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**Reading Flash Fiction Stories: A Revisited Strategy
to Develop EFL Students' Interactive Competence**

Case of Study: First Year Students of English Language at the
University of Bejaia

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for the Master's degree in Linguistics at Bejaia University

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Dedication

We dedicate this research work to our families and loved ones

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Abstract

The Language learners' lack of vocabulary when interacting has provided an opportunity to researchers to investigate the most appropriate strategies that could ameliorate this capacity. The main purpose of this study was to explore the efficacy of reading flash fiction stories as a revisited strategy to develop EFL student's interactive competence. This study was conducted with 32 students of first year at the department of the English language, University of Bejaia. A mixed method research was adopted which included a teacher's interview and a student's questionnaire. The questionnaire analysis showed that students needed motivation to read books continuously to be able to gain familiarity with new vocabulary items and language structures. The teacher's interview revealed that most of them approached the same aim to develop the learners' interactive competence and language skills by using different strategies like short stories and literary texts. Based on the findings, we could conclude that most of our informants agreed that flash fiction stories might be a suitable strategy in supporting EFL learners to enhance their communicative competence.

Key Words: Flash Fiction Stories, Interactive Competence, Communicative Competence, Reading, Language Skills, EFL Learners.

List of Abbreviations / Initialism

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FFS: Flash Fiction Stories

LMD: Licence/ Master/Magister/ Doctorate

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General Introduction

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1. Introduction

Among the four language skills, reading is the area where plenty of information can be displayed and provided especially to EFL learners. This skill does not only provide leisure and comfort but it is an invaluable bank of knowledge and recommendations. Reading covers different domains and disciplines presented through a myriad of forms: articles, poems, prose, novels, and short stories to list just these. These latter constitute our topic of research and interest bearing in mind the fact that they are a revisited strategy to enhance the interactive competence of EFL learners mainly in the Algerian Higher Education context.

Exploring the effect of this type of stories is very important in our research as our undertaking is based on exploring and explaining all about flash fiction stories especially the advantages they present in the development of students' communicative competences and the target language reinforcement.

2. Statement of the Problem

Many students suffer from the lack of vocabulary and important gaps when interacting. This reality has been revealed thanks to the data collected from our population samples and which have been used to localize areas of strength and mainly weaknesses that hindered any form of communication. Therefore, the first conclusions target the EFL learners' preferences of reading only at home during few times a week without any motivation or intensity and only when they feel that they need to read. Additionally, seeking information to complete assigned tasks has been the second conclusion drawn from our prior analysis to enable us state the problem on valid data, a situation that has made of these learners go straightly with un-noticed errors (spelling) and mistakes (grammar and vocabulary).

3. Research Questions

This research attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1) What might hinder the EFL learners' communicative competence to develop?
- 2) Can Flash Fiction Stories be integrated in EFL teaching and learning process as a strategy?
- 3) How can this strategy help in developing EFL learners' communicative competence?

4. Aim of the Study

This research aims at introducing the flash fiction stories as a strategy in the EFL teaching and learning processes because we strongly believe that they are important pedagogical tools to develop the students' interactive competence in regard to the characteristics and advantages they offer. The other intent of the work at hand is to explain the difference between interactive competence via communicative language teaching through the "Flash Fiction Stories-based interactive approach.

5. Population

The participants in this research work are a group of first year students of English language at Abderahmane Mira university of Bejaia for the academic year 2019/2020. It is selected randomly and it represents 32 students. We have also directed our research to most of the teachers at the same department especially the professionals in charge of the speaking/oral module to form as a whole our information providers.

6. Research variables

Depending on the work's title: "Reading flash fiction stories: A revisited strategy to develop the EFL student's interactive competence" we extract two variables as follows:

- The Dependent variable is the development of student's interactive competence.
- The Independent variable is the reading of Flash Fiction Stories as a revisited strategy.

The relation between both variables is to investigate and explore the effect of reading flash fiction stories on developing student's interactive competence.

7. Research Method and Data Collection Procedure

The selected method to treat the research problem is the exploratory method since it allows a better understanding of what the research aims should be throughout the duration of the project.

This research is carried out on first year LMD students and the teachers of the English department. Two research instruments have been used to gather data; the teachers' interview which allows us to obtain individual's opinions, and the pupils' questionnaire which is used for measuring the level of effectiveness of Flash Fiction Stories on EFL students' interactive competence.

8. Significance of the study

The motivation behind conducting this research work is to highlight how reading Flash Fiction Stories can be an effective tool to develop EFL students' interactive competence. Developing EFL students' interactive competence should be sought by the teachers; however, little studies have investigated how classroom teaching tools and techniques can influence the development of EFL students' interactive competence. The results obtained from our study will hopefully support the teachers to develop their teaching strategies and the learners to develop their interactive competence.

9. Description of the Study

This dissertation comprises four main parts, the first part is entitled « Reading Skills in EFL Context » which involves the definition and the types of reading. Besides, it tackles the importance of reading and reading skills as processes. The second part which is labeled « Developing the Interactive Competence » is divided into two sections; the first one presents the Communicative Language Teaching including its principles, characteristics, aims and types, it also presents the Interactive Approach; its definition, theories and characteristics. The second section which is labeled « Flash Fiction Stories reading and EFL Interactive Competence in EFL Context » discusses Flash Fiction Stories definition, elements, structures, characteristics and advantages. The third part under the title of « Research Methodology and Design », presents the research methodology that is used throughout our study, the research variables, the research design and the description of the population and sample. « Data Analysis and Interpretation » constitutes the fourth part where data of the exploratory work are discussed and analysed. Finally, we end our research with some implications and the general conclusion which comprises the different research summaries, the recommendations and finally the answers to our research questions.

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PART ONE: Reading skill in the EFL context

Introduction

Reading is an important lifelong skill that is central for acquisition in most professions and occupations, especially in the EFL learning process. It is an area to gather many information which could be: cultural, political, scientific, social, historical and even exploratory.

1.1. Definition of Reading

On the basis of the dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's degree in Didactics ,University of Bejaia : "The Effect of Reading Strategies on EFL Learners' Exam Performance"(p 05) written by Roukaya Belambri on June,2013 and (englishclub.com/reading/what.htm), reading is one of the receptive skills through which we get knowledge and is a process done by the use of our eyes in order to be acknowledged about the written signs and symbols that our brain turns into a product of meaningful speeches.It can be silent or aloud.

Furthermore, and according to (study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-reading-definition-process.html) and (coerll.utexas.edu/methods/modules/reading/01) January 2020 also (rit.edu/ntid/sea/processes/comprehension/process/whatis) January 2020, reading is a complex process too because it requires the speaking skill which means that there is interaction between the reader when he/she decodes the written symbols of the text to reach the meaning, this is why it is regarded as a cognitive process. It involves three main stages: pre-reading, during reading and after reading. Therefore, we agree with this truth since reading and speaking are used to decode conveyed messages.

1.1. Types of Reading

Reading can be divided into two main types which are different in terms of aims and features. They are: Extensive and Intensive Reading.

1.1.1. Intensive Reading

Based on the thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctorate in TEFL "The effect of reading skills on the development of language proficiency" (p.41/42) submitted by HABIB Madani, University of Tlemcen (2016), intensive reading is

that type in which learners are forced to focus and concentrate on the given text under the teacher's guidance in order to understand deeply what it means and how its meaning is created. According to the dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's degree in Didactics, University of Bejaia entitled "The Effect of Reading Strategies on EFL Learners' Exam Performance"(p 08) written by RoukayaBelambri on June,2013; It expresses our targeted aim since it requires reflection, concentration, understanding and analysis, this is why it is called reflective reading. This type includes the learning of complex grammatical structure and techniques of discourse analyses that are basic for the reading process. It converges on the skills and the strategies which lead to acquire second language reading.

This type aims at intensifying a careful understanding and fulfilling complete comprehension of the details and the ideas developed in the text without forgetting the rhetorical arrangements and the linguistic tools besides the structural ones since it is based on a deep analysis focusing on how that meaning is created.

