An analysis of short stories in ELT coursebooks for teaching vocabulary at the intermediate and upper-intermediate levels

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to analyze and determine the effectiveness of short stories in teaching vocabulary in ELT coursebooks of the intermediate and upper-intermediate levels. The first part of the paper will attempt to define vocabulary and theoretically explain the connection between short stories and vocabulary learning through previous studies and research. Then, the methodology, corpus, and data collection of the study are presented. In the second part of the paper, the different exercises and activities that are provided with each story are analyzed and evaluated based on their effectiveness in teaching vocabulary. The analysis suggests that most exercises and activities accompanying the short stories have strong potential to support vocabulary development. While the findings indicate promising outcomes, further research involving learners is needed to confirm these findings.

Keywords: ELT, TEFL, short stories, vocabulary, teaching

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل وتحديد فعالية القصص القصيرة في تدريس المفردات في كتب تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية للمستويين المتوسط وفوق المتوسط. يهدف الجزء الأول من البحث إلى تعريف المفردات وشرح العلاقة النظرية بين القصص القصيرة وتعلم الكلمات والمفردات، مع تقديم ملخص لدراسات وبحوث سابقة في هذا المجال. ثم تقدم المنهجية، ومجموعة النصوص، وطريقة جمع وتحليل البيانات. الجزء الثاني من الدراسة يحلل ويقيم التمارين والأنشطة المختلفة المرفقة مع كل قصة بناءً على فعاليتها في تدريس المفردات. واستنتجت الدراسة أن معظم التمارين والأنشطة تساهم في اكتساب وتعلم الكلمات والمفردات. ومع ذلك، هناك حاجة إلى مزيد من البحوث التي تشمل المتعلمين لتأكيد هذه النتائج.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الانجليزية، كتب تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية، القصص القصيرة، المفردات، التدريس

Introduction

Language is an essential element in social life and it is evolving and changing every day. Language is characterized by the expansion and multiplicity of meaning by which society, its culture, and civilization are affected, it is the basis of human, intellectual, and civilization communication, and it is what distinguishes them. Through language, individuals express their feelings, emotions, and thoughts. It is also the main gateway to studying the rest of all sciences, and from this logic, learning languages is a necessity in this age. In addition, Abdalrahman (2023) states that "as a medium of communication, language is an important tool for people to contact and interact with each other in their daily activities" (p. 7). This is why the attention of educators, administrators, politicians, as well as parents, has turned to emphasize the necessity and importance of language learning. Therefore, learning any language is a great wealth for the individual and generations, and it is of high value when the language is an international language, and English is the first among the world's languages in terms of popularity and the demand of countries to teach it to their citizens.

Vocabulary represents one of the most important skills necessary for teaching and learning a foreign language. It is the basis for the development of all the other skills: reading comprehension, listening comprehension, speaking, writing, spelling, and pronunciation. Vocabulary is the main tool for the students in their attempt to use English effectively. When confronted with a native English speaker, when watching a movie without subtitles or when listening to a favorite English song, when reading a text, or when writing a letter to a friend, students will always need to use words. Khalid (2023) claims that "without sufficient vocabulary, people cannot communicate and express their feelings" (p. 177). Talking about the importance of vocabulary, the linguist David Wilkins argued that: "without grammar, little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed." Indeed, people need to use words in order to express themselves in any language. Most learners, too, acknowledge the importance of vocabulary acquisition. This is why most of the words need to be taught so that there cannot be many problems in communication due to a lack of vocabulary (UKEssays, 2018). Reading stories provides learners with an opportunity to see and hear vocabulary in a meaningful and memorable context and gives them an opportunity to infer the meanings of words that they do not know. That is, stories help students develop their vocabulary by making connections between known and unknown words. Reading could definitely contribute to significant vocabulary learning; however, students need to work with the chosen stories, ideally in several different ways, so that they learn more about how the words work, and to help them memorize and understand them. Obviously, a coursebook will/should have plenty of pre-prepared practice activities, which will serve as an extremely useful tool in the vocabulary learning process (Roberts, 2015).

