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Department of English

Short Stories Effectiveness in Developing Reading Comprehension and Writing Skills in EFL Class

The Case study of 2nd year EFL Students, English department at Ammar Thelidji University. Laghouat

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Presented by

DJIDEL Maissa

DJAMATE Maroua Manal

Supervised by

BELHADJ Abdelkrim

Jury Board

Chair man: KOURDOURLI .A

Supervisor: BELHADJ .A

Examiner: BOUMEDIEN .H

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Dedication

We dedicate this humble work to our mothers and fathers for their protection, support and encouragement, also our dear friends.

Acknowledgements

We would like to take the opportunity to express our deepest appreciation, to all those who provided us the possibility to complete this research.

First of all, we are genuinely grateful to the source of inspiration, our dear parents who believed in us, also brothers and sisters who supported us in all our ups and downs.

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of using literature in the EFL/ESL curriculum particularly the short stories, since it provides an authentic model of language use.

This research was carried out to determine the case of language learning and its relation to the literature study, and how can literature plays a beneficial role in language learning process. Furthermore, this research tries to suggest indirectly to the instructors to include literature in the curriculum , in order to develop the learner's reading comprehension and writing skills also to check how far the hypotheses we have proposed are correct about the correlation of the two skills reading and writing, and how can reading effects writing . Moreover it reinforces the inclusion of the short story within the curriculum, due to its beneficial role, and its consideration as an effective literary genre to be taught in the EFL classes.

ملخص

الغرض من هذا البحث هو التعرف علي اثر استخدام الأدب في مناهج اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية , وعلي وجه خاص القصص القصيرة لأنها تمثل نموذج دقيق من استخدام اللغة .

اجري هذا البحث خصيصا لتحديد دراسة حالة دراسة اللغة وعلاقتها بدراسة الأدب ,وكيف يمكن للأدب أن يلعب دورا أساسيا ومفيد في تعلم اللغة. إضافة إلي ذلك يقترح هذا البحث بطريقة غير مباشرة علي المعلمين إدراج الأدب في المناهج الدراسية من اجل تطوير البناء الفكري للمتعلم ومهارة الكتابة ,و أيضا لتأكد من مدي صحة الفرضية المقترحة حول علاقة كلا من القراءة والكتابة وكيف يمكن للقراءة التأثير علي الكتابة , علاوة على ذلك فإنه يعزز إدراج القصة القصيرة ضمن المناهج الدراسية نظرا لدورها الهام والمفيد باعتبارها نوعا أدبيا فعال في يمكن تدريسه في الفصول اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

L1: First Language/Mother Tongue

L2: Second Language

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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General Introduction

The use of literature to teach a foreign language can be traced back to over one century ago. Nowadays, the role of literature as a basic component in EFL curriculum is clearly marked, many teachers use literature as a technique to develop students' language skills especially reading comprehension and writing skills . Literature offers EFL learners the opportunity to discover and analyze the world around them in broad, it progresses their higher level of thinking and build their vocabulary.

Among the literary genres preferable for most EFL learners, short stories because they are much easier to appreciate. Thus an appropriate selection of literature will help learners to get in contact with good skills of writing and reading comprehension. The teaching objectives should reflect the needs of the learners to develop their reading comprehension and writing skills. Short stories are needed in the EFL curriculum more than any literary genre because of their effectiveness and great role in developing learners' language.

Teaching language is the field which allows the teacher, who is considered to be the manager of the classroom, to present a relevant text to his learners to evaluate the level in reading comprehension, also the interpretation of the learner and his ability, in understanding through the productive skill writing.

Literature is the best tool to develop students' language skills but for many students classic books and novels are just a kind of boring and uninteresting way because of their length and difficulty. In the other hand, many teachers assert that most of students refuse to read long literary works, the objective of this research is to explore the effectiveness of the short story.

Short stories effectiveness in developing reading comprehension and writing skills in EFL classes was supported by a lot of instructors , the shortness of the story make suitable and preferable, to be used in the classes, it attracts the attention of both teachers and learners since it is modern literary genre .The fact that English learners face some difficulties in reading comprehension and writing as well make some pedagogues claim that the lack of reading affects negatively on the reading comprehension and writing, beside this short story participates in building the students' proficiency level.

The current research highlights the reasons behind using short stories as a suitable literary genre in EFL classes ,in order to develop both students' skills reading and writing since other literary genres like the figurative language of poetry which needs enough time to grasp or the

lengthy novels which are very difficult to finish for such classes, for these reasons using short stories in the curriculum is a modern technique because it combines between self enjoyment and language learning, thus the research has further pedagogical benefits to develop EFL learners' writing under the shadow of reading comprehension. Furthermore, we witnessed during our career students in pressure and attitudes were more motivated when dealing with such theme short stories. This observation pushed us to show the effectiveness of short stories in composing other themes in literature poetry and novels which were esteemed with students.

English students face certain difficulties in the way how to express their ideas to convey an intended meaning and how to communicate fluently, short stories can play an effective role in promoting learners skills writing and reading.

The research will try to investigate the following research questions:

1. Can short stories be an appropriate genre for developing EFL students' language and culture?

This issue can be joined by sub question for an adequate achievement of research perception:

2. How can teachers participate in the development of learners' skills (reading and writing)?

Accordingly the following hypotheses are suggested:

1) Short stories might contribute in the development of language skills of the EFL learners, their inclusion in the curriculum will enrich students own reading and writing abilities and they allow them to acquire a new vocabulary and a new grammar structures beside the acquisition of the new language.
2) After reading short stories both teachers and students will discover their benefits, due to their shortness and simplicity of language the learner became able to experience new themes and different styles and may be adopted in the students' writing.
3) Teachers are the leaders of the teaching process they engage their students with reading and writing, which will result with the improvement of both skills, the teachers' participation in the amelioration of students skills will be seen in the best selection of the material, methods and tasks.

The research design has a descriptive nature, which is concerned with collecting data, analyzing the statistical results and descriptive results design is usually associated with quantitative data. The data are collected through students 'questionnaire and teachers' interview aims to show the short story effectiveness in developing writing and reading in EFL classes. The main objective of dealing with EFL teachers is to give us their opinions concerning the use of short stories as an authentic material.

The present study is composed of three chapters, the first chapter examines the role of literature and the relation between reading comprehension and short story and it sheds the light on

some problems that face EFL students, also it describes the benefits of the short story in the EFL context.

Meanwhile, the second chapter deals with the impact of short stories on the writing skill in relation with the reading skill as well, this chapter investigates the nature of writing and the importance of acquiring it. The research provides in this chapter some methods and strategies to teach the writing skill, in addition to the role of short stories in obtaining new grammatical rules and structures.

The third chapter is based on the analysis of information gathered from the research tool questionnaire and interviews. In addition to this, the results are interpreted, discussed and examined.

Nowadays with the new outlook in the academic system, all the focus turned toward the use of literature in EFL classroom. The effect of teaching literature on EFL learners' general knowledge is a vehicle for enriching the learners' language and self-development as a whole , it also opens the doors of opportunities for the students to express their ideas, their own point of view, emotion and reaction. Among the literary forms, indeed, the short story is an engaging literary genre and can therefore be utilized for language learning purposes. Almost all modern short stories have the following unique characteristics which are the simplicity of language, shortness and attraction which make them especially suitable to be used in reading also , it is an effective tool to improve student’s narrative writing.

The first chapter deals with the importance of teaching literature in general and short stories in particular and reading comprehension,(collie & Slater ,1987) assert that short stories offer many immediate and striking advantages for the teacher . Also short stories are often a perfect tool for introducing students to literature in the foreign language classroom. Slater and Collie insist on the fact that short stories can be read entirely within one or two class lessons due to their practical length , beside that a teacher can choose very different short stories, so that this greater chance of finding something to appeal to each individual's tastes and interests. In addition the use of literature in general and short stories in particular, diversify classroom procedures and make it more enjoyable, simply because they encourage students to read deeper .This chapter has a main focus on Lazar (1993) literature because it is a very central to the research .

The second chapter explains the correlation between short story and the productive skill of writing. Teacher’s role is to provide the EFL learners with a suitable model of language to be used with making the balance between both reading and writing. The research hypothesizes that the

importance of using literature and especially short stories in EFL classes, is a very useful to improve students' vocabulary and reading.

Among the main references used in this chapter (Ghasemi: 2011) emphasizes on the strong link between short stories and the acquisition of writing skill, also the interconnectivity of the short story to teaching process, he asserts that the short story is an effective literary genre to build the writing skill, and enrich the students' cultural orientation, he mentioned that the short story is a multi-dimensional literary genre, meaning the best tool of acquiring of language skill.

The purpose from EFL teaching is to help students to communicate fluently and to produce correctly. Thus the good selection of the appropriate material helps the learners to be in touch with different kinds of writing and push them to write after reading. Short stories have been the center of attraction for EFL curriculum, but mainly due to some pedagogical aspects embodied in them which at first serves the development of reading comprehension and writing skills as well.

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Chapter One

Short Stories for Developing Reading Comprehension in EFL Context

Chapter One

1.1. Introduction

The explosion of the literary works and the cultural theory was clearly marked in the last two decades which paved the path for further research on the strong relationship between literature, language and education. In Algeria, Arabic language has been the only official language and English as foreign language is new for the learners, so teachers must think of new methods and techniques to help EFL learners to grasp the vocabulary of English language, it is not surprising that literature forms very significant place in the ELT curriculums since the education trainers found it the best tool to improve the linguistic level of the students.

In the middle of the 1980's a new revolution appeared in the field of education and the interests of literature as teaching resource has renewed and continues until today . In the recent years the strong move toward study of literature was remarkable especially as culture and how it will be reintegrated to the academic curriculum. Thus, many researches assert that it is important to include the literary texts in the L2 syllabus.

1.2. The Role of Literature in the EFL Setting

Reading has a vital role to play in teaching foreign languages. Readers can find different choices in the English literature which is rich with works such as poems, short stories, novels and novellas, which are full of feelings emotions imagination and creativity a good selection of a short story or a novel creates suspense and curiosity about the plot.

Lazar arranges following reasons insisting on the use of literature in the teaching language classroom:

- *It is very motivating.*
- *It is authentic material.*
- *It has general educational value.*
- *It is found in many syllabuses.*
- *It helps students to understand another culture.*
- *It is stimulus for language acquisition.*
- *It develops students'interpretative abilities.*
- *Students enjoy it and it is fun.*
- *It is highly valued and has a high status.*
- *It expands students' language awareness.*

- *It encourages students to talk about their opinions and feeling.*

(Lazar.G :1993,14-15)

Literature is a field that allows the writer to get out his feelings, thoughts, experiences and opinions in addition to that it is an aesthetic tool to instruct the learner. (Lazar.G:1993,1) introduces literature in her way:*'' literature means... to meet a lot of people , to know different points of views , ideas , thoughts , mind...to know ourselves better !! Literature is a successful medium to express the human feeling ideas, views and so on* '' (Ibid, 1)

The collaboration of literature and language teaching has been the center of attraction of researches in the language teaching domain, particularly in the 20th century, the use of literature was beneficial to EFL and ESL learners since it is considered as a vehicle for teaching second foreign language .Clearly some researchers studied the effectiveness of the amplification of literature in languages classes. English as a foreign language or second language was brought back again into the field of teaching , because of the last discovered results about the strong link between the principles of communication and language teaching that support the use of literature in EFL / ESL classes, over the years the use of literature in second language teaching (L2) has became an important aspect .The purpose of this study is to review and to know the role of literature in EFL/ESL classes , through several analysis and studies the main idea is that it keeps communication also it builds a conceptual modal of communicative literature and what can literature play in EFL /ESL classes.

1.2.1. Literature and Reading Comprehension

Literature as a specific field enable the teaching process to get better and move forward in a very straight and positive path with linking the linguistic activities and the learners competences in order to evaluate the reading comprehension is in the right path or not , whether the learner is benefiting from the text and the activities or not all these steps are the duty of the teacher who is considered as the first manager of the classroom and the only supervisor of the learner and the teaching process . we may say that literature is an authentic context that the learner can ameliorate his comprehension with .Generally it is the interaction between the learner and the literary text , what make literature the appropriate more than any other text is that the student can easily grasp knowledge and build his special background .

Teaching English as foreign language or second language became the most fashionable phenomenon ,and by using literary texts both the instructor and the learner can experience a new comprehension and they may face new culture , meaning that the cultural benefits cannot be ignored since literature and culture are interrelate , having literature as discourse provides the learner to discover new morals and spiritual values, also it is obvious that reading is the process or the skill that links between the writer and the reader and the role of the learner here is to understand first then interpret the message ,after that he is acquired to decode the message . Furthermore , reading is considered as a dynamic process in which the knowledge gained from the text reacts to allow the learner to arrange meaning while ,before and after reading , Goodman stated that when the learner '' *[…]interacts with a message encoded by the writer. HeConcentrates his total prior experience and conceptshe has attained, as well as the language competencehe has achieved.''* (Goodman :1973,162,Quoted in Medjahdi.W:2015,05)

Among the important skills reading appears as the most. Simply because it heals people to learn from human knowledge and experience through reading knowledge which is highly participated in the development of the mankind. Reading is the prompt and easiest way to improve people's educational level, it is like opening the doors of grasping and understanding to humans life, it is also stimulating the cells of the human brain and it strengthens the skills in short, reading is the preferable and the only way of allowing human to have new experience and correct some old views.

What is known about reading comprehension is that reading is the appropriate way which helps the students to get meaning from printed materials. Comprehension is getting meaning from words is very important in the academic learning. According to Snow, reading comprehension is: The *process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through Interaction and involvement with written language. It consists of three elements: the reader, the text and the activity or purpose for reading.* (Snow: 2002, Quoted in May.C:2010, 07)

The teacher must understand the reading process first in order to aid students to derive meaning from a text, in general reading process starts with the information from the text ends with what the student gains, moreover reading is the process of reformulating the authors' words and ideas.

Reading is a combination of many skills and process that help the reader to interact with the written words for both content and pleasure, and they guarantee that with reading the instructor can teach writing, speaking, vocabulary and other language aspects, also reading permit the learners to

understand the outside of the world and always relate themselves to and they find solution to their own problems. (Pourkalhor & Kohan : 2013)

Reading is called the receptive skill in which the reader is receiving a message from the writer. The main aim of the study is to link literature and its significance over comprehension and what can literary works present to the EFL learners, so literature occupies a very important place in the EFL curriculum. In the recent years the experts insists on the employment of literature in the program since it is very beneficial works on the amelioration of the skill moreover the communication.

There is no doubt that literature reinforces the four language skills ,but reading literature adds to the self understanding some experiences and values, teaching and reading different literary genres can participates in promoting students 'creative thinking , that is why literature is the core of language teaching, and encourages self awareness of students moreover, allows them to discover the world around them .When literature is taught in the context of English as second or foreign language, a lot of benefits is gained among these benefits it brings to the learner a great heritage of linguistics .

As well, literature must be seen as a very important resource of motivating material that would provide access to the cultural background. Lazar believes that literature promotes the language acquisition, also it expands students'awareness and abilities of interpretation, she thinks that the use of literary texts in language teaching provide the students with the cultural knowledge about the target language and its use in context. It also helps good interpretation. Lazra believes that teaching literature can help to stimulate the imagination of learners develop their critical abilities and increase their emotional awareness. (Lazar: 1993)

1.2.2. Using Literature as a Context for Teaching Vocabulary

It is undebatable that vocabulary plays an important role in the academic path of EFL learners and real developed vocabulary is needed for foreign language learners. It was stated by Wilinks that *without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed* (Wilinks.D : 1973,111. Quoted in Pathan & Al Dersi: 2013, 01)

Teaching vocabulary occupies a very significant place in language teaching, the importance of vocabulary teaching is related to the level of foreign language learners since it the only way that decide it. Thus it needs much attention from both teachers and learners. As the aim of any language teaching is to enhance the competence of the learners to make them able to communicate successfully and freely , vocabulary refers to the students understanding, the combination of knowledge and vocabulary can contributes in the improvement of the comprehension .Vocabulary and comprehension are closely connected skill , besides this literature permits the learner to read more and put them in the right path towards a good language acquisition and have a larger vocabularies in order to articulate responses to questions and ask better . Reading researches emphasize on the significance of including literatures within the EFL curriculum, to teach vocabulary is not only to help students how to deal with words but it is the way how to guide them to decode their speeches and interpret their understanding, for this matter Lubliner & Smetana assert in their work ,*The ultimate challenge of a vocabulary intervention is not merely to teach a set of words or skills, but to positively affect reading comprehension"* (Lubliner & Smetana :2005.Quoted in Kristina & Hansen:2009,07).

The recent studies insist on that reading comprehension and vocabulary through wide independent reading. The instructors' basic role is to encourage wide reading, and it is the most worthy thing that can be done to improve the learners' vocabulary. The question of Why should I teach vocabulary? as teacher my students need to learn new words and know how to employ in sentences the main aim of including literature that it is the main field that permit the learner in the reticulation of words in its correct meaning in different situations, the learner productive vocabularies grow when the teacher works with them simultaneously and help them to develop precision in their definition and usage and mention some ways and strategies.

1.3. Major Problems Faced by EFL Learners in Reading Comprehension

For EFL learners, reading is one of the most important skills that should be acquired in English as a Second language.

> *Reading is not just a single skill but a combination of many skills and processes in which the readers interact with printed words and texts for content and pleasure. Through reading, one can teach writing, speaking, vocabulary items, grammar, spelling and other language aspects. There are some essential goals of reading such as enabling*

students to understand the world, growing their interests, and finding solutions to their own problems. (Pourkalhor & Nohan: 2013, 52)

Reading is performed to grasp meaning from a text, in which grammatical structures and vocabulary are required simultaneously. Many researchers have already shown before that EFL learners read more slowly in their second language compared to their native language. EFL learners have many texts to read and through reading, the learners can acquire much of their knowledge and understanding different subject areas, but, unfortunately some students often think that reading is only mastering the mechanics of reading, but good readers know that the purpose of reading is to understand words. EFL students must understand that reading is comprehension; most of them with reading disabilities have incapacity to grasp the important ideas in reading a passage.

In EFL classes, most of students are weak to communicate effectively, orally and writing .When focusing on EFL reading comprehension skill, there is an agreement that EFL students suffer a lot from many problems in their reading comprehension skill because of the inadequate practice of reading.

The first problem which is a part to EFL students reading comprehension problem is the lack of vocabulary; the majority of EFL students encounter a big problem to have the sufficient and also the essential vocabulary to make a communication. It was observed that this problem is because of the no conscious efforts given by the teachers to motivate the students to acquire new terms and use them in their daily life as much as they could in their life.

Another problem in EFL classes is that EFL students face a problem of pronunciation when they read; they often do not know how to pronounce some terms or they pronounce it as it is written.

Another problem faced by EFL learners which is the wrong following of punctuation. When they are asked to read a text they do not know where they have to take a pause, and where they have not to, in addition to that they do not respect the punctuation marks such as: comma, semi- colon, exclamation mark, question mark etc.