Read a text intensively requires the following features according to (lucalampariello.com/intensive-vs-extensive-reading) February 2020

- Interesting because learners should enjoy what they are reading in order not to forget the content.
- Short to understand the detailed information of the text and avoid mental attrition.
- Brief periods of time since it needs concentration and effort for the complete precision of the understanding.
- Most mental energy to support learning ability and decrease all kind of mental attrition since it takes the profound comprehension of the text as necessary.
- Learners are center- based since they are the ones who asked to read such texts.

Some examples of intensive reading materials retrieved from (fluentu.com/blog/intensive-and-extensive-reading) February 2020, are

- Reports, contracts, insurance claim, news articles, blog posts and short pieces of text such as short stories

1.1.2. Extensive Reading

Reckoning on the thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctorate in TEFL "The effect of reading skills on the development of language

proficiency" (p.38/39/40) submitted by HABIB Madani, University of Tlemcen (2016), extensive reading is to read a large amount of materials without paying attention to meaning and unknown terms used in the text, in addition to seeking only for them when there is a necessity to comprehend. It is reading for fluency and overall understanding.

In other words, and based on the dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in language sciences and teaching English as a foreign language entitled «The effect of reading short stories on improving students' vocabulary acquisition» University of Oum-El-Bouaghi (p 24/25) presented by Ahlem HADDAG (2014/2015) it is an extra-reading of large number of materials that is done for pleasure outside the classroom. It is true because in regard to this type we are more concerned with seeking new additional and extra information.

Therefore, this type has the intention of developing reading comprehension capacities and realizing autonomy moreover making progress of grammatical structures and textual features also it extends the vocabulary knowledge, besides the amendment of the communicative skills and oral production. In addition, it improves the individualized learning without the teacher's guidance and it creates a kind of comfort and relaxation for students as it makes them enjoy reading.

To read a text extensively there are some aspects to be followed and according to (lucalampariello.com/intensive-vs-extensive-reading) February 2020, these features are:

- Interesting and hold lecturer's attention since it is a matter of long time in selecting an important text;
- Level appropriate, it is not to understand each word written in the text, you must just comprehend a high percentage of it through making the unknown words in the context.
- longer periods of time, since it deals with longer texts unlike the intensive one, so surely it converges a lot of time.
- Moderate length, it is the type of reading that transacts with long texts of an average of 15 to 30 pages.
- The role of teacher in this type is a modal of a reader for learners.

Some examples of extensive reading materials retrieved from (fluentu.com/blog/intensive-and-extensive-reading) February 2020 are:

- Magazine articles, graded readers, novels also comic books...etc.

Make sure that both styles are efficacious and functional to be used in order to mend your weak vocabulary whenever and wherever you read in your target language. So they are very important for EFL learners.

1.2. Importance of Reading

Reading is considered as an integral part of our daily life since it overlays all its domains, and covers an unlimited number of advantages. Here are some basic benefits of reading suggested by (learn-to-read-prince-george.com/why-is-reading-important) February,2020 and (gladreaders.com/importance-of-reading-books) February 2020

- **Books in our life:** They are a sea of knowledge and perception for us. They never die. Without them life is impossible.
- **Reading is a functional approach** in society regarding its necessity in this instance as well.
- It **offers opportunities to be recruited** in a job because many jobs require reading as a factor of fulfillment.
- It is a **relaxation act** which diminishes pressures and stress. In addition, it reduces the different depressive cases.
- The **development of vocabulary**, sentence construction and cohesion as well as fluency.
- The **development of imagination**, thinking and creativity over helping in growing mentally, psychologically and even emotionally; for instance: building good ideas, drawing conclusions, thinking about the end of the story,etc.
- It **stimulates and trains the brain** while concentrating and focusing during reading.
- The **discovery and the exploration** of new things, ideas, information.
- The **education of one own self** when browsing the pages of magazines, journals, books
- Since it is a **complex process** that requires the speaking skill, so it helps in developing the interactive competence via pronouncing the written symbols.
- It is a **source of motivation and inspiration** especially when feeling lost and unhelpful.
- It **engages readers to both others and author's feeling** by becoming part of that book through understanding their circumstances.

- It **educates the readers** and makes them good persons when reading about others' different hardships experiences.

1.4. Reading Skills as Processes

1.4.1. Reading as a Thinking Process

Based on the proposal submitted to Dr. Sid T. Womack by I-Chen, Shen in the study entitled "The influence of Reading upon the Attainment of Thinking Skills" Arkansas Tech University, *"Thinking is that metacognitive action which can be either controlled or uncontrolled. It happens in the mind. By some means we do it daily in whatever life's activities, in this instance as well: dancing, eating, revising, relaxing, writing, reading.... etc."*

Hence, we come to an agreement with this certainty for the reason that it refers to reflection, reasoning, beliefs, opinions, and thoughts. It requires the previous circumstantial experiences, the background knowledge and the language used in expressing one's ideas.

This process is included in reading skill as an important strategy to focus on their interrelation. When we read anything we use our prior knowledge, we make inferences, we develop meaning, we draw conclusions, we regulate the understanding and even we plan new steps.

1.4.2. Reading as an Interactive Process

Based on what David Nunan said in 1989:

".... reading is an interactive process between what a reader already knows about a given topic or subject and what the writer writes. It is not simply a matter of applying decoding conventions and grammatical knowledge to the text. Good readers are able to relate the text and their own background knowledge efficiently."

We could understand when analyzing this passage that there is a real truth since the interactive process is mainly dominated by experiences, interaction and even prior knowledge about the given topic in addition to the information given in the text. This means that it is not only focusing on the interpretation of meaning and the grammatical knowledge. It is somehow a kind of being intelligent in reaching prior knowledge to the text so as being a good reader.

In other words, this process aims at showing the relationship that exists between the reader of the text through his/her involvement (Widdowson1979)

Conclusion

This part has explained and covered most concerns of reading skill because of its importance the different EFL students' levels can gain. It has covered the definition of this skill and its two basic types without forgetting its great importance in all life's concerns.

It is more than just a receptive skill because recently more attention is given to the communicative competence as an entire section of the foreign language in order to evolve it. Therefore, because of the key role the reading skill plays mainly when teaching and learning a foreign language to keep this sphere to our study, researchers merge literary texts such as novels, frame stories, flash fiction stories which are our interest in the present study.

As a matter of fact, the coming part deals with the suggested material to improve the foreign language learning and mastery. The so-called material is embedded in "Flash Fiction Stories" and the impact they may have on our EFL learners.

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PART TWO: Developing the Interactive Competence

Introduction

This part introduces developing the interactive competence. It is divided into two sections: the first section includes Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), its principles, characteristics, aims, and its types. It also includes the interactive Approach, its definition, theories, and characteristics. Whereas the second section, it is about Flash Fiction Stories (FFS) reading and EFL interactive competence in EFL context. It includes FFS definition, elements, structure, characteristics and advantages.

Section 1

2.1.1. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that facilitate more learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom (Jack C. Richard's, 2001). CLT is not a method, it is a guided idea, those purpose is to help students produce authentic language and communicate with others (Jack C. Richard's 2001). Consequently, we express our total agreement since the aim of this research is to enable the EFL students develop their communicative competence.

2.1.1.1. Principles of CLT

Language is a means of communication. So, an effective approach to teach language is the one that helps learners use the language for actual communication. The communicative approach at developing learners' communicative competence (Angwattanakul. 1994)

Additionally, the elements of underlying learning theory can be discerned in some CLT practices; Such elements might be described as the communicative principles which are as follows:

- Activities that involve real communication promote learning.
- The second element is the task principle: activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning (Johnson. 1982).
- The third element is the meaningfulness principle: language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process (cited in Richard's and Rodgers 1986. P72)

That is to say that the purpose of language learning is to acquire the ability to communicate purposefully with others using the target language; the language used to communicate must be appropriate to the situation, that is, to differentiate between the formal and the informal style.

