

# Reader Response Using Short Stories: A Comparison of Knowledge-Telling and Knowledge-Transforming Processes

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## Abstract

Due to their nature of being brief, short stories have been successfully used in language-based classrooms. Discussions about the issues in the short stories can develop learners' critical abilities. This can be done through activities like reader response. One of the many activities from reader response is writing. Learners are asked to write comments about the short story based on their interpretation. According to Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987), the ability to re-tell knowledge and transform knowledge is what differentiates between a novice and an expert writer. Knowledge-transforming is more difficult as it involves the writer to create new knowledge and this involves problem-analysis and perhaps even suggestions for solutions to the mentioned problems. This study is done to investigate learners' perception of their reader response writing activity on short stories. It explores how learners perceive the knowledge-telling process and knowledge-transform process in the reader response. This quantitative study is done to explore the relationship between elements of short story with knowledge-telling and knowledge-transforming writing process. 106 students were randomly chosen to respond to the survey. Findings showed that the content of the short stories benefitted the learners in several ways. Findings also revealed positive relationships between the elements of knowledge-telling and even knowledge-transforming process. The findings in this study bear interesting implications in the teaching and learning of language using short stories.

**Keywords:** Language Learning, Short Stories, Reader Response, Knowledge-Telling, Knowledge-Transforming.

## Introduction

### Background of Study

The use short stories can provide many benefits to both the readers and listeners. According to Rahmawati & Rakhmawati (2022), a short story is one form of literature. It means that a short story is a prose narrative that can be read in a short amount of time. Just as the name implies, short stories are brief and therefore, easy to read. Short stories are often used as a motivational content to help readers learn from. Lazar (1990) defines short stories as fictional work. The work elaborates an event in a detailed manner. It contains crisis, characters and

even resolutions just like normal stories. The only difference is, the text is written in a brief manner.

Due to their nature of being brief, short stories have been successfully used in language-based classrooms. Discussions about the issues in the short stories can develop learners' critical abilities (Bartan, 2017). This can be done through activities like reader response. Woodruff and Griffin (2017) add that the main component of reader response encourages learners to make meaningful, and authentic connections with the stories. Reader response activities approach helps learners become critical readers and thinkers. This is because they do not merely interpret the text based on their understanding, they need to justify their varying interpretations using textual evidence and support.

### **Statement of Problem**

One of the many activities from reader response is writing. Learners are asked to write comments about the short story based on their interpretation. Writing can be fun for writers of narrative and descriptive essays (Rahmat, 2020). This is because they regurgitate memory/information from their mind. They re-tell what they could recall. They merely "knowledge-tell" what they want to write. According to Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987), the ability to re-tell knowledge and transform knowledge is what differentiates between a novice and an expert writer. Knowledge-transforming is more difficult as it involves the writer to create new knowledge and this involves problem-analysis and perhaps even suggestions for solutions to the mentioned problems.

This study is done to investigate learners' perception of their reader response writing activity on short stories. It explores how learners perceive the knowledge-telling process and knowledge-transform process in the reader response. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions;

- How do learners perceive reading the elements of the short story?
- How do learners perceive the knowledge-telling process? In reader response?
- How do learners perceive the knowledge-transforming process in reader response?
- Is there a significant difference in total mean scores for knowledge-telling and knowledge-transforming processes.?
- Is there a relationship across variables for reader response?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Reader Response**

Reader-response theory is a theory that focuses on the creative role the reader. According to Probst (1994), it is the active communication between the reader and the writer. Language classrooms use short stories to incorporate the use of reader response by readers. Language instructors can use reader-response to emphasise the importance of active reading. Nevertheless, learners are better able to respond to the stories if they have prior background on the short stories.

There are several ways that the instructor can use reader response as language activities. Firstly, the instructor can make students read the short stories aloud in class. This helps to practice fluency and pronunciation. The session is then followed by group discussion on the issues in the stories. Next, reader response can be done from listening to writing. Students are asked to listen to audio of the short stories. They can make their own notes about the short stories. They are then asked to write a response to the issues in the short stories. Written response are more detailed as some students may end up narrating events in the

stories (knowledge-tell) instead of making their own interpretations (knowledge-transform) on the issues in the short stories. According to Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987), novice writers knowledge-tell when they wrote while expert writers are able to knowledge-transform the information before they write is as a written text.