The major problem in EFL classes is that students may read words with difficulty, but they cannot understand their meaning or remember what they have read before, in addition to the weakness of their paraphrasing and fluency. Recent researches on reading comprehension show that EFL learners suffer from grasping vocabulary, for instance, EFL learners may fell confused between different words of similar lexical forms; there Are some terms seem to be closely in phonetics such as: Wide and Wild …others seem to be similar in morphology like: Reception and Perception, in such cases an EFL reader might be confused between the different word because they

seem to be similar. Other type of difficulty that we can find with EFL learners ,is the presence of different meaning within a same word , like the word break for example : break the law which means don t obey the law , and break a chair which means separate it into pieces . *Focusing on reading comprehension is important even when student s primary area of difficulty is word cognition .when students understand what they read they enjoy it and are motivated to read more.* (Jennings et All: 2005, 266)

As it is observed in EFL classes, these problems might be because of the non attention by the teachers to develop the comprehension skill, or because of the wrong selection of material that an EFL students consider it as being difficult and boring, like: using informative texts, poems or articles from a newspaper, and this kind of selection, does not help EFL students to grasp the meaning or motivate them to read.

Additionally, the obstacles of reading comprehension are first because of the lack of vocabulary that Most of EFL learners have. To avoid such problems, the learners should have large amount of vocabularies, and this later came from the habitual tendency of reading, i.e. as much the learner reads a lot, he acquires new vocabulary and has the opportunity to ameliorate his background knowledge which facilitates the reading task.

1.4. Criteria of Selecting the Appropriate Material in EFL Classes

Learning a foreign language for EFL learners is not always a pleasurable experience meaning that the process of foreign language teaching and learning is considered to be very uninteresting and difficult. In such situation, the teaching methodology and the material selected for learning language skills, in addition to the various motivational and also learning strategies play an interesting role in the success, as well the failure of foreign language teaching and learning.

While some EFL teachers still believe that EFL is based on focusing on linguistic only, the new trend emerges which attempt to integrate literature in EFL curriculum, since it adds a new measurement to the teaching of English as a foreign language.

The use of literary works in ESL and EFL classes has been a center of attraction for both teachers and learners and more for studies on the kind of literature that should be presented to the EFL classes., the various motivational and also learning strategies, play an interesting role in the success as well the failure of foreign language teaching and learning.

The most decisive factor in adopting literature in the language class is the selection of the text which could quite literally guarantee or abandon learning totally. There is nothing more euphoric than reading a text which is so pleasant that the learner simply forgets to look at this watch, and, yet, there is nothing more suffocating than having to drag oneself one of those ultimately boring non sensual texts. (Marashi.H:1995, 13)

Using literature in language teaching offers four benefits: authentic material, cultural enrichment, language advancement and personal growth. A major problem in EFL setting is the creation of the authentic situation which provides EFL learners natural or pure language, the language by introducing and providing the interaction between people and society.

The idea of literature suitability in EFL class depends on students' needs, interests, cultural background and the level of the language. An important factor that EFL teachers should be taken it into consideration is if the literary texts chosen is able to arise the sort of personal involvement i.e., provoking the learners' interest and his positive reaction toward such literary texts. The more the literary text chosen is enjoyable and understanding, the more reading process is likely to have an attractive and beneficial impact on EFL learner s linguistic background, as well cultural knowledge. (Collie and Slater1991)

It is very significant to choose literary text which is closely connected to the life experiences , dreams and emotions of the reader .Also, The difficulty of language of course has to be well considered because as a foreign learner , he is not able to realize and enjoy texts which they get as being difficult ; simplicity of language may be helpful for an EFL learner but the important factors are the relevance and their interest i.e, it will be great if the literary work reflects the issues which are sense to be close to the heart of peoples interest .

It is suggested by Arthur some factors that play a crucial role in encourage EFL students to experience literary text while reading:

The first factor is when teachers select a literary text that characterized by new and difficult vocabulary words and grammatical structures, this will completely discourage the students' especially in EFL classes, where the level is not high enough to recognize and analyze the difficulty of vocabulary terms and also the grammatical structures .

The second factor for Arthur is the non verbal clues include pictures, sound effect, this make literature be presented to the students as non verbal experience.

The third factor according to Arthur is reading environment: an EFL class must have relaxed atmosphere and the explanation of the teacher should be minimized.

Thus, an EFL teacher may avoid the extra time and the hard efforts which will certainly be required for Students to grasp a literary text in a language, which is not his own. As long as the time spends on obtaining a good connection between EFL reader and the literary work, they can be asked to read and to do other interests or tasks. (Arthur: 1986)

From all what is mentioned before, the main criteria that justify the use of literature as the best tool for teaching a foreign language:

Firstly, linguistic criterion which defends that literature provides EFL students with different types and authentic samples of language learning, i.e, through literary texts the students can be trained in a variety of styles, genres band be able to function them.

Secondly, methodological criterion, meaning that different literary texts includes various Interpretation, these leads to motivate and interact the student to the text.

Thirdly, motivational criterion, since the literary texts express the writers' feeling this strengthens the student's motivation toward the literary text.

1.4.1 Short Stories

The use of literary works in EFL classes has been a center of attraction from both teachers and learners and more for studies on the way literature must applied in EFL classes.

There are plenty of literary genre can be used as a tool for language teaching in EFL classes. But many researches shows that first, poetry has a figurative language and complex which needs a long time to perceive, meaning that it cannot be well explained in a single classroom lesson. Second, Drama may be used in EFL classes, but it is very difficult to play in overcrowded classes and with a limited time. Thirdly, the novel is so long and is very difficult to finish for such level.

According to those obstacles, among literary genre, the appropriate on is short story which is defined by Edgar Allan Poe as: *as a narrative which can be read at one sitting of from half an hour to two hours, and is limited to "a certain unique or single effect" to which every detail is subordinate*. Short stories are the only literary genre that has an amount of structure and can easily used in teaching a foreign language, because of its relevance to the limited class time. Then short stories due to its shortness it aims at presenting a single effect; it is just one plot with few details of setting.

Moreover, it is easy for a foreign learner of a foreign language to follow up a story because of its simplicity. The short story is considered to be the suitable literary text that should be tackled in EFL classes ,because it develop EFL students language skills especially reading and writing , in addition it makes the reading comprehension skill easy , interesting and fun . It is mentioned that: *The short story offers certain advantages for material design for ESL students since this genre includes short textual material to be satisfactorily handled in one or limited teaching sessions.* (Ghasmi.P:2011, 70)

Moreover, short stories have an impact on learner's psychology; whenever the student start to read a short story ,It creates on the student an inner monologues and reinforce his curiosity to discover what happens next .

In general terms, the more convinced selection for EFL / EFL learners may be the use of short stories which are modern and concise enough to be tackled in a few teaching sessions.

The reading process as a whole gives the EFL learners a feeling of achievement, but they are more motivated when their psychologically is satisfied from the simplicity of the language.

Thus, the linguistic side of a literary text should be equivalent to the level of EFL/ESL students.

1.5. Benefits of Using Short Stories for Developing Reading Comprehension and their Amplification in the EFL Context

Reading materials are necessary will improve perusing skills, that will drives the learner toward the development of his reading skill, for instance, statement analysis, structural analysis, lexicon use, and taking in the intending for expressions starting with the connection. Short stories are considered to be the best literary genre that can be used in the EFL classes, so that it helps the learner to understand the content and grasp vocabulary in easy way. They Might make useful since expositive expression need those personal satisfaction for constantly widespread and short stories permit those instructors' testament with manage human issue.

Short stories was admitted by the researchers that it is the best tool in teaching second language and they advocate its amplification in ESL/EFL and they list several, benefits of short stories , These include motivational, literary, cultural and higher-order thinking benefits. None the less before teachers go deeper with the advantages of they must make sure that all these benefits serve all the instructors, and all of them take it into consideration in the reinforcement of the skills . The importance of short stories permit the teacher to include it within the curriculum in order to teach all the skills of language proficiency, it is stated that *short stories can, if selected and exploited*

appropriately, provide quality text content which will greatly enhance ELT courses for learners at intermediate levels of proficiency. (Murdoch.G:2002, 09. Quoted in Erkaya.O:2003, 03)

The quotation mentioned above explains the significance of using short stories and why it is needed to be used in the ELT by discussing activities and suggesting some solution, also the instructors can create a writing and acting out a dialogue that work not only on the students'skills but also on the growth of self confidence in them. Litterature assists learners to write more creatively ,of course with the aid of the teacher who will always provides the learners with a variety of writing in order to develop their writing skills ,since this two skills are interrelated .

1.5.1. Short Stories and its Effect on EFL Learners

Reading short stories allows learners who are in their beginning of acquiring their second language (L2), they help them to relate what they read to their lives, and usually this engagement makes them like reading literature. Learners focus must not be only on developing grammar and vocabulary but they need to develop a fully grasp the social and cultural environment either within the language in question is actually used.

Furthermore, reading short stories can successfully develop the interpretative abilities. Short stories motivate the learners to make hints ,understand different levels of meanings and work on developing skills in critical thinking , and at the same time to assent the difficulties in the text .as claim out : *reading narratives as literary works aids in cognitive development and critical thinking* (Wallen: 2010,11 Quoted in Alemi.M:2011,01)) in different words reading short stories work on both language and the emotional awareness of the students by vitalizing their imagination and helps in the up growth of the critical skills. So it is obvious that reading literature in general encourage the language acquisition, mainly English teaching nowadays can have a specific connection to literary works .

Among all the literary genre, short stories seems to be the most suitable one to be used in the EFL classes and the teacher is acquired to choose a story that learner can follow easily to avoid difficulty and boredom, ''*selecting short story from a well known writer such as T.S Eliot as teaching tool for EFL students is a challenging approaches''.* (Ibid: 04) Thus the teacher can makes the match between the difficulty level of the literary work and proficiency level of the students in addition to the evaluation of the student's understanding comes after reading the passage.

A numerous studies which shed the light on the positive impact of the use of short stories since the main concern of EFL students is to communicate fluently in the target language not focus merely on the linguistic element. The studies discussed some elements explaining the short stories work on such as the amelioration of the reading performance, it avoids boredom and creates the element of excitement, also it lead out the learner to have a large space of imagination and expression in which each learner will end up with a specific and own style. All the obtained results emphasized the relation between the learner and short story and its effectiveness as an appropriate literary genre for the improvement of EFL learners' competences.

Previously, people have been telling stories as long as they have telling the story it may mislead and lose interest for the listener , but the written form allows the reader to concentrate with the characters and the flow of the events ,even the learner can get attracted with the words and how sentences are composed . Here is the fact of the importance of the short story in its written form , Edgar Allen Poe introduces the short story as a piece that can be read in one setting meaning that the writer focus on developing a plot and characters instead on focusing on the main concept and how to tell the story effectively.

The short story when it appeared as new literary genre it made uproar in the field of teaching that changed the general view where it became popular not as any other genre

> *The written short story as we know it today is relatively new. Writers like Poe and Edith Wharton in the mid 1800s strove to make it popular by writing short stories themselves. Poe edited several magazines of short works, and many nonfiction books follow the rules for short stories that he laid out. It is through his efforts that we have the short story market we have today.*
>
> (Dickens.L:2004)

The short story was popularized by Edgar Allen Poe and he was approved with, indeed the existence of short story traced back to before Poe's short stories was addressed to the general public, he attempts to write stories that can be easily read and summarized at once and digested the whole meaning, moreover his stories have a numerous advantageous for the general public, in the other hand for writers who asks for a professional writing career.

It is a bit hard for people to specify time for reading and for some it compose a difficult task and if they choose novel they may feel stuck with, and they won't be able to complete the novel it is

often involves a real investment of time .So short stories are wrote to be read in one setting as it was mentioned before. Furthermore , short stories can be read at any small period of time for instance in the way to work or in the car or in the break between the sessions , and the reading of short stories in the evening it is the best since it helps the reader's mind to get used with it and to establish reading schedule or routine , also it presents unlimited opportunities to increase the readers knowledge about different cultures and different ways of living in other words short stories participate in the building of the learners personality and it adds to their general knowledge and lead them to discover what the world means to them .

For beginners short stories the preferable since they are dealing with a language different from the native language of the learners and their interest is to focus on the basic element of the language they are acquiring .Traditionally short stories have been used to educate morals, values, and ethical teaching beside this ,they motivate them to write their own and develop their understanding in the writing skill and decreases the vocabulary mistakes and the last idea will be well explained deeply and discussed in the following chapter .

1.5.2 .Short Stories as an Authentic Material in EFL Class

The short story is the convenient tool in teaching it permits the students to realize the importance of literature and how short story plays a very significance role in teaching a second language. The shortness and the well organized texture and controlled writing style make the short stories easy to digest mainly for the narrative speakers , they focus on the clear theme or topic this what makes them easier an suitable for the non native learners because it is the written with natural dialogue , a simple language and conversational tone , since the short story is the outlet of the writer's emotions it finds convergence of highly motivated from learners because it links them directly with the writer's thoughts and feelings which they want to discover more about it .

Never the less this benefits can't be taken in consideration unless the instructor be reminded of those benefits that works on the reinforcement of the teaching skills, short stories allow the teacher to engage all the four skills to move forward to the level of proficiency ,and this can be realized by making sure from the instructor and the activities he made, in addition to that, short stories can be selected to develop learners' vocabulary and their reading performance , students are always motivated by the use of literature for this reason, it is *motivationally effective if students can genuinely engage with its thoughts and emotions and appreciate its aesthetic qualities* (Erkaya .O:2003,05).

Also this specific genre short story, considered as effective and fruitful genre because it helps in teaching culture to EFL students also it transmits culture to people about whom and what for the

stories were written , this is how learners will differentiate between the tenses and they will have an open minds about costumes and traditions . Furthermore, they will star comparing everything in the story and to their lives and the culture to their own, whether they find similarities and the different points, also the common points between the two cultures.

The strongest benefit is that short stories act as the most exciting and interesting in the growth of the high order thinking,so that the students of different levels of thinking be able to analyze each piece they read in order to think critically while they read stories, among the interest of .Erkaya.O is to motivate both learners and teachers and she insists on the use of authentic material such as literature in the language instruction she insist on:

> *Stories have two crucial advantages over traditional content: . . [First,] because they are entertaining, students' pervasive apprehension is reduced, and they learn from the beginning that critical thinking is natural, familiar, and sometimes even fun. Second, the stories put issues of critical thinking in an easily remembered context.* (Cited in Erkaya .O:2003, 8, 9).

The aim of EFL teaching centered in the fluency of the students' communication in the second language, short stories were beneficial it has not only linguistics benefits also helps the teacher to teach culture, literature and high order thinking and its amplification in the EFL curriculum helps EFL students to get used with reading, make them well skilled and their minds will be full-blow for new language, new culture and high level of skills and vocabulary.

To sum up the significance of using short stores in the EFL classes is embodied in the development of the language of learners and ameliorate the way they acquire their new language ,also strengthens their general comprehension ability , most important is that short stories motivate them to read a lot in the sake of developing the reading skill, and to create for them the sense of curiosity and enable them to interpret it in their own way, ending up with the growth of their vocabulary , their background and open mind on a new culture and new language .

1.6. Problems of Using Short Stories

The beginning is difficult for anyone who is in the first steps of the ladder of success, especially for those who are facing new things .Concerning the language and the ability of acquiring it is a bit difficult but it is not impossible. Here are some problems that face both learners and teachers in dealing with literature more specific the short stories , the first obstacle stands in the path of the learner is the case of understanding more clearer comprehension , so the learners do not know how to deal with the short story and they don't know if reading this piece make sense or not, they may think that if they read the words of any written text means for them that their mission is complete and they do not know that reading is related to comprehension.

Short stories usually contain a narrative language in which describes the character, setting and plot, this plot generally is divided into different dilemmas that the character falls in and series of events which perform in the place within the story, the problem here is that learners as beginners dealing with such details need more explication and they need some illustration and exemplification to understand the content of the story.

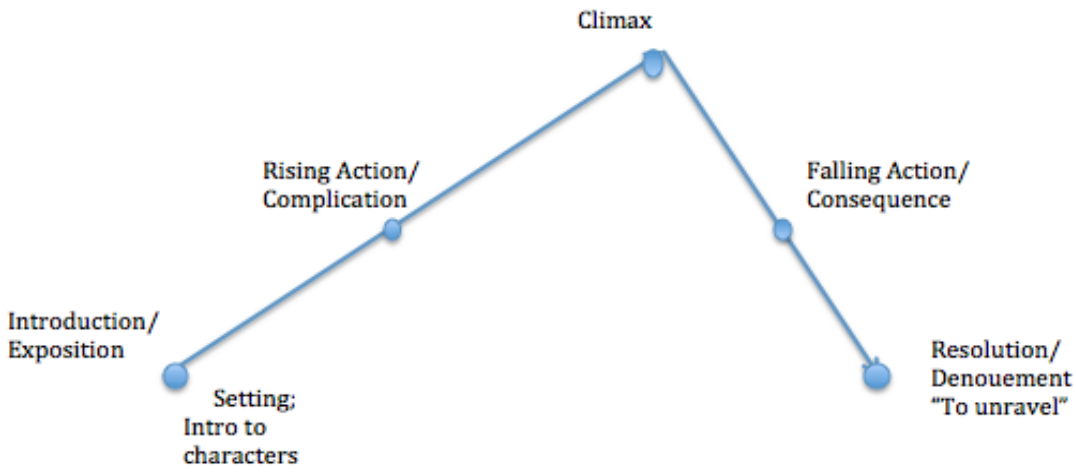

Figure 1.5 : Mapping a short story by the learner after reading (plot structure).

This map must be presented first by the teacher to his students later on they will be able to draw their own after reading in good way and can precise it also relate it to the story learned *''Teacher can introduce story maps before student read and ask them to fill in the frame either during or*

after reading. They also give the map to students after reading story has been read and ask them to identify ...''(Cited in Jenning et al:2005 ,248).

Also the language may be a source of problems for the fact of complexity the late handicap their understanding , it is known that literature contains difficult language about ninety percent of the learners find language as a major problem that prevent their understanding, the meaning of the story and the moral gained from the short story studied in the classroom. Thus, they deal with their emotions mainly because they relate it to some stories in their native language not only the language but also the religious facts, tradition and believes, which are totally wrong because the aim of teaching is not preparing the students to adopt the foreign values and attitudes, but is to teach only the language and how to grasp the vocabulary.

(Gillian Lazar: 1993) designed a map in which she explains students' problems with the short stories. Starting first with motivation she stated some point, such as: lack of confidence, and the content of the stories which may be uninteresting or they may feel that this certain short story irrelevant to be included in exams. This facts may discourage them second how they can make their interpretations ,whether they interpret with confidence or just copy with ambiguity ,then the inadequate reading strategies may mislead the learner will focus on word rather than the general meaning, after that it comes the most important point which is the comprehension , so the students find some confusion in following the plot , understanding characters ,understanding the vocabulary and understanding the role of the narrator. In general Lazar explains these different points in order to help the learner later on how to appreciate the style of writing then to understand the cultural background to the story (See Appendix 5).

1.7. Reinforcement of Reading Comprehension Skill through Short Stories

Since learning a second language is learning speaking, reading and writing in English, English as a second reading activity are the key. Reading English texts can be difficult for EFL students, because reading is divided into understanding vocabularies and sentence structure.

Using short stories in EFL class facilitate the task of developing EFL student reading skill, the selection of short stories as a suitable material, can provide EFL classes with different activities and exercises.

