



الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
جامعة الجيلالي ليايس بسيدي بلعباس
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

كلية الآداب اللغات و الفنون

إذن بطبع مذكرة ماستر

قسم: اللغة الانجليزية

تخصص: أدب و حوار

أنا الممضي أسفله الأستاذ(ة): سبارسي أمينة

المشرف على مذكرة ماستر بعنوان:

Investigating the Impact of Reading Short Stories on the
psychological and emotional development of EFL learners

للتأليف(ة): مناد عائشة

أوافق على طبع المذكرة وتقديمها للمناقشة أو التقييم (الإيداع) بعد أن استوفت الشروط
الضرورية لذلك.

ختم وتوقيع الأستاذ المشرف

سبارسي أمينة

ختم مكتبة الكلية

(بعد إيداع نسخة من المذكرة بصيغة pdf)



تودع هذه الوثيقة بعد ملئها وختمها على مستوى القسم وهي شرط لإيداع المذكرة أو برمجة المناقشة



الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
جامعة الجيلالي لياابس بسيدي بلعباس
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

كلية الآداب اللغات و الفنون

إذن بطرح مذكرة ماستر

قسم: اللغة الانجليزية

تخصص: ادب وحوارة

أنا الممضي أسفله الأستاذ(ة): برارسي أمسية
المشرف على مذكرة ماستر بعنوان:

..... Investigating the impact of Reading short stories on
..... the psychological balance and the emotional development.
..... للطلاب(ة): زيادي نورا أمال

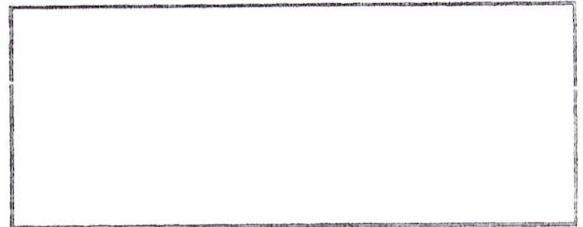
أوافق على طبع المذكرة وتقديمها للمناقشة أو التقييم (الإيداع) بعد أن استوفت الشروط
الضرورية لذلك.

ختم وتوقيع الأستاذ المشرف

..... برارسي أمسية

ختم مكتبة الكلية

(بعد إيداع نسخة من المذكرة بصيغة pdf)



تودع هذه الوثيقة بعد ملئها وختمها على مستوى القسم وهي شرط لإيداع المذكرة أو برمجة المناقشة



PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF SIDI BEL ABBES

جامعة جيلالي ليايس - سيدي بلعباس
DJILLALI LIABES UNIVERSITY - SIDI BEL ABBES
UNIVERSITE DJILLALI LIABES - SIDI BEL ABBES

FACULTY OF LETTERS ,LANGUAGES
AND ART

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

**Investigating the Impact of Reading Short Stories on
the psychological balance and the Emotional
Development of EFL Learners**

*Dissertation submitted as a partial fulfillment of the
requirement of Master's degree in literature and civilization*

Presented by:

Aicha OUARED

Nassima ZIADI

Supervised by:

Dr.BERRARBI Amina

BOARD OF EXAMINERS

<i>Dr. HABIB ZAHMANI Fatima</i>	<i>MCB</i>	<i>Chairperson</i>
<i>Dr.BERRARBI Amina</i>	<i>MCA</i>	<i>Supervisor</i>
<i>Dr. ZELLAT HENRY Imen</i>	<i>MCB</i>	<i>Examiner</i>

2025-2026

Dedications

In the Name of Allah most merciful, Most gracious .

With deep gratitude and sincere appreciation we dedicate this work to those who have been a constant source of love and support.

To our Family your endless encouragement, patience, and sacrifices have guided us every step of the way.

This work is a humble expression of our appreciation to all of you .

Thank you all.

Acknowledgements

Above all we would like to thank allah , the almighty , for providing us with patience and the will to study, reach this level, and complete our thesis.

All praise is due to allah .