### *Knowledge-Telling*

Novice writers are said to knowledge-tell when they wrote, why is this so? Knowledge-telling involves the simplistic shifting from oral thoughts into written thoughts. Figure 1 below shows the representation of the knowledge-telling process. With reference to figure 1, when the writer gets the writing assignment, he/she will begin a mental representation of the assignment. Before the writer begins, the writer is aware of his/her knowledge of the content and discourse knowledge of the written assignment. The writer then tries to locate the topic identifiers for the assignment. At this stage, the writer could brainstorm ideas related to the topic. This is also the stage where the writer locates the genre identifiers. The writer could look up for some samples written product bearing the same genre. Next, the writer construct memory probes for the written assignment, He /she then retrieve the content for the assignment form his/her memory. He/she then run test of appropriateness of what he/she has produced so far. He/she then begins writing the draft of the assignment, maybe stopping to check with what he/she already has in his/her mental representation of the text.

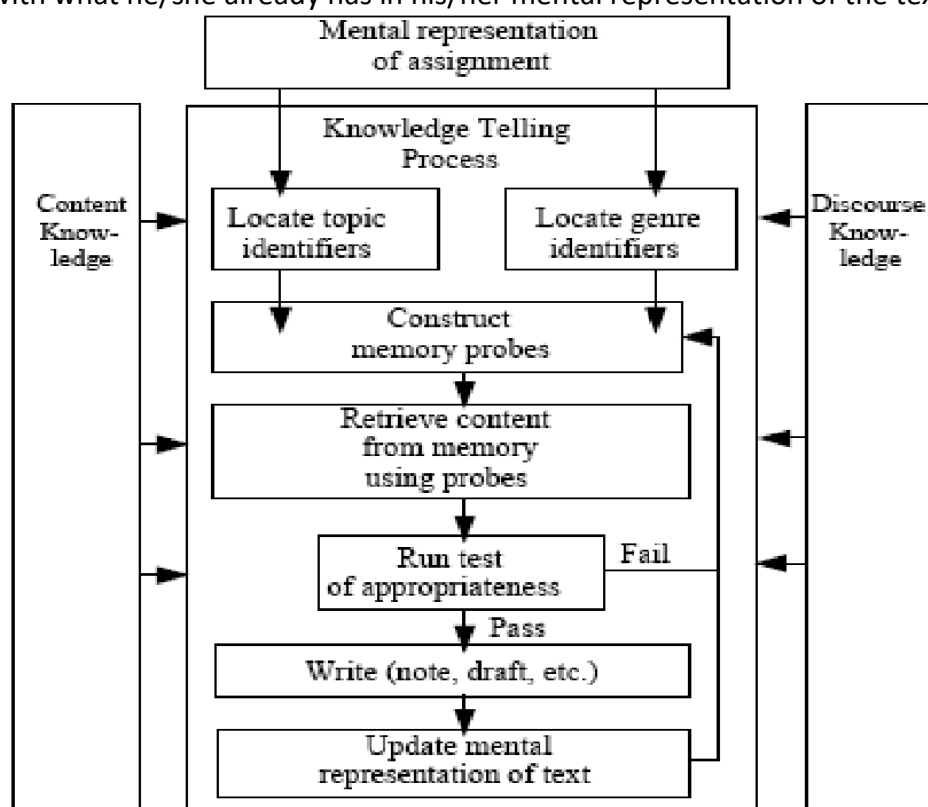


Figure 1- Knowledge-Telling in Writing  
(Source: Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987)

### **Knowledge-Transforming**

Knowledge-transforming involves the writer to go through the process of discovery before writing. Figure 2 shows the representation of writing undergoing the knowledge-transforming process. Just like the novice writers, the writers who begin the knowledge-transforming process, first form mental representation of the assignment. He/she then goes the problem-

analysis and goal setting stage. The writer then uses his/her content knowledge to solve the content problem space. He/she has to undergo the problem translations to arrive at the next stage. He/she also uses his/her discourse knowledge to solve the rhetorical problem space. Again, he/she has to use problem translation to solve the rhetorical problem space. When all these stages are completed, he or she will still go through the knowledge-telling process to complete the process of writing the assignment.