Teaching Vocabulary

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines vocabulary as a "list or collection of words or words and phrases usually alphabetically arranged and explained or defined" and "a sum or stock of words employed by a language, group, individual, or work or in a field of knowledge". Cambridge Dictionary defines it as "all the words that exist in a particular language or subject" and "all the words known and used by a particular person". According to Diamond and Gutlohn (2006), "vocabulary knowledge is not something that can ever be fully mastered; it is something that expands and deepens over the course of a lifetime. Instruction in vocabulary involves far more than looking up words in a dictionary and using the words in a sentence. Vocabulary is acquired incidentally through indirect exposure to words and intentionally through explicit instruction in specific words and word-learning strategies".

Vocabulary plays a pivotal role in foreign language learning. It is also fundamental to reading comprehension, as one cannot understand a text without knowing what most of the words mean. Increasing the vocabulary knowledge of the students is a fundamental part of the process of education, both as a means and as an end. Lack of adequate vocabulary knowledge is an obvious and serious obstacle for many students, and the number of such students can be expected to rise as an increasing proportion of our students fall into categories considered educationally at risk if vocabulary teaching and vocabulary learning in TEFL continue to be neglected. At the same time, advances in knowledge will create an ever-larger pool of concepts and words that a person must master to be literate and employable (Nagy, 1988: 2). Furthermore, Bhatti et al (2020) asserts

that "instruction of vocabulary makes a very important feature of any target language learning and teaching process. The level of English language learners is decided and determined by the knowledge of vocabulary. There are four basic and major skills which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Vocabulary creates a key role to develop these four skills. With the help of vocabulary, one can develop mastery over language. It widens the limit of one's knowledge and makes us feel that we are members of this living world. It increases our knowledge, understanding and widens our views" (p. 56).

There is an intertwined relationship between reading and vocabulary. Reading stories, novels, poems, books, or articles can serve as a good means for building and learning vocabulary. So, it would be beneficial to encourage learners to read stories to enhance their reading skills and to build up their vocabulary. Students have to learn vocabulary to build their own lexicon in order to communicate in the target language. The more they enhance their vocabulary, the more they are able to understand, read, write, speak, and listen to that target language. In other words, learning a language starts with learning its alphabet which leads to making words, so to understand that target language, and to communicate in it, one should learn and acquire the words to form sentences and speeches. EFL learners consider vocabulary learning as a challenge to learn English. The field of vocabulary and its importance to language learning has been widely investigated and explored, and many studies were conducted to explore approaches, strategies, and techniques for building vocabulary.

Research Questions
The present study addresses the following key research questions:
1) To what extent are short stories in ELT coursebooks effective for teaching vocabulary to learners at the intermediate and upper-intermediate levels?
2) What types of exercises and activities are used with short stories in ELT coursebooks?
3) Do the exercises and activities related to the short stories reflect effective vocabulary teaching strategies?

Previous Studies
Stories are one of the most creative types of literature, and reading stories has many benefits for people, as it is a way to teach values and morals and develop creative thinking, in addition to developing mental awareness. Reading stories could enrich the reader's imagination and increase their knowledge. The readers could also acquire linguistic knowledge. A good story may improve students' language skills and improve their intercultural understanding. According to Tarakзıoğlu and Tunзarslan (2014), "in recent decades, teaching and learning English has gained importance not only for adults but also even for very young children. Therefore, games, songs, art-craft activities, and short stories have proved to be practical instruments for learners; especially, short stories are great tools to teach vocabulary as words are best acquired in a meaningful context" (p. 67).

Vocabulary learning through stories has been of interest to several researchers in second language acquisition. Murdoch (2002) indicates that short stories can, if selected and used appropriately, provide quality text content that will greatly enhance ELT courses for learners at intermediate levels of proficiency (9). Many researchers have studied the potential of stories in fostering vocabulary development, especially in early childhood education. However, when choosing stories for students to read, teachers should consider the students' needs and their stage of development, as the stories must suit the linguistic and cognitive needs of the students and must not be too difficult to comprehend. Several studies, such as Bin Ab Rashid (2011), İnal and Cakir (2014), and Brown et al (2008) have proven that stories are effective in fostering vocabulary acquisition and found that students showed improved vocabulary acquisition by having someone read stories to them, and further stated that stories are more fun, enjoyable, and engaging compared to other vocabulary learning methods, in addition to the fact that students became more motivated and willing to read aloud. More importantly, students seemed to remember the vocabulary better when reading stories.