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our supervisor Dr. Berrarbi amina for kindly accepting to supervise this research thank for her patience an valuable advice.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the members of the jury all of Dr. Fatima HABIB ZAHMANI and Dr. Imen ZELLAT HENRY for accepting to evaluate our work and for their valuable.

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of reading short stories on the psychological balance and emotional development of English as foreign language EFL learners. While reading has traditionally been emphasized for its linguistic benefits such as vocabulary acquisition, grammar improvement, and reading comprehension this research highlights its significant affective and psychological dimensions. Drawing on theoretical perspectives from positive psychology and developmental bibliotherapy. the study explores how literary narratives can enhance learners emotional well-being, reduce anxiety , and foster empathy and self-awareness.

A mixed methods approach was adopted, combining quantitative data collected through questionnaire with qualitative insights derived from classroom observation. The findings aim to examine learners attitudes toward short stories and analyze how narrative engagement contributes to emotional regulation, motivation, and psychological stability. The study also investigates key narrative processes such as identification , empathy, and narrative transportation, and their role in shaping learners emotional experiences. The results are expected to demonstrate that integrating short stories into EFL classrooms not only supports linguistic development but also promotes emotional growth and psychological balance. This research contributes to the field of language education by bridging the gap between cognitive and affective aspects of learning, emphasizing the importance of addressing learners emotional needs alongside academic achievement.

List of Figures

Figure 3. 1:Students gender distribution	57
Figure 3. 2:Students age distribution.....	58
figure 3. 3:Students academic level.....	59
Figure 3. 4:learners reading level.....	60
Figure 3. 5:students enjoyment of reading short stories.....	61
figure 3. 6:frequency of reading short stories.....	62
figure 3. 7:emotional involvement with characters.....	63
Figure 3. 8:reading short stories and understanding others feelings.....	64
Figure 3. 9:reading short stories and stress reduction.....	65
figure 3. 10 :emotional balance after reading short stories.....	66
figure 3. 11:improvement of emotional expression through reading.....	67
figure 3. 12 :reflection on personal feelings and experiences through short stories.....	68

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a foreign language

SLA : *Second Langage*

Acquisition EQ: Emotional Quotient

FLE: Foreign Language Enjoyment

FLCA: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

FLB: Foreign Language Boredom

CDST: Complex Dynamic Systems Theory

NHS: National Health Service

PP: Positive Psychology

RBS: Readers Beliefs

Contents

<i>Dedications</i>	<i>II</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>III</i>
<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>V</i>
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	<i>VI</i>
<i>Contents</i>	<i>VII</i>
<i>General introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Chapter One</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>1.1. Introduction</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>1.2. Reading in EFL Contexts</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>1.2.1. The Nature of Reading in Foreign Language Learning</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>1.2.2. Models of Reading</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>1.2.2.1. The Bottom-Up Model</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>1.2.2.2. The Top-Down Model</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>1.2.2.3. The Interactive Model</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>1.3. Cognitive and Affective Dimensions of Reading Short Stories</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>1.3.1. COGNITIVE DIMENSIONS of Reading Short Stories</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>1.3.2. Affective Dimensions of Reading Short Stories</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>1.3.3. The Interaction between Cognitive and Affective Dimensions</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>1.4. INTRODUCTION TO SHORT STORIES</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>1.4.1. The origins and main features of the short story</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>1.4.2. Pedagogical Value of Short Stories in EFL Classrooms</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>1.4.3. Characteristics of A Short Story:</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>1.5. The effects of short stories on efl learners' psychological BALANCE</i> <i>:</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>1.6. Conceptualising psychological balance and well-being:</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>1.6.1. Definition of psychological well-being</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>1.7. Affective variables in sla anxiety enjoyment and motivation:</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>1.8. Emotional development in adolescence and young's:</i>	<i>24</i>