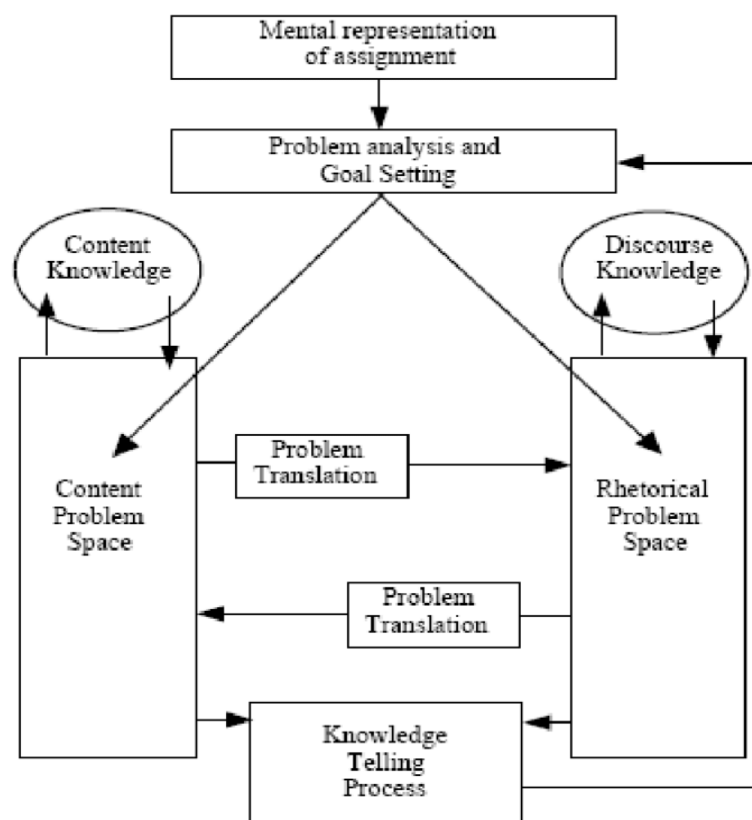


Figure 2- Knowledge-Transforming in Writing

(Source: Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987)

### *Past Studies*

The study by Ceylan (2016) was done to explore the thoughts and attitudes of first year students in Bulent Ecevit University English Language and Literature Department towards the short stories covered in their Reading Skills. 40 first year students in English and Literature department course were chosen for this study. Instead of using the textbook, the researcher used fifteen short stories from the literature of various countries. Students were asked to present brief analysis of the story. The instrument used is a questionnaire. The questionnaire was analysed using frequency tests. Findings showed that respondents felt the short stories broadened their perspectives. The stories enabled them to think about the reasons rather than the result of events. They learnt to appreciate literature and wanted to read more short stories.

Next, the study by Boubekour (2021) was done to explore the use of Reader-Response Theory in the classroom. The study was conducted in Moulay Tahar University-Saida, Algeria. Data is collected from a questionnaire, observation and students' written assignment. Findings showed that Reader-Response is able to reinforce students' thinking skills and also boost their creativity.

The study by Youssef (2021) was done to explore an alternative method for teaching the novel in Egyptian secondary schools. The method is Reader Response Approach (RRA). Participants were 35 Egyptian female students from a second-year secondary school. A Reading Comprehension test was used to measure their comprehension of the novel at three comprehension levels. Findings revealed the effectiveness of the approach. It also enhances students' reading comprehension and critical thinking skills.

Zahra & Farah (2016) conducted a mixed mode study to investigate the use of short stories in the EFL class. The study was also done to examine students' attitudes towards using short stories. Participants of the study were students of English major in Hebron University, Palestine. The instrument used is a questionnaire. 135 students responded to the questionnaire. Findings showed that students had positive attitudes towards using short stories in the EFL classes. However, there are no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of the students towards the use of short stories due to gender, seniority, and major. Rahmawati & Rakhmawati (2022) examined the effectiveness of using short stories to engage students in listening practices. The quantitative study employed a pre-experimental design to test the effect of short stories. Participants were first year college students of the English Department in an Indonesian university. Results showed that the students' scores have increased after the treatment. Analysis of the results showed that there is an improvement in the post-test scores. This result suggests that short stories is significantly effective for engaging for engaging students in listening practice.