2.1.1.2. Characteristics of CLT

Brown (2007. Pp. 46 – 47) states a number of features that characterize the CLT Approach which are:

- The ultimate goal of language instruction is to develop the learners' communicative competence.
- The emphasis is on the appropriateness not accuracy of the form (appropriate use of language is emphasizing rather than accuracy)
- The main focus is communicative functions are more important rather than linguistic structures.
- The major focus while using CLT Approach is on learners. The teacher is just the facilitator and guide the students to generate the veritable use of the language.

Savignon (2002), however, provides some characteristics of CLT including:

- A focus on meaning that grammar is not important, or that proponents of CLT favour learners ability to Express themselves without regard to form.
- The basic feature is that learners should engage with texts and meaning through the process of use and discovery (the essence of CLT is the engagement of learners in communication to allow them to develop their communicative competence)
- The use of authentic materials, they permit the learners to deal with the language as it is used by its native speakers.

2.1.1.3. Aims of CLT

On the basis of the aforementioned characteristics, the aims of CLT can be presented as follows:

- to replicate native speaker norms and develop communicative competence rather than capability (Littlewood).
- To motivate students to learn and use communicative skills.
- helping learners to communicate meaningfully in the target language.

- to infuse into individuals the ability to create and to construct utterances (spoken and written) which have the desired social value or purpose.
- to promote knowledge of the language system.

According to Jack C. Richards, the goals of CLT includes:

- The teaching of communicative competence.
- Knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions.
- Knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge.
- To develop fluency in language use (fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques).

2.1.1.4. Types of CLT

For Littlewood (1981), in communication language teaching, activities in classroom must be done in a communicative way, to target: distinguishing between two main categories, functional communicative activities and social interaction activities.

- **Functional communication activities**

Functional communication activities require students to use the language they know in order to get meanings across as effectively as possible. The learners have to overcome an information gap or solve a problem. It is true to a certain extent because other communicators can provide more information to fill in the gaps or any additional solution to the problem.

- **Social interaction activities**

Littlewood (1981. Pp20) says that « the competent speaker chooses language which is not only functionally effective, but is also appropriate to the social situation he is in », for him, learners still aim at conveying meaning effectively paying greater attention to the social context in which the interaction takes place. This finding may encourage cultural principles to be set and shared.

2.1.2. Interactive Approach

2.1.2.1. Definition of interactive Approach

The interactive Approach as defined by Van Lier (1988). « holds that language learning occurs in and through participation in speech events, that is, that talking to others, or making conversation is essential » (1988, p. 74). This Approach is rooted in Long's (1985) interaction hypothesis, Brown emphasises: « the dynamic nature of the interplay between learners and their peers and their teachers and others with whom they interact » (2007, p.304).

The interactive Approach is attractive because it is an active Approach to learning and teaching.

2.1.2.2. Characteristics of Interactive Approach

According to Savignon's interactional approach (as cited in Margie Berns (1990, p.89) the step toward understanding communicative competence for the classroom, Savignon explores the individual concepts of communication and competence. The central characteristic of competence in communication are associated with:

- 1- The dynamic, interpersonal nature of communicative competence and its dependence on the negotiation of meaning between two or more persons who share to some degree the same symbolic system.
- 2- Its applications to both spoken and written language as well as to many other symbolic systems.
- 3- The role of context in determining a specific communicative competence, the infinite variety of situations in which communication takes place, and the dependence of success in a particular role on one's understanding of the context and a prior experience of a similar kind.
- 4- Communicative competence as a relative, not absolute, concept, one dependent on the cooperation which makes it reasonable to speak of degrees of communicative competence.

Section 2: Flash Fiction Stories Reading and EFL Interactive Competence in EFL

Context

2.2.1. Flash Fiction Story

2.2.1.1. Flash Fiction Story definition

It is a piece of prose fiction, which is usually about one thing, it contains maximum of 10.000 words, which can be read at one sitting. A short story is intended to create an impression via characters, conflicts, themes, setting, symbols and point of view (as cited in Bouti, p.22).

It is defined by Poe (as cited in Abrams as cited in Bouti, p.22) as a « narrative that can be read at one sitting of from one-half hour to two hours, and that is limited to a certain unique or single effect to which every detail is subordinate ».

Is a short fiction Story of under 1500 words, usually under 1000 words, the term is often used to describe short works or short casual works as well Flash fiction is written in pretty much any genre. Popular genres include:

Romance, thrillers, horror, sci-fi, and fanfiction.

2.2.1.2. Elements of FFS

It is very important to know the elements of Flash Fiction Stories to get the whole meaning. Gelbi (1973) suggest seven important elements of FFS:

- **The title**

The title gives the general idea about the theme of the story, it is what the writer write about. So, it is important to understand the global meaning of the story.

- **Plot**

It is the structure and the actions that constitute the story, includes:

- **Introduction:** it is the background of the story, setting and characters.
- **Rising action:** it is where the problem is established, and it is about how the story develop.
- **Climax:** it is the greatest suspense of events that riches the story.
- **Falling action:** the problem starts to resolve.

- **Resolution:** it is the result of the story.
- **Conflict:** it is the battle between opposing forces, the conflict may be mental, physical, emotional or moral. We can find more than one conflict in one character.
- **Characters:** it refers to the persons and animals involved in the story.
- **Setting:** place and time the story's actions takes place.
- **Theme:** it is the topic that the history discusses.
- **Point of view:** it is the position from which the story is seen. The narrator is involved as a character in the story through using the first person pronouns « I or we".

2.2.1.3. Structure of FFS

According to Haddag (2015. p. 28-29), most short stories have a structure that is simple in which the reader can go through and understand it easily. That is the structure of FFS is so important to understand the whole meaning of the story. Gelpi (1973, p.3) suggests the following FFS's structure:

The writer starts by a brief explanation in which he provides the reader by background information, generally it includes some information about the setting, characters, sets the scene for the actions and sometimes creates the basic atmosphere of the story.

The story consists a series of events, the rising action, the conflict of the story appears, and this events develop step by step till it riches the climax.

The flash fiction story has a turning point; the reader may notice a big change for the main characters. During reading, the reader may feel that the actions are going in only one direction to yield for a suitable solution of the whole story, that is the resolution of the story.

2.2.1.4. Characteristics of FFS

According to Haddag (2015), the question: reading flash fiction stories in leisure time for pleasure and enjoyment is the best choice. But-on which basic should students select the best short story for themselves? Leads to the characteristics suggested by Menrath (2003) :

- The FFS should be brief, FFS attempts to condense into the fewest words possible.
- A twist or surprise at the end, there is a reflection on what happened.
- It should have a clear and simple plot.
- It should have a limited and believable characters.

- It mostly aims to present a specific aspect of life and a short period of life.
- It should have a unity (I understand every part so each part should contribute to the meaning of the story).

2.2.1.5. Advantages of FFS

English language is rich by its vocabulary, but it is not sufficient to learn it just in classroom, learners need other resources to improve their vocabulary and this resources help in reinforcing student's language skills and teach them higher order thinking.

- **Reinforcing Language Skills**

According to A.Haddag (2015. P. 31), short stories could be very beneficial materials that EFL learners may use in order to improve their language skills, that is, we agree with her that FFS makes EFL learners language skills strong and lean. Namely: reading, speaking, reading and writing.

In this regard Murdoch (2002) states 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 », (as cited in Bouti, p.24)

- **Reading and Speaking**

It comes without much debate to say that reading and speaking are both important skills to have. We need both to communicate. FFS are a useful tool to improve both reading and speaking skill, FFS is a large amount of comprehensible input, which creates an interaction between the reader and the writer's message, and it allows the learner to decode and make sense of that input then produce it in his own way. So that, it helps the learner to practice and increases his reading speed which leads him to speak more and enhance its pronunciation.

Oster 1989 (as cited in Bouti, p. 25 as cited in Haddag, p. 31), states that « when students read, they interact with the text. By interacting what they read, they can work toward speaking English creatively ».

