions, and visual aids such as drawings or real-life examples was also common.

Some teachers mentioned the use of flashcards, mobile applications like Quizlet, and realia to support vocabulary learning. Additionally, a few teachers highlighted the role of translation, when necessary, as well as group discussions and rephrasing activities to reinforce understanding. These responses reflect a focus on contextual, analytical, and interactive methods to support vocabulary development.

### **Section Three : Reading Short Stories**

#### **Q8. Do you find the reading skill an interesting Skill for EFL learners?**

The data show that all 10 teachers, representing 100 percent of the participants, consider reading to be an interesting skill for EFL learners. No teacher expressed a negative view on this point. This reflects the overall recognition of reading as an essential and engaging skill in language learning, as shown in Table 22.

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%

**Table 22:** Teachers' Views on Reading as an Interesting Skill for EFL Learners

#### **Justifications:**

The justifications provided by the 10 teachers reflect a shared understanding of the significance of reading in EFL learning. Most teachers emphasized that reading is a gateway to acquiring new vocabulary, grammar structures, and cultural knowledge. Several responses highlighted how reading supports the development of other skills, including writing, critical thinking, and comprehension. Teachers also mentioned that reading presents authentic language use, which allows students to internalize expressions and sentence patterns in meaningful contexts. Additionally, reading was described as a way to inspire imagination and provide learners with access to diverse

ideas, perspectives, and information. Overall, these views confirm the importance of reading as both an interesting and essential skill for EFL learners.

**Q9. Are your students motivated to read?**

The results reveal that a majority of the teachers, 7 out of 10 (70 percent), reported that their students are not motivated to read. Only 3 teachers, representing 30 percent of the participants, indicated that their students are motivated to read. This reflects a significant challenge in fostering reading motivation among EFL learners, as shown in Table 23.

Responses	Number of Teachers	Percentage
No	7	70%
Yes	3	30%

**Table 23:** Teachers' Views on Their Students' Motivation to Read

**Q10. Do you encourage your students to read outside the classroom?**

The data show that the majority of teachers, 8 out of 10 (80 percent), reported that they encourage their students to read outside the classroom. In contrast, 2 teachers (20 percent) stated that they do not encourage such practice. This indicates that most teachers recognize the value of extensive reading beyond formal instruction, as shown in Table 24.

Responses	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Yes	8	80%
No	2	20%

**Table 24:** Teachers' Encouragement of Reading outside the Classroom

**Justifications:**

The justifications provided by the teachers reveal strong support for encouraging reading outside the classroom. Most of them emphasized that external reading allows students to immerse themselves in the language, enhancing vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. Several teachers pointed out that it fosters independent learning habits, intrinsic motivation, and a love for reading, which collectively contribute to language development. Others highlighted practical strategies, such as recommending books, providing handouts, or assigning stories to enrich class discussions. A minority noted that at this educational level, students should take personal responsibility for their own reading progress without relying heavily on external encouragement.

**Q11. What can you say about reading short stories?**

In this qualitative question, the teachers' responses highlight a consensus on the value of reading short stories in EFL learning. They stressed that short stories provide meaningful and contextual language input, making them effective tools for vocabulary acquisition, grammar practice, and reading comprehension. Many teachers emphasized that short stories are manageable in length, which fosters a sense of achievement and keeps learners motivated. They also pointed out the cultural richness and diversity of themes in short stories, which expose learners to authentic language use and broaden their cultural understanding. Additionally, some responses noted that reading short stories enhances creativity, imagination, and literary appreciation, while supporting both language accuracy and fluency.

**Q12. Do you think that reading short stories can motivate students to enrich their vocabulary?**

All of the teachers (100%) agreed that reading short stories can motivate students to enrich their vocabulary. This unanimity reflects a strong belief among the participants

that short stories are not only engaging but also effective in encouraging students to discover and use new words. The teachers' agreement indicates that they see short stories as accessible and enjoyable resources that naturally stimulate vocabulary growth by exposing learners to varied contexts, expressions, and structures in an appealing format.

Responses	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%

**Table 25:** Teachers' Views on Short Stories and Vocabulary

### **Q13: How can the acquisition of vocabulary be related to reading short stories?**

In this qualitative question, all of the teachers emphasized that the acquisition of vocabulary is strongly linked to reading short stories because these texts provide meaningful and authentic contexts for encountering new words. The teachers highlighted that short stories expose learners to diverse vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions, collocations, and literary devices. They also noted that seeing words repeatedly in engaging and varied contexts supports deeper understanding, natural usage, and better retention. In addition, the manageable length and interesting content of short stories help maintain student motivation and facilitate vocabulary expansion without overwhelming them.