In addition, the study conducted by Bin Ab Rashid (2011) concluded that the use of children's stories to develop vocabulary was effective and was perceived positively by both the students

and the teacher, indicating that the stories may have had a positive influence. This result also reflects the potential of stories in helping less proficient students who lack high-frequency words to develop their vocabulary and shows that stories may be effective teaching materials in developing students' enthusiasm and motivating them to learn and improve their English, as cultivating interest and motivation for students to learn a second language is one of the key factors in determining the success of second language learning.

Furthermore, a study conducted by İnal and Cakir (2014) suggests that the teaching techniques that were based on story reading were more effective than the traditional techniques, concluding that stories can provide students with fun and enjoyment that motivate them positively towards the lesson and help them learn new vocabulary items in a memorable way. Another study conducted by Horst (2005) indicated that of 35 new words available for learning in self-selected graded reading materials, 18 words were learned: a gain of 51%.

However, Brown et al (2008) points to the need for exposure to great amounts of written text to ensure the repeated encounters with words in texts at regular intervals. The study suggests that foreign-language learners should be provided with opportunities and guidance on how to capitalize on the incidental learning of vocabulary from their reading. Thus, if learners do a lot of reading and listening, there will be considerable cumulative enrichment of partially known words as well as the establishment of certain new words in their lexicons. Inferring the meanings of unknown words from context is therefore important both for coping with and learning unfamiliar words.

It is also important to have exercises and activities related to the stories, which could support and facilitate the process of vocabulary learning. In a study, Dunmore (1989) highlighted the need for exercise types in vocabulary learning and emphasized the importance of context in understanding the meaning of unknown words. In another study, Paribakht and Wesche (1994) reported that text-based vocabulary exercises and activities will be more effective and efficient in vocabulary learning than reading only the text. Another research by Tahir and Mohtar (2016) concluded that the incorporation of vocabulary exercises was effective in helping students learn the target words. The student's retention levels of the acquired words were also seen to be high, indicating that meaningful learning occurred through the use of vocabulary exercises. The target words were stored in their long-term memory and they could recall the target words to answer the questions in the posttest successfully.

Methodology

The methodology of the research started with the population, who are the English language students of the intermediate and upper-intermediate levels. Then, the analysis was conducted. Several short stories were presented, examined, and analyzed. Finally, the exercises and activities related to the stories were analyzed and evaluated based on their effectiveness in teaching vocabulary. This study evaluated the effectiveness of vocabulary exercises and activities related to short stories in ELT coursebooks by drawing on established research and accepted practices in vocabulary instruction. The evaluation was grounded in pedagogical literature and the analysis was guided by key principles identified in previous studies, which highlight the importance of factors such as contextual learning, repeated exposure to target vocabulary, learner engagement and discussion, and doing different exercises and activities related to the short stories.

Relevant research and theoretical frameworks were reviewed to identify what constitutes effective vocabulary teaching. These sources provided a foundation for evaluating the selected activities. Each vocabulary task accompanying a short story was examined to determine whether it aligned with these established criteria. In case the exercises, activities, or projects related to the stories were proven to be somewhat ineffective in teaching vocabulary, suggestions were made on how they could have been better used to teach vocabulary.

Corpus

A collection of stories found in English language coursebooks of the intermediate and upper-intermediate levels is the material under investigation in this study. The coursebooks are the principal source that teachers rely on in teaching. In English classes, the material is ready for

teachers to use, and they may get help from other resources such as videos, worksheets, and other materials. However, learners are eventually evaluated according to their achievement in mastering the material in their coursebooks, and teachers mostly use it as a reference for teaching and learning. In addition, Charalambous (2011) reports that "coursebooks play a vital role in EFL teaching and learning by providing useful material to both teachers and students" (p. 10).

Data Collection and Instrument
The qualitative method was used to achieve the purpose of the study. Stories from different coursebooks were picked. In addition, the tasks and exercises in the coursebooks were analyzed and evaluated. A descriptive qualitative method was used to describe, analyze, and evaluate those tasks and exercises.

There are thousands of English teaching coursebooks that are used in many different educational institutions, and all of those coursebooks are designed for a specific group of learners. Most of the time, those groups are determined by their level of English knowledge. Generally, they are either beginner, intermediate, or advanced learners. To ensure the research remained specific and not overly broad, coursebooks at the intermediate and upper-intermediate levels were selected as the focus. For the purpose of the research, the coursebooks needed to include stories in them. A sum of 7 coursebooks were collected, and they included 14 stories. The coursebooks were written by different authors, and the 14 stories analyzed for this study were also written by different authors. The books ranged between 159 and 182 pages, 5 books contained 12 units, and 2 books contained 9 units, with each unit containing approximately 10 pages. Each unit covered a different topic, such as work, time, travel, technology, and health.