The results of Lao and Krashen s 2000 study which compared the reading achievement between a group of students that read literary texts and second group that read non literary texts at a university in Hong Kong revealed that group who read literary texts made better improvement in reading and Vocabulary (Pardere. P: 2011, 6)

For instance, when an EFL teacher choose Edgar Allen Poe story ,*The Black Cat*, (see appendix2) he can deals with different tasks which help the students to acquire vocabulary. These activities have a strong effect in producing meaning.

a. Complete the table below with the correct form of the missing participle, adjective, noun, verb or adverb:

participle	Adjective	Noun	Verb	Adverb
	annoyed		annoy	
continuing		Continuation		continuously

• By the use of this activity, EFL learners acquire more vocabulary and it is also the best way to push them learning how to use a dictionary.

b. Match each work from column A with its meaning from the column B:

A	B
Mad Allusion Remorse Docile	• Indirect reference • Mentally distributed • Easily managed or handled • Deep and painful regret from wrong doing

- In this activity, students should match each word with its appropriate meaning, this task help the EFL students to memorize and understand more, the difficult vocabularies.

C. pick up words from the column A to complete these sentences:

1. He felt a deep .....for his wrongdoing
2. You act like a …….when you are angry
3. In the previous novel, there was an …….to the famous Greek god Zeus
4. After a long time of training, the wild horse became more …….

- The last activity may help an EFL student to practice the new vocabularies that he has already understand its meaning .And by applying this activity, there is a reinforcement of what is gained from reading the story .Many researchers supported the idea of using short stories for vocabulary instruction saying that: *Vocabulary in short stories in presented in vivid and clear context and the illustrations help to convey meaning. Both the context and the frequently amusing situations can make the vocabulary easy to remember.* (Ellis & Brewster:2014,31).

As far as reading short stories is concerned, the new vocabularies which help the students acquire from it will help them with comprehension .But, this does not refer that the EFL students have completely understand the story. Thus, the activities given by the teacher (a,b,c) reinforce more students reading comprehension .

1.8. Infusing Superior Reasoning

Teaching EFL students the superior reasoning is a necessary outcome. Short stories are a good tool for infusing superior reasoning and developing the critical thinking in EFL classes. Learners with a good level, can consider and examine what they read .The plot of a short story provides EFL students a chance to show their creativity and critical thinking . Short story unit is an important and successful unit in helping EFL teachers to attend their major objectives, EFL students became more confident reader and also thinkers, they can experience literature and acquired knowledge of basic literary elements such as: character, setting, conflict and theme. (Johnson & Golombeck: 1916)

With the K.W.L activities, EFL teachers can ask the students what they know about the topic of story, and in the same time teacher can ask questions to confirm their knowledge, it is a useful way when teaching a short story.

Moreover, teacher's question of what they have already know about the story may help EFL students to think and list his ideas as well share it with his colleague .The teacher may ask the students the following questions:

1. What they know about the story?

2 .What do we want to know in general?

3. What did we learn from the story?

(Crawford et al: 2005.Quoted in, Thapaliya: 2012)

So, teacher's question plays an important role in activating students low and high thinking. Most EFL students when they are beginners, are able to answer questions about events plot, places. When they practice more the language they involve a logical reasoning such as: classification, comparisons, hypothesizing…but when they skill the language, students can analyze, evaluate and synthesize what they read. Thus, EFL students much reach a high level of language skill to analyze and interpret the facts about the story.

1.9. Teaching a New Culture

Nowadays, the purpose of teaching English as a second or a foreign language is not only seeking to teach students the way to speak, write, read and listen in English, but also to enhance their cultural intelligence. The use of literature as a tool to develop EFL students' culture is a great method, because it provides them a large window to worlds that are far away for us. As it pointed out by lazar *''Literature can provide students with access to the culture of the people whose language they are studying.''* (Lazar.G:1993, 16)

Short stories are the best example of how literature is a source of insight society and culture; it is a link between a foreign culture of people and the students and depicts their real social life.

Stories are an effective way of teaching, it play an important part in all cultures. By learning about any culture in a story, students learn about the ancient times as well the present ones .Moreover, when reading short stories students can discover other people's traditions and customs and enhancing their knowledge by providing a vivid context ;characters from different social background are depicted(King, I :2001). As lazar stated:

> *A description of a farm in the outback, for example in a short story by an Australian author, might familiarize students with the typical scenery and social structures to be expected in such as setting. More interestingly, it could provide them with insights into the possible relationships, emotions and attitudes for the inhabitants of the farm .*

(Lazar.G:1993, 17)

The effect of culture on EFL students is that he can respect, discover the differences of other people and be more conscious about his own culture .This is a great opportunity for EFL students to explore multiple cultural aspects and see the comparison between their own culture and the other cultures they can find, through reading a story . Thus, an EFL reader can explore foreign thoughts, customs, and beliefs, behind a vivid imagined world which can provides the learner with feeling of depiction a real life.

1.10.Conclusion

As a conclusion to the first chapter, reading comprehension skill regarded as an important skill in EFL classes, as this specific skill led to the basis for effective language competence. For this reason the EFL teacher's materials related to reading comprehension skill should be very accurately and effectively , to read in a foreign language as English , is not a simple task , EFL students may encounter many difficulties in reading comprehension while they reading . So, teacher's role as a guide can provides EFL students by the appropriate material and design to teach reading comprehension skill, as well the material selected should not focus only on the development of linguistic proficiency, but also should be enjoyable and understandable.

The short story is the best tool for teaching reading comprehension skill to EFL students, it makes reading as being enjoyable and interesting, it is not wealthy only of linguistic aspects, but also other pedagogical aspects such as: infusing superior reasoning and teaching a new culture.

Finally, the short story has a great influence in making the reading comprehension interesting, it can offers to EFL students the opportunity to grasp comprehension skill acquisition, and considered as a wonderful grant for overcoming the problems of EFL students reading comprehension.

Chapter two

Short Stories for Developing Writing Skill in EFL Context

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Chapter Two

2.1.Introduction

Language is a very complicated trend in individual's life , so that it has been taken as one of the secrets that have faced individuals, it is used to give expression and change the lifestyle of the community, it is the vehicle of ideas and the device of connection. Hence, the main aim of this chapter is studying different conditions in. This hypothesized that EFL learners are expected to react to different writing projects, and be able to use the language in order to discover and show their ideas evidently. Moreover, by giving learners look around the fictional language, they are motivated to think about the criteria of the language use, and become accustomed with it. In addition to that, learners may advantage from the studying paragraphs to write their compositions, since reading and writing are said to be two abilities that mirror each other.

Therefore, the second part of the study attempts to shed the light on the most important points that the EFL learning focuses on. It is based on of the nature of the productive skill and its importance and what are the suitable methods , ways and strategies help in its acquisition in addition to the points mentioned before the role of literature more specifically the short story in the second language learning and its relation to the writing skill.

2.2. The Nature of Writing

Writing is a way of communication, it is considered to be a complex process that needs awareness for the combination of different components of language in effective way. The writing skill is one of the fundamental skill of language learning,. According to Syahrulz .M

> *Writing is a productive skill that urges the writer to carry out the meanings or messages in the written form. In the writing process, the writer tries to interact with the readers by exploring the ideas in the written form. The ideas usually contain the context, prior knowledge, and discourse. As writing is transactional and message-oriented, its goal must be to convey information accurately, effectively and appropriately.* (Syahrulz .M: 2014)

The writing skill can be defined as the ability to express ideas and thoughts into written patterns to convey a message, it is a process which makes the reader grasp what is meant by the writer s thoughts. It is one of the most important skill that should acquired in EFL class, because it

is necessary for EFL students to express their thoughts in organized structures sentences to create a meaningful message .

The ability to write in a second or a foreign language as English is considered to be a crucial skill for EFL students, learning how to write in a foreign language has further objectives: in university for instance writing is a way of learning, it is impossible for EFL students to attained their objective studies without knowing how to write in effective way, but unfortunately as foreign or second language writers, they ignore how to plan and organize ideas, also they face difficulties to do that.

Writing skill is one of the most challenging and sophisticated projects for language learners, it is a hard competence that needs a significant effort and practice on the students' part to reach a good level of writing, this skill is not by the human nature or innate, it must be practiced a lot in order to be learned and acquired its rules.

> *The complete reliance on metalinguistic competence indicates that the rules of written discourse are largely learned by merely acquiring language naturally like in speaking, writing skill requires more formal instruction and practice, especially about the grammar and vocabulary*. (Syahrulz.M:2014)

Writing is a way of communication between the writer and the reader, it is an ability to express ideas, thoughts and information about topic .For EFL students, it is not an easy task to write in a foreign language because this needs to master: vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and advanced level of productive language, meaning that the written language required an explicitly, accuracy and effectiveness much more than the speaking language.

Hence EFL students must framework and integrate ideas, thoughts or information into coherent and cohesive texts, moreover it is necessary to have sufficient knowledge about the language, according to Ferits &Hedogcok (2013): writing systems should demonstrate, developing literary in any language requires learning not just its orthography but also the social practices and cognitive functions required to decode and produce written texts.

Weigle (2002) the physical act of writing is considered mainly as a cognitive effort of the individual writer .Indeed , the traditional approach to writing assessment focused on the cognitive aspects of writing , however it is important to consider writing not only as the product of the individual , but also as cultural and social act. Meaning that, writing should be learned through socially mediated processes, such as formal instruction, imitation and practice. To be able to write

in a second language effectively, the writer have to learn , its orthography , morphology , syntax and lexicon , moreover the discourse and rhetorical conventions of the 2nd language (Brakaoui :2002)

In general terms, the ability of writing is not an innate fact, EFL students should learn how to master linguistic, cognitive and also sociocultural factors are involved to write effectively in English, they need also a support from teachers by providing them with structured activities and meaningful context to practice writing.

2.3.The Importance of Acquiring Writing Skill in the EFL Classroom

The writing skill or ability could be described as the ability of sharing thoughts and ideas into structured types, in order to help readers understand what was produced by writing. Thus, EFL students need to be able to convey their ideas and feelings in very organized sentences seeking for a meaningful whole.

The importance of writing lies in its two sides meaning: what is said (content) and in which way it is said (form) it signifies a cognitive characteristics of the writer which are transmitted to the readers, not actually to share the same ideas, but at least to persuade or offer them an appropriate writing despite the gap between them. (Brooks: 1960) , Oshima &
Hogue pointed out:

> *Whenever you write, consider your specific audience, that is, the people who will read what you have written. Knowing your audience will help you to communicate clearly and effectively. In academic writing, your audience is primarily your professors and instructors* (Oshima&Hogue,2:1999 quotd in Elhabiri .H ,2013:23)

The word importance reflects the strong relation between the skill of writing and the acquisition of language. Most people never consider the complexity and hardness of the composing process. In fact, compared to all other educational activities, writing needs a lot of connotation may be more than any other skill. Learners must call on a progressively wide variety of abilities to not only create legibly, logically, and in a structured way but also to produce guidelines of sentence structure and format. This mixture of specifications makes writing the most complicated and difficult use of language.

Theoretically, writing is important because it is the only skill allows the learner to express his ideas and his feelings .It is the productive skill i.e. the learner can summarizes and jot down the things he understood from anything he had already read , writing skill can be the ticket for good academic achievement, writing is a process where symbols are arranged according to certain agreements to form words and how words are combined to form sentences in order to have a coherent passages in very meaningful way , writing is a kind of method of decoding meaning after the reading some printed materials

Some students ask their teachers why writing skills is so important in our learning career? They seek for reasonable answer. The appropriate answer is: the purpose of writing process is to catch an idea or thought to transmit it to a permanent form and make it tangible also the ultimate target of writing is communication, meaning that to translate to the audience what one wants to say. Writing is much clearer than the spoken language because the last lacks helping and supporting hints in addition to that composing or writing has a great care to ensure that the message is quiet conveyed smoothly and in correct way .Also the importance of writing skill lies in the fact of blogging every single detail in printed copies to return to it when it is needed , and most important is that student through writing he can learn grammar rules , structures , and how words and sentences are combined , writing is creative process but it does not create something out of nothing , rather it uncovers some facts , ideas, faculties and skills which existed before, beside this through writing the instructor can evaluate the comprehension capacities of the learner .

Here are some facts show how writing is important in the EFL classes and emphasize on the ideas mentioned above:

- Writing is utilized in many parts of our lives.
- Writing is crucial to turning into a good reader.
- Writing is an important job skill.
- Writing is the main basis upon which one's work, learning, and intellect will be judged in any level of learning, in the work place and in the community.
- Writing provides us with communicating and thinking skills.
- Writing declares who we are as persons.
- Writing tends to make our thinking and learning apparent and permanent.
- Writing promotes our ability to explain and improve our ideas to others and ourselves.
- Writing preserves our ideas and memories, also it permit us to store our achievements
- Writing allows us to understand our lives, and sometimes they'll be part of it.
- Writing allows us to entertain others, and link them to our thinking.

At the end student can show through writing that he can produce in coherent way and employ the grasped meaning in what they write and they identify all the branches that help in writing.

2.4. Ways, Method and Strategies to Teach Writing Skill in EFL Class

Writing is an important skill for learning English as a foreign language, it shows the power of students in perfecting writing techniques .As EFL students they have to be aware of writing skill not only as a process, but as well learning how to write contains learning the ability to write effectively with the respect of rules and conventions of the language. However, EFL students are struggling many problems in writing skill.

> *Learners often have problems in deciding what words will most precisely and clearly express their ideas, and what words will support their purpose for writing.*
>
> *As a result, their essays suffer from incorrect usage and incoherent paragraphs. Students need to find words that communicate their meaning, because the reader has no opportunity to ask for clarification.* (Elhabiri.H,2012:116)

To solve those problems, there are strategic writing techniques to apply in EFL classes. Students should know these tactics and how to handle them. The main objective of writing method instruction is to control construction of writing to EFL students.

Writing method and strategies are a chance to control writing process of EFL students, these strategies are known as cognitive and metacognetive ones is the combination of knowledge with thinking. According to Gillespie & Graham (2012) effective writing strategies for EFL students are:

<u>Writing strategies:</u>

Clearly teach students strategies for planning, transforming or modifying their written products. This may includes teaching processes such as: brainstorming , editing or a specific elements like how to write an essay .In the same case , teachers design the process , provide a support as students train using the process on their own writing , and allow for individual practice with the strategy once they have learned it .

a) Summarizing texts:

Teach students the steps of summarize what they read .This technique provide them the opportunity to practice how to write a concise and clear writing, in order to transmit a proper message of the main ideas in a text .Teaching the technique of summary is very important one, it engages students to understand explicit strategies for successful summaries.

b) Collaborative writing:

In the class, teacher allows students to work together (in group), to design a plan, write and modify their writing .Teachers can provide a structure for cooperative writing and precise objectives for individual performance within their groups, for instance: if students of class are working on des Short stories are a shift from learning model to acquisition model .

c) Goals:

Set specific objectives for writing are an important idea in teaching second language composition in EFL class. The goals can be established by the teacher or by the students, with an evaluation from the teacher to see whether they are appropriate .goals can be included just adding, additional ideas or provide specific elements of writing such as: (in an opinion essay, support your belief in some ideas).Setting up specific goal in writing can motivate students' writing.

d) Word processing:

Teachers allow students to use a computer to de written tasks, by the computer text can be added or omitted, also students can access to other tools like: check spelling, to correct their writing structure, so technology play an important role in teaching second language writing.

e) Sentence combining:

Teacher should engage students to write more complex sentences, and ask them to combine two sentences to create a new one. Students should be encouraged by the teacher to applicate the sentence structure skill while they are writing.

f) Inquiry:

Set writing task which needs the use of inquiry skills. Effective inquiring activities include creating a clear goal for writing task for instance: (write a short story about disadvantages of smoking) to encourage students to express their ideas and reactions.

g) Prewriting

interact students with activities before writing to help them to produce and arrange their thoughts, prewriting activities provide students the opportunity to access what they have already know about the topic or do research about what they do not know.

h) Models:

Teacher can provide students with models similar to the type of writing they are going to produce .Teachers should analyze and interpret the model in class and encourage students to imitate it in their own writing.

Furthermore, teachers should apply writing practices which are equivalent to students' needs no single way of teaching writing skill is effective.

> *Writing has always been considered as a very important and difficult skill in learning English. Writing activity compels students to concentrate and organize their ideas and includes students abilities to analyze, criticize and summarize what they have read. However students find composing in English difficult because the writing process demands to use various strategies such as cognitive, linguistic, logical, critical, etc. (Cited in KavaliausKiené.G, 2010:3)*

For all EFL students, several teaching strategies were suggested in order to teach second language writing composition, therefore teacher should motivate students by providing them with several models, clear learning objectives and carefully structured activities etc.

2.5. Literature as a Subject Matter for Writing Skill

Previously, the importance of literature and its significance role had been well discussed, mainly because of its great impact in the improvement of the language skills and it offers great opportunities for both learners and teachers in the English language teaching and learning in fact literature has a big space in the human life it helps them to discover themselves**.** According to Langer :

> *Literature plays a critical role in our life, often without our notice. It helps us to explore both ourselves and others, to define and redefine who we are, who we might become, and how the world might be……*
> *In its best sense, literature is intellectually provocative as well as*

> *humanizing, allowing to use various angles of vision to examine thoughts, beliefs, and actions.* (Langer, 1995:5)

Almost all researches agree on the fact of including literature in the EFL classes and they assert on the close relation between the writing skill and teaching literature. This relationship is the primary purpose of the study. To explore such correlation and how these relationships operate and help in understanding the literature of the past and benefit from that by producing new writings are the key questions of this study. Therefore, it will be attempted to investigate these relationships and underline the importance of the English literature and its role on enhancing creative writing skills.

The main aim is to acquire new language and to facilitate the road toward its acquisition, the teacher must look for new disciplines that enable the continuation of the learning process for the student. Literature is the best tool that can be included in the EFL curriculum, because its use helps the learners not only to earn the language but also how it works, according to Lynn.:

> *Literature is what speaks to us .Literature is what we choose to think most deeply about. Literature is an important part of what connects us to the past ,helps us grasp our present speaks us to shape the future . We can't pin it down . But it's what awaits you here.* (Lynn.S,39:2004)

The wide range of literary genres for instance (poetry, story, novel, drama, etc.) shows that literature gives is a great source. This part of study emphasis on the inclusion of literature in the EFL program , more specifically the use of short stories and narrative texts in second language learning especially in the development of the tow skills reading and writing.
Tomlinson states that literature is a useful element in the language classroom because:

> *Poems, stories and extracts from plays, novels and autobiographies can involve students as individual human beings who can gain rich exposure to authentic English, as well as opportunities to develop communication skills as a result of motivated interaction with texts and with their fellow students.* (Tomlinson, 09:1985 quoted in ELhabiri.H, 37:2013)

2.5.1 Novels

Novels are very long narrative pieces it came to being in the early 18th century .It consumes a large time also needs much of concentration from the EFL learners .Normally it consist a plot , characters setting ... etc

The novel has a fictional language which makes it a bit hard to be taught in the class sometimes novels do not treat only one case but several ones in short novels are not the appropriate material to be included in the curriculum for many reasons among them: its length, the complexity of the language, the difficulty of themes and the different styles of each writer.

2.5.2 Poems

Poems or poetry can be a tool of language teaching due to the shape, its significance is embodied in visualizing the subject matter being described and analyzing how words and phrases might be put together to convey a larger meaning, repetition and rhyme in the poem permit the reader (learner) to grasp the meaning in easy way, reading this genre woks on the improvement of the student's punctuation. Poetry helps in the discovery of culture and history, generally poems help the learners to be native in the language meaning it aids in the fluency. Also it cannot be a suitable genre to carry on with the learning process because of its figurative language.