Conclusion:

To conclude, developing the Interactive Competence emphasized the Communicative Language Teaching, Interactive Approach and Flash Fiction Stories as its main concepts. Therefore, we have explored these concepts; we have divided this part into two sections; the first section, we discussed the CLT's principles, characteristics, aims and types, then we explained the interactive approach. The second section which is more important, we explored Flash Fiction Stories reading and EFL interactive competence in EFL context. In the following part, we are going to explore the method and the approach adopted for this chapter focusing on the description of the research design, population and sample, and research variables.

PART THREE: Research Methodology and Design

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Introduction

This research work aims at exploring the effect of reading flash fiction stories on EFL students' interactive competence.

In this part, we describe the methodology adopted in this research, the reason we have chosen this method and mainly the aims this methodology targeted. Then we moved to the research design describing the materials and giving thus the reasons for this selection and the objectives each material stand for. This part has shed light on the definition of the population and sample used in this study.

3.1. Research Methodology

In this research work, the exploratory method was adopted. Because we strongly believe that it is the preliminary research to clarify the nature of the problem to be solved, and it can add quality and insightful information to a study, as it is vital to a study too. Furthermore, it allows a better understanding of what a research aims should be throughout the duration of a project.

There are however other reasons for this choice which has been embedded in exploring our topic which is "Reading Flash Fiction Stories" as a Revisited Strategy to Develop the EFL Student's Interactive Competence and gathering preliminary data which helped us define our topic on some reliable concerns.

3.2. Research Variables

Our current study "Reading Flash Fiction Stories" as a Revisited Strategy to Develop the EFL Student's Interactive Competence consists of two main variables: independent and dependent:

- The Dependent variable is the importance and the development of EFL student's interactive competence.
- The Independent variable is the reading of Flash Fiction Stories as a revisited strategy to 1st year students of English language at A.Mira University of Bejaia.

3.3. Research Design

In the present study, we have adopted the exploratory method combining both quantitative and qualitative methods; the quantitative part makes use of the questionnaire whereas the qualitative method is presented by the use of the interview.

3.3.1. The Teachers' Interview

To solicit more information from the participants of our study, an interview was held with (3) teachers randomly chosen from the sample. Our choice for the interview as a research tool for qualitative data collection lies in the fact that the interview can cover any number of content areas and is relatively inexpensive and efficient way to collect a wide variety of data that does not require formal using, and it is a useful research method which allows a researcher to obtain individual's opinions and impressions about a specific topic, issue, etc. (Marczyk, Dematto&Festinger, 2005). Therefore, we can say that the interview allows for the collection of further information, complementary, and more detailed information to allow the understanding and the exploration of our research subject's opinions.

3.3.1.1. Description and aims of the interview's questions

This interview is structured according to the title of the research topic at hand in order to treat on a reliable basis the main areas where the core of the problem encountered by the population sample which puts the reading skill as one of the most important language micro-skills. Moreover, on the basis of the statement of the current situation's problem, we observed that reading is not given its due care. Therefore, this interview is part of our research paper which deals with the reading skill and the possible strategies to enhance our population sample's competence to regain confidence, motivation and mainly skills.

As a matter of fact, the interview is composed of six (6) questions (see appendix 01, p, 52)

In Question¹, we wanted to seek how teachers evaluate their students' reading skill in order to maintain or reject the problematic situation our population sample.

Question² however, was directed towards gathering more data about the strategies teachers use in class to encourage their students to read thus, to remove layers of obscurity around the following situations: want to read, can read, no interest in reading difficulties to understand the reading passages messages, and so on...

In Question³, the purpose was to elicit the teachers' responses and reactions on how reading comprehension can be a source for more vocabulary learning.

Question 4 was stated to reveal to a certain extent the major problems the teachers face in teaching their students their students the reading skill.

Concerning Question 5, it has been asked to mold the different ways teachers introduce to help their students to learn out of the classroom as an additional and motivational concept to develop their reading skills.

Finally, Question 6 which consists of four sub-questions related to the selected type of books in our research « Flash Fiction Stories » as a strategy to develop the EFL learners' language competences mainly in reading, is meant to highlight how these materials can enhance the interactive competence of EFL learners, how they can as an instrument to evaluate or assess the level of interaction of the students be effective and adequate. Finally, to wrap up the questions, we wanted the respondents to suggest some titles of Flash Fiction Stories taking into consideration the different levels of difficulties, interests, preferences and mainly accordance to the language teaching and learning requirements.

3.3.2. The Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire at hand comprises four sections. The first section which groups eight questions represents an Overview on Reading as a skill and an action. The second section however, deals with the Specific reading materials. The third is on Reading self-assessment checklist. The last section entitled "Further Suggestions" seeks ample contributions of the students as the main characters in order to construct a sort of propositions bank which articulates the EFL students' interests, preferences and needs. Furthermore, the second one is made up of three questions. Then, the third section is in the form of a table which contains 6 statements to answer with a (x) in the right choice. At last, the fourth section involves only one question.

3.3.2.1. Description and aims of the Questions

Section 01:

Question 1: We asked students whether they read in English language to know if they practiced the reading skill.

Question 2: We asked students to circle the format which they preferred to use while reading in order to see which format is the dominating between print or electronic materials.

Question 3: We asked them about the degree they had when reading in English either difficult or very difficult or even easy, so to see if they find it hard or easy.

Question 4: We asked them to list what might encourage them to read to know how they could consider reading as an obligatory act or a relaxing one.

Question 5: We asked them about the time they spent for reading in order to know if they were active readers.

Question 6: We asked respondent students about the place where they could do that activity to notice if it was only done in the class or at home or may be in other places.

Question 7: We asked them about the amount of new items they could obtain when finishing their reading to see their different outcomes.

Question 8: We asked them to list their favorite authors in order to know the different domains they read about.

Section 02

Question 9: this question seeks some students' opinions on whether they agree or disagree with the fact that flash fiction stories are very important to enhance the communicative competence so as to come up with the efficacy of the final outcomes that they can result at in developing their communicative competence.

Question 10 is meant to collect some suggested titles of flash fiction literary productions mainly if our students are aware of whether they are used to reading this type of short stories.

Question 11 is directed towards finding out whether flash fiction stories can be beneficial to other language skills and not merely limited to develop the EFL learners 'communicative competences.

Section 03

Question 12: students were asked to put a cross by the right box (Always/Never/ sometimes), in order to measure the frequency used in the reading skill. As aforementioned, this question has been divided into six (6) sub-questions which focused on determining important objectives.

A/ we asked them if they could understand easily the message conveyed by the text so as we could measure the ability to manipulate the sense, the meaning and the message when reading.

B/We asked students about whether they used any facilitating support to look for the definition of the difficult words and the meaning of the new vocabulary they faced. This sub-question has been asked to evaluate the students' degree of perception.

C/We asked them if they picked up new vocabulary items to cement their prior knowledge and build up a new one.

D/Being acknowledged of the students' thoughts concerning the availability of reading strategies is necessary because this principle may encourage them to read more in English language and to know if they use any strategies.

E/Prediction goes hand in hand with a salient reading comprehension, imagination, and active knowledge. This is why we wanted our students to acquaint us with some valid data about their capability to make a prediction of any text through a title or even a picture.

F/This sub-question seeks information about the students' awareness related to the errors or mistakes they might do when reading aloud or silently in addition to the potential they might detain to memorize what they read.

Section 04

Question13: The last section comprises only one question requiring the informants to list other different ideas to enhance the communicative competence through reading flash fiction stories to consider their different focus.

3.4. Description of the population and sample

The participants of our current study are first year students of English language at Abderrahmane Mira University of Bejaia for the Academic year 2019/2020. From the entire population that is divided into groups of 25 to 30 students, only one group has been selected randomly to represent the sample of our research.

The selection has been encouraged by the following facts:

- Homogeneity,
- Cooperation concepts,
- Availability,
- Franck desires for development and enhancement,
- Risk takers,
- The sample that represents the wanted profile for the study.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the research map route bringing thus to light the research methodology appropriate to our study and the tools used to collect reliable and useful data; Both the research methodology and design have been described to enable our readers see the different elements which have constructed them in addition to the objectives targeted through these materials. The next part analyses and interprets through discussions, tabular and graphic presentations the data collected.