Analysis and Discussion: Reading
The reading tasks of the stories ranged from relatively careful reading which is usually useful in grasping the main points and events of the story, to in-depth, careful, and accurate reading. The former answers the questions of "why?" and "how", which were usually present in the accompanying speaking exercises. This type of reading looks for different ideas that the students seek to assemble. For that, they may need to read the entire material, but they read it quickly and carefully, passing through the ideas in order to answer the questions in their minds, and in the meantime, they get to know the main points, facts, and information that answer those questions. Some examples of the careful quick reading tasks that appear in the stories were: In "Heart-warming Stories", students were asked to look quickly through the stories and answer a question about each one, the questions are related to the main events of the story: what had the security officer kept for Maudie? What did Chris do with the money? Why did the commuters lift the bus? In "Spot the Fake", students were asked to first just read the headlines of the stories to get an idea of what they are about and then discuss their ideas. In "Richard III", there was a task to read quickly through the story and find what some dates (1452, 1483, 2012, etc.) refer to, this way, students know that they have to specifically pay attention to those dates and their significance in the story in order to be able to answer the question. They were then asked to read the story more carefully and discuss some reading comprehension questions. The same task appeared in "The Gentle Touch", where students were first asked to skim the text, and then read it carefully.

When it comes to in-depth, careful, and accurate reading, students should read with a critical mind that pays attention to even reading between the lines. Especially if there are reading comprehension multiple-choice questions given to choose the correct answer from, since most of the time, all of the choices are most likely very close to the correct answer. It is important that students pay very close attention to the story and the meaning of its words and phrases in order to be able to choose the correct answer. The stories of "The Three Students", "Romeo and Juliet", "The Blind Assassin", "The Clinging Woman", "Richard III", "The Gentle Touch", "Real Life Unsolved Mysteries", and "A Twist of Fate" all had reading comprehension questions related to the events of the stories, some examples include:
- From "Romeo and Juliet": what happened when Romeo and Juliet first met? How did Juliet kill herself? How did their families feel at the end?
- From "The Three Students": where was Sherlock Holmes staying? Why did Mr. Soames refuse to call the police?

- From "The Blind Assassin": what are the various suggested causes of the crash? How does Iris explain the crash to the policeman?

In addition, there were other exercises that test students' understanding of the plot of the story, such as matching exercises where students were asked to match the missing sentences from the story with the gaps given in it, to match two sets of sentences in order to make true statements about the story, or to choose whether the given statements about the story are true or false. The matching exercises appeared in "Heart-warming Stories", "The Grand Canyon", "A Twist of Fate", and "The Kite Runner". The true or false exercises are included in "The Three Students", "Lost and Found", and "Silent Darkness". For example, in "Lost and Found", 8 statements about the story are given, and students are asked to write ✓ if the statement is true and ✗ if it is false, and to correct the false ones, some of the statements are:

1. Saroo and his brother both had jobs cleaning the trains.
2. Saroo fell asleep at the station in Calcutta.
3. He was given food and shelter by a man.

There is no doubt that reading could contribute to vocabulary learning; however, there are some suggestions and methods that could make reading much more beneficial when it comes to vocabulary gain. Brabham and Brown (2002) suggest that reading stories aloud could lead students to significant vocabulary gain; it could also be a useful way to stimulate discussion, build comprehension, impart knowledge, or evoke students' responses to literature (465). The same study supports that verbal and interactional reading-aloud styles are more effective for vocabulary acquisition than just reading aloud with no discussion, and confirms that teacher explanations and student discussions are critical factors that benefit students' learning of words, concepts, and meaning. Based on this, it is encouraged that the reading of the stories is not silent, but loud interactional reading. Tomize (2013) used a number of post-reading activities that supported vocabulary learning in their study, those activities included group discussions, acting out of a story, and story reading competitions (64-65). Students must understand the stories because such activities ask for creative, relevant responses from them. It is also advised that students keep a dictionary with them, especially during and after the reading process. Students should identify the words that they do not know and then search for them in the dictionary to understand the meaning that revolves around them and their different contexts.