The study by Koroglu (2020) investigated student teachers' perceptions of digital short stories' implementation in language classrooms through listening skills. The study used a pre-test and post-test method. Data was collected from a written structured interview. The interview contained 6 open-ended questions. The achievement tests and t-test were used to analyse the quantitative data. Results revealed that digital short stories provide satisfactory content. It also supports students' vocabulary learning. It improves language learners' listening skills besides giving students familiarity with complex grammar structure. The stories also introduced the students to different cultures.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Figure 3 below shows the conceptual framework of the study. The framework combines elements of short stories by Gribble (2022) and also knowledge-telling and knowledge-transforming processes by (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). This study investigates the relationship between elements of short stories with knowledge-telling and also knowledge-transforming process.

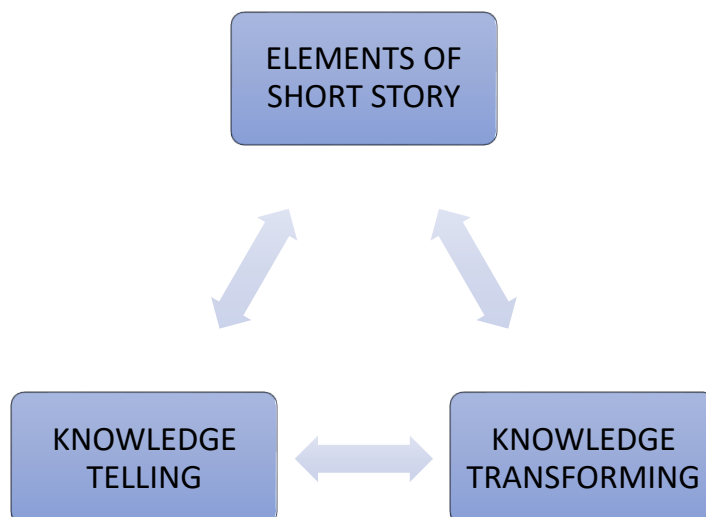


Figure 3- Conceptual Framework of the Study  
 Relationship between Short Stories , Knowledge- Telling and Knowledge-Transforming

**Methodology**

This quantitative study is done to explore the relationship between elements of short story with knowledge-telling and knowledge-transforming writing process. 106 students were randomly chosen to respond to the survey. The instruments (refer to table 1) used is a survey with 5 Likert scale (never, seldom, sometimes, often and almost always). Section B has 7 items on elements of short story (Gribble, 2022). Section C has 7 items on knowledge process while section D has 7 items on knowledge-transforming. An SPSS analysis (refer to table 1) was done on the instrument to reveal section B with Cronbach alpha of .764 ; section C with Cronbach alpha of .842, while section D has Cronbach alpha of .905. An overall Cronbach Alpha of .913 was reported for the overall instrument; thus revealing a high reliability of the instrument.

Table 1  
*Distribution of Items in the Survey.*

SECTION	VARIABLE	No of Items	Cronbach Alpha
B	ELEMENTS OF SHORT STORIES	7	.764
C	KNOWLEDGE-TELLING	7	.842
D	KNOWLEDGE-TRANSFORMING	7	.905
		21	.913

**Findings**

Findings for Demographic Profile

Q1 GENDER

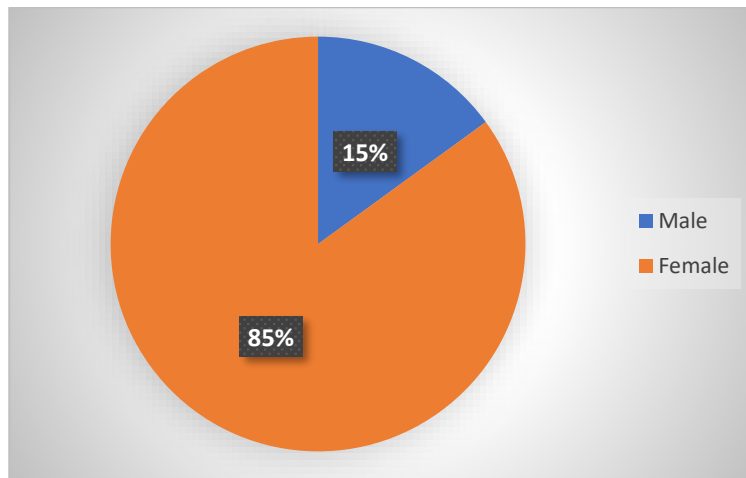


Figure 2- Percentage for Gender

Figure 2 shows the percentage for gender. 85% of the respondents were female while 15% were male.