PART FOUR: Data Analysis and Interpretations

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PART FOUR: Data Analyses and Interpretation

Introduction

This part deals with the different data analyses and interpretations gathered in order to shed light on the EFL population sample's problems in the reading micro-skill of the target language.

The analyses are illustrated through tabular and graphic presentations and go gradually according to the research designs used.

Due to the current health situation in the global pandemic "Covid 19", this dominated all the people surrounding the world, the researchers have been directed towards another research methodology rather than the one agreed on before which was based on an experimental research method and tools. Algeria as our country is not of any exception regarding the great number of patients. Accordingly, we have faced difficulties when delivering this questionnaire as the majority of students have not answered by fear of being contaminated, as well as when interviewing teachers.

However, the few number of responses we could gather, we have succeeded in analysing the findings and interpreting them as well

4.1. Analysis of the teachers' interview and interpretation of the findings

Section One

- **To question 1:** how do you evaluate your students' reading skill?

The respondents were supposed to answer how they evaluate their students' reading skill, the data in table 1 (see table 1) below shows that each teacher has his/her own way to evaluate his/her students' reading skill. The first and the second teachers evaluate their students' reading skill by asking them to read texts from books or handouts, and then they ask them questions. The third teacher uses tasks that incite the students to scan, skim, re-read and guess the meaning from the context.

The question	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
-How do you evaluate your students' reading skill?	-I give them handouts of texts or short stories and I ask them to read the texts or the short	-I ask them to read some texts from the handouts, and then I ask them questions.	-I use tasks that incite my students to scan, skim, re-read and guess the meaning

	stories then I ask questions.		from the context.
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Table 1: Teachers' answers to the Interviews' first question

- To question 2:** What strategies do you use in class to encourage your students to read? The respondents here focused on reading, and the data in table 2 (see below), show that the first teacher uses the strategy of giving texts to read, reading and discussing novels and works of criticism. The second teacher relies on reading paragraphs then explaining meaning. In addition to the third teacher who told us that he used the strategy of sharing his reading lists with his students, and talked about how reading is important for both personal and professional development, and mentioned names of famous influential and successful people who read a lot.

The question	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
-What strategies do you use in class to encourage your students to read ?	-I give them texts to read (reading comprehension). Reading and discussing novels and works of criticism.	-We read loudly paragraph by paragraph then we explain meaning.	-I try to share with them my reading lists, talk about how reading is important for both personal and professional development, and mention names of famous influential and successful people who read a lot.

Table 2: Teachers' answers to the Interview's second question

- To question 3:** Vocabulary is integral in reading to enable the EFL learners use later in their oral and written communications. Therefore, how can reading comprehension be a source of more vocabulary learning?

As table 3 below demonstrates, the respondents see that reading enhances the students' vocabulary. The first teacher told that it depended on the nature of the passages. He added that for L3 students, they were supposed to read texts which were very rich and written in a very sophisticated, elevated, and lofty style (Puritans and Classicists), including historical, biblical, mythical and literary references, and thus they were asked to analyse and interpret them. Therefore, the students would receive important range of words and could memorize them. For L2 students, they were given modern versions of text written in old and Medieval English, and this would enhance their vocabulary. The second respondent however, sees that reading

texts will enhance the learners' vocabulary building by learning new words and how to write new sentences. The third teacher said that "when we read, we meet tons of new and difficult words, and most of these words keep coming again and again, thus, some of them become familiar and are memorized spontaneously and naturally by those who read intensively". Reading contributes to vocabulary growth without any formal instruction.

The question	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
-Vocabulary is integral in reading to enable the EFL learners to use later in their oral or written communications. Therefore, how can reading comprehension be a source of more vocabulary learning?	-It depends on the nature of the passages. My L3 students are supposed to read texts which are very rich written in a very sophisticated, elevated and lofty style (Puritans and Classicists), and for L2 students are given modern versions of texts written in Old English and Medieval English.	-Reading texts will enhance the learners' vocabulary building by learning new words and how to build new sentences.	-When we read, we meet tons of new and difficult words, and most of these words keep coming again and again, thus, some of them become familiar and memorized spontaneously and naturally by those who read intensively. Reading contributes to vocabulary growth without any formal instruction.

Table 3: Teachers' answers to the Interview's the third question

- **To question 4:** What are the major problems in reading you face when teaching your students?

The respondents told us that they faced different types of problems when teaching the reading skill to their students. For instance, the first teacher said that there were students that could not understand the meaning of words and sentences. This situation can be caused by lengthy texts because students did not like lengthy texts.

The second teacher supposed that the problem could be generated by some pronunciation issues and the meaning of new words in the texts provided. The third teacher said that he faced the problem of unknown and unfamiliar vocabulary (lack of vocabulary), lengthy texts, lack of concentration, boredom and misunderstanding of some content ideas and complex grammatical structures. (see table 4)

The question	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
-What are the major problems in reading you face when teaching your students?	-Some students do not understand the meaning of words and sentences. Lengthy texts (students do not like lengthy texts).	-May be some pronunciation issues and the meaning of new words.	-The problem of unknown and unfamiliar vocabulary (lack of vocabulary).

Table 4: teachers' answers to the Interview's fourth question

- **To question 5:** How can you help your students learn indirectly?

The respondents contributed through giving suggestions. The first teacher said that to help his students learn indirectly, he tried to post and publish links to audio-books, eBooks, videos, and he suggested some short stories and some texts to read at home. The second teacher encouraged his students learn indirectly by suggesting texts especially short stories and told them how important the vocabulary was if they wanted to develop their competences. The third teacher answer was to assign homework, texts and short stories. He also suggested further reading lists and recommended some useful websites and online courses. (see table 5)

The question	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
-How can you help your students learn indirectly?	-I tried to post and publish links to audio-books, eBooks, videos, and I suggest some short stories and some texts to read at home.	-I encourage my students by suggesting texts and especially short stories and told them how important the vocabulary is if they want to develop their competences.	-I would think to assign homework, suggest texts and short stories, suggest further reading lists and recommend some useful websites and online courses.

Table 5: teachers' answers to the Interview's fifth question

To question 6: below are listed our questions related to the selected type of books “Flash Fiction Stories” which construct our suggested strategy to develop the EFL Learners' language competences.

a) What do you think of this kind of short stories books?

The respondents reported that this kind of books (short stories) is very interesting and very important to develop the students' vocabulary and to enhance their language competences. The first teacher said that this kind of books is very important to the developing of language competences because it is easier to read in a very short period of time. Furthermore, the second teacher said that "Flash Fiction Stories" are very interesting for EFL learners who want to develop both, their language competences and communication abilities easily with others. The third teacher said that this kind of books is more practical and easier to read than regular books. They are brief and very short, not heavy to transport and can be read anywhere as they can be finished in a very short period of time. That is, the teachers who accepted to be interviewed agreed that "Flash Fiction Stories" are useful and very important and they are a strategy to develop language competences because they are very practical and we can read a lot of this kind in a very short period of time (see table 6).

b) How can the "Flash Fiction Stories" enhance the interactive competences of EFL learners?

The respondents think that "Flash Fiction Stories" enhance the interactive competences of EFL learners. While reading this kind of books, their minds can memorise a lot of new words in a very short period of time which they will use later in their communications. The first teacher said that "Flash Fiction Stories" enriched the vocabulary so this could promote different skills and competences including the interactive competences. The second teacher told us that this kind of books gave us more creativity and develop our vocabulary in a short period of time so this help to communicate easily and enhance the interactive competences, in addition to exchanging reading experiences. The third teacher said that "Flash Fiction Stories" helped EFL learners connect with people and receive information instantly and continuously (see table 6).

c) How can you evaluate or assess the level of interaction of your students?