2.5.3 Short Story

The story is a universal literary genre throughout all cultures of the world. Due to this universality, it is a natural part of language learning experiences of people in every culture. It is *''one of the most fundamental uses of language known to humans''* (Butler.I, 2006:19). Thus, stories can be a natural link between cultures. According to Ellis (2000) stories are a powerful educational tool. Therefore, using stories in second language classrooms can provide rich, authentic and meaningful context for reading. This research signifies that literature can be used to improve the four language skills. Several studies in L1 clearly show the benefit of using stories in developing the writing and reading abilities of students.

When the short story is existed in the EFL classes and the student became familiar with it ,they get encouraged to write their own story and they learn how to translate ideas in their own word and they became aware about who is the audience of a piece of writing will be critical to develop a relevant support. When students target their writing to a specific audience, they quickly learn to select only the information that is relevant to that audience. Information that is convincing or useful for one audience may have no effect on a different audience.

The narrative language used in the short stories make it the best and the most suitable literary genre that the teacher can depend on in teaching second language skills reading and writing, simply because it provides the learner with new vocabulary and diversify the grammatical rules and structures , it is matter of fact that after reading literature especially short stories learners' writing became clearer with suitable interactions , developed and well organized ideas with detailed explanation with exemplification. Writing occupies a core stage at the university level, in composition teachers want their students to be able to use language to discover, convey ideas and discuss those ideas clearly. Moreover, student will be inspired to write properly through the short story and they will be familiar with various linguistic, syntax and discourse.

EFL learners may face restriction of vocabulary, poor sentence structure knowledge, deficiency of business proficiency and lack of knowledge to support discussion. To overcome those difficulties, different language research said that literary text messages may provide a variety of content for language learners, in order to make use of their writing. Moreover, Povey (1967) claims that: *Containing real examples of grammatical structures and vocabulary items, the literary texts raise learners' awareness of the range of the target language and advance their competence in all language skills.* (Cited in Pardede.P, 2011:16).

Students need to learn how to write in the EFL perspective, since they have to write home works, summaries, reports and sit for written exams in almost all their modules. They are expected to learn both the structural and the communicative elements of the language.

2.6. Rationale of Using Short Stories in EFLClass

The use of short stories in the EFL classes and its role in the development of the language skill, has been always the center of academic debate .Teachers are always recommending on this kind of use and appreciating the potential advantages.

The stimulus of the study is first of all about the inclusion of literature in the EFL classes in general then the short story in particular, simply because short stories are recommended to be the main literary genre to be used in the curriculum, as it was mentioned before in previous chapter that the short story plays an advantageous role in the language teaching. Therefore, the implication of the short story in the EFL it provides greater chances for students so that they will enjoy learning activities and its improve their language skills, besides the short story is incorporated also for self enjoyment, usually short stories help a lot the instructors to teach punctuation, vocabulary and grammar structures. Some pedagogues and teaching experts advocate that the use short stories not

only in the development of the language skills but also in the building of the learners backgrounds and personalities.

Short stories are not use only for the fact of teaching language and its skills, but also it is used to open the students' minds on new culture, Krishna and Sandhya stated that:

> *Short stories are effective when teaching culture to EFL students. They transmit the culture of the people about whom the stories were written. By teaching short stories, the students learn about the culture, past and present and their tradition. Culture teaches students to understand and respect people's differences. When using literary texts, instructors must be aware of the culture of the people (if different from that of the students) for whom the text was written.*
> (Cited in Krishna & Sandhya ,2014:3)

The inclusion of short fiction in the ESL curriculum provides the following educational benefits, stated by Arıoğul :

- *It makes the students' reading task easier due to being simple and short when compared with the other literary genres.*
- *Enlarges the advanced level readers' worldviews about different cultures and different groups of people .*
- *Provides more creative, encrypt, challenging texts that require personal exploration supported with prior knowledge for advanced level readers .*
- *Motivates learners to read due to being an authentic material .*
- *Offers a world of wonders and a world of mystery .*
- *Gives students the chance to use their creativity .*
- *promotes critical thinking skills .*
- *Facilitates teaching a foreign culture (i.e. serves as a valuable instrument in attaining cultural knowledge of the selected community .*
- *Makes students feel themselves comfortable and free .*
- *Helps students coming from various backgrounds to communicate with each other because of its universal language.*
- *Helps students to go beyond the surface meaning and dive into underlying meanings .*

acts as a perfect vehicle to help students understand the positions of themselves as well as the others by transferring these gained knowledge to their own world . (Arıoğul, 2011:1)

In brief, short stories cannot help only in the linguistic achievement of learners in the foreign language learning, which make the effective in using the target language but it also teach them how to appreciate the others cultures, believes and societies and became open-minded and more responsible. Furthermore short story seems to be a helpful technique in nowadays foreign languages classes, it motivates the student to read, interpret then write in his own way of understanding.

2.7. The Role of Short Stories in the Acquisition of Grammatical Rules and Structures

Among the literary genres in English literature, short story is considered to be a promising tool for teaching second language grammatical rules and structures .It is an effective way to encourage students to read literature due to its shortness and attraction moreover, short story is a useful strategy to elicit and illustrate grammar points, it employs deductive thoughts and inductive reasoning, and it is an effective way to include both approaches to plan a lesson. According to Murdoch. *Short stories can, if selected and exploited appropriately, provide quality text content which will greatly enhance ELT sources' for learners at intermediate levels of proficiency* (Murdoch. 2002 quoted in Saricoban & Kucukoglu : 161). Using short stories in class as a source of input activities to help students develop the creative writing skill, for instance they can be asked to write a dialogue or other activities in accordance with the lesson goals and the language level of students .meaning that short stories should be used in EFL classes to reinforce English language teaching by the creation of discussing activities that EFL teachers can create like acting out dialogue or writing tasks and design composition courses which combine reading, writing and grammar .

There are several kinds of activities and tasks can EFL teacher draw on when designing materials to use with short stories , bearing in mind that these tasks and activities are planned to help most EFL students to overcome their difficulties in writing English . Writing activities are suitable for all levels of proficiency , they are for the activation of writing strategies for discovery, invention and reinforce the writing skill for EFL students. Through using writing activities students are obliged to examine different sides of linguistics and syntactic knowledge.

The selection of short stories give EFL students a raise motivation, when they are satisfied from the material selected, they can easily benefit from its vocabularies and grammatical structures.

For instance, supposed that an EFL teacher chooses Joyce's Eveline short story (See appendix3) after reading it more than once, EFL students can observe and acquire some linguistic aspects which may help them to write paragraphs and essays correctly.

Jacqueline Costello pointed out: since most stories are written in the past tense, students can examine different past tenses and also review those modals that show a habitual past action. Sentences of the story served as models for an analysis and distinction between present perfect, past perfect, conditional and subjunctive tenses (1990:27), for instance:

- Present perfect:
  - *He had tales of distant countries .He had started as check boy at a pound a mouth on a ship of the Allan time going out to Canada. "*
  - *"He had sailed through the straits of Magellan and he told her stories of terrible Patagonians. "*

The class quickly remarked that the present perfect indicates an action that began at some time in the past, continues into the present tense, and might extend to the future .As a practice with these tenses, teacher can ask students to write an essay about a good experience they have had in their life using the present perfect.

- Past Perfect:
  - *" Ernest had been her favorite but liked Harry too. "*
  - *"When she had been laid up for a day, he had read her out a ghost story and made toast for her at the five. "*

Students of the class can easily noticed that the past perfect tense is a tense which points to past time that came before another past tense, and it is used to express a past that took place before a specific event in the past. To practice that, students can be asked to write about unforgettable summer using the past perfect and he past simple.

- Conditional and subjunctive:
  - *"She went, tomorrow she would be on the sea with Franck, steaming towards Buenos Ayres".*

When reading this, students start to recognize the meaning of if clause sentences and distinguish the differences of meaning in each type of if clause .As a practice , the teacher can ask the students to complete a selection of if clauses , for instance : (if I were you …or if I have enough money, ...) and so one .

- Other writing activities can be done for EFL students according to Eveline story ,(See appendixe3)

a) Eveline has difficult decision to make. List the arguments she uses to convince herself of either of the two options.

b) Summarize the story in three sentences. Including the main character, setting.

c) Write one sentence on the main theme of the story.

d) Write down a short paragraph describe your feeling about Eveline .

e) In few lines, imagine and rewrite another ending about Eveline . Try to make it more positive.

Thus, through reading short stories, EFL students are encouraged to use new patterns in their paragraphs and essays, it is a method to revise some aspects in grammar and structure which can benefit EFL students in their writing tasks. In addition to the practice of tenses, and the implied cause /effect analysis.

Using short stories in EFL class is a productive way that provides EFL students the opportunity to acquire grammatical rules and structure, most important item they have learned that reading and writing are reciprocal activities, each completing and enriching the other. EFL teachers can use short stories as a material to design their lessons which can meet their students' needs.

2.8. Short Stories and Good Writing Relationship

Generally, writing does not mean simply a record of spoken language, but it is a way how to express ideas, feelings, or experiences. In other words, it is away how to communicate with other people via a writing system. In the course of time, writing has become an important way of human communication. What is more, a written message can survive quite long, which means that we can return to it and read it again. A written text is usually more coherent than spontaneous speech. That is why to write is most important than to read only, learning to write is not really easy task it takes time and it needs a lot of practice, short story is not like any other literary genre, it helps the learner to acquire a new language in one hand and it makes the acquisition of the language skills reading and writing in smooth way in the other. Writing does not promote the language only, but it develops thinking and creativity as well. Raims asserted that:

> *Writing helps our students learn. How? First, writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that we have been teaching our students. Second, when our students write, they also have a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned to say, to take risks. Third, when they write, they necessarily become very*
> *involved with the new language; the effort to express ideas and the constant use of eye, hand and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning.* (Raimes, 3:1983Qtd in Veronika.K, 09:2009)

In more details , Raimes asserted on the idea of writing and the great role that this skill plays in the language learning ,writing is a great tool in English and it can be utilized in various purposes , such as , learning new culture .

Enhancing students' writing skills is considered as the most important activities which the EFL learners need to improve.

Conley noted that writing makes our thoughts and experiences vivid and long lasting and helps us learn things in every subject area. He added that "*in many ways, writing is the way we make sense of our world"* (Conley ,1995 quoted in Ibnian ,2010:1)

Therefore, helping EFL learners expert the skill of writing and enabling them to write effectively and interactively is one of the primary targets of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) field.

Writing and short stories are correlated since writing is the only way that anyone can express his ideas, and feeling also through writing. Any one can write his own short stories, from short stories. They can be proved that the language learning is in the right way in comparison with the

native language, we can find that stories take big space in the language acquisition for this reason Urbancová Ž reported that:

> *Stories are very important for our psychical health. We learn our mother tongue through stories. So, it is natural to learn foreign language through them as well. Teachers should try to teach their students about language, life and culture through stories.* (Urbancová Ž.2006:11)

Using short stories in the EFL classes enable learners to discover meaning and develop their grammar, so it cannot be said that the relation between the writing skill and short story is normal one , it is more than strong relation where learners get used with the short story in the classroom and they get motivated by the instructor, they will be excited to write their own story with their own way , stories are motivating and challenging and they present a great amount of fun and eliminate any feeling of boredom, in addition to that they give positives stances toward language learning and foreign culture .

Stories pursuit universal themes which go beyond the useful level of basic dialogues and every day activities meaning that it gives the chance to the student to play with ideas and feelings in order to think about the matters which are important and to discover what is relevant to them.

Through writing the teacher may find some talents among their students beside this, he may discover the *fluency*[1] and the *accuracy*[2]. (Wright,A. 4:1997 quoted in Veronika.K, 11:2009) says that:

> *Accuracy and fluency need not be in conflict*" in more details he explains that: "*interesting and relevant ideas need to be clearly expressed, and correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation are part of this* (ibid).

Short stories are consisted of some basic element ,these elements help the learner to develop his writing skill for instance the setting where they can find some descriptions of the place and time ,then the characters , in any story there is a set of personalities who take apart of the story and ensure the continuation of the events , the plot which is the events in which the characters dole out and the conflict of the problem in which the main characters struggle in , after that the solution to

[1] *Fluency*= is aimed at the flow of ideas in the text.
[2] *Accuracy* is connected with the correctness of the text from grammatical and structural point of view.

resolve the conflict within the story ,finally the theme which is managing the general idea of the whole story . With this element it may be said that the short story involves the reader (student) within the events and it may convince his to write his personal one.
So the learner can be traced by the short story and start to write about everything he had experienced. Based on the above-mentioned argument, Ibnian.S believes that:

> *Developing students' short story writing skills has a clear impact on all other language skills, especially when students practice using figurative and literal language, their language becomes more concrete, more explicit and more descriptive as well.* (Ibnian.S, 2010:2)

Most of the teachers agree that short story gives the chance for the beginners to experience new things in the language learning, and it helps them to develop their skills also motivates them to have critical minds, works on the building of their personalities and their sense of imagination . Also it allows them to write about anything they want and they will be able to discover more and more about the language.

2.9. The Necessity if Including Short Stories in EFL Curriculum

In the educational curriculum of EFL teaching, short stories are considered to be the most suitable choice for enhancing students' language skills. Most EFL students have a positive reaction to understand the content of the short story and acquire its grammatical rules and structures. Short stories are a shift from learning model to acquisition model, for this reason, pedagogues support the incorporation of short story in EFL syllabus.

The inclusion of short stories in English as a foreign or second language classes is expected to give greater opportunities for EFL students ,to first enhance their language skills. Second, to develop their cultural knowledge about a foreign culture. Third, to develop their critical thinking. Moreover , the practices of activities that followed short stories which are expected to increase students' language skill.

The designers and lectures of EFL curriculum have greatly supported the idea of using literary works for foreign language instruction , therefore recently with the implementation of curriculum , it was found that poetry , novel and drama are problematic to be used in EFL classes due to the limited time and its complexity .As a consequence , short stories are regarded to be the appropriate

literary genre that is necessary to be implemented in EFL syllabus, because it play an important role in motivate EFL students to read and inspire their capacities.

Theoretically, according to Murali krishma & Sandhya The general objectives of using short stories in EFL classes are:

- *Short stories are simple and practical.*
- *Their length is short enough to cover very quickly.*
- *Theme and plot are not too complicated for the students to understand during listening or reading on their own.*
- *Variety of choices is available according to the students' interest.*
- *They motivate the readers and promote imaginative and critical thinking skill.*
- *Moral, mysterious and / or humorous stories' become valuable tools in the attainment of cultural knowledge.*
- *Finally, short stories are available for all levels from the beginner to advanced learner, as well as for all ages from young learners to adults.* (Murali krishma & Sandhya ,2015:59)

In general terms, it was agreed that the selection of short stories in EFL syllabus as an authentic material can improve students' reading comprehension and writing skills , also build their cultural identity .This idea will be well explained and supported by a questionnaire in the 3rd chapter. The questionnaire will confirm the necessity of short stories inclusion and students, teachers' views about that.

2.10. Conclusion

Writing skill regarded as being one of the most important and also difficult skills, that EFL students are expected to acquire the mastery of cognitive and linguistic competencies. Writing is a challenging task for EFL students, therefore, writing has not an innate nature, and it needs a lot of practices and motivations to activate student s ability for effective writing.

Teachers can help EFL students improve their writing skill, to get students write well, they need to apply appropriate strategies in language class.

Recently, literature is considered as an authentic material for writing instruction, but short stories are regarded to be the most suitable literary genre, because it can offer EFL students the adequate linguistic aspects which can help them to write effective paragraphs and essays. When reading short story students can focus and understand how tenses should be used and make the distinction between them, as well students can benefit from short stories and use easily what they

have already acquired in writing activities. So short stories and good writing have a strong relationship, if students are engaged to read short stories habitually, teachers can notice a clear progress in their level of writing skill.

Thus, short stories are a shift from learning model to the acquisition model , several pedagogues greatly supported the idea of using short stories as an authentic material for lectures design.

Chapter Three

Data Collection / Data Analysis

Chapter 3

Data Collection / Data Analysis

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3.1. Introduction

The previous chapters contain some concepts and views about the short story effectiveness in developing reading comprehension (chapter1) and writing skill (chapter2). The present chapter is devoted to present the data collected from the analysis of a questionnaire of 2nd year students and the teachers.

This part of the thesis is based on some questions given to the 2nd year (LMD) students of the English department, and the teachers as well to get some information about the level of learners and their attitudes. This questionnaire is mainly designed to diagnose the evaluation of the students' skills (reading / writing), all the interests of this study centered in the importance of the short story and its inclusion in the EFL curriculum. The questionnaire is consisted of different points that shed the light on some facts that the EFL classroom needs, also this part of the study contains the analysis of the students' answers and the teachers interviews and the general outcomes of both.

3.2. The Sample of Population

The current research deals with EFL students and also teachers from the department of English at Ammar Thelidji University of Laghouat , during academic year 2015 /2016.

3.2.1. Students

The present research took place in the department of English at Ammar Thelidji University ,the sample of students were selected randomly for the present case study are twenty five (25) , second year LMD students .

3.2.2. Teachers

The main objective of dealing with EFL teachers is to give us their opinions concerning the use of short stories as an authentic material.

3.3. Students' Questionnaire

3.3.1. The Aim of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed and developed to gather and analyze students' attitudes and different reactions about the short stories and its inclusion in the curriculum, and how the short story contribute in promoting their skills in reading and writing .

3.3.2. The Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was addressed to the 2nd year students of English language at university of Laghouat, the questionnaire was devoted to 25 students therefore their participation have great impact on the development of the research.

3.3.3. Description of the Questionnaire

The whole questionnaire is consisted of 19 questions classified under five parts each part based on specific characteristics, this questionnaire contained a closed and open-ended the last which needs more explanation from the learners.

3.3.4. The Analysis of the Questionnaire

- **Item 1:** *Information about students' level in English*

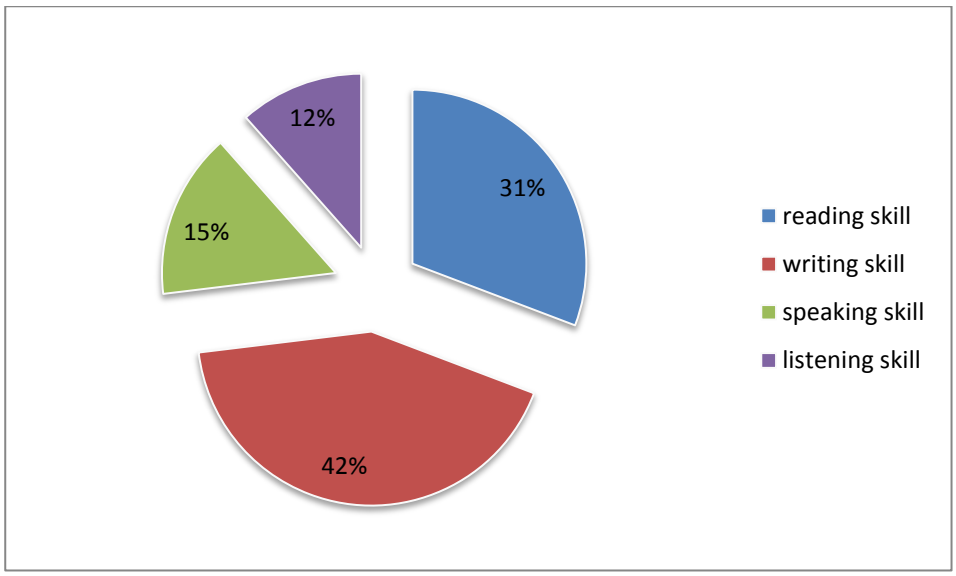
About 14 (56%) students evaluate their level in English as an average, therefore 07(28%) students consider their level as a poor level, and only few students 04 (16%)evaluate themselves having a good level in English.