Language Work

The stories of "The Three Students", "Lost and Found", "The Blind Assassin", "The Clinging Woman", "The Gentle Touch", "Real Life Unsolved Mysteries", and "The Kite Runner" are great examples of how stories could be aimed at vocabulary learning, as they had an entire exercise section dedicated to language work and vocabulary.

One useful type of exercise that appeared in "The Three Students" and "The Kite Runner" is to work out the meaning of words from their context. Out of the 14 stories in this paper, 2 exercises were dedicated to this type of exercise. Context has a crucial role in identifying the meaning of unknown words since the meaning of a word can be determined by the other words around it; its context. Numerous studies asserted that context is an important and effective source of vocabulary knowledge and linguistic proficiency. However, since natural context is often relatively uninformative (Nagy, 1995: 19), the context in which the words are present should give hints and information on what the unknown words could mean. In other words, it is important that the texts are created with enough contextual clues so that the learners are able to infer the meaning of the target words. Hamilton (2012) suggests that guessing should only be encouraged if clues are in the immediate context, as some contexts can be misleading.

Looking at the words in these exercises, it was apparent that there are contextual clues that can help the students guess the meaning of the unknown words. For example, the word "nap" was preceded by the sentence "I ended up falling asleep", the word "agitated" was preceded by "very nervous", and "stand on tiptoe" was preceded by "he wasn't tall enough". In addition, one of the stories added a task where students were asked to replace the unknown words with some underlined words in sentences, which gave even more informative context to the students. From these examples, it was clear that the authors were careful to include words and sentences that would give the students an idea of what the unknown words could mean, and this way, students

could make connections between those clues and the words that they need to guess the meaning of. In addition, in "Lost and Found", there was an extra exercise where students are asked to replace the unknown words with their synonyms. This simple addition could give the students more contextual clues to work out the meaning of the unknown words, teach the students the synonyms of the unknown words, and overall make vocabulary gain even more likely. Webb (2008) states that supplementing examples of target words in informative contexts may notably improve vocabulary learning and that supplementary tasks or contexts involving unknown words are likely to be necessary for learners to gain knowledge of meaning, which is the case in those exercises.

The stories of "Real Life Unsolved Mysteries" and "The Gentle Touch" actually included an exercise where students were asked to discuss their answers regarding the meaning of words with a partner and check with a dictionary, which was a great way to learn the new words. In addition, "The Gentle Touch" had an exercise where students were given 7 explanatory sentences (similar to definitions) and were then asked to find the words/phrases that relate to them in the story, some of the given explanatory sentences were:
1. The police officers were speaking kindly to the boy.
2. The boy was in a confused state.
3. The boy had fallen and hurt himself.

By doing this exercise, students would look for and learn all the words that relate to those definitions, which would ultimately increase their vocabulary.

In "The Blind Assassin" and "The Clinging Woman", there was an exercise where students were asked to match words extracted from the stories to their meaning, definition, or synonym. For example, the words extracted from the stories such as: swirling, deeds, suspended, and gossip, should be matched with their provided definitions and synonyms: turning and twisting, things people do, hung, and chat. This kind of exercise appeared only twice in all 14 stories. As Rachmawati (2019) states, the use of word-matching exercises has a significant influence on students' vocabulary, the exercises are also easy to use and have an impact on students' vocabulary mastery and increase student motivation in learning vocabulary. In addition, using this exercise can help students connect new information/vocabulary with the information they already know, or learn a different meaning of a certain word (p. 56). Word-matching exercises could help students understand new words more easily and improve their vocabulary knowledge. This exercise is a good way for an initial understanding of words and concepts, and it could also make it easier for teachers to teach vocabulary. In this particular exercise, the definitions of the words were given, which made it very useful and beneficial for vocabulary learning.

Another good vocabulary exercise, which appeared in "The Three Students", was rewriting sentences. In this exercise, students were asked to rewrite sentences extracted from the stories using specific words. This kind of exercise put emphasis on particular words by asking the students to use them in the rewritten sentences, which could potentially lead the students to learn and memorize those words. Changing tenses, moving the time phrases or clauses, and using prepositional phrases are three of the most used methods in which one can rearrange or rewrite a sentence in English (Williams, 2015). However; using synonyms or similar words with slightly different meanings could also help rewrite sentences. By using this method, vocabulary is employed in the process of replacing words and expressions, and this could encourage students to think of different words and synonyms, which could ultimately lead to vocabulary gain. In addition, in some cases, students may rephrase the sentences by using a noun form of a verb, or a verb form of a noun, which could also promote vocabulary learning. However, this type of exercise may not be of great benefit when it comes to vocabulary gain if the words given are mostly already known, and although it is unlikely, students could still use vocabulary and synonym replacement in the process of rewriting the sentences.