Q2 Usage of Free Time

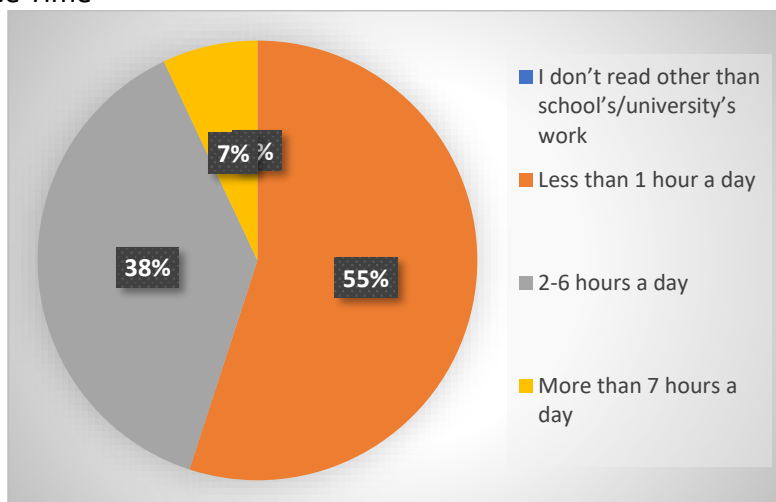


Figure 3- Percentage for Usage of Free Time

Figure 3 shows the percentage for usage of free time, 55% reported that they read less than One hour a day. 38% reported that they read 2-6 hours a day while 7% reported that they read more than 7 hours a day.

Q3-Reading Preference

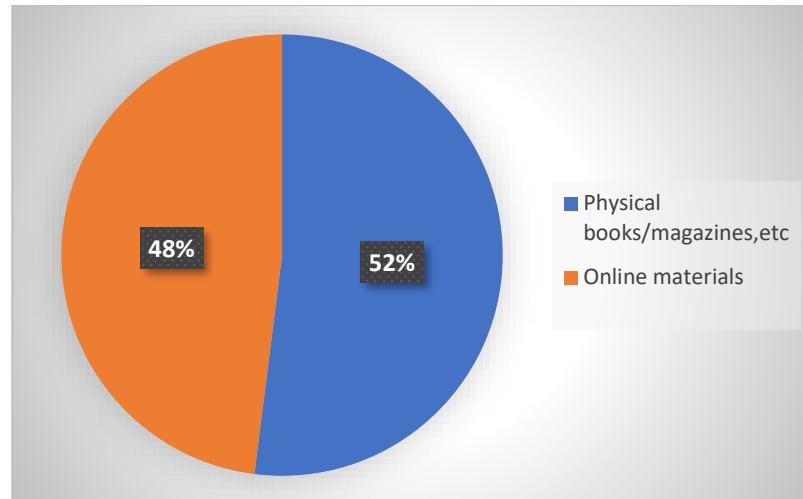


Figure 4- Percentage of Preference of Reading Material

Figure 4 shows the percentage of preference of reading material. 52% preferred physical books while 48% preferred online material.

Q4-Reading Habit

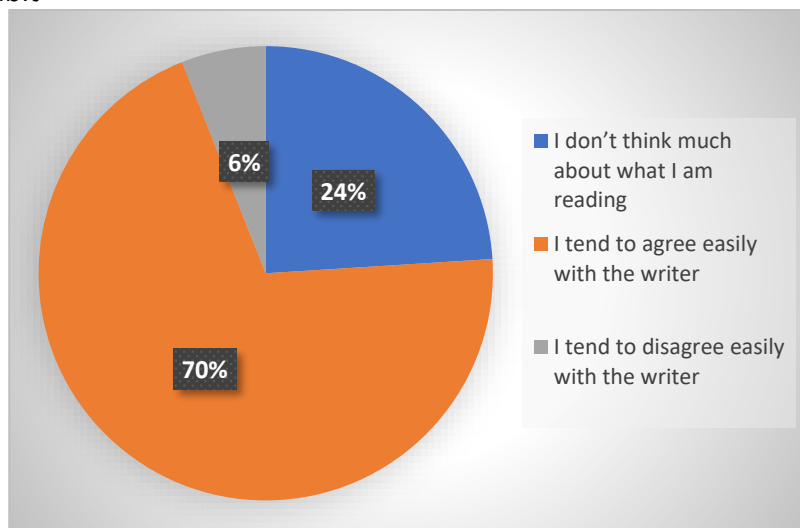


Figure 5- Percentage of Reading Habit.