- **Item 2***:* *Difficulties in English learning*

When asking students about the English language and if there are any difficulties 15 students (60%) said yes, meanwhile 10 students (40%) respond no .Those who said yes they mentioned some obstacles face them in their learning process, like the fact of that the language is new for them and they are not familiar with it, they need much practice . Whereas those who respond by yes, they said that English language is fun for them and they enjoy it in addition to that, according to them, thanks to their strong background they do not have difficulties.

- **Item 3 :** *The most difficult language skill to master*

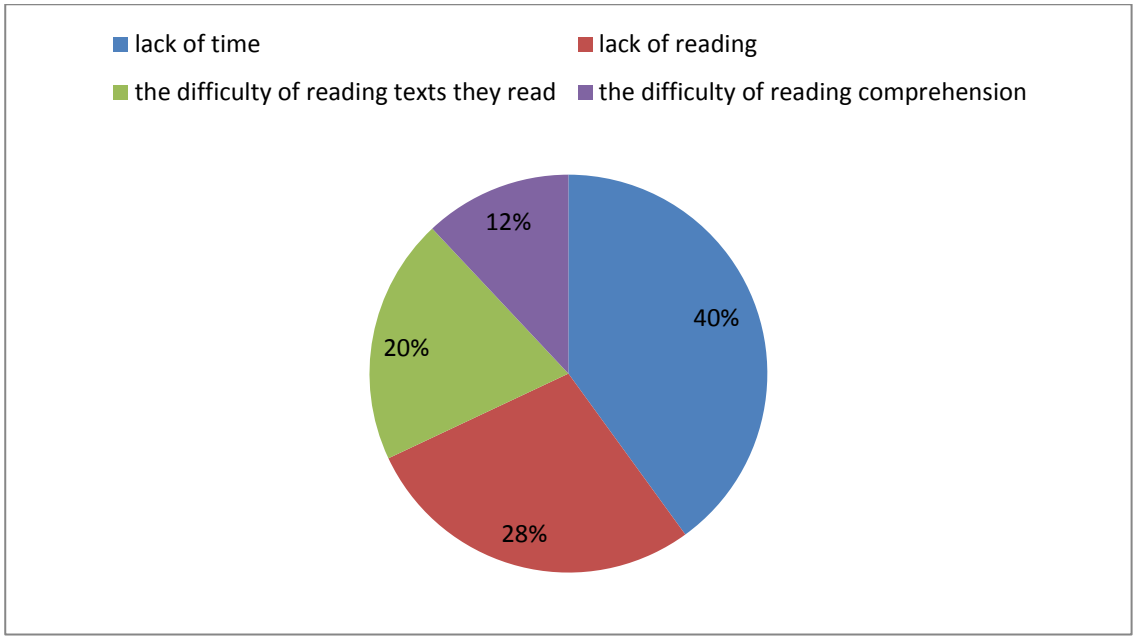
According to students' answers, they face difficulties in language skills, their answers revealed that 10 (40%) students find difficulties most in expressing their ideas in writing, then 8 (32%) students face difficulties in reading, it might be because they are beginners, they have difficulties in reading and understand some vocabularies. Speaking skill came next in term of difficulty, 04 (16%) students have problems in speaking orally. And listening skill is difficult for only some students, only 03 (12%) students have this difficulty.



Pie-Chart 3.1. The Most Difficult Language Skill for Students

- **Item 4:** *Reasons behind reading difficulties*

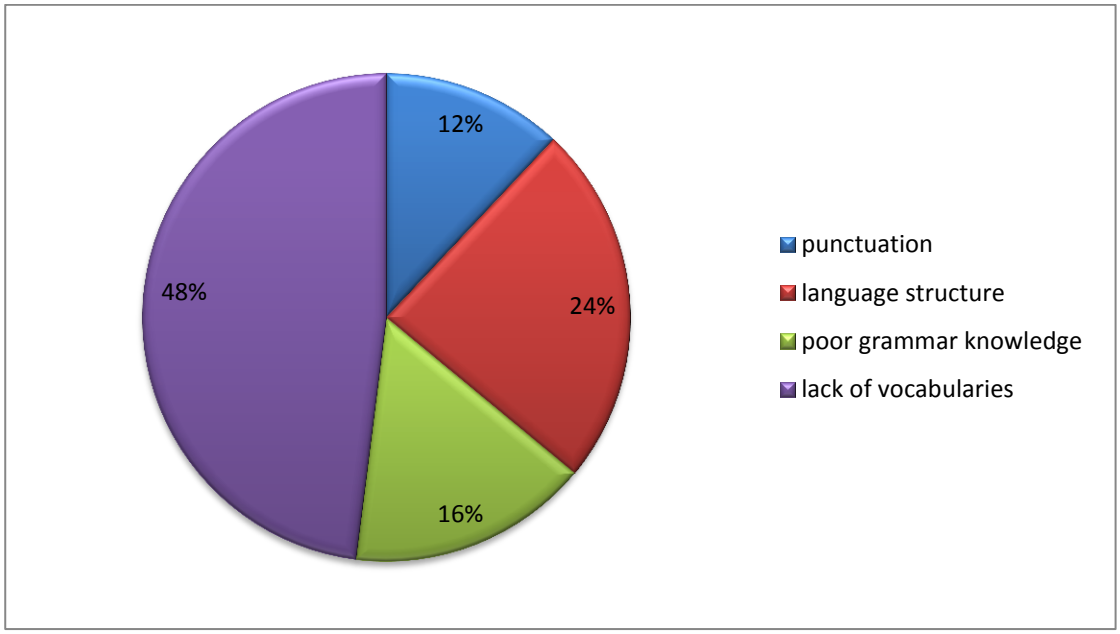
Ten students (40%) replied that the obstacle that face them in reading comprehension is the lack of time or in other words the shortness of time and they argument that to understand the passages given, they need much time to interpret it in their own style, seven (28%)students said that the lack of reading itself is a problem because they don't read that's why they do not comprehend texts, other 5 (20%) students said that the difficulty is inside the texts they read and they mention the language used in the texts ,the rest 3 students (12%) said that their problem is reading comprehension itself they do not understand how interpret the given texts and they have a weak vocabulary background.



Pie-chart 3.2. Reasons Behind Reading Difficulties

- **Item 5:** *Students' main difficulties when witting*

Concerning students' difficulties when writing, 12 students (48%) said that the lack of vocabularies posed a big problem for them, and limits their communication, however 6 students (24%) said that they face problem in language structure and the wrong use of grammar. 4 students (16%) claimed that it is difficult to apply grammar in English .Moreover, 3 students (12%) find it difficult to use the correct punctuation.



Pie-chart 3.3. Students' Difficulties When Writing

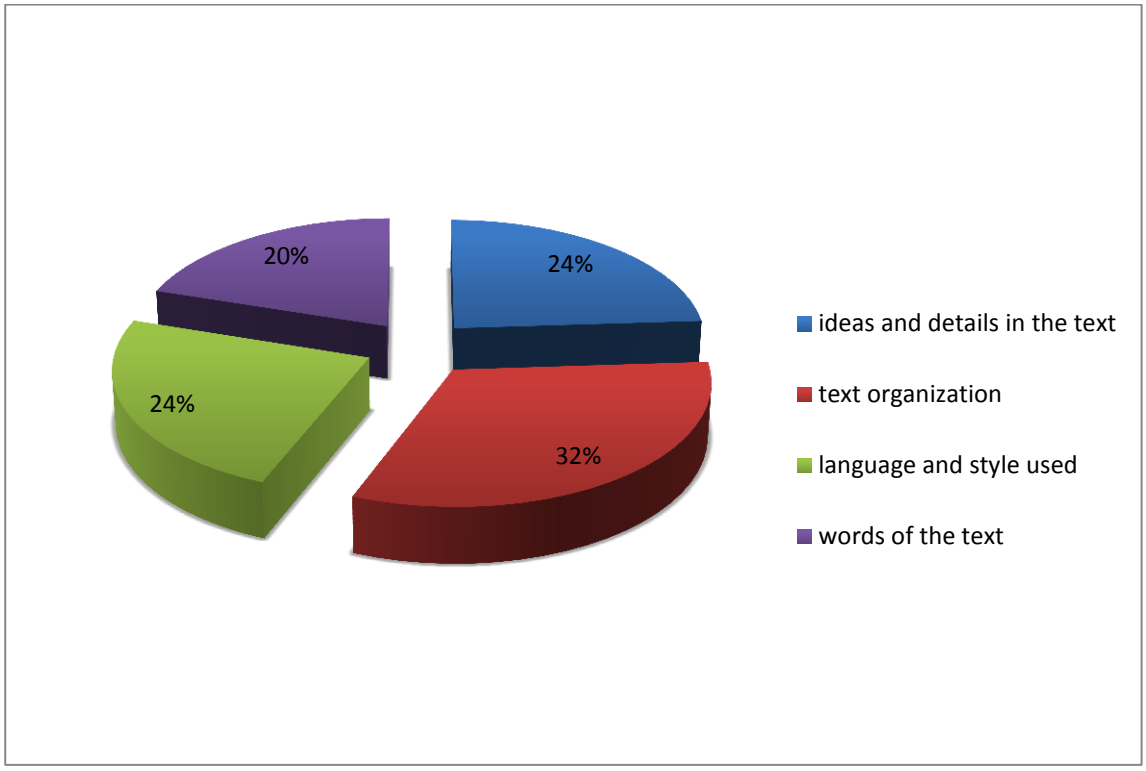
- **Item 6 :** *Literature and the development of the language skills, grammar, and vocabulary*

The discovered results after the answers of the students revealed that 18 (72%) of them said that they enjoy reading literature, and indeed it improved their level and they got new baggage of vocabulary and new grammar structures .While 7(28%) students said that literature did not contribute in promoting their skills, and they did not acquire new vocabulary since it has a very complex language, this do not allow them to grasp the vocabulary and grammar ,and they said that they don't agree on the idea of literature ,it do not help them because they still have some confusion . This means that EFL students cannot appreciate all literary genres taught to EFL students.

- **Item 7 :** *The focus on reading the literary text*

6 student or 24 % detect that while they read literary texts, their interest mainly focus on ideas and details in the text. Almost the same number 6 students (24%) said that when they read

literary texts they focus on the language and style used. Furthermore, 8 students (32%) said that text organization is the most important for them. The rest 5 students (20%) said that they care merely about the word in the text.



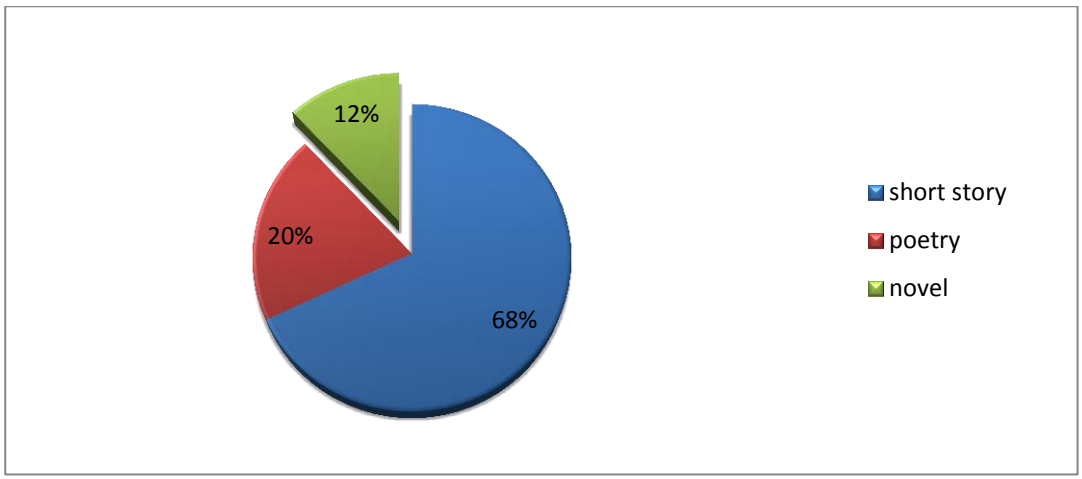
Pie Chart 3.4 . The Main Focus of Students While Reading

- **Item 8:** Do *literary texts contribute in the development of your reading comprehension?*

19 students (76%) replied that literary texts help them in the development of their reading comprehension, but 6 students (24%) selected no, which means that literary texts do not contribute in the development of their reading comprehension , it might be according to them literary texts are difficult to understand .

- **Item 9:** *Kind of literature the EFL students prefer to read more*

Students' answers revealed that 17 (68%) prefer to read short stories, most of them consider short stories as a suitable literature and they enjoy it more than any other literary genre, due to its simplicity and shortness. 5 students (20%) prefer to read poetry because they like its sound rhyme, rhythm and its vivid imagery. And only 3 students (12%) like to read novel just because are part of the university syllabus.



Pie-chart 3.5. Different Kind of Literature That Students Like to Read

- **Item 10:** EFL *students benefit from reading short stories*

Students' answers revealed that 20 students (80%) benefit from reading short stories, they can easily understand its meaning and the main theme as well through short stories students can easily do their reading comprehension tasks .Meanwhile, 5 students (20%) answer by no, just because they do not waste their time to read printed texts.

- **Item 11:** *Understanding language and style used in the short stories*

Around 15 students (60%) disclosed that they understand the language and the style of the short stories easily, and they can grasp the meaning and learn new vocabularies. Whereas ten student (40%) said no because short stories do not offer them much chances and language complex, also style is very difficult.

- **Item 12:** *Students views weather they benefit from the activities given by the teacher after reading short stories passages*

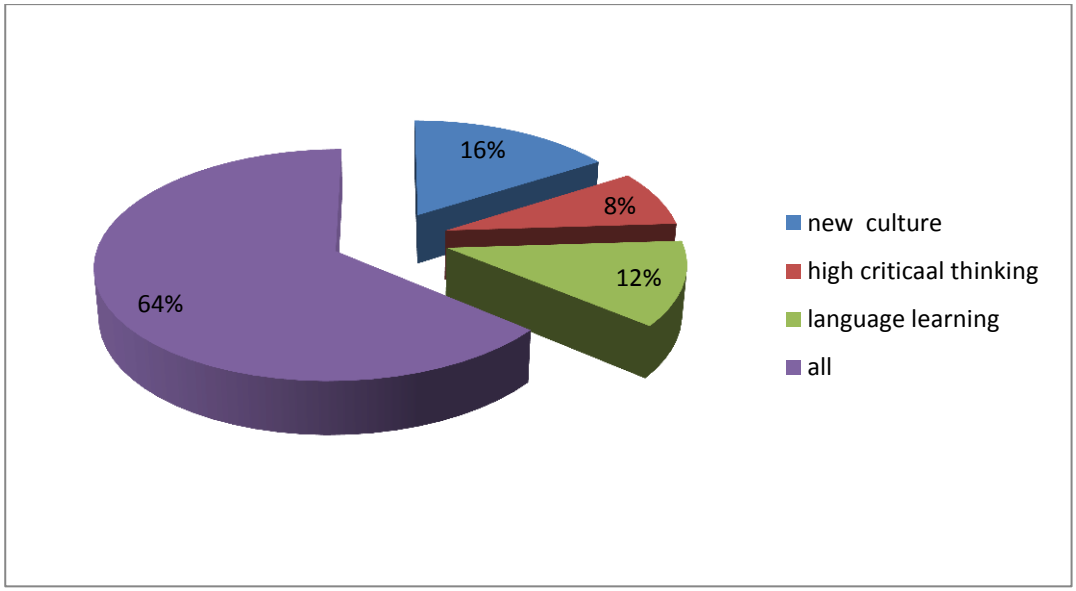
When asked students about the activities given after short story in EFL class, most of them 20 students said that they do benefit from that, because the teacher in this case is reinforcing their comprehension and facilitates it by comprehension tasks , like asking questions about the story or falling the gaps , and since short story is easy to read and grasp its meaning , they can do these activities easily .Therefore 3 students said that they do benefit , but not so much because it depends on the activities given by the teacher .

Item 13 : *Vocabulary through short story*

According to twelve (48%) students short stories are a source from which they grasp new vocabulary, moreover 10 students (40%) respond that short stories act somehow as the genre that help them to develop their vocabulary. Three (12%) students said no they mean that short stories are not beneficial for them.

- **Item 14:** *About the role of the short story*

4 students (16%) said that short story builds up new culture .2 students (8%) said that the short story allows in the building of the high critical thinking .3 students (12%) said that short story helps them to learn only the language. Furthermore, 16 students (64%) replied that short story build up all meaning the culture, the critical thinking and the language learning.



Pie-chart 3.6. About The Role of the Short Story

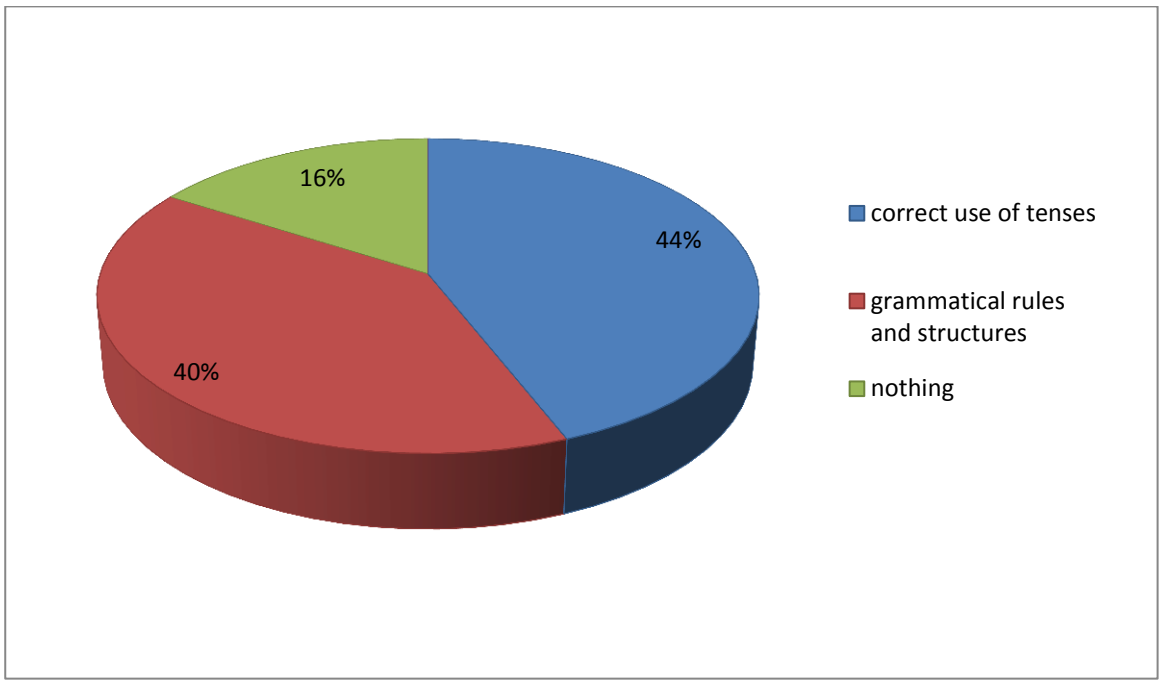
- **Item 15 :** *Short story and its relation to the creative writing*

Around sixteen students (64%) agree that short story plays a great role in the building of creative writing, and they confirm the effectiveness of the short story in developing the writing skill creatively. Finally 9 students (36%) disagree and said that short story does not work on their writing and it confuses them.