1.9.	<i>Emotional Intelligence:</i>	26
1.9.1.	<i>Empathy</i>	27
1.9.2.	<i>Perspective taking in learning language:</i>	28
1.10.	<i>Classroom emotions in EFL learning (enjoyment boredom anxiety):</i>	29
1.11.	<i>Bibliotherapy and narrative based approaches:</i>	32
1.11.1.	<i>concept and types of bibliotherapy clinical vs developmental:</i>	34
1.11.2.	<i>mechanisms of change identification catharsis and insight:</i>	35
1.12.	<i>Reader Engagement and Character Identification:</i>	37
1.13.	<i>Narrative transportation theory and immersion in story worlds:</i>	37
1.14.	<i>Reader character identification empathy and emotional learning :</i>	39
1.15.	<i>Narrative processes in efl Reading :</i>	40
1.16.	<i>Core constructs of positive psychology in education:</i>	41
1.17.	<i>Reading short stories for learners well-being :</i>	43
<i>Chapter Two</i>		46
2.1.	<i>Introduction:</i>	47
2.2.	<i>Research Design:</i>	48
2.3.	<i>Research Setting:</i>	48
2.4.	<i>Population and Sampling:</i>	49
2.4.1.	<i>Population:</i>	49
2.4.2.	<i>Sample:</i>	49
2.5.	<i>Research Instruments:</i>	49
2.5.1.	<i>Questionnaire:</i>	49
2.5.2.	<i>Classroom Observation:</i>	50
2.6.	<i>Data Collection Procedure:</i>	53
2.7.	<i>Qualitative Analysis:</i>	53
2.8.	<i>Validity and Reliability:</i>	53
2.9.	<i>Ethical Considerations:</i>	53
2.10.	<i>Limitations of the Study:</i>	54
2.11.	<i>Conclusion:</i>	54
<i>Chapter Three</i>		55

3.1.	<i>Introduction</i>	56
3.2.	<i>Description of Participants</i>	57
3.3.	<i>Questionnaire analysis</i> :	57
	<i>Question 1: Gender distribution</i>	57
	<i>Question 2 : Age distribution</i>	58
	<i>Question 3 : Students academic level</i>	59
	<i>Question 4 : how would you rate your English reading level ?</i>	60
	<i>Question 5 : do you enjoy reading short stories in English ?</i>	61
	<i>Question 6 : how often do you read short stories In English?</i>	62
	<i>Question 7: when reading short stories do you feel emotionally involved with the characters ?</i>	63
	<i>Question 8 : reading short stories help me understand others feelings and perspectives?</i>	64
	<i>Question 9 : reading short stories help me feel relaxed and less stressed ?</i> ...	65
	<i>Question 10 : I feel more emotionally balanced after reading short story ?</i> ..	66
	<i>Question 11 : reading short stories improve my ability to express my emotions ?</i>	67
	<i>Question 12 : short stories help me reflect on my own feelings and experiences ?</i>	68
	<i>Question 13 : in your opinion , how does reading short stories influence your emotions or psychological well-being ?</i>	69
3.4.	<i>Limitations of the Study:</i>	69
3.5.	<i>Recommendations:</i>	70
3.6.	<i>Conclusion:</i>	72
	<i>General Conclusion</i>	73
	<i>Bibliography</i>	76
	<i>Appendices</i>	80

General Introduction

General introduction

Reading is the central point in acquiring a new language especially for Learners of English as a foreign language. In EFL classroom Reading help learners develop critical .Thinking improve vocabulary and grammar. Grabe (2009) states that reading adding comprehension consists Of interacting cognitive processes Such as word recognition, syntactic parsing, and semantic processing, all of which work together to make meaning .Short stories Enable learners to improve .Their reading fluency.

According to Collie and Slater (1987), literary texts are authentic language Material, meaning they are not written specifically for language teaching but are real examples of Language use by native speakers Short stories can improve Psychological balance giving a safe Place to experience emotions Reading can lead to feel joy or fear through Characters which Help relate to others and reduce social stress.