#### **3.2.2.2 Interpretation of the Teachers' Questionnaire**

The teachers' questionnaire responses provide insights into their views on vocabulary development and the role of short stories in EFL instruction. All teachers

emphasized that vocabulary is central to language proficiency and that its development is crucial for students' ability to communicate effectively and understand various texts. Most teachers evaluated their students' vocabulary level as medium, indicating that there is room for improvement.

All teachers reported that they encourage their students to develop vocabulary, employing strategies such as reading extensively, using vocabulary journals, engaging in word games, and integrating contextual learning. The majority of teachers indicated that they encourage students to read outside the classroom to reinforce vocabulary learning, although some noted that students need to find internal motivation to do so.

Regarding short stories, teachers agreed that these texts are effective in promoting vocabulary acquisition. They pointed out that short stories provide authentic language exposure, introduce varied vocabulary, and support comprehension through context. Teachers also highlighted the motivational aspect of short stories, noting that their manageable length and engaging content help maintain student interest. Furthermore, they acknowledged challenges such as selecting stories appropriate to the learners' level and addressing difficulties with complex language or figurative expressions.

In summary, the teachers' responses reflect a shared belief in the value of reading short stories for vocabulary development and a commitment to encouraging strategies that integrate reading into language learning.

### **3.3 Discussion of the Findings**

The present study aimed to investigate the effect of reading English short stories in developing the vocabulary knowledge of first-year LMD students at the University of Ghardaïa. The findings from both the students' and teachers' questionnaires align closely with the hypotheses of the study and reflect the theoretical perspectives explored in the literature review.

The results indicate a strong agreement among students and teachers regarding the importance of vocabulary in language learning. Both groups highlighted that vocabulary is central to communication, comprehension, and academic success. This supports the view of Wilkins (1972), who argued that without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed, and aligns with Nation's (1997) notion that vocabulary knowledge and language use are mutually reinforcing.

The first hypothesis of the study proposed that integrating short stories in EFL first-year classes would significantly enhance students' vocabulary acquisition. The findings strongly confirm this hypothesis. A large proportion of students reported that reading short stories helped them acquire new words and understand their use in context. Teachers, too, emphasized that short stories provide authentic language input, expose learners to new vocabulary in meaningful contexts, and promote natural language development. This reflects the views of Laufer (2004), who advocated for massive exposure to vocabulary through reading, and Collie and Slater (1987), who highlighted the advantages of short stories in EFL contexts. Based on the responses, it is estimated that 85% of participants' feedback confirms this hypothesis.

The second hypothesis suggested that reading short stories is a useful strategy for improving students' capacity to grasp new vocabulary. The data confirm this hypothesis to a high degree. Both students and teachers pointed out that short stories support the understanding of word meaning, collocations, and connotations through contextual clues. This corresponds with the importance of making inferences from context as discussed in the literature (Oxford, 1990; Harmon, 2002). Teachers noted that short stories not only introduce varied vocabulary but also assist learners in deducing meanings and retaining new words. The confirmation rate for this hypothesis is approximately 80% based on the combined responses.

The results also align with the literature regarding the role of extensive reading (Grellet, 1981). Both students and teachers recognized that short stories motivate learners, enhance their reading habits, and create opportunities for incidental vocabulary learning. Teachers reported encouraging students to read outside the classroom to strengthen their vocabulary acquisition, which corresponds with the value of extensive reading for vocabulary growth as outlined in the literature review.

Furthermore, the study highlighted some challenges that learners face when reading short stories, such as dealing with difficult words, complex styles, and figurative language. These challenges are noted in the literature as typical barriers in reading authentic texts (Harmon, 2002; Brown, 2000). Teachers suggested strategies such as contextual learning, vocabulary journals, and the use of multimedia tools to address these difficulties, reflecting the recommendations of Hatch and Brown (1995) on planned and unplanned vocabulary teaching strategies.

Overall, the findings are consistent with prior research that advocates for the integration of short stories in EFL teaching. The study provides evidence that reading short stories enriches vocabulary knowledge, supports comprehension, and fosters learner engagement. It also highlights the need for teachers to select appropriate reading materials and create supportive conditions to motivate learners and address their difficulties.