Figure 5 shows the percentage for reading habit. 24% reported they did not think much about what they were reading. Next, 70% reported that they tend to agree easily with the writer. 6% tend to disagree easily with the writer.



*Findings for Elements of Short Story*

This section presents data to answer research question1- How do learners perceive reading the elements of the short story?

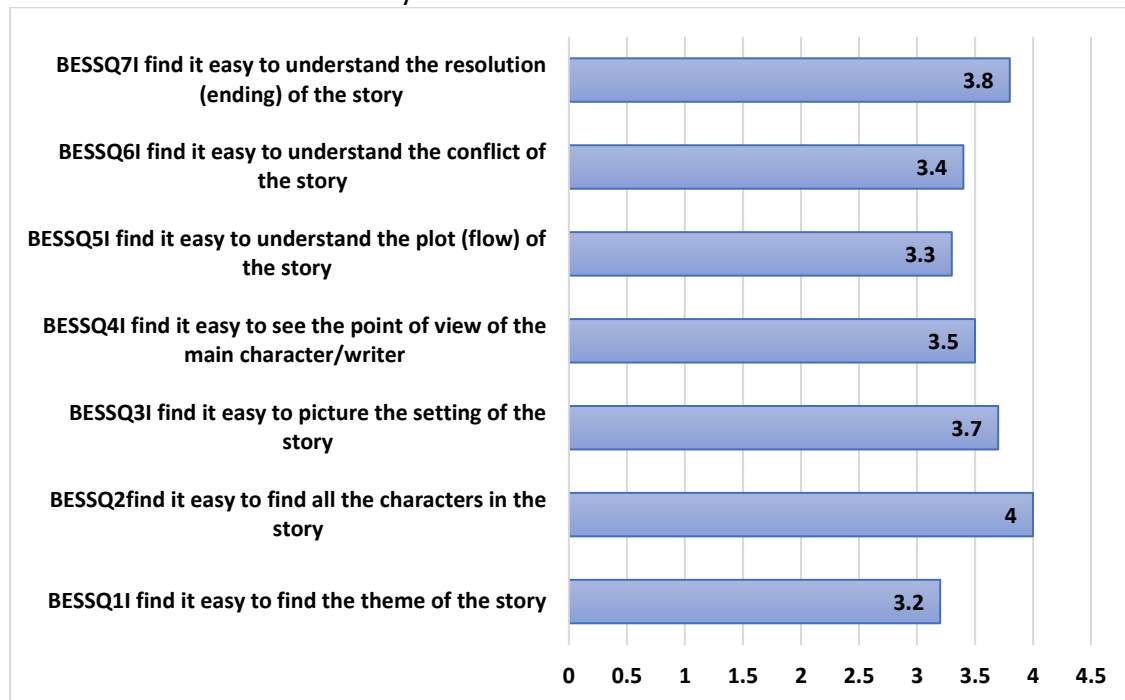


Figure 6-Mean for Elements of Short Stories

Figure 6 shows the mean for elements of short stories. The highest mean is 4 for the item “easy to find all the characters in the story”. Next is the mean of 3.8 for the item “easy to understand the resolution (ending) of the story”. The item “easy to picture the setting of the story” had a mean of 3.7. The lowest mean is 3.2 for the item “ easy to find the theme of the story”.

*Findings for Knowledge-Telling Process*

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do learners perceive the knowledge-telling process? In reader response?