Emotional development involves the ability to control and understand Emotions (Salovey C Mayer, 1990). Engaging with short stories allows learners to understand characters perspectives, and reflect on their Own feelings, as a result fostering empathy, emotional awareness, And self control. That builds connections between known and new language, enhancing Othe from skills like speaking, and fostering cultural awareness. The present study aims to investigate the impact of reading short stories On the psychological balance and emotional development of EFL Learners. More specifically, it seeks to explore how exposure to short Literary narratives in foreign language classrooms may contribute not Only to linguistic development but also to learners' emotional growth, Well-being, and affective regulation.

The study attempts to examine the role of reading in the EFL context from both cognitive and Affective perspectives. Explore how short stories function as a pedagogical tool in foreign language learning. Analyse the relationship between short story reading and psychological balance ,including factors such as anxiety reduction, Motivation, and emotional well-being. Investigate how narrative

General introduction

processes such as identification, empathy, and narrative transportation foster emotional development in EFL learners. Frame short story reading Within Positive Psychology and developmental bibliotherapy Perspectives.

This study seeks to answer the following questions :

1. How does reading short stories affect the psychological balance of EFL learners?
2. To what extent does reading short stories contribute to the emotional development of EFL learners?
3. What are learners' attitudes toward the use of short stories in the EFL classroom?
4. How can short stories be used as an effective pedagogical tool to support both linguistic and emotional development?

Based on the research questions, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

1. Reading short stories can have a positive effect on the psychological balance of EFL learners.
2. Reading short stories significantly enhances the emotional development of EFL learners.
3. Learners are likely to show positive attitudes toward the use of short stories in the EFL classroom due to their motivational and engaging nature.
4. Short stories are expected to enhance both learners' linguistic skills and emotional development by promoting language practice, empathy, and critical thinking.

Despite the widely acknowledged importance of reading in EFL classrooms, the focus is placed on linguistic outcomes such as vocabulary acquisition and grammatical competence, while the emotional and psychological dimensions of learning remain relatively neglected. Many EFL learners experience anxiety, lack of motivation, and emotional disengagement, which may hinder their overall learning process. Although short stories are frequently used as reading materials, their potential role in enhancing learners' psychological balance and

General introduction

emotional development has not been sufficiently explored. Therefore, there is a need to investigate how integrating short stories into EFL instruction can contribute not only to language proficiency but also to learners' emotional well-being and affective growth.

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The quantitative data will be gathered through a questionnaire administered to EFL learners in order to examine their attitudes and perceptions regarding the use of short stories. The qualitative data will be collected through classroom observation to analyze learners' emotional responses, engagement, and interaction during literary sessions. This combination of methods allows for a comprehensive understanding of the impact of short stories on both psychological balance and emotional development.

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to highlight the importance of integrating emotional and psychological dimensions into foreign language learning. While traditional approaches often prioritize linguistic competence, this study emphasizes the role of literature, particularly short stories, in fostering emotional intelligence and well-being.

This research is grounded in Positive Psychology, which focuses on enhancing learners' well-being, motivation, and emotional balance within the learning process. It also draws on the principles of developmental bibliotherapy, which suggests that reading literary texts can support individuals in understanding and managing their emotions through identification with characters and situations. By combining these two theoretical perspectives, the study seeks to demonstrate how short stories can be used not only as linguistic input but also as a means of promoting psychological balance and emotional development. Therefore, this research contributes to the field of EFL by bridging the gap between language learning and learners' affective needs.

General introduction

This dissertation is divided into two main chapters. Chapter One is devoted to the theoretical framework of the study. It provides an overview of reading in EFL contexts, highlighting its cognitive and affective dimensions. It also examines the role of short stories in language learning and discusses key concepts related to psychological balance and emotional development. In addition, this chapter presents the main theoretical perspectives underpinning the study, namely Positive Psychology and developmental bibliotherapy. Chapter Two focuses on the practical part of the research. It describes the research methodology adopted in this study, including the research design, participants, and data collection tools. It also presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the questionnaire and classroom observation, followed by a discussion of the main findings. Chapter Three is devoted to the analysis and discussion of the findings. It provides an in-depth interpretation of the data obtained from the questionnaire and classroom observation in relation to the research questions and hypotheses. This chapter also discusses the effectiveness of short stories in enhancing learners' linguistic abilities and emotional development, while linking the findings to the theoretical framework and previous studies.