- **Item 16:** *What do EFL students acquire from reading short story?*

11 students (44%) selected that they acquire the grammatical rules and structures, through how words and sentences are classified .Meanwhile, 10 students (40%) selected that they acquire

the use of tenses since short stories are characterized by the different use of tenses, moreover the rest of students 4 (16%) selected nothing, may be they do not read the story they asked to read.



Pie – chart 3.7. Students Gains from the Short Stories

- **Item 17:** *Benefits of the short story on students' writing*

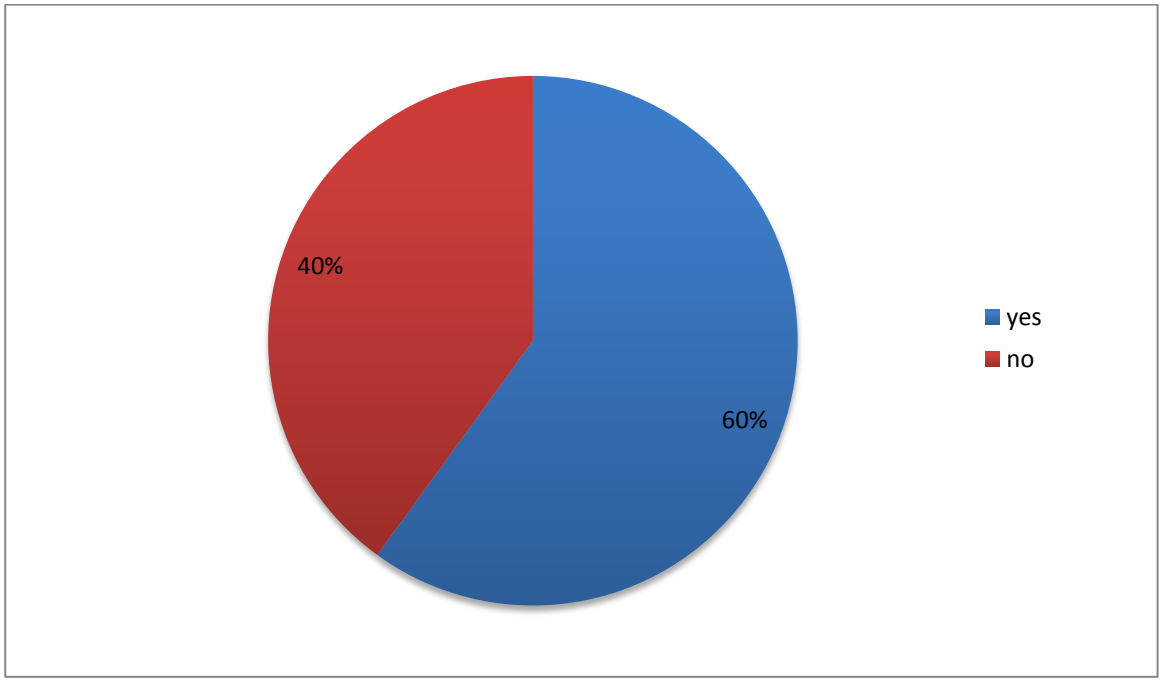
Seven students (28%) answered that short story permits them to improve their grammar and sentences structures .4 students (16%) said that they learn from short stories how to organize ideas in coherent form .Three students (12%) insist on the vocabulary improvement. Only 6 students (24%) said that they benefit from the short story in all, i.e. grammar, new sentence structures organization of ideas and the development of vocabulary.

- **Item 18:** *Students' performance amelioration after reading short stories*

Students' answers revealed that 19 students (76%) agree on reading short stories support their writing, which means that through short stories students, can do summaries, paraphrasing...etc, and they can also write in the same way. Only 6 students (24%) selected that their performance do not ameliorated after reading a short story, it may be they have a lack of concentration or they are not linguistically competent to express their ideas.

- **Item 19 :***Short stories, reading and writing*

Students' answers revealed 15 (60%) that they include what they read in the short stories in their writing. Meanwhile 10 students (40%) said that they don't relate everything they read in the short stories in their writing, may be because they do not focus on it.



Pie-chart 3.8. The Inclusion of What is Gained from Reading Short Stories in The Students Writing

3.4 Teachers Questionnaire

3.4. 1. The Aim of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is designed to describe and analyze the different views of the teachers about the inclusion of short story, and its effectiveness in developing the students' level also it's a kind of investigation to the teachers about the students' attitudes toward the short storie, and the two skills reading and writing.

3.4.2. Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was created to be addressed to all the teachers of writing in the English department of Laghouat University .The questionnaire was devoted to 4 teachers and their contribution was beneficial for the advancement of the research.

3.4.3. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire as whole contains 05 questions in general given to the teachers about the level of learners and their interests, this questionnaire consists of different kinds of questions that allow us to know and discover more about the teaching process and the learners' behavior.

3.4.4. Analysis of the Questionnaire

- *Teachers ' view about the inclusion of short stories in the curriculum and its effects on students' skills*

All EFL teachers agree on the inclusion of short stories in the curriculum because they have positive effects on students' competence, they asserted that they are authentic, and authenticity is very important in learning the language. Teachers stated that short stories can be used as a good model to learn reading comprehension and writing skill, all of them added that students through short stories will learn about vocabulary, language style …etc

- *Short stories build the learner's level*

Most of the teachers answered that the short story participate in the building of all sides of the learners level , it allows them to discover new culture , it develops the creative writing and it makes them aware about everything about language. They argument that reading short story is beneficial for them and according to them students got motivated while reading.

- *Teachers ' views about short story as an authentic material to teach writing skill successfully*

All teachers agree on the importance of using short stories to help EFL students improve writing skills , they asserted that since they are beginners, it is the best way to motivate students and engage them to read in addition to the acquisition of grammatical rules and structures, they emphasize on writing activities that follow short stories , and suggested that forming groups to make a dialogue or imagine another end to the story , make EFL students motivated and self confident while writing .

- *Development of reading and writing simultaneously through short stories*

Most of the teachers indicate that students must be encouraged to read more and more and they do select some short stories that suit their level, also short story motivates them to share their ideas and expression to reach the goals. One of the teachers said that the short story helps students to improve their spelling, therefore all the teachers share the same thought about reading short story, one of the teachers explains that while reading we use eyes first which sends the information to the brain where the decoding of words and meanings occurs, but before reaching any goal of a good writing, the learner must make sure to improve reading first.

3.5. General Analysis of the Findings

According to students questionnaire and teachers interviews , we gather a lot of information concerning short stories effectiveness in reading comprehension and writing skills , the aim of the research was to discover whether short story truly was the best literary genre and what does present for both EFL students and teachers .

For the analysis of second year students' answers, we can say that students experience certain difficulties in their reading comprehension and writing skills since they are beginners.

The majority of students' answer revealed that the most difficult skills are writing and reading comprehension, because it is a hard task for them to comprehend difficult text and benefit from it.

Since literature is the best tool for teaching language skills, we attempt to look for its benefits in the EFL classes, along the meeting with 2nd year students of English department, we have remarked that most of them agree and like reading literature because it assists them to acquire new language of vocabulary and grammar, the findings of our questions stated that literary texts had a great role in EFL settings , through reading literary texts , EFL are able to acquire a new vocabularies and improve their writing skills , however EFL students are not motivated to read all kinds of literature , they usually prefer to read simple and attractive texts.

According to students' answers most of them prefer to read short stories, and since they are still beginners, they like the simplicity of the language, most of 2nd year students find short stories interesting to use as material of self enjoyments that motivate and engage them in reading. Moreover, as components language skills especially reading comprehension and writing skill.

The statistical analysis revealed that 2nd year students' interests and their perceptions were correlated and both affect each other, most of them agree on short story as a suitable material to use it to teach reading comprehension and writing skills. According to them, they benefit a lot from the activities given by the teacher after reading a short story more than any other literary genre like poem, a part of novel …etc. Those activities are just to reinforce students' reading comprehension and writing skills.

Also it was noticed that students of second year level do not feel confident when they write in the target language , they mostly find difficulties on vocabulary choice, grammar and punctuation marks…etc .According to 2nd year students , through short stories, they learn different grammatical rules and structures, since stories are full of various tenses and language structure .

In addition to EFL students, EFL teachers also agree that reading comprehension and writing skills should be taught in a clear and simple way, especially for beginners like 2nd year students, they stated that the use of difficult texts as an authentic material make students feel bored and do

not like to read at all, the fact which makes students become weak and face difficulties in writing and reading comprehension.

Teachers added that after involving EFL students in reading comprehension and writing activities, a big difference was found in their ideas and expressions; most of them understand the theme and the general idea of the story and can easily answer the questions of reading comprehension, as well they can easily produce adequate summary or paragraphs with fewer mistakes.

The findings of the research seems to relate reading short stories and its effectiveness in reading comprehension and writing skills, and join to some extent the first research's hypothesis which stated that by assigning EFL students to explore short stories , they may benefit from it to develop their reading comprehension skill and recognize words and sentences written in English , on the other hand, the results gained from the questionnaire support the second hypothesis which stated that EFL students writing skill, become more organized and clearer with less mistakes through reading short stories.

EFL students stated that reading short story helped them expressing their thoughts and language awareness, as well thinking critically and expand their point of views , their answers explained that through short stories, they can acquire more vocabularies that may help them to write effectively.

Teachers' interviews close the strong relationship between reading and effective writing, they stated that short stories are the appropriate teaching tool that motivates students to read and participates in building their cultural background, creative thinking and language awareness, they see if the literary texts are appropriately selected, EFL students may be attracted to read. Teachers have a common point of view , their views were the more students read the better they will acquire , but the suitable material to engage them to read and understand English language is very important. All teachers claimed that EFL not skilled in reading comprehension and writing skills because of the wrong choice of material to teach both skills.

Nearly all the students replied that they benefit from what they read in the short story and they include it in their writing , teachers also said that they work in collaboration with the short story to improve their students 'writing and reading comprehension.

3.6. Conclusion

In the current chapter, the research attempts to resume all the data and the analysis of this research, through different questions which were distributed to a different kind of students and teachers .The analysis of the data was given through questions, in this part of the research, the researcher attempts to support all the ideas and the facts were presented in the previous chapters. Through the results obtained from the general analysis it might be said that the research reached its goals.

General Conclusion

Teaching English language skills through literature has become a modern trend, over recent years , it plays a significant role in English curriculum for non English speaking countries.

Literature provides EFL learners an authentic and clear model of real life language use, and it is the best strategy to encourage EFL learner' s cultural as well personal growth, by spiritual and moral advancements. Literature as a whole contribute in developing EFL creative ability in language skills which helps them associate themselves to the socio psychological context of the literary work .Meanwhile , EFL students do no appreciate all kinds of literature since English is a foreign language for them , they always prefer to read simple and a relevant literature to their level .

EFL students face a lot of difficulties in language skills, especially on reading comprehension and writing skills according to the questionnaire designed in the current research, because EFL students do not usually asked to read literary texts that encourage and motivate them to read.

Teachers' selection of the relevant language learning material is an important path, EFL teacher should set the aim of language teaching in accordance to students' needs and expectation. After studying the attitudes of EFL students toward different types of literature through data collection, it can be noted that short stories are the appropriate kind of literature for EFL students.

The current research started first by presenting short stories and its effectiveness on students reading comprehension, and how through it is a source of motivation and reinforcement of reading comprehension skill , the research attempted to shed the light on some short story' s pedagogical aspects such as : infusing superior reasoning and teaching a new culture , it deals on how short stories have a great impact on students way of thinking and acquiring a foreign cultures , then she moved to show how the short story is a source of writing skill acquisition ,and it is the best authentic material for writing instruction , since it is wealthy by the adequate linguistic aspects which help EFL students to write effectively. Finally the last chapter of the research dealt with analysis of collected data from students and teachers' questionnaires.

Results obtained from 2nd year students LMD revealed that they benefit from using short stories as an authentic material in EFL class, more than any other literary genre due to its pedagogical benefits, through students' answers , it can be noted that short stories are the appropriate literary genre for developing EFL students reading comprehension and writing skills,

and make them creative to express their ideas .Moreover , EFL teachers also contribute on the development of EFL students skill through reinforce their language skills by strategies and activities given by the teacher when using a short story as an authentic material .

If selected appropriately, short stories can be an important source for enhancing students' reading comprehension and writing skills, in addition to that, by introducing the elements of fun and interest that characterized literary texts generally and the short stories particularly, EFL students will effectively develop their reading comprehension and writing skills in on hand and their imagination and creativity on the other hand.

Thus, the inclusion of short stories in EFL curriculum participate on the development of EFL/ ESL students in general, and enrich their own reading and writing abilities by acquiring new vocabularies and new grammar structures, in addition to the acquisition of new language according to students' answers results that seem to join to some extent the first hypothesis of the research. As far as the second hypothesis of the research is concerned, the results revealed that after reading a short story both students and teachers will discover its benefits and notice creativity on students' expression of their thoughts. Moreover, teachers are the guiders of teaching process, by engaging EFL students to read the relevant material to their needs, it will be result the improvement in both skills , according to students and teachers findings which are relevant to the third hypothesis of the research .

Furthermore, based on the results obtained from the current research, it is suggested that EFL teachers, first need to select appropriate literary texts, second they need to provide EFL learners with different reading comprehension and writing activities that may stimulate EFL students motivation. Moreover, if EFL teachers are flexible, they can certainly make these activities successful, and will encourage EFL students to learn and also to write about English.

It should be stated that the current research suffered from certain problems like: carelessness of the participants during the questionnaire; some students did not care about the questionnaire , they leave a lot of questions empty .

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that further research needs to cover the area of using short stories as teaching material to develop EFL students' language skills, discussion other skills that short stories can develop it.

Recommended Lesson Plan

A. Pre reading activities

Teacher can ask the students general questions, weather they already have an idea about the story (see appendix 04) or if they have red it before, some students' answers can motivate the others.

B. During reading Activities

Think, share, pair strategy is a useful way to comprehend meaning, as the students came to read sentences bolded, they start to focus on the context of the word in the passage given. Students can be asked to find a synonym of the word and share it with their colleagues, dictionaries can be used as tool do to the task

1. But the Prince looked rather **pitiful** with a big hole in his crown where the ruby used to be, and the bird felt bad for him.
2. The swallow **plucked** the ruby from the center of the Prince s crown. He flew across the city over rooftops and along narrow streets. He found the shabby gray house and flew in through the kitchen window. He placed the jewel on the wooden table.

Introduce new vocabularies:

Annoyed, Leaden, Pry

This activity is designed to motivate students' prior knowledge, the teacher can introduce some new vocabularies and after a discussion of each word, he can divide the students into groups and ask them to complete a vocabulary activity

1. Use the word in a full sentence
2. Give a synonym or an antonym of the word

- This task will help the students discover the meaning of some vocabularies that will help them in their writing.

C. After reading activities

The teacher can ask the students about the story they have red:

1) Where does the story take place?
2) Who are the characters? Describe the main character in the short story ?
3) What are the changes that were obviously seen on the happy prince character ?
4) What a kind of values you get from the swallow's behavior toward the happy prince ?
5) What kind of message you get from the short story?
6) Who is your favorite character and why?

After discussed the story, students can be asked to do written activities :

Task1

Write about the happy prince s point of view and its importance in a few lines

…….

……

Task2

How does this relate to your own life, write a paragraph about?

…….

……

Task 3

Write your own version of what happens next

……..

…….

Task4

Summarize the story, by your own words in only about one hundred words.

……

……..

- Those activities will help EFL students to develop their creative thinking and descriptive writing.

- The lesson plan above is one of the many plans that can be used in EFL classes, to make EFL students familiar with reading comprehension and writing skill in the same time. Furthermore, EFL teachers should be creative and innovative when planning the appropriate activities that cover their students' needs and lead them to be creative too, by reinforcing them produce their own ideas and works.

  EFL teacher is a guider and facilitator for the success of those activities, through raising students' motivation and make them active rather than passive learners.

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Appendix (01)

University of Laghouat

English Department

Students'questionnaire

Hello, you are kindly invited to participate in our thesis questionnaire. In this survey, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire that asks questions about the short stories effectiveness in developing reading comprehension and writing skills. This survey, will discuss the contribution of the short story in the development of students' skills. Completion of this will take approximately 15-20 minutes. Thank you very much in advance for your time and support. Please start answering the questions now by choosing the choice that convince and suits you.

Part one : *general information about students' level*

I. Your level in English is

1) Good ☐
2) Average ☐
3) Weak ☐

Part two : *students' difficulties in English language learning*

II. .Do you have difficulties in learning English?

1) Yes ☐
2) No ☐

Explain

…….

……..

…….

III. In your opinion, which language skill is the most difficult for students to master?

1) Reading skill ☐

2) Writing skill ☐
3) Speaking skill ☐
4) Listening skill ☐

IV. What are the reasons behind reading comprehension difficulties?

1) The lack of time ☐
2) The lack of reading ☐
3) The difficulty of texts that they read ☐
4) The difficulty of reading comprehension ☐

V. What are the difficulties that you face when writing?

1) Punctuation ☐
2) Language structure ☐
3) Poor grammar knowledge ☐
4) Lack of vocabularies and ideas ☐

Part Three*:* *Students perspective toward literary texts and its effect on reading and writing skills*

VI. Most teachers and pedagogies advice EFL students to read habitually literary texts, does literature improved your language skills, vocabulary and grammar?

1) Yes it does. ☐
2) no, it doesn't ☐

VII. When reading literary texts , do you focus on

1) ideas and details in the text ☐
2) text organization ☐
3) language and style use ☐
4) words of the text ☐

VIII. Do literary texts contribute in the development of your reading comprehension?

1) Yes ☐
2) No ☐

Why

……..

……..

Part four: *Students perspectives toward short stories*

IX. What kind of literature do you prefer to read?

1) novel ☐
2) short story ☐
3) poetry ☐

Why?

……

……..

……

X. Most EFL teachers use short stories as an authentic material for better reading comprehension, do you benefit from reading a short story?

1) Yes ☐
2) Yes , so much ☐
3) No ☐

XI. Do you understand short stories language and style?

1) Yes ☐
2) No ☐

XII. Can you answer short stories reading comprehension activities

1) Easily ☐
2) Hardly ☐

Why?……..

……..

……

XIII. Do, you acquire new vocabularies through reading short stories?

1) Yes ☐
2) Somehow ☐
3) No ☐

XIV. In your opinion, short stories build up

☐

1) New culture
2) High critical thinking ☐
3) Language learning ☐
4) All them ☐

Part five: *Short stories and good writing*

XV. Short stories are the most suitable literary genre that builds up the creative writing

1) Agree ☐
2) Disagree ☐

XVI. What do you acquire from reading short stories?

1) The correct use of tenses ☐
2) Grammatical rules and structures ☐
3) Nothing ☐

XVII. Benefits of reading short stories according to you are

1) Improvement in grammar and sentence structure ☐
2) Learn the organization of ideas ☐
3) Vocabulary development ☐
4) All ☐

XVIII. Does your writing performance ameliorated after reading short stories?

1) Yes ☐
2) No ☐

XIX. Do you benefit from what you acquire through reading short stories in your own writing?

1) Yes ☐
2) No ☐

University of Laghouat

English Department

Teachers' questionnaire

The following questions to see and to gather general information about the short stories effectiveness in developing reading comprehension and writing skill in EFL classes. Thus you are kindly invited to answer the following question in order to help us in our thesis of Master degree in English language.