The respondents said that they evaluated and assessed the level of interaction of their students by direct observations in classroom in order to increase classroom participation opportunities and thus, teachers could assess the level of interaction of students inside educational settings with equity. However, creating Face book groups, messenger conversation chatting groups, blogs and forums all are means to check the interactive competences of the learners; but this could not be taken as a structured mode of evaluation and assessment because a strategy like

this ought to be well designed and considered. The teacher in the aforementioned suggestion (using network social media) would need new roles and new innovative type of evaluation and assessment. (see table 6).

d) Could you please suggest some titles of “Flash Fiction Stories”?

The respondents suggested some titles of Flash Fiction Stories including “**Last Long Night**” by **Lina Rather** (992 words), “**The Wife on Ambien**” by **Ed Park** (1027 words), “**The Comedian**” by **Yoko Morgenstern, Taylor Swift, Girl**, “**Give It Up**” by **Kafka**, “**Chapter 5**” by **Hemingway** (see table 6).

The question	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
a) What do you think of this kind of books (stories)?	-This kind of books is very important to the developing of language competences because it is easier to read in short period of time.	-They are very interesting for who wants to develop his language competences and communicate easily with others.	-This kind of books is more practical and easier to read than regular books. They are brief and very short, not heavy to transport and can be read anywhere.
b) How can they enhance the interactive competence of EFL learners?	-FFS enrich the vocabulary so this promotes different skills and competences including the interactive competence.	-They give us more creativity and develop our vocabulary in a short period of time so this helps to communicate easily and enhance the interactive competence.	-FFS help EFL learners connect with people and receive information instantly and continuously.
c) How can you evaluate or assess the level of interaction of your students?	-Direct observation in classroom.	-Direct observation in classroom, and classroom participation.	-Increasing classroom participation opportunities is one of the means teachers can use to assess the level of interaction of students inside educational settings. Creating Face book groups, messenger conversations, chatting groups, blogs and forums.

<p>d) Could you please suggest some titles of Flash Fiction Stories?</p>	<p>- "Last Long Night" by Lina Rather (992 words). - "The Wife on Ambien" by Ed Park (1027 words).</p>	<p>- "The Comedian" by Yoko Morgenstern. - "Give It Up" by Kafka. "Chapter 5" by Hemingway.</p>	<p>- "Taylor Swift". - "Girl"</p>
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Table 6: teachers' answers to the interview's sixth sub-question

4.2. Analysis of the students' questionnaire and interpretation of the findings

1/Section 01: Overview on Reading as an action

1- Do you read in English?

Answers	Yes	No	No answer	Total
Number of answers	10	3	19	32
Percentage (%)	31.25 %	9.375 %	59.375 %	100 %

Table 7: Doing Reading's Percentage

•Interpretation

We notice from the answers that 31.25% of students read in English language due to its necessity while studying whereas a small percentage 9.375% do not read ignoring its great value in developing language mastery.

2- What reading format do you prefer, circle your choice

Reading from:

- A- A print book
- B- A computer
- C- Your smart phone
- D- Magazines and newspapers
- E - A tablet
- F- Web sites

	A	B	C	D	E	F	No answer	Total
N° of answers	8	2	6	1	2	1	12	32
Percentage(%)	25 %	6.25%	18.7 %	3.12 %	6.25 %	3.125%	37.5%	100 %

Table 8: Students' Reading Preferences

•Interpretation

From the table above, we observed that 18.7 % of students use their smart phones when reading because they saw them as practical, easy, and most fashionable ways. Some of them use other electronic devices like tablets and computers in the rate of 12.5% (6. 25% for each format). Only 3.125% read from websites may be to check for information. Coming to printed devices and the most used are books 25% prefer reading from what is printed to be safeguarded as intangible sources. 3.125% read from magazines and articles to browse additional ideas but still are printed format. According to the diverse answers regarding the students' reading format preferences, we conclude that the action of reading is maintained.

3- How do you find reading in English?

-Difficult? -Very difficult? -Easy?

	Difficult	Very difficult	Easy	No answer	Total
N° of answers	2	0	11	19	32
Percentage (%)	6.25 %	0 %	34.375 %	59.375 %	100 %

Table 9: Reading in English level of difficulty

•Interpretation

34.375% find reading in English language easy since they started studying it from middle school to efficiently be used in practice. None (0%) finds it very difficult. Yet, 6.25% find it difficult may be in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary. The results are much expressive. They are however also revealing some true behaviour related to reading since 59.375% provided no answer. This situation may be explained by two facts: either the respondents neglect reading printed (paper or electronic formats), or, the question seemed embarrassing, not clear, or even, did not meet their needs and expectations.

4- What motivates you to read? Circle your choice(s)

- A- You enjoy reading
- B- Your parents oblige you to read
- C- Need for information
- D- Relaxation act
- E- School or University assignments
- F- Recommendation from friends
- G- Others. Please, list them.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	No answer	Total
N° of answers	3	0	12	2	8	1	6	32
Percentage (%)	9.375%	0 %	37.5 %	6.25 %	25 %	3.12 %	18.75%	100%

Table 10: Reading Motivation

•Interpretation

Through the tabular results' presentation, we can notice that the first motivating reason for reading is the need for information (37. 5%), another common reason is the school or university assignments expressed by 25% which is our case as students respond to the given assignments. There is however a category of students who enjoys reading (9.375%). This portion of students does it with love and interest. 6. 25% presents the students who view reading as a relaxing act. The students feel at ease when doing it. In addition, we have "recommendation from friends" as another form of motivation to read. This has been selected by 3.12%. Moving to parents who oblige their children to read, we see that no one has chosen it. May be this alternative does not match our requirements, or, parents do not really play an important role in regard to this skill as they may feel very confident about their children's awareness and language mastery at the University level.

5- How often do you read in English?

- A- Never
- B- 1/2 Times a week
- C- 2/3 Times a week

D- 4/5 Times a week

E- Everyday

F- Rarely

	A	B	C	D	E	F	No answer	Total
N° of answers	0	5	2	2	1	3	19	32
Percentage(%)	0 %	15.62 %	6.25 %	6.25 %	3.125 %	9.375 %	59.375%	100%

Table 11: Reading Frequency

•Interpretation

We notice that the majority of students read 1/2 times a week. They represent 15.62%, also 6.25% represents both 2/3 times a week and 4/5 times a week; 3.125% represent those who read every day which is a small quantity. 9.375% show the rate of students who read rarely read. This may be because they only do it for the needs of information. Reading proves once again how important it is actually since the act is omnipresent whatever the frequency and the reasons are.

6- Where do you often read?

- In class, - At the library - At home

	In class	At the library	At home	No answer	Total
N° of answers	13	4	0	15	32
Percentage (%)	40.625 %	12.5 %	0 %	46.875 %	100 %

Table 12: Places of Doing Reading

•Interpretation

40.625% do read in class since it is obligatory for them when learning. 12.5% read at libraries may be for more knowledge, or, because this environment may bring comfort and appropriateness to the readers. No one reads at home. Students may feel free as no teacher might be there to order them.

7- If your choice is made for any of the above alternatives, what positive results do you come with at the end of your reading?

To this question, the responses are as follows:

- There are all the needed sources (books, internet, laptop...) and any other material that might be needed hence the productivity level is quite interesting.
- Learn more vocabulary and new words.
- The outcomes are depending on what we are seeking for, like: In a dissertation, we read books that will be helpful for the theme.
- There is more time to concentrate on what you read.
- Satisfaction of needs.
- Developing language skills.
- Get a deeper understanding of the texts.
- Improving the writing skill.
- Reading feeds the mind. It expands the imagination as it is a good way to consolidate our knowledge.

• Interpretation

As we see in the suggestions above, students come with benefits and no inconvenient has been mentioned. This means that the data gathered through the diverse answers are satisfactory.

8- Who are your favourite authors?

Some suggestions have been revealed through the question. They are as follows: Allan Patton - Elie Wiesel - Virginia Wolf - Paulo Coelho - Franz Kafka - Leo Tolstoy - Albert Camus - Noam Chomsky - Eric Zemmour - William Shakespeare - Jane Austin - James Patterson - Beck Robinson - Edgar Allan Poe - Agatha Christie - Ernest Hemingway - Daniel Defoe - William Blake - Kate Chopin - Charles Dickens.