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation is divided into two main chapters. Chapter One is devoted to the theoretical framework of the study. It provides an overview of reading in EFL contexts, highlighting its cognitive and affective dimensions. It also examines the role of short stories in language learning and discusses key concepts related to psychological balance and emotional development. In addition, this chapter presents the main theoretical perspectives underpinning the study, namely Positive Psychology and developmental bibliotherapy. Chapter Two focuses on the practical part of the research. It describes the research methodology adopted in this study, including the research design, participants, and data collection tools. It also presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the questionnaire and classroom observation, followed by a discussion of the main findings.

This study may face several limitations. First, the sample size may be limited to a specific group of EFL learners, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Second, the study is conducted within a particular educational context, which may not represent all EFL settings. Third, time constraints may limit the depth of data collection and analysis. Finally, learners' responses in questionnaires may be influenced by personal biases or lack of full engagement.

1.1. Introduction

Reading plays a central role in second and foreign language acquisition. In EFL classrooms, reading activities contribute significantly to vocabulary development, grammatical awareness, and critical thinking skills. According to William Grabe (2009), reading comprehension involves multiple cognitive processes including word recognition, syntactic parsing, and semantic interpretation that interact to construct meaning .

This chapter establishes the theoretical framework for examining the psychological and emotional impact of reading short stories within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Rather than focusing exclusively on linguistic proficiency, the chapter explores the intersection between language learning and learners' psychological well-being. It reviews the nature and principal models of reading in foreign language learning and highlights the pedagogical value of short stories as effective literary tools in EFL classrooms.

In addition, the chapter introduces the concept of psychological balance in language education and discusses emotional development during adolescence and young adulthood, which represents a critical stage for learners' cognitive and affective growth. Particular attention is given to affective variables in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), including anxiety, enjoyment, and motivation, and how these factors influence learners' engagement with literary texts.

The discussion is further informed by theoretical perspectives from Positive Psychology, which emphasize the role of positive emotional experiences in the learning process. Moreover, the chapter examines bibliotherapy and narrative-based approaches as mechanisms that may support emotional development and self-reflection among learners. It also considers the concepts of narrative transportation and reader-character identification, explaining how these processes can foster empathy, emotional awareness, and deeper engagement

with literary narratives. To ensure conceptual clarity, the chapter is structured into eight major sections that progressively develop and support the theoretical framework guiding the present study.

1.2. Reading in EFL Contexts

Reading plays a central role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, serving not only as a key source of linguistic input but also as a gateway to cultural understanding and critical engagement. For EFL learners, reading extends beyond decoding words and sentences; it involves constructing meaning, interpreting diverse texts, and developing higher-order thinking skills. Within classroom settings, reading activities are often shaped by learners' proficiency levels, instructional goals, and sociocultural backgrounds, making the process both dynamic and context-dependent. Moreover, effective reading instruction in EFL environments requires the integration of appropriate strategies, such as skimming, scanning, and inferencing, alongside the use of authentic and engaging materials. Consequently, reading becomes a multifaceted skill that supports vocabulary acquisition, grammar development, and the overall communicative competence of learners.

1.2.1. The Nature of Reading in Foreign Language Learning

Reading in a foreign language (FL) is a complex cognitive activity that involves more than simply recognizing written symbols. It is a dynamic process in which learners actively construct meaning from texts by integrating linguistic knowledge, prior experiences, and contextual clues. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), reading plays a central role in language development as it provides learners with rich input that supports vocabulary acquisition, grammatical awareness, and cultural understanding.

According to Kenneth Goodman (1967), reading is a psycholinguistic process in which the reader reconstructs an encoded message using syntactic and semantic and foreign languages, the process becomes more demanding in a foreign language due to limited linguistic knowledge, unfamiliar vocabulary, and possible interference from the learner's native language.