- As an instructor in the EFL classes do you think that the inclusion of the short story in the curriculum is beneficial enough for the improvement of the student skills?

- Reading literary text specifically short stories participate in building of the:

1) Cultural background of the learner ☐
2) Creative thinking of the learner ☐
3) Langage awareness. ☐
4) All ☐

- Are you among those teachers who agree that short story provides them a huge amount of chances to teach writing skill successfully?

- Would you describe your students' reaction while writing after reading a short story?
- According to your experience how far short story improves the learners reading and writing simultaneously?

Appendix (2)

The Black cat

By Edgar Allen Poe

FOR the most wild yet most homely narrative which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief. Mad indeed would I be to expect it, in a case where my very senses reject their own evidence. Yet, mad am I not—and very surely do I not dream. But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburden my soul. My immediate purpose is to place before the world, plainly, succinctly, and without comment, a series of mere household events. In their consequences, these events have terrified—have tortured—have destroyed me. Yet I will not attempt to expound them. To me, they have presented little but horror—to many they will seem less terrible than baroques. Hereafter, perhaps, some intellect may be found which will reduce my phantasm to the commonplace—some intellect more calm, more logical, and far less excitable than my own, which will perceive, in the circumstances I detail with awe, nothing more than an ordinary succession of very natural causes and effects. From my infancy I was noted for the docility and humanity of my disposition. My tenderness of heart was even so conspicuous as to make me the rest of my companions.

I was especially fond of animals, and was indulged by my parents with a great variety of pets. With these I spent most of my time, and never was so happy as when feeding and caressing them. This peculiarity of character grew with my growth, and, in my manhood, I derived from it one of my principal sources of pleasure. To those who have cherished affection for a faithful and sagacious dog, I need hardly be at the trouble of explaining the nature or the intensity of the gratification thus derivable. There is something in the unselfish and self-sacrificing love a brute, which goes directly to the heart of him who has had frequent occasion to test the paltry friendship and gossamer fidelity of mere Man. I married early, and was happy to find in my wife a disposition not uncongenial with my own. Observing my partiality for domestic pets, she lost no opportunity of procuring those of the most agreeable kind. We had birds, gold-fish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and a cat. This latter was a remarkably large and beautiful animal, entirely black, and sagacious to an astonishing degree. In speaking of his intelligence, my wife, who at heart was not a little tinctured with superstition, made frequent allusion to the ancient popular notion, which regarded all black cats as witches in disguise. Not that she was ever serious upon this point—and I mention the matter at all for no better reason than that it happens, just now, to be remembered. Pluto—this was the cat's name—was my favorite pet and playmate. I alone fed him, and he attended me wherever I went about the house. It was even with difficulty that I could prevent him from following me through the streets. Our friendship lasted, in this manner, for several years, during which my general temperament and character— through the instrumentality of the Fiend Intemperance—had (I blush to confess it) experienced a radical alteration for the worse.

I grew, day by day, more moody, more irritable, more regardless of the feelings of others. I suffered myself to use intemperate language to my wife. At length, I even offered her personal violence. My pets, of course, were made to feel the change in my disposition. I not only neglected, but illused them. For Pluto, however, I still retained sufficient regard to restrain me from maltreating him, as I made no scruple of maltreating the rabbits, the monkey, or even the dog, when, by accident, or through affection, they came in my way. But my disease grew upon me—for what disease is like Alcohol!—and at length even Pluto, who was now becoming old, and consequently somewhat peevish—even Pluto began to experience the effects of my ill temper. One night, returning home, much intoxicated, from one of my haunts about town, I fancied that the cat avoided my presence. I seized him; when, in his fright at my violence, he inflicted a slight wound upon my hand with his teeth. The fury of a demon instantly possessed me. I knew myself no longer. My original soul seemed, at once, to take its flight from my body; and a more than fiendish

malevolence, ginnurtured, thrilled every fibre of my frame. I took from my waistcoat-pocket a penknife, opened it, grasped the poor beast by the throat, and deliberately cut one of its eyes from the socket! I blush, I burn, I shudder, while I pen the damnable atrocity. When reason returned with the morning—when I had slept off the fumes of the night's debauch—I experienced a sentiment half of horror, half of remorse, for the crime of which I had been guilty; but it was, at best, a feeble and equivocal feeling, and the soul remained untouched. I again plunged into excess, and soon drowned in wine all memory of the deed. In the meantime the cat slowly recovered. The socket of the lost eye presented, it is true, a frightful appearance, but he no longer appeared to suffer any pain. He went about the house as usual, but, as might be expected, fled in extreme terror at my approach. I had so much of my old heart left, as to be at first grieved by this evident dislike on the part of a creature which had once so loved me. But this feeling soon gave place to irritation. And then came, as if to my final and irrevocable overthrow, the spirit of PERVERSENESS. Of this spirit philosophy takes no account. Yet I am not surer that my soul lives, than I am that perverseness is one of the primitive impulses of the human heart—one of the indivisible primary faculties, or sentiments, which give direction to the character of Man. Who has not, a hundred times, found himself committing a vile or a stupid action, for no other reason than because he knows he should not? Have we not a perpetual inclination, in the teeth of our best judgment, to violate that which is Law, merely because we understand it to be such? This spirit of perverseness, I say, came to my final overthrow. It was this unfathomable longing of the soul to vex itself—to offer violence to its own nature—to do wrong for the wrong's sake only—that urged me to continue and finally to consummate the injury I had inflicted upon the unoffending brute. One morning, in cold blood, I slipped a noose about its neck and hung it to the limb of a tree;—hung it with the tears streaming from my eyes, and with the bitterest remorse at my heart;—hung it because I knew that it had loved me, and because I felt it had given me no reason of offence;—hung it because I knew that in so doing I was committing a sin—a deadly sin that would so jeopardize my immortal soul as to place it—if such a thing were possible—even beyond the reach of the infinite mercy of the Most Merciful and Most Terrible God. On the night of the day on which this most cruel deed was done, I was aroused from sleep by the cry of fire. The curtains of my bed were in flames. The whole house was blazing. It was with great difficulty that my wife, a servant, and myself, made our escape from the conflagration.

The destruction was complete. My entire worldly wealth was swallowed up, and I resigned myself thenceforward to despair. I am above the weakness of seeking to establish a sequence of cause and effect, between the disaster and the atrocity. But I am detailing a chain of facts—and wish not to leave even a possible link imperfect. On the day succeeding the fire, I visited the ruins. The walls, with one exception, had fallen in. This exception was found in a compartment wall, not very thick, which stood about the middle of the house, and against which had rested the head of my bed. The plastering had here, in great measure, resisted the action of the fire—a fact which I attributed to its having been recently spread. About this wall a dense crowd were collected, and many persons seemed to be examining a particular portion of it with very minute and eager attention. The words "strange!" "singular!" and other similar expressions, excited my curiosity. I approached and saw, as if graven in bas-relief upon the white surface, the figure of a gigantic cat. The impression was given with an accuracy truly marvellous. There was a rope about the animal's neck. When I first beheld this apparition—for I could scarcely regard it as less—my wonder and my terror were extreme. But at length reflection came to my aid. The cat, I remembered, had been hung in a garden adjacent to the house. Upon the alarm of fire, this garden had been immediately filled by the crowd—by some one of whom the animal must have been cut from the tree and thrown, through an open window, into my chamber. This had probably been done with the view of arousing me from sleep. The falling of other walls had compressed the victim of my cruelty into the substance of the freshly-spread plaster; the lime of which, with the flames, and the ammonia from the carcass, had then accomplished the portraiture as I saw it. Although I thus readily accounted to my reason, if not altogether to my conscience, for the startling fact just detailed, it did not the less fail to make a deep

impression upon my fancy. For months I could not rid myself of the phantasm of the cat; and, during this period, there came back into my spirit a half-sentiment that seemed, but was not, remorse. I went so far as to regret the loss of the animal, and to look about me, among the vile haunts which I now habitually frequented, for another pet of the same species, and of somewhat similar appearance, with which to supply its place. One night as I sat, half stupefied, in a den of more than infamy, my attention was suddenly drawn to some black object, reposing upon the head of one of the immense hogsheads of gin, or of rum, which constituted the chief furniture of the apartment. I had been looking steadily at the top of this hogshead for some minutes, and what now caused me surprise was the fact that I had not sooner perceived the object thereupon. I approached it, and touched it with my hand. It was a black cat—a very large one—fully as large as Pluto, and closely resembling him in every respect but one. Pluto had not a white hair upon any portion of his body; but this cat had a large, although indefinite splotch of white, covering nearly the whole region of the breast. Upon my touching him, he immediately arose, purred loudly, rubbed against my hand, and appeared delighted with my notice. This, then, was the very creature of which I was in search. I at once offered to purchase it of the landlord; but this person made no claim to it—knew nothing of it—had never seen it before. I continued my caresses, and, when I prepared to go home, the animal evinced a disposition to accompany me. I permitted it to do so; occasionally stooping and patting it as I proceeded.

When it reached the house it domesticated itself at once, and became immediately a great favorite with my wife. For my own part, I soon found a dislike to it arising within me. This was just the reverse of what I had anticipated; but—I know not how or why it was—its evident fondness for myself rather disgusted and annoyed me. By slow degrees, these feelings of disgust and annoyance rose into the bitterness of hatred. I avoided the creature; a certain sense of shame, and the remembrance of my former deed of cruelty, preventing me from physically abusing it. I did not, for some weeks, strike, or otherwise violently ill use it; but gradually—very gradually—I came to look upon it with unutterable loathing, and to flee silently from its odious presence, as from the breath of a pestilence. What added, no doubt, to my hatred of the beast, was the discovery, on the morning after I brought it home, that, like Pluto, it also had been deprived of one of its eyes. This circumstance, however, only endeared it to my wife, who, as I have already said, possessed, in a high degree, that humanity of feeling which had once been my distinguishing trait, and the source of many of my simplest and purest pleasures. With my aversion to this cat, however, its partiality for myself seemed to increase. It followed my footsteps with a pertinacity which it would be difficult to make the reader comprehend. Whenever I sat, it would crouch beneath my chair, or spring upon my knees, covering me with its loathsome caresses. If I arose to walk it would get between my feet and thus nearly throw me down, or, fastening its long and sharp claws in my dress, clamber, in this manner, to my breast. At such times, although I longed to destroy it with a blow, I was yet withheld from so doing, partly by a memory of my former crime, but chiefly—let me confess it at once—by absolute dread of the beast. 10 TH This dread was not exactly a dread of physical evil— and yet I should be at a loss how otherwise to define it. I am almost ashamed to own—yes, even in this felon's cell, I am almost ashamed to own—that the terror and horror with which the animal inspired me, had been heightened by one of the merest chimeras it would be possible to conceive. My wife had called my attention, more than once, to the character of the mark of white hair, of which I have spoken, and which constituted the sole visible difference between the strange beast and the one I had destroyed. The reader will remember that this mark, although large, had been originally very indefinite; but, by slow degrees—degrees nearly imperceptible, and which for a long time my reason struggled to reject as fanciful—it had, at length, assumed a rigorous distinctness of outline. It was now the representation of an object that I shudder to name—and for this, above all, I loathed, and dreaded, and would have rid myself of the monster had I dared—it was now, I say, the image of a hideous—of a ghastly thing—of the GALLOWS!— oh, mournful and terrible engine of Horror and of Crime—of Agony and of Death ! And now was I indeed wretched beyond the wretchedness of mere Humanity. And a brute beast—whose fellow I had contemptuously destroyed—a brute

beast to work out for me—for me, a man fashioned in the image of the High God—so much of insufferable woe! Alas! neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of rest any more! During the former the creature left me no moment alone, and in the latter I started hourly from dreams of unutterable fear to find the hot breath of the thing upon my face, and its vast weight—an incarnate nightmare that I had no power to shake off—incumbent eternally upon my heart! Beneath the pressure of torments such as these the feeble remnant of the good within me succumbed. Evil thoughts became my sole intimates—the darkest and most evil of thoughts. The moodiness of my usual temper increased to hatred of all things and of all mankind; while from the sudden, frequent, and ungovernable outbursts of a fury to which I now blindly abandoned myself, my uncomplaining wife, alas, was the most usual and the most patient of sufferers. One day she accompanied me, upon some household errand, into the cellar of the old building which our poverty compelled us to inhabit.

The cat followed me down the steep stairs, and, nearly throwing me headlong, exasperated me to madness. Uplifting an axe, and forgetting, in my wrath, the childish dread which had hitherto stayed my hand, I aimed a blow at the animal, which, of course, would have proved instantly fatal had it descended as I wished. But this blow was arrested by the hand of my wife. Goaded by the interference into a rage more than demoniacal, I withdrew my arm from her grasp and buried the axe in her brain. She fell dead upon the spot without a groan. This hideous murder accomplished, I set myself forthwith, and with entire deliberation, to the task of concealing the body. I knew that I could not remove it from the house, either by day or by night, without the risk of being observed by the neighbors. Many projects entered my mind. At one period I thought of cutting the corpse into minute fragments, and destroying them by fire. At another, I resolved to dig a grave for it in the floor of the cellar. Again, I deliberated about casting it in the well in the yard—about packing it in a box, as if merchandise, with the usual arrangements, and so getting a porter to take it from the house. Finally I hit upon what I considered a far better expedient than either of these. I determined to wall it up in the cellar, as the monks of the Middle Ages are recorded to have walled up their victims. For a purpose such as this the cellar was well adapted. Its walls were loosely constructed, and had lately been plastered throughout with a rough plaster, which the dampness of the atmosphere had prevented from hardening. Moreover, in one of the walls was a projection, caused by a false chimney, or fireplace, that had been filled up and made to resemble the rest of the cellar. I made no doubt that I could readily displace the bricks at this point, insert the corpse, and wall the whole up as before, so that no eye could detect anything suspicious. And in this calculation I was not deceived. By means of a crowbar I easily dislodged the bricks, and, having carefully deposited the body against the inner wall, I propped it in that position, while with little trouble, I re-laid the whole structure as it originally stood.

Having procured mortar, sand, and hair, with every possible precaution, I prepared a plaster which could not be distinguished from the old, and with this I very carefully went over the new brickwork. When I had finished, I felt satisfied that all was right. The wall did not present the slightest appearance of having been disturbed. The rubbish on the floor was picked up with the minutest care. I looked around triumphantly, and said to myself: “Here at least, then, my labor has not been in vain.” My next step was to look for the beast which had been the cause of so much wretchedness; for I had, at length, firmly resolved to put it to death. Had I been able to meet with it at the moment, there could have been no doubt of its fate; but it appeared that the crafty animal had been alarmed at the violence of my previous anger, and forbore to present itself in my present mood. It is impossible to describe or to imagine the deep, the blissful sense of relief which the absence of the detested creature occasioned in my bosom. It did not make its appearance during the night; and thus for one night, at least, since its introduction into the house, I soundly and tranquilly slept; aye, slept even with the burden of murder upon my soul. The second and the third day passed, and still my tormentor came not. Once again I breathed as a free man. The monster, in terror, had fled the premises for ever! I should behold it no more! My happiness was supreme! The guilt of my dark deed disturbed me but little. Some few inquiries had been made, but these had been readily

answered. Even a search had been instituted—but of course nothing was to be discovered. I looked upon my future felicity as secured.

Upon the fourth day of the assassination, a party of the police came, very unexpectedly, into the house, and proceeded again to make rigorous investigation of the premises. Secure, however, in the inscrutability of my place of concealment, I felt no embarrassment whatever. The officers bade me accompany them in their search. They left no nook or corner unexplored. At length, for the third or fourth time, they descended into the cellar. I quivered not in a muscle. My heart beat calmly as that of one who slumbers in innocence. I walked the cellar from end to end. I folded my arms upon my bosom, and roamed easily to and fro. The police were thoroughly satisfied and prepared to depart. The glee at my heart was too strong to be restrained. I burned to say if but one word, by way of triumph, and to render doubly sure their assurance of my guiltlessness. "Gentlemen," I said at last, as the party ascended the steps, "I delight to have allayed your suspicions. I wish you all health and a little more courtesy. By the bye, gentlemen, this—this is a very well-constructed house," (in the rabid desire to say something easily, I scarcely knew what I uttered at all),—"I may say an excellently well-constructed house. These walls—are you going, gentlemen?—these walls are solidly put together"; and here, through the mere frenzy of bravado, I rapped heavily with a cane which I held in my hand, upon that very portion of the brickwork behind which stood the corpse of the wife of my bosom. But may God shield and deliver me from the fangs of the Arch-Fiend! No sooner had the reverberation of my blows sunk into silence, than I was answered by a voice from within the tomb!—by a cry, at first muffled and broken, like the sobbing of a child, and then quickly swelling into one long, loud, and continuous scream, utterly anomalous and inhuman—a howl—a wailing shriek, half of horror and half of triumph, such as might have arisen only out of hell, conjointly from the throats of the dammed in their agony and of the demons that exult in the damnation.

Of my own thoughts it is folly to speak. Swooning, I staggered to the opposite wall. For one instant the party upon the stairs remained motionless, through extremity of terror and awe. In the next a dozen stout arms were toiling at the wall. It fell bodily. The corpse, already greatly decayed and clotted with gore, stood erect before the eyes of the spectators. Upon its head, with red extended mouth and solitary eye of fire, sat the hideous beast whose craft had seduced me into murder, and whose informing voice had consigned me to the hangman. I had walled the monster up within the tomb.

Appendix(3)

Eveline

by James Joyce

SHE sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. She was tired.

Few people passed. The man out of the last house passed on his way home; she heard his footsteps clacking along the concrete pavement and afterwards crunching on the cinder path before the new red houses. One time there used to be a field there in which they used to play every evening with other people's children. Then a man from Belfast bought the field and built houses in it -- not like their little brown houses but bright brick houses with shining roofs. The children of the avenue used to play together in that field -- the Devines, the Waters, the Dunns, little Keogh the cripple, she and her brothers and sisters. Ernest, however, never played: he was too grown up. Her father used often to hunt them in out of the field with his blackthorn stick; but usually little Keogh used to keep nix and call out when he saw her father coming. Still they seemed to have been rather happy then. Her father was not so bad then; and besides, her mother was alive. That was a long time ago; she and her brothers and sisters were all grown up her mother was dead. Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back to England. Everything changes. Now she was going to go away like the others, to leave her home.

Home! She looked round the room, reviewing all its familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth all the dust came from. Perhaps she would never see again those familiar objects from which she had never dreamed of being divided. And yet during all those years she had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall above the broken harmonium beside the coloured print of the promises made to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque. He had been a school friend of her father. Whenever he showed the photograph to a visitor her father used to pass it with a casual word:

"He is in Melbourne now."

She had consented to go away, to leave her home. Was that wise? She tried to weigh each side of the question. In her home anyway she had shelter and food; she had those whom she had known all her life about her. O course she had to work hard, both in the house and at business. What would they say of her in the Stores when they found out that she had run away with a fellow? Say she was a fool, perhaps; and her place would be filled up by advertisement. Miss Gavan would be glad. She had always had an edge on her, especially whenever there were people listening.

"Miss Hill, don't you see these ladies are waiting?"