In the fill-in-the-blank exercise that appeared in "The Kite Runner", students were asked to complete five sentences with five underlined compound adjectives (homemade, thin-boned, low-set, deep-throated, and longhaired) from the extract of the story. Another similar exercise was found in the story about "The Grand Canyon", but the words and phrases that students had to use to fill in the blanks were related to the narrative and structure of writing a story (the setting, the narrator, dialogue, the main characters, etc.). A Study by Hashemzadeh (2012) showed

that fill-in-the-blank exercises were the most effective exercise type influencing EFL learners' vocabulary retention. This exercise is extremely effective in learning vocabulary because, naturally, the students need to learn about those words or compound adjectives in order to be able to complete the sentences correctly.

This exercise is an excellent method to help students learn the meaning of words and memorize new vocabulary; however, as mentioned before, this exercise appeared only once in all of the stories, taking its high level of effectiveness when it comes to vocabulary gain into account, it can be said that it is used very little.

Speaking

Some stories such as "Romeo and Juliet", "Heart-warming Stories", "The Clinging Woman", "Spot the Fake", "The Gentle Touch", "The Kite Runner", "Real Life Unsolved Mysteries", and "Silent Darkness" were accompanied by several questions for speaking. For example, in "The Kite Runner", students were asked to look at two posters of the novel and then speak about what they think the story is about, then, they were asked to read the story and choose which poster they think matches the story better and why, after that, they were asked to work in pairs and answer some questions related to the themes of the story. There was also a discussion task at the end of the story where students were asked to discuss the subject of forming friendships with different cultural or social backgrounds; students were also provided with ideas to help them. In "The Clinging Woman", again, students were asked questions related to the picture attached to the story, the events of the story, and finally, students' interpretation and general opinion of some major events in the story. In "Real Life Unsolved Mysteries", students were asked to speak about any unsolved mysteries that they may know, and then they were asked to read, discuss, and summarize the four mystery stories provided. Students would learn new words from reading the stories, and they are likely to discuss their meaning with their teachers as part of the reading process. In "Romeo and Juliet", before reading the story, students were asked two questions; what do they know about William Shakespeare (the author of the story)? And what do they generally know about the story? Those questions could serve as an introduction to the story, as they help students understand what the story is about and help them interact with the text to create or construct meaning (Day and Park, 2005: 61). There was also an exercise dedicated to retelling the story in students' own words.

Pictures and posters were featured in the speaking tasks of some stories, as they help students grasp the main themes of the story, identify its characters, and give students ideas and inspiration to answer the discussion questions. A picture of the list of story characters was provided in "Romeo and Juliet", and it was accompanied by the question "What do you know about the story?". In fact, the whole story was provided in a comic style, with illustrations of every scene. There was a task to retell the story using those illustrations. "The Three Students" and "Heart-warming Stories" had a picture and a question to guess what is happening in the story based on the picture provided. "The Blind Assassin" was accompanied by the cover of the storybook, and students were asked to answer some questions regarding the story (such as: who wrote it? what kind of story is it? where is it set?) using the information provided in the cover. The task of "The Gentle Touch" was quite interesting, students were asked to take a look at the picture provided with the story and think of three possible interpretations of what the situation might be, which is a great way to give students the opportunity to be creative and voice their thoughts, it is also a great way to ensure that a big number of students can participate, as they are likely to have different ideas and interpretations, which might evoke discussions in the classroom. Later, after they read the story, they would know which interpretation was correct.

On one hand, the speaking questions of those stories did not prove to be explicitly aimed at vocabulary learning, but they were rather focused on developing the skill of speaking. On the other hand, speaking is a good way to learn vocabulary. Nation and Newton (1996) state that speaking tasks are a great tool for the indirect learning of vocabulary (1), as the speaking tasks are full of discussions from both the students and teachers, in this way, students might be introduced to some new words from their classmates and teachers, and they could practice the pronunciation of the words that are included in the answers of the questions. Students who already know the meaning of unknown words could explain them to their fellow students. However, the vocabulary that will be present in the discussions is limited to the subjects and participants of the discussions. So, whether the students will benefit from the speaking tasks or