	Yes I know	No I do not know	No answer	Total
N° of answers	12	5	15	32
Percentage(%)	37.5 %	15.625 %	46.875 %	100%

Table 13: Students' Percentage about Favourite Authors

•**Interpretation**

We observe that 37.5% have listed different writers. This means that they have favourite authors whose writings meet the respondents' preferences. This is a good strategy which helps them develop their language mastery, communication competence and mainly their creativity through the host of new items.

2/Section 02: Specific Reading Materials

9-Flash fiction stories are very important books to enhance the communicative competence, do you: - Agree () - Disagree ()

	Agree	Disagree	No answer	Total
N° of answers	10	2	20	32
Percentage(%)	31.25 %	6.25 %	62.5 %	100 %

Table 14: Agreement and Disagreement Concerning the Importance of Flash Fiction Stories to Enhance the Communicative Competence

•**Interpretation**

31.25% agree with the idea that flash fiction stories are very important books to enhance the communicative competence; but only 6.25% disagree. According to the percentages 6.25% (disagreeing), and 62.5% (no answers), we may react this way:

- The stories developed in such styles do not meet the readers' needs and preferences;
- The readers may find such stories boring and not useful for language development;
- Such stories may be too imaginary that they do not reflect the real standard of life; and
- May be the language used is very much based on unreal items which make the stories far from any active issues.

10-Do you know some titles of flash fiction stories? If yes, would you please suggest some?

Here are some titles proposed as follows:

-Ramona - Give it up - Angles and blueberries - Girl - John Redding goes to see - Guardless - Two skulls - Boys and Bones - Riddle - War of clowns - Last long night - Alice's adventure in wonderland - Metamorphoses.

•Interpretation

Students proposed many different titles of flash fiction stories. This means that they are used to reading this type with much interest as they provided us with a good number of titles.

11-What other developing points can flash fiction stories provide EFL learners with?

The answers to this question are few and are as follows:

-Get knowledge to discover new things about the surrounding world even if most of the situations are fictitious.

-Enhancing vocabulary.

-Developing imagination and creativity.

-Relaxation and entertainment.

-Motivation.

-Promote EFL learners reading and writing

- Linguistically speaking, learning new expressions and words.

-Widening our prior information and knowledge

-Help learners learn different lexicon, and may be the most important for them is to acquire the fact that they will think and act in English useful to master the target language.

-Being knowledgeable and creative learners.

•Interpretation

We notice that some students cited different other developing points which are mainly based on enhancing vocabulary, creativity, imagination, being cultivated, motivation and many other benefits.

3/Section 3: Reading self-assessment checklist

•Put (x) by your choice

	Always	Never	Sometimes
A/Can you understand easily the main idea in a text?			
B/Do you check for difficult and new vocabulary meaning?			
C/Do you look for new vocabulary?			
D/Do you think that the strategies of reading engage you to read more in English?			
E/Can you picturize the text you read?			
F/Do you notice your mistakes while reading either silently or aloud?			

		Always	Never	Sometimes	No answer	Total
A	N° of answers	3	0	12	17	32
	Percentage%	9.375%	0%	37.5%	53.125%	100%
B	N° of answers	5	3	6	18	32
	Percentage%	15.625%	9.375%	18.7%	56.25%	100%
C	N° of answers	10	0	2	20	32
	Percentage%	31.25%	0%	6.25%	62.5%	100%
D	N° of answers	0	2	8	22	32
	Percentage%	0%	6.25%	25%	68.75%	100%
E	N° of answers	13	0	1	18	32
	Percentage %	40.625%	0%	3.12%	56.25%	100%
F	N° of answers	12	0	3	17	32

	Percentage%	37.5%	0%	9.375%	53.25%	100%
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Table 15: Self-Assessment Checklist

•Interpretation

Concerning the first question 37.5% answered by “sometimes” they can understand easily the main idea in a text, and 9.375% answered by “always” and no one has answered with “never” and it is good. The second question, we see that 18.7% answered that they check for difficult and new vocabulary meaning, 15.625% have selected “always” and 9.375% have chosen “never”. The third question was about if they look for new vocabulary. Therefore, 31.25% answered “always”, 6.25% answered “sometimes” and no one has answered with “never”. The fourth question was about whether they think that the strategies of reading engage them to read more in English. 25% answered “sometimes” and no one has answered “always”. 6.25% see that these strategies do not engage them. The fifth question was about if they can picturize the text they read. 40.625% answered “always” and 3.12% answered “sometimes” and no one has said “never”. The last question was whether they notice their mistakes while reading. 37.5% answered “always”, 9.375% answered “sometimes” and no one has answered with “never”.

4/Section 04: Further suggestions

13-Will you please suggest more ideas to develop the communicative competence through reading flash fiction stories?

Amongst the 32 students questioned, only a few students have answered and the suggestions given are as follows:

- Using audio-books of Flash Fiction Stories may enrich and develop English language learners’ communicative competence. The accessibility and availability of audio-books on Smart phones allow learners to listen to Flash Fiction Stories whenever and wherever they want. Thus, it plays a crucial role in developing EFL learners’ communicative competence.
- This could be done through transforming flash fiction stories into audio files so that everyone can listen to them, as well as video files. I also suggest to including a glossary of difficult words so as to help the readers read without spending much energy searching for the difficult word in dictionaries.
- Inspire learners to be open- minded and look at the world in a different way.

- Summarizing the story to evaluate their writing and understanding.
- Ask learners to read only some parts of the story then imagine its end.
- Reading out loud and record yourself.
- Encourage students to do readability of flash fiction stories while they have nothing to do.

•**Interpretation**

It is noticeable that students suggested many ideas concerning the development of the communicative competence through reading flash fiction stories. Most of the suggestions provided are directed towards developing the language mastery, motivation, self-assessment and evaluation, and autonomy.

4.3. Implications

This is the final point to be discussed in the practical part of our research. Depending on the findings that we have obtained when analysing the student's questionnaire and the teacher's interview, we can draw a conclusion fulfilling a revelation as far as the population sample (In our case: First year students of English language) and teachers also at the department of English language, University of Bejaia.

- In regard to the findings of this research, Flash Fiction Stories are a rich source of vocabulary for students due to their characteristics. They help students to know more about words' breadth and depth and helps them focus on both the form and the meaning.
- Flash Fiction Stories can be introduced in language skill since they are very beneficial material to develop language skills. They can be used with all levels (beginner to advance), all ages (young learners and adults) and all classes.
- Flash Fiction Stories reduces students' anxiety through creating a comfortable atmosphere.
- We can generalize the use of this type of stories to all student's levels in the department of English language, University of Bejaia because all the levels are concerned to make in progress their communicative competence.
- This type of stories would be included in the teaching program of reading as a skill by reason that they represent a perfect stimulus and an available strategy to be adopted.

- In the case of our university A. Mira of Bejaia, we notice a lack of such books (flash fiction stories) as materials, they are not disposable unlike novels which are the most available since they are needed much more by students of literature and civilization. This may imply that although the scarcity of the hard copies materials, engagements for developments, enhancements and fostering in the target language cannot be a barrier.
- This type of stories reveals beneficial for EFL learners as it can be used differently. Here are some ideas showing the generalization of their use:
 - Make additional sciences in order to practise the reading skill through this type of stories.
 - Make students imagine the story's conclusion to develop their fiction and develop their creativity.

Conclusion

Through the analysis obtained from the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview, we have reached some insights related to our research topic. The result from the two instruments were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Both questionnaires and interviews lead us to confirm that reading Flash Fiction Stories is a helpful strategy to enhance EFL learners' communicative competence. In fact, the result indicates for us that teachers should help their students to promote their interactive competence by using different techniques and strategies including the strategy of reading Flash Fiction Stories.

General conclusion

Among the issues that students suffer from, we selected the interactive competence since communication is much more built on active reading.