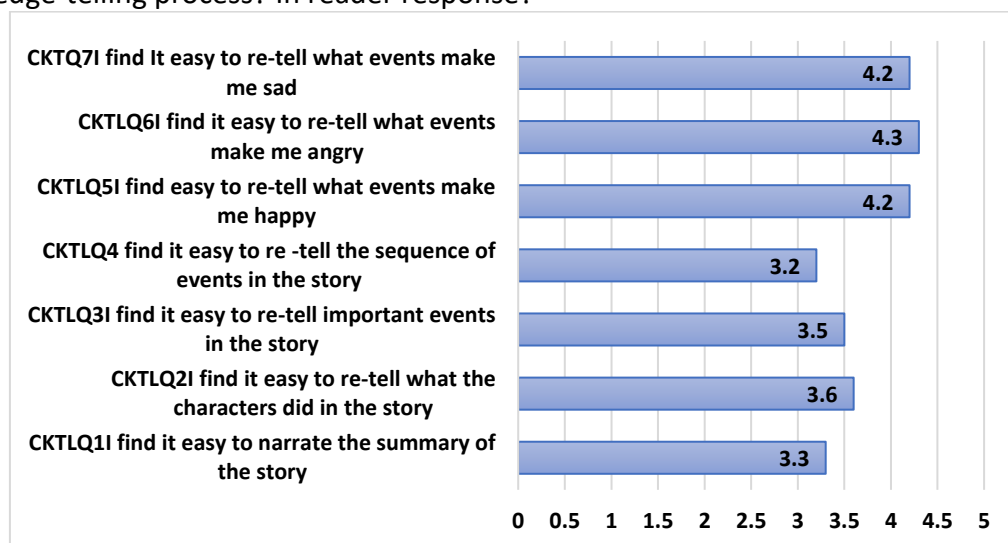


Figure 7- Mean for Knowledge-Telling

Figure 7 shows the mean for knowledge-telling. The highest mean is 4.3 for the item “easy to re-tell what events make me angry”. This is followed by 2 items with the same mean of 4.2 and they are “easy to re-tell what events make me happy” and “easy to re-tell what events make me sad”. The lowest mean is 3.2 for the item “easy to re -tell the sequence of events in the story”.

**Findings for Knowledge-Transforming process**

This section presents data to answer research question 3- How do learners perceive the knowledge-transforming process in reader response?

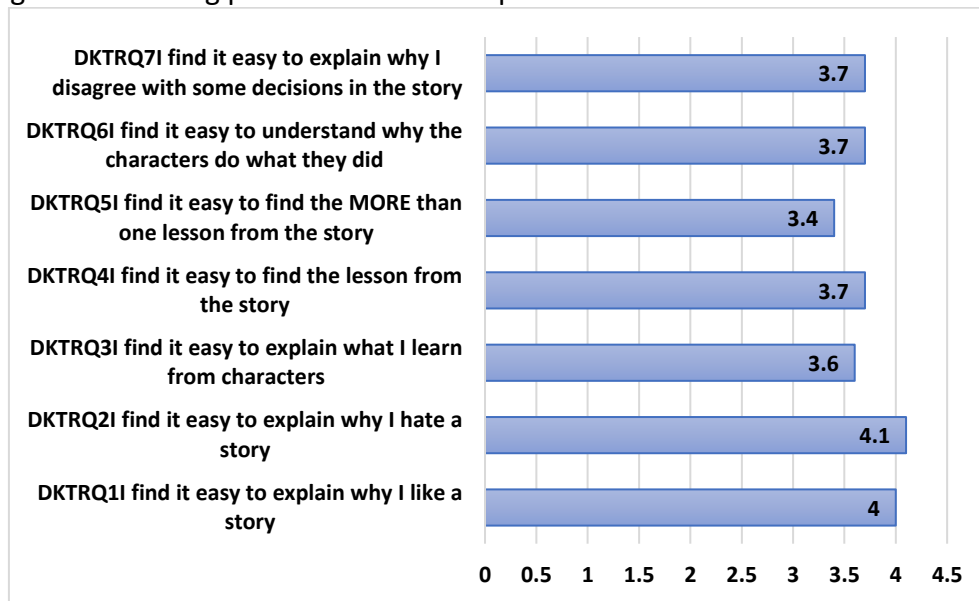


Figure 8- Mean for Knowledge- Transforming Process

Figure 8 shows the mean for knowledge-transforming process. The highest mean is 4.1 for the item “easy to explain why I hate a story”. This is followed by a mean of 4 for the item “easy to explain why I like a story”. The lowest mean is 3.4 for item “easy to find the MORE than one lesson from the story”.

*Findings for Mean Difference*

This section presents data to answer research question 4- Is there a significant difference in total mean scores for knowledge-telling and knowledge-transforming processes?