In EFL contexts, reading therefore requires learners to engage in an active process of meaning construction rather than merely decoding individual words. It serves as an essential input source through which learners encounter authentic language structures, discourse patterns, and cultural references. As learners progress, they gradually move from “learning to read”, where the focus is primarily on decoding and comprehension skills, to reading to learn,” where reading becomes a tool for acquiring knowledge and expanding intellectual understanding.

Furthermore, effective reading instruction in EFL often combines intensive reading, which focuses on detailed analysis of shorter texts, and extensive reading, which encourages learners to read larger amounts of material for general understanding and enjoyment. Together, these approaches contribute to the development of reading fluency, confidence, and the ability to engage with texts in meaningful ways.

1.2.2. Models of Reading

Research on reading processes developed significantly with the rise of cognitive psychology in the 1970s. During this period, scholars began to investigate the complex mental operations involved in understanding written texts. This development led to the emergence of three principal perspectives on reading: the bottom-up model, the top-down model, and the interactive model (Samuels C Kamil, 1988). Each of these frameworks offers a different explanation of how readers process written language and construct meaning from texts.

1.2.2.1. The Bottom-Up Model

The bottom-up model describes reading as a step-by-step decoding process. According to David Nunan (1991), this approach views reading as the transformation of written symbols into sounds and meanings, beginning with the recognition of

letters, progressing to words, and eventually leading to sentence and text

comprehension. In this model, meaning is constructed through the accurate decoding of linguistic elements.

This perspective focuses primarily on text-based processing, suggesting that comprehension occurs only after readers successfully decode the basic components of language (Dechant, 2013). In other words, understanding a text depends largely on the reader's ability to recognize and process lower-level linguistic units such as letters, words, and grammatical structures

However, the bottom-up model has been widely criticized for placing excessive emphasis on mechanical decoding. Scholars argue that such reliance on lower-level processes may overload working memory and hinder reading fluency (Nunan, 1991; arrison, 2004). Furthermore, this model tends to overlook the role of prior knowledge, contextual clues, and predictive strategies, which are essential elements in the reading process.

1.2.2.2. The Top-Down Model

In contrast to the bottom-up approach, the top-down model views reading as an active and hypothesis-driven process. Influenced by schema theory and Kenneth Goodman's description of reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game," this model emphasizes the importance of the reader's background, expectations, and inferencing abilities in interpreting texts (Anderson, 2000).

From this perspective, readers do not rely solely on textual information. Instead, they use their previous experiences, cultural knowledge, and contextual understanding to generate predictions about the meaning of a text and to confirm or revise these predictions as they read. William Grabe (2009) argues that comprehension improves when readers integrate their personal experiences, purposes, and interests into the reading process.

Nevertheless, critics of the top- down model point out that it does not clearly explain how specific interpretations are formed. Additionally, it may

underestimate the importance of accurate word recognition and linguistic decoding, which remain essential for effective reading comprehension (Samuels C Kamil, 1988).

1.2.2.3. *The Interactive Model*

The interactive model attempts to combine the strengths of both the bottom-up and top-down approaches. It proposes that reading involves the simultaneous interaction of lower-level and higher-level cognitive processes. In other words, readers decode textual information while simultaneously using their prior knowledge, expectations, and cognitive strategies to construct meaning.

Anthony Manzo (1990) explains that readers employ various strategies during reading, such as predicting, verifying, and revising their interpretations as they process the text. Similarly, Dechant (2013) describes the interactive model as an integration of visual decoding and contextual reasoning.

Keith Stanovich (2000) further expands this perspective through the interactive-compensatory hypothesis, which suggests that readers can compensate for weaknesses in one area (for example, phonological processing) by relying on strengths in another area, such as semantic knowledge or contextual understanding.