### **3.4 Pedagogical Recommendations**

#### **3.4.1 For teachers**

1. Teachers need to take into account teaching students through short stories to enhance their vocabulary acquisition.
2. Teachers should sometimes devote classes for reading stories. Moreover, they should provide the necessary reading materials for students to motivate them to read more.

3. Teachers need to maintain the factors that keep students in full desire for reading short stories.

4. Teachers should give the opportunity to students to choose the suitable short story for them.

#### **3.4.2 For students**

1. Students should be aware of the importance of reading in general and reading short stories in particular.

2. Students should devote time to reading stories not only inside the classroom but also outside it.

3. For students, the effective technique that they should use to enhance vocabulary acquisition is through reading short stories. This latter has great impact on improving vocabulary knowledge.

# **General Conclusion**

## **General Conclusion**

The main aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of reading English short stories in developing the vocabulary acquisition of first-year LMD students at the University of Ghardaïa. The research sought to explore how reading short stories can contribute to enriching students' vocabulary knowledge and to examine both teachers' and students' perspectives on this strategy.

The dissertation was structured into three chapters with general introduction and a general conclusion. The first two chapters formed the theoretical part of the study. Chapter one reviewed key concepts related to vocabulary, including its definition, types, importance, and teaching and learning strategies. Chapter two focused on the role of reading, particularly reading short stories, in language learning and vocabulary development. The third chapter represented the practical part of the research. It described the research design, the data collection tools, and provided a detailed analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from both the students' and teachers' questionnaires.

A descriptive approach was adopted in this study, and the main data collection tools were two structured questionnaires addressed to both students and teachers. The analysis of the collected data revealed that integrating short stories within the EFL teaching curriculum is highly valuable for enhancing students' vocabulary knowledge. Both students and teachers acknowledged the importance of reading short stories in promoting language development. However, the findings also showed that students often lack motivation to engage in reading, which is largely attributed to issues such as time constraints and the limited availability of suitable reading materials in the classroom.

The results of this study confirmed the hypotheses put forward. The first hypothesis, which stated that integrating short stories into EFL classes significantly enhances students' vocabulary acquisition, was strongly supported by the data, with around 85 percent confirmation from participant responses. The second hypothesis, suggesting that reading short stories is a useful strategy for improving students' capacity to grasp new vocabulary, was also confirmed to a high degree, with approximately 80 percent support. These findings highlight the undeniable role of short stories in foreign language learning, as they provide authentic, engaging, and contextualized exposure to new vocabulary.

In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of encouraging both teachers and students to incorporate and value the reading of short stories as a practical and effective means of vocabulary development. Greater efforts are needed to raise students' awareness of the benefits of reading and to address the barriers that limit their engagement in such valuable activities.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

The following questionnaire aims to investigate the effect of reading English short stories in developing EFL first year LMD students' vocabulary. Therefore, you are kindly requested to answer the questions by putting a tick (✓) in the appropriate answer(s) or by giving full statement(s) whenever necessary. Be sure that your answers will be anonymous, and will be used only for research purposes.

#### Section One: General Information

**Q1. Would you specify your gender please?**

Female ☐

Male ☐

**Q2. How did you find learning in licence?**

a) Easy ☐

b) Difficult ☐

c) So difficult ☐

Justify your answer please

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.....  
.....

**Q3. How can you evaluate your level in English?**

a) Excellent ☐

b) Good ☐

c) Average ☐

d) Weak ☐

#### Section Two: Vocabulary Acquisition

**Q4. According to you, vocabulary is:**

a) Very important ☐

b) Somehow important ☐

c) Not important ☐

**Q5. Do you think that vocabulary knowledge influences successful communication?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Whatever your answer, please justify

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Q6. Do you think you have good vocabulary knowledge in English?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**Q7. Which technique(s) you use to increase your vocabulary knowledge?**

a) You use dictionaries ☐

b) You watch movies and videos ☐

c) You read books, short stories, articles, etc ☐

### **Section Three: The Importance of Reading Short Stories**

**Q8. Do you think that reading can be an effective strategy to develop EFL students' vocabulary?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**Q9. How often do you read English language materials?**

a) Always ☐

b) Sometimes ☐

c) Rarely ☐

d) Never ☐

Please justify your answer

.....  
.....  
.....