"Look lively, Miss Hill, please."

She would not cry many tears at leaving the Stores.

But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would be married -- she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then. She would not be treated as her mother had been. Even now, though she was over nineteen, she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence. She knew it was that that had given her the palpitations. When they were

growing up he had never gone for her like he used to go for Harry and Ernest, because she was a girl but latterly he had begun to threaten her and say what he would do to her only for her dead mother's sake. And no she had nobody to protect her. Ernest was dead and Harry, who was in the church decorating business, was nearly always down somewhere in the country. Besides, the invariable squabble for money on Saturday nights had begun to weary her unspeakably. She always gave her entire wages -- seven shillings -- and Harry always sent up what he could but the trouble was to get any money from her father. He said she used to squander the money, that she had no head, that he wasn't going to give her his hard-earned money to throw about the streets, and much more, for he was usually fairly bad on Saturday night. In the end he would give her the money and ask her had she any intention of buying Sunday's dinner. Then she had to rush out as quickly as she could and do her marketing, holding her black leather purse tightly in her hand as she elbowed her way through the crowds and returning home late under her load of provisions. She had hard work to keep the house together and to see that the two young children who had been left to hr charge went to school regularly and got their meals regularly. It was hard work -- a hard life -- but now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life.

She was about to explore another life with Frank. Frank was very kind, manly, open-hearted. She was to go away with him by the night-boat to be his wife and to live with him in Buenos Ayres where he had a home waiting for her. How well she remembered the first time she had seen him; he was lodging in a house on the main road where she used to visit. It seemed a few weeks ago. He was standing at the gate, his peaked cap pushed back on his head and his hair tumbled forward over a face of bronze. Then they had come to know each other. He used to meet her outside the Stores every evening and see her home. He took her to see The Bohemian Girl and she felt elated as she sat in an unaccustomed part of the theatre with him. He was awfully fond of music and sang a little. People knew that they were courting and, when he sang about the lass that loves a sailor, she always felt pleasantly confused. He used to call her Poppens out of fun. First of all it had been an excitement for her to have a fellow and then she had begun to like him. He had tales of distant countries. He had started as a deck boy at a pound a month on a ship of the Allan Line going out to Canada. He told her the names of the ships he had been on and the names of the different services. He had sailed through the Straits of Magellan and he told her stories of the terrible Patagonians. He had fallen on his feet in Buenos Ayres, he said, and had come over to the old country just for a holiday. Of course, her father had found out the affair and had forbidden her to have anything to say to him.

"I know these sailor chaps," he said.

One day he had quarrelled with Frank and after that she had to meet her lover secretly.

The evening deepened in the avenue. The white of two letters in her lap grew indistinct. One was to Harry; the other was to her father. Ernest had been her favourite but she liked Harry too. Her father was becoming old lately, she noticed; he would miss her. Sometimes he could be very nice. Not long before, when she had been laid up for a day, he had read her out a ghost story and made toast for her at the fire. Another day, when their mother was alive, they had all gone for a picnic to the Hill of Howth. She remembered her father putting on her mothers bonnet to make the children laugh.

Her time was running out but she continued to sit by the window, leaning her head against the window curtain, inhaling the odour of dusty cretonne. Down far in the avenue she could hear a street organ playing. She knew the air Strange that it should come that very night to remind her of the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could. She remembered the last night of her mother's illness; she was again in the close dark room at the other side of the hall and outside she heard a melancholy air of Italy. The organ-player had been ordered

to go away and given sixpence. She remembered her father strutting back into the sickroom saying:

"Damned Italians! coming over here!"

As she mused the pitiful vision of her mother's life laid its spell on the very quick of her being -- that life of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness. She trembled as she heard again her mother's voice saying constantly with foolish insistence:

"Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun!"

She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy? She had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her.

She stood among the swaying crowd in the station at the North Wall. He held her hand and she knew that he was speaking to her, saying something about the passage over and over again. The station was full of soldiers with brown baggages. Through the wide doors of the sheds she caught a glimpse of the black mass of the boat, lying in beside the quay wall, with illumined portholes. She answered nothing. She felt her cheek pale and cold and, out of a maze of distress, she prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty. The boat blew a long mournful whistle into the mist. If she went, tomorrow she would be on the sea with Frank, steaming towards Buenos Ayres. Their passage had been booked. Could she still draw back after all he had done for her? Her distress awoke a nausea in her body and she kept moving her lips in silent fervent prayer.

A bell clanged upon her heart. She felt him seize her hand:

"Come!"

All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her. She gripped with both hands at the iron railing.

"Come!"

No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish.

"Eveline! Evvy!"

He rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow. He was shouted at to go on but he still called to her. She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition.

Appendix (4)

The Happy Prince

By Oscar Wilde

High above the city, on a tall column, stood the statue of the Happy Prince. He was gilded all over with thin leaves of fine gold, for eyes he had two bright sapphires, and a large red ruby glowed on his sword-hilt.

He was very much admired indeed.'He is as beautiful as a weathercock,' remarked one of the Town Councillors who wished to gain a reputation for having artistic taste; 'only not quite so useful,' he added, fearing lest people should think him unpractical, which he really was not.

'Why can't you be like the Happy Prince?' asked a sensible mother of her little boy who was crying for the moon. 'The Happy Prince never dreams of crying for anything.'

'I am glad there is some one in the world who is quite happy', muttered a disappointed man as he gazed at the wonderful statue.

'He looks just like an angel,' said the Charity Children as they came out of the cathedral in their bright scarlet cloaks, and their clean white pinafores.

'How do you know?' said the Mathematical Master, 'you have never seen one.'

'Ah! but we have, in our dreams,' answered the children; and the Mathematical Master frowned and looked very severe, for he did not approve of children dreaming.

One night there flew over the city a little Swallow. His friends had gone away to Egypt six weeks before, but he had stayed behind, for he was in love with the most beautiful Reed. He had met her early in the spring as he was flying down the river after a big yellow moth, and had been so attracted by her slender waist that he had stopped to talk to her.

'Shall I love you said the Swallow', who liked to come to the point at once, and the Reed made him a low bow. So he flew round and round her, touching the water with his wings, and making silver ripples. This was his courtship, and it lasted all through the summer.

'It is a ridiculous attachment,' twittered the other Swallows, 'she has no money, and far too many relations;' and indeed the river was quite full of Reeds. Then, when the autumn came, they all flew away.

After they had gone he felt lonely, and began to tire of his lady-love. 'She has no conversation,' he said, 'and I am afraid that she is a coquette, for she is always flirting with the wind.' And certainly, whenever the wind blew, the Reed made the most graceful curtsies. I admit that she is domestic,' he continued, 'but I love travelling, and my wife, consequently, should love travelling also.'

'Will you come away with me?' he said finally to her; but the Reed shook her head, she was so attached to her home.

'You have been trifling with me,' he cried, 'I am off to the Pyramids. Good-bye!' and he flew away.

All day long he flew, and at night-time he arrived at the city. 'Where shall I put up?' he said 'I hope the town has made preparations.'

Then he saw the statue on the tall column. 'I will put up there,' he cried; 'it is a fine position with plenty of fresh air.' So he alighted just between the feet of the Happy Prince.

'I have a golden bedroom,' he said softly to himself as he looked round, and he prepared to go to sleep; but just as he was putting his head under his wing, a large drop of water fell on him.'What a curious thing!' he cried, 'there is not a single cloud in the sky, the stars are quite clear and bright, and yet it is raining. The climate in the north of Europe is really dreadful. The Reed used to like the rain, but that was merely her selfishness.'

Then another drop fell.

'What is the use of a statue if it cannot keep the rain off?' he said; 'I must look for a good chimney-pot,' and he determined to fly away.

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But before he had opened his wings, a third drop fell, and he looked up, and saw - Ah! what did he see?

The eyes of the Happy Prince were filled with tears, and tears were running down his golden cheeks. His face was so beautiful in the moonlight that the little Swallow was filled with pity.

'Who are you?' he said.

'I am the Happy Prince.'

'Why are you weeping then?' asked the Swallow; 'you have quite drenched me.'

'When I was alive and had a human heart,' answered the statue, 'I did not know what tears were, for I lived in the Palace of Sans-Souci where sorrow is not allowed to enter. In the daytime I played with my companions in the garden, and in the evening I led the dance in the Great Hall. Round the garden ran a very lofty wall, but I never cared to ask what lay beyond it, everything about me was so beautiful. My courtiers called me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I was, if pleasure be happiness. So I lived, and so I died. And now that I am dead they have set me up here so high that I can see all the ugliness and all the misery of my city, and though my heart is made of lead yet I cannot choose but weep.'

'What, is he not solid gold?' said the Swallow to himself. He was too polite to make any personal remarks out loud.

'Far away,' continued the statue in a low musical voice,'far away in a little street there is a poor house. One of the windows is open, and through it I can see a woman seated at a table. Her face is thin and worn, and she has coarse, red hands, all pricked by the needle, for she is a seamstress. She is embroidering passion-fowers on a satin gown for the loveliest of the Queen's maids-of-honour to wear at the next Court-ball. In a bed in the corner of the room her little boy is lying ill. He has a fever, and is asking for oranges. His mother has nothing to give him but river water, so he is crying. Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow, will you not bring her the ruby out of my sword-hilt? My feet are fastened to this pedestal and I cannot move.'

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'I am waited for in Egypt,' said the Swallow. 'My friends are flying up and down the Nile, and talking to the large lotus flowers. Soon they will go to sleep in the tomb of the great King. The King is there himself in his painted coffin. He is wrapped in yellow linen, and embalmed with spices. Round his neck is a chain of pale green jade, and his hands are like withered leaves.'

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince,'will you not stay with me for one night, and be my messenger? The boy is so thirsty, and the mother so sad.

'I don't think I like boys,' answered the Swallow. 'Last summer, when I was staying on the river, there were two rude boys, the miller's sons, who were always throwing stones at me. They never hit me, of course; we swallows fly far too well for that, and besides, I come of a family famous for its agility; but still, it was a mark of disrespect.'

But the Happy Prince looked so sad that the little Swallow was sorry. 'It is very cold here,' he said 'but I will stay with you for one night, and be your messenger.'

'Thank you, little Swallow,' said the Prince.

So the Swallow picked out the great ruby from the Prince's sword, and flew away with it in his beak over the roofs of the town.

He passed by the cathedral tower, where the white marble angels were sculptured. He passed by the palace and heard the sound of dancing. A beautiful girl came out on the balcony with her lover. 'How wonderful the stars are,' he said to her,'and how wonderful is the power of love!' 'I hope my dress will be ready in time for the State-ball,' she answered; 'I have ordered passion-flowers to be embroidered on it; but the seamstresses are so lazy.'

He passed over the river, and saw the lanterns hanging to the masts of the ships. He passed over the Ghetto, and saw the old Jews bargaining with each other, and weighing out money in copper scales. At last he came to the poor house and looked in. The boy was tossing feverishly on his bed, and the mother had fallen asleep, she was so tired. In he hopped, and laid the great ruby on the table beside the woman's thimble. Then he flew gently round the bed, fanning the boy's forehead with his wings. 'How cool I feel,' said the boy, 'I must be getting better;' and he sank into a delicious slumber.

Then the Swallow flew back to the Happy Prince, and told him what he had done. 'It is curious,' he remarked, 'but I feel quite warm now, although it is so cold.'

'That is because you have done a good action,' said the Prince. And the little Swallow began to think, and then he fell asleep. Thinking always made him sleepy.

When day broke he flew down to the river and had a bath.

'What a remarkable phenomenon,' said the Professor of Omithology as he was passing over the bridge. 'A swallow in winter!' And he wrote a long letter about it to the local newspaper. Every one quoted it, it was full of so many words that they could not understand.

'To-night I go to Egypt,' said the Swallow, and he was in high spirits at the prospect. He visited all the public monuments, and sat a long time on top of the church steeple. Wherever he went the Sparrows chirruped, and said to each other, 'What a distinguished stranger!' so he enjoyed himself very much.

When the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince. 'Have you any commissions for Egypt?' he cried; 'I am just starting.'

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'will you not stay with me one night longer?'

'I am waited for in Egypt,' answered the Swallow. To-morrow my friends will fly up to the Second Cataract. The river-horse couches there among the bulrushes, and on a great granite throne sits the God Memnon. All night long he watches the stars, and when the morning star shines he utters one cry of joy, and then he is silent. At noon the yellow lions come down to the water's edge to drink. They have eyes like green beryls, and their roar is louder than the roar of the cataract.'

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince,'far away across the city I see a young man in a garret. He is leaning over a desk covered with papers, and in a tumbler by his side there is a bunch of withered violets. His hair is brown and crisp, and his lips are red as a pomegranate, and he has large and dreamy eyes. He is trying to finish a play for the Director of the Theatre, but he is too cold to write any more. There is no fire in the grate, and hunger has made him faint.'

'I will wait with you one night longer,' said the Swallow, who really had a good heart. 'Shall I take him another ruby?'

'Alas! I have no ruby now,' said the Prince; 'my eyes are all that I have left. They are made of rare sapphires, which were brought out of India a thousand years ago. Pluck out one of them and take it to him. He will sell it to the jeweller, and buy food and firewood, and finish his play.'

'Dear Prince,' said the Swallow,'I cannot do that;' and he began to weep.

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'do as I command you.'

So the Swallow plucked out the Prince's eye, and flew away to the student's garret. It was easy enough to get in, as there was a hole in the roof. Through this he darted, and came into the room. The young man had his head buried in his hands, so he did not hear the flutter of the bird's wings, and when he looked up he found the beautiful sapphire lying on the withered violets.

'I am beginning to be appreciated,' he cried; 'this is from some great admirer. Now I can finish my play,' and he looked quite happy.

The next day the Swallow flew down to the harbour. He sat on the mast of a large vessel and watched the sailors hauling big chests out of the hold with ropes. 'Heave a-hoy!' they shouted as each chest came up. 'I am going to Egypt!' cried the Swallow, but nobody minded, and when the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince.

'I am come to bid you good-bye,' he cried.

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince,'will you not stay with me one night longer?'

'It is winter,' answered the Swallow, and the chill snow will soon be here. In Egypt the sun is warm on the green palm-trees, and the crocodiles lie in the mud and look lazily about them. My companions are building a nest in the Temple of Baalbec, and the pink and white doves are watching them, and cooing to each other. Dear Prince, I must leave you, but I will never forget you, and next spring I will bring you back two beautiful jewels in place of those you have given away. The ruby shall be redder than a red rose, and the sapphire shall be as blue as the great sea.

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'In the square below,' said the Happy Prince, 'there stands a little match-girl. She has let her matches fall in the gutter, and they are all spoiled. Her father will beat her if she does not bring home some money, and she is crying. She has no shoes or stockings, and her little head is bare. Pluck out my other eye, and give it to her, and her father will not beat her.

'I will stay with you one night longer,' said the Swallow,'but I cannot pluck out your eye. You would be quite blind then.'

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'do as I command you.'

So he plucked out the Prince's other eye, and darted down with it. He swooped past the match-girl, and slipped the jewel into the palm of her hand. 'What a lovely bit of glass,' cried the little girl; and she ran home, laughing.

Then the Swallow came back to the Prince. 'You are blind now,' he said, 'so I will stay with you always.'

'No, little Swallow,' said the poor Prince, 'you must go away to Egypt.'

'I will stay with you always,' said the Swallow, and he slept at the Prince's feet.

All the next day he sat on the Prince's shoulder, and told him stories of what he had seen in strange lands. He told him of the red ibises, who stand in long rows on the banks of the Nile, and catch gold fish in their beaks; of the Sphinx, who is as old as the world itself, and lives in the desert, and knows everything; of the merchants, who walk slowly by the side of their camels, and carry amber beads in their hands; of the King of the Mountains of the Moon, who is as black as ebony, and worships a large crystal; of the great green snake that sleeps in a palm-tree, and has twenty priests to feed it with honey-cakes; and of the pygmies who sail over a big lake on large flat leaves, and are always at war with the butterflies.

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'Dear little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'you tell me of marvellous things, but more marvellous than anything is the suffering of men and of women. There is no Mystery so great as Misery. Fly over my city, little Swallow, and tell me what you see there.'

So the Swallow flew over the great city, and saw the rich making merry in their beautiful houses, while the beggars were sitting at the gates. He flew into dark lanes, and saw the white faces of starving children looking out listlessly at the black streets. Under the archway of a bridge two little boys were lying in one another's arms to try and keep themselves warm. 'How hungry we are' they said. 'You must not lie here,' shouted the Watchman, and they wandered out into the rain.

Then he flew back and told the Prince what he had seen.

'I am covered with fine gold,' said the Prince, 'you must take it off, leaf by leaf, and give it to my poor; the living always think that gold can make them happy.'

Leaf after leaf of the fine gold the Swallow picked off, till the Happy Prince looked quite dull and grey. Leaf after leaf of the fine gold he brought to the poor, and the children's faces grew rosier, and they laughed and played games in the street. 'We have bread nod' they cried.

Then the snow came, and after the snow came the frost. The streets looked as if they were made of silver, they were so bright and glistening; long icicles like crystal daggers hung down from the eaves of the houses, everybody went about in furs, and the little boys wore scarlet caps and skated on the ice.

The poor little Swallow grew colder and colder, but he would not leave the Prince, he loved him too well. He picked up crumbs outside the baker's door when the baker was not looking, and tried to keep himself warm by flapping his wings.

But at last he knew that he was going to die. He had just strength to fly up to the Prince's shoulder once more.'Good-bye, dear Prince!' he murmured, 'will you let me kiss your hand?'

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'I am glad that you are going to Egypt at last, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'you have stayed too long here; but you must kiss me on the lips, for I love you.'

'It is not to Egypt that I am going,' said the Swallow. I am going to the House of Death. Death is the brother of Sleep, is he not?'

And he kissed the Happy Prince on the lips, and fell down dead at his feet.

At that moment a curious crack sounded inside the statue, as if something had broken. The fact is that the leaden heart had snapped right in two. It certainly was a dreadfully hard frost.

Early the next morning the Mayor was walking in the square below in company with the Town Councillors. As they passed the column he looked up at the statue: 'Dear me! how shabby the Happy Prince looks!' he said.

'How shabby indeed!' cried the Town Councillors, who always agreed with the Mayor, and they went up to look at it.

'The ruby has fallen out of his sword, his eyes are gone, and he is golden no longer,' said the Mayor; 'in fact, he is little better than a beggar!'

'Little better than a beggar,' said the Town Councillors.

'And there is actually a dead bird at his feet,' continued the Mayor. 'We must really issue a proclamation that birds are not to be allowed to die here.' And the Town Clerk made a note of the suggestion.

So they pulled down the statue of the Happy Prince. 'As he is no longer beautiful he is no longer useful,' said the Art Professor at the University.

Then they melted the statue in a furnace, and the Mayor held a meeting of the Corporation to decide what was to be done with the metal. 'We must have another statue, of course,' he said, 'and it shall be a statue of myself.'

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'Of myself,' said each of the Town Councillors, and they quarrelled. When I last heard of them they were quarrelling still.

'What a strange thing!' said the overseer of the workmen at the foundry.'This broken lead heart will not melt in the furnace. We must throw it away.' So they threw it on a dust-heap where the dead Swallow was also lying.

'Bring me the two most precious things in the city,' said God to one of His Angels; and the Angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird.

'You have rightly chosen,' said God,'for in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing for evermore, and in my city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise me.'