not largely depends on their answers and their willingness to participate in the discussion, as some students are shy and reluctant, and some of them are afraid to make mistakes, which means that sometimes, even if they have enough vocabulary and subject knowledge, they avoid participating in the speaking tasks because of their fear of making mistakes. As a result, these issues might hinder the vocabulary learning process. Here comes the teacher's role as a facilitator. The teacher could help the students understand by using pictures and occasional words in the students' native language, or by being as expressive as possible. It is thought that if the teacher uses language that is just in advance of students' current level of proficiency while making sure that her/his input is comprehensible, the acquisition will be achieved "naturally" (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2011: 137). The teacher could also ask some follow-up questions that could motivate the students and prompt them to speak more and thus, use more vocabulary. In addition, the teacher could effectively incorporate many speaking activities to make them fit for a vocabulary learning goal, as well as planning and introducing words that are likely to be learned in particular tasks and exercises. For example, Nation and Newton (1996) suggest that retelling the story from a different focus in students' own words is a method of learning and remembering vocabulary (3), as retelling a story requires students to reconstruct what they have read, not repeat it, which could prompt them to use words and expressions that were mostly not used in the original story, which may result in the usage of new and different vocabulary. This vocabulary could be further negotiated between the teacher and students regarding its meaning, form, synonyms etc. In addition, the teacher could prepare a list of questions that are designed to encourage the use of the words from the original story text, then ask the student retelling the story those questions so that the teacher could observe whether the students know the meaning of the words or not, and then further define them in case it turns out that the students do not know the meaning.

Kacani and Cyfeku (2015: 394) state that the following strategies are necessary to use when aiming at effective vocabulary teaching while building speaking skills:

- Repeating the target vocabulary effectively to strengthen and enrich it by considering the spacing of the repetitions and the nature of the repetition.
- Using clear instructions and definitions to enhance vocabulary acquisition from oral input.
- Using English in different phases and situations of the lesson to provide more practice input.
- Selecting vocabulary teaching and learning activities considering the goal of the activity and the psychological conditions it uses to help learners reach their learning goal.
- Increasing the amount of engagement learners have with lexical items in various listening and speaking activities to enhance vocabulary learning.

Conclusion

This study involved 14 stories from 7 ELT coursebooks of the intermediate and upper-intermediate levels. The stories were all accompanied by exercises and activities. An in-depth analysis of the exercises and their relevance to teaching vocabulary was conducted.

It can be confirmed that the stories were accompanied by a great number of discussion tasks and questions, as well as speaking activities and other exercises, which could be extremely effective in the process of learning words and their meanings. Students could potentially learn new words from reading and discussing the story and the questions. Teachers' additional explanations of unknown words as they are encountered could lead to vocabulary gain. The frequency of occurrence of the word in the story, the helpfulness of the context, and the frequency of occurrence of the word in pictorial representation are all features in the stories that appear to account for a large portion of the variance in the likelihood that it will be learned by students. The unfamiliar words should be supported by a helpful verbal or pictorial context, and there should normally be more than one exposure to each word (Elley, 1989: 184).

All in all, based on the analysis, using short stories in ELT coursebooks is an effective method for increasing vocabulary. Based on the data presentation and interpretation above, it can be

concluded that the majority of the exercises and activities could lead to vocabulary gain. The stories could help students develop vocabulary because their contexts provide effective clues to get the meaning of unfamiliar words, and most of the exercises showed great potential to be very effective in developing vocabulary. In addition, short stories help instructors to teach literary, cultural, and higher-order thinking aspects. However, to get more accurate findings, further research should also include students' participation.

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1. Romeo and Juliet - page 22
2. The Three Students - page 86

Cutting Edge 3rd Edition, Intermediate:
1. A Twist of Fate - page 56

Cutting Edge, Upper-intermediate:
1. The Gentle Touch - page 31
2. The Grand Canyon - page 36
3. Real Life Unsolved Mysteries (4 stories) - pages 102 and 103

Headway 5th Edition, Upper-intermediate:
1. Lost and Found - page 14
2. Heart-warming Stories - page 32
3. The Clinging Woman - page 35
4. Spot the Fake! - page 46
5. Richard III - page 102

New Headway, Upper-intermediate:
1. The Blind Assassin - page 30

Solutions 3rd Edition, Upper-intermediate:
1. The Kite Runner - page 36

Solutions 3rd Edition, Intermediate:
1. Silent Darkness - page 119