1.3. Cognitive and Affective Dimensions of Reading Short Stories

Reading short stories in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms engages both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning. From a cognitive perspective, reading literary texts promotes comprehension, vocabulary development, and critical thinking skills. From an affective perspective, it stimulates motivation, emotional engagement, and positive attitudes toward language learning. The integration of these two dimensions contributes to a holistic learning experience, making language acquisition more meaningful and accessible for learners.

Short stories, in particular, provide learners with rich and contextualized language input while simultaneously stimulating imagination and emotional involvement. Through narrative structures, students are encouraged not only to understand linguistic elements but also to interpret characters, themes, and situations. This combination of intellectual and emotional engagement can lead to improved language skills and more positive learning experiences.

1.3.1. COGNITIVE DIMENSIONS of Reading Short Stories

The cognitive dimension of reading refers to the mental processes involved in understanding, interpreting, and analyzing texts. Short stories play an important role in developing these cognitive abilities because they provide meaningful contexts for language use.

vocabulary Acquisition. Short stories offer contextualized exposure to new vocabulary. Through narrative contexts, learners can infer the meanings of unfamiliar words and expressions without relying solely on direct translation. Repeated exposure to lexical items within meaningful contexts helps reinforce vocabulary retention and expands learners' lexical repertoire.

reading Comprehension narrative texts facilitate comprehension by presenting ideas in a structured and coherent way. Elements such as plot development, characters, and sequence of events help learners follow the text more easily. As a result, students can grasp complex ideas and retain information more effectively than when reading isolated or purely informational texts.

Critical Thinking Development short stories encourage learners to move beyond surface-level understanding and engage in deeper analysis. Students are often required to interpret themes, evaluate characters' actions, and identify underlying messages. These activities stimulate higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, interpretation, and evaluation.

language Skill Development Reading literary texts contributes to the development of overall language proficiency. Exposure to authentic language

structures enhances learners' knowledge of grammar, discourse patterns, and stylistic features. Moreover, reading activities can serve as a foundation for developing other language skills, including writing, speaking, and classroom discussion.

Interpretative and analytical skills short stories often contain symbolic meanings implicit messages and cultural references engaging with such texts encourages learners to interpret meaning beyond the literal level and to develop analytical reading strategies . this process strengthens their ability to understand complex texts in the target language .

1.3.2. Affective Dimensions of Reading Short Stories

In addition to cognitive benefits, short stories also influence the affective domain, which includes learners' emotions, attitudes, and motivation.

- **Motivation and Engagement**

Narratives are inherently engaging and enjoyable, making language learning more stimulating compared to purely mechanical grammar exercises.

When students find reading materials interesting, they are more likely to participate actively and invest effort in understanding the text.

- **Emotional Connection**

Literary narratives enable learners to identify with characters and situations, creating emotional connections that deepen their engagement with the text. Through these experiences, students can explore universal human emotions and social realities, which enhances empathy and personal reflection.

- **Positive Attitudes toward Language Learning**

Research suggests that the integration of literature in language classrooms often leads to greater confidence and more positive attitudes toward learning English. When students experience success in understanding and discussing literary texts, their self-confidence and motivation increase.

- **Imagination and Creativity**

Short stories transport learners into different worlds and perspectives. This Agentive dimension stimulates creativity and encourages learners to express their ideas through discussions, writing tasks, and interpretative activities.

1.3.3. The Interaction between Cognitive and Affective Dimensions

The cognitive and affective dimensions of reading are closely interconnected. When learners experience emotional engagement with a story, they are more motivated to focus on the text and invest cognitive effort in understanding it. This relationship links with the concept of the affective filter, which suggests that positive emotions such as enjoyment and interest can reduce anxiety and facilitate language acquisition.

Short stories provide contextualized learning environments where both cognitive and emotional processes work together. Through meaningful narratives, learners simultaneously develop linguistic knowledge, interpretative abilities, and emotional engagement with the text. This combination contributes to deeper comprehension and more effective language learning outcomes.