Through this study, we have investigated how reading Flash Fiction Stories could be an effective strategy to develop the EFL students' interactive competence. Taking first year LMD students of English language as the research case study population, at Abderrahmane Mira University of Bejaia because this level responded to the requirements of the study and the population although having gained some of the target language mastery, they still presented some hindrances mostly concerning the communicative skills.

The work was divided into three main parts with the general introduction and the general conclusion. The first and the second parts were devoted to the presentation of the theoretical background of our work. The third part comprised two sub parts. The first sub part was about the methodology adopted in the research based on an exploratory approach cemented by qualitative and quantitative research designs presented through the student's questionnaire and the teachers' interview. The second sub part dealt with the gathered data analysis and their interpretations which through the findings it has been demonstrated that the majority of the students read mostly in class because of the need for information. The findings showed that it was easy for the students to use electronic tools rather than hard copies especially concerning the strategy suggested embedded in reading "Flash Fiction Stories" whose main authors have been mentioned by our respondents to express their preferences, as according to the respondents, this kind of readings have proved efficient and helpful tools for the interactive competence development.

Despite the difficulties met while conducting this research especially the pandemic Covid19 sanitary situation in our country, we have not had the chance to be present neither during the teacher's interview nor while the students filled the questionnaire in order to collect the data and the copies. Therefore, these two activities have been achieved online. Another naughty situation emerged from the aforementioned situation: being able to borrow books for our study from the local University library. Therefore, we changed for a total electronic sources technique, the references listing is as shown based on electronic materials. One least but not last inconvenient was to change brutally the research methodology from the experiment to exploration bearing in mind that our first objectives were to suggest the

technique based on reading “Flash Fiction Stories” and then experiment it with the population sample.

By investigating adequately, the utility of reading flash fiction stories as a revisited strategy in developing the EFL learners' interactive competence; this research problem would be an accomplishment to our research findings. It is therefore up to new researchers to develop this theme through the experimentation of the proposed strategy.

❖ **Validity of the Research Questions**

Answer to Question 1:

Clearly, the study of this work has given an answer to our research questions. Generally, EFL learners want to speak, interact and participate fluently and accurately, but when they try to express themselves and share ideas they generally face some linguistic difficulties such as lack of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation problems, linguistic gaps and the fear of making mistakes, or simply the fear of negative feedbacks (linguistic and psychological apprehensions).

Answer to Question 2:

Flash Fiction Stories can be integrated in the EFL teaching and learning process as a strategy because this may help both literature teachers and students to solve the possible problems occur, and give them the opportunity to evaluate their teaching practices and to give shape to their concrete contributions as to what strategies and pedagogies should be changed.

Moreover, students will be more engaged in the reading task which will be meaningful and more interesting thanks to the atmosphere of collaboration and self-centred learning in the classroom. In addition, teacher can help students create reading literature club where students are able to read in groups and interact with each other by retelling the story that they had read, which enhances their fondness and motivation to read.

Answer to Question 3:

Using Flash Fiction Stories for EFL classes is more propitious for the students in developing their skills, especially reading, speaking and writing, due to the nature of simplicity, brevity, and authenticity of the content. They motivate the EFL Learners mainly to create very short stories, and encourage them to interact with others and add more issues to their language mastery.

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Appendices

Appendix 01:

Teachers' Interview

Teacher's Interview

Title of the research: **Reading Flash Fiction Stories: A Revisited Strategy to Develop The EFL Student's Interactive Competence**

Introduction:

Nowadays, reading as language skill is more and more a put outside, this interview is part of our research paper which deals with the reading skill and the possible strategies to enhance our population, sample's competences.

We would like to further our deepest thanks and regards for the invaluable and precious time devoted to this interview.

Questions :

1. How do you evaluate your student's reading skills?
2. What strategies do you use in class to encourage your students to read?
3. Vocabulary is integral in reading to enable the EFL learners to use later in their oral or written communications. Therefore, how can reading comprehension be a source of more vocabulary learning?
4. What are the major problems in reading you face when teaching your students?
5. How can you help your students learn indirectly?
6. Below our questions related to the selected type of books « **Flash Fiction Stories** » which consists as our strategy to develop their language competences.
 - What do you think of this kind of books (stories)?
 - How can they enhance the interactive competence of EFL learners?
 - How can you evaluate or assess the level of interaction of your students?
 - Could you please suggest some titles of Flash Fiction Stories?

**Appendix 02:
Students' questionnaire**

University of Bejaia

Faculty of languages and letters

Department of English

Degree: Master 02 in Linguistics

Thesis about: Reading flash fiction stories: A revisited strategy to develop the EFL student's interactive competence.

Case study: First year students at the department of English

"Student's Questionnaire"

Reading is an important skill for EFL students but unfortunately it is abandoned ignoring its great value and usefulness in all life's domains. Therefore, this questionnaire is designed to gather data about our research topic entitled "Reading flash fiction stories: A revisited strategy to develop the EFL student's interactive competence".

We would be grateful if you afford some of your precious time to answer the questions. Be sure that your answers will be treated with great confidence.

May you accept our heartfelt thanks!

A) Section 01: Overview on Reading as an action

1) Do you read in English?

.....

2) What reading format do you prefer, circle your choice:

Reading from: - A print book

-A computer

-Your smartphone

-Magazines and newspapers

-tablet

-Website

3) How do you find reading in English?

A-Difficult

B-Very difficult

C-Easy

4) What motivates you to read? Circle your choice

-You enjoy reading

- Your parents oblige you to read

- Need for information

- Relaxation act

- School or University assignments

- Recommendation from friends

Others, please list them:

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

5) How often do you read in English?

- Never

- 1/2 Times a week

- 2/3 Times a week

- 4/5 Times a week

- Everyday

- Rarely

6) where do you reading?

A-In class

B-At the library

C-At home

7) If your choice is made for any of the above alternatives, what outcomes do you come with at the end of your reading?

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

8) Who are your favourite authors?

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

B) Section 02: Specific Reading Materials

9) Flash fiction stories are very important books to enhance the communicative competence, do you: - Agree () - Disagree ()

10) Do you know some titles of flash fiction stories, if yes, would you suggest them?

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

11) What other developing points can flash fiction stories provide EFL learners with?

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

C) Section 3 : Reading self-assessment checklist

•Put (x) by your choice:

	Always	Never	Sometimes
Can you understand easily the main idea in a text?			
Do you check for difficult and new vocabulary meaning?			
Do you look for new vocabulary?			
Do you think that the strategies of reading engage you to read more in English?			
Can you picturize the text you read?			
Do you notice your mistakes while reading either silently or aloud?			

D) Section 04: Further suggestions

13) Will you please suggest more ideas to develop the communicative competence through reading flash fiction stories?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Résumé

Le manque de mots des apprenants en langues lors de l'interaction a donné aux chercheurs l'occasion d'examiner les stratégies les plus appropriées susceptibles d'améliorer cette capacité. L'objectif principal de cette étude était d'explorer l'efficacité de la lecture d'histoires de fiction comme stratégie revisitée pour développer la compétence interactive des étudiants EFL. Cette étude a été menée auprès de 32 étudiants de première années au département de langue anglaise, Université de Bejaia. Une recherche à méthode mixte a été adoptée, qui comprenait une entrevue avec un enseignant et un questionnaire destiné aux élèves. L'analyse du questionnaire a montré que les étudiants avaient besoin de motivation pour lire des livres en continu afin de se familiariser avec les nouveaux éléments de vocabulaire et les structures linguistiques. L'entretien de l'enseignant a relevé que la plupart d'entre eux avaient le même objectif de développer les compétences interactives et les compétences linguistiques des apprenants en utilisant différentes stratégies telles que des histoires courtes et des textes littéraires. Sur la base des résultats, nous pourrions conclure que la plupart de nos informateurs ont convenu que les histoires de fiction pourraient être une stratégie appropriée pour aider les apprenants EFL à améliorer leurs compétences en communication.

Mots clés : Histoires de Fiction, Compétence Interactive, Compétence Communicative, Lecture, Compétences Linguistiques, Les Apprenants EFL.