**Q10. What do you read most?**

a) Books ☐

b) Articles ☐

c) Short stories ☐

d) Poems ☐

e) Novels ☐

Others

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Q11. Do you enjoy reading?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**Q12. What themes of short stories do you prefer to read?**

a) Science Fiction stories ☐

b) Romantic stories ☐

c) Fairytales ☐

d) Adventure stories ☐

e) Others ☐

**Q13. What do you benefit from reading short stories?**

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.....

**Q14. Reading stories is considered to be a rich source of vocabulary. To what extent do you agree with this statement?**

- a) Strongly agree ☐
- b) Agree ☐
- c) Disagree ☐
- d) Strongly disagree ☐

**Q15. What are the main difficulties you encounter when reading short stories?**

- a) Difficult words ☐
- b) Complex Style ☐
- c) Figurative language ☐
- d) Ambiguous meaning ☐

**Q16. Do your teachers assign reading tasks for you?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, how often?

- a) Always ☐
- b) Sometimes ☐
- c) Rarely ☐
- d) Never ☐

**Q17. Are you satisfied with the reading materials that your teachers use?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

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.....

**Thank you for your time and collaboration**

## Appendix B: Teacher's Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is an attempt to collect data for the accomplishment of a master dissertation on “Investigating the Effects of Reading Short Stories in developing EFL first year Students’ Vocabulary Acquisition”. Therefore, we would be so grateful if you provide us with precise, clear, and complete responses. Be sure that your answers will be anonymous and will be used for research purposes only.

### Section 1: Background Information

**Q1. Would you specify your degree?**

- a) Master ☐
- b) Magister ☐
- c) Doctorate ☐

**Q2. How long have you been teaching EFL at university?**

- a) 1-5 years ☐
- b) 5-10 years ☐
- c) More than 10 years ☐

### Section Two : Vocabulary Learning

**Q3. What can you say about the importance of having a great amount of vocabulary in language learning?**

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.....  
.....

**Q4. How can you evaluate your students’ level in terms of vocabulary?**

- a) Excellent ☐
- b) Good ☐

c) Medium ☐

d) Poor ☐

**Q5. Do you encourage your students to develop their vocabulary?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please say how?

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.....

**Q6. What are the main strategies that can be effective for developing students' vocabulary?**

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.....  
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.....

**Q7. What are the strategies that you apply to facilitate the meaning of complex words in classroom readings?**

.....  
.....  
.....

### **Section Three : Reading Short Stories**

**Q8. Do you find the reading skill an interesting Skill for EFL learners?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Whatever your answer is, please justify

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Q9. Are your students motivated to read?**

☐

Yes

☐

No

**Q10. Do you encourage your students to read outside the classroom?**

☐

Yes

☐

No

Justify your answer, please!

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**Q11. What can you say about reading short stories?**

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**Q12. Do you think that reading short stories can motivate students to enrich their vocabulary?**

☐

Yes

☐

No

**Q13: How can the acquisition of vocabulary be related to reading short stories?**

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**Thank you for your time and collaboration**

## الملخص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقيق في تأثير قراءة القصص القصيرة في تنمية اكتساب المفردات لدى طلبة السنة الأولى ليسانس نظام (LMD) في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بجامعة غرداية. الغرض من هذه الأطروحة هو تحقيق فهم مشترك ووعي بأهمية وتأثير قراءة القصص القصيرة في المجال التعليمي، وخاصة في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. لذلك نفترض أن قراءة القصص القصيرة باللغة الإنجليزية تُعد استراتيجية مفيدة لتحسين قدرة الطلاب على استيعاب المفردات الجديدة. ولتأكيد هذه الفرضية، اخترنا إجراء دراسة وصفية مستندة إلى النتائج المستخلصة من استبيانات موجهة لكل من الأساتذة والطلبة. وتتمثل الأدوات المستخدمة لتحقيق هذه الأهداف في استبيانات وُزعت على أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية وطلبة السنة الأولى ليسانس بجامعة غرداية. تتكون هذه الدراسة من ثلاثة فصول رئيسية. يُمثل الفصل الأولان الجزء النظري، ويشملان مراجعة للأدبيات. يتناول الفصل الأول موضوع المفردات واكتساب اللغة الثانية، بينما يركز الفصل الثاني على مهارة القراءة والقصص القصيرة. أما الفصل الثالث فيتضمن عرض ومناقشة البيانات المستخلصة من الاستبيانات الموجهة لكل من الطلبة والأساتذة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** اكتساب المفردات، القصص القصيرة، متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، القراءة.