Table 2- T-Test for Knowledge-telling and Knowledge-Transforming Process

➔ **T-Test**

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TOTALCKnowledgeTell	106	3.7332	.42838	.04161
TOTALDKNOWTRANSFORM	106	3.7561	.64462	.06261

One-Sample Test						
Test Value = 0						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
TOTALCKnowledgeTell	89.722	105	.000	3.73315	3.6507	3.8157
TOTALDKNOWTRANSFORM	59.990	105	.000	3.75606	3.6319	3.8802

Table 2 shows the t-test for knowledge-telling and knowledge-transforming processes. A one-sample t-test was performed to compare knowledge knowledge-telling and knowledge-transforming processes. There was no significant difference in knowledge knowledge-telling (M=3.73, SD=.43) and knowledge-transforming processes (M=3.76, SD=.05); t=89.722p=.000 & t=59.990;p=.000.

*Findings for Relationship across Variables for Reader Response*

This section presents data to answer research question 5- Is there a relationship across variables for reader response? To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between elements of short-stories, knowledge-telling, and knowledge transforming, data is analysed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in table 3,4 & 5 below.

Table 3

*Correlations between Knowledge Tell vs Knowledge Transform*

**Correlations**

		TOTALCKnowledgeTell	TOTALMEAN KNOWLEDGE Transform
TOTALCKnowledgeTell	Pearson Correlation	1	.701**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	106	106
TOTALMEANKNOWLEDGE Transform	Pearson Correlation	.701**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	106	106

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows there is an association between knowledge-telling and knowledge transforming. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between knowledge-telling and knowledge transforming ( $r=.701^{**}$ ) and ( $p=.000$ ). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a high positive relationship between knowledge-telling and knowledge transforming.

Table 4

*Correlation between Elements of Short Story vs Knowledge Telling*

### Correlations

		TOTALBSelements	TOTALCKnowledgeTell
TOTALBSelements	Pearson Correlation	1	.712 <sup>**</sup>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	106	106
TOTALCKnowledgeTell	Pearson Correlation	.712 <sup>**</sup>	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	106	106

<sup>\*\*</sup>. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows there is an association between elements of short-story and knowledge-telling process. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between elements of short-story and knowledge-telling process ( $r=.712^{**}$ ) and ( $p=.000$ ). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a high positive relationship between elements of short-story and knowledge-telling process.

Table 5

*Correlations between Elements of Short Story vs Knowledge Transfer*

### Correlations

		TOTALBSelements	TOTALCKnowledgeTransform
TOTALBSelements	Pearson Correlation	1	.268 <sup>**</sup>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	106	106
TOTALCKnowledgeTransform	Pearson Correlation	.268 <sup>**</sup>	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	106	106

<sup>\*\*</sup>. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows there is an association between elements of short-story and knowledge-transforming process. Correlation analysis shows that there is a low significant association between elements of short-story and knowledge-transforming process ( $r=.268^{**}$ ) and ( $p=.000$ ). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a low positive relationship between elements of short-story and knowledge-transforming process.

## **Conclusion**

### Summary of Findings

A summary of the findings showed that the content of the short stories benefitted the learners in several ways. They were exposed to different types of characters, resolutions, setting and themes. This is also reported by Ceylan (2016) and Zahra & Farah (2016) who found the use of short stories added activities in the language classes. Learners were exposed to creative uses of the language they are learning.

Next, findings also revealed positive relationships between the elements of knowledge-telling and even knowledge-transforming process. Writing about the short stories included more than re-telling of events or issues. Learners were encouraged to use their thinking skills to discuss issues in the chosen stories. This is also agreed by Boubekour (2021); Youssef (2021) who also found that short stories encouraged the use of critical thinking skills among language learners.

### *Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research*

Short stories are indeed a good addition in the language classroom. Instructors can use short stories to introduce creative ways of using the target language. Short stories can be used in the form of reading aloud, reading comprehension activities and even problem-solving activities. Listening to short stories is another interesting activity that instructors can use to model reading strategies to learners. Learners can practice fluency and even pronunciation through listening to short stories. Future researchers could explore more language related activities using short stories. Future researchers could also explore the influence of different types of short stories to facilitate the learning of different language skills.

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