1.4. INTRODUCTION TO SHORT STORIES

Short stories are characterized by a concise and focused narrative structure. Typically, they present a limited setting, often confined to a single time and place, and revolve around one or two central characters. Due to their brevity, every element in the narrative—whether dialogue, description, or action—plays a significant role in advancing the plot.

Unlike longer literary forms such as novels, short stories generally concentrate on a single central conflict or theme, allowing readers to grasp the narrative more quickly. This concentrated structure makes them particularly suitable for classroom use, as students can read, analyze, and discuss the entire text within a limited time frame. Consequently, short stories provide an effective medium for integrating literary analysis with language learning in EFL contexts.

1.4.1. The origins and main features of the short story

The short story developed from early forms of storytelling such as legends ,myths, folktales, fairytales, fables found in ancient societies around the world these early stories were mainly oral and were passed from generation to another. many examples appear in ancient literature including the Indian epics , the Greek epics ,the Arabian nights. early prose stories by Chaucer and Boccaccio appeared later .followed by moral tales from Steele and Addison .Modern short stories were shaped by writers like Hawthorne and Poe who focused on creating final impression

Main features of the short story :

1 Singleness of the aim and effect: a short story is designed as a single, focused impact on the reader. Every part, plot character or setting is carefully chosen to keep the story clear and powerful.

2 Art of narration: storytelling in a short story need to be engaging events unfold naturally with developments leading the reader to a satisfying and

meaningful conclusion.

3 Plot: The plots have to be coherent to hold the reader's attention. Only the most important events are included.

4 Characterization: characters are usually limited in number and developed with the precision. The main character is often the focus.

5 Setting: the setting provides context for the characters and action limited to specific locations and help to establish the story tone.

1.4.2. Pedagogical Value of Short Stories in EFL Classrooms

Short stories occupy an important place in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy because they combine linguistic richness with pedagogical flexibility. Their relatively short length allows teachers to introduce complete literary texts within limited classroom time, making them particularly suitable for language learning environments. Unlike longer literary genres such as novels, short stories provide concise narratives that can be read, analyzed, and discussed within a few

lessons, which facilitates comprehension and classroom interaction (Collie C Slater, 1987)

One of the major pedagogic advantages of short stories lies in their ability to expose learners to authentic language use. Literary texts often contain natural dialogue, varied sentence structures, and rich vocabulary that reflect real communicative contexts. Through this exposure, learners become familiar with stylistic features of the language such as figurative expressions, narrative discourse, and descriptive language. According to Lazar (1993), literary texts provide meaningful and contextualized language input that supports vocabulary acquisition and language development. Moreover, short stories encourage interactive learning and classroom discussion. Because narratives frequently address universal themes such as identity, relationships, and moral dilemmas,

they stimulate learners' curiosity and invite interpretation. Students can discuss characters' motivations, analyze narrative events, and express personal responses to the story. Such activities promote communicative competence and critical thinking skills in the language classroom (Carter C Long, 1991). In addition, short stories contribute to the development of cultural awareness among EFL learners. Literature reflects the social values, beliefs, and traditions of the societies in which it is produced. By reading literary texts from different cultural backgrounds, learners gain insights into diverse perspectives and develop a deeper understanding of cultural differences. This exposure enhances intercultural competence and broadens learners' worldview (Duff C Maley, 2007).

Finally, short stories facilitate integrated language skill development. Reading literary texts can be extended to various classroom activities such as writing summaries, engaging in group discussions, role-playing scenes, or producing creative interpretations of the narrative. These tasks allow learners to practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills simultaneously while engaging with meaningful content. Consequently, the use of short stories represents a valuable pedagogical resource for promoting both linguistic competence and intellectual engagement in EFL classrooms (Lazar, 1993). While the pedagogical value of short stories in EFL classrooms highlights their role in promoting language development and learner engagement, it is equally important to examine the literary features that make this genre particularly suitable for educational purposes. Understanding the structural and stylistic characteristics of short stories allows educators and researchers to better appreciate how these texts function as effective tools for language learning and literary analysis. Therefore, the following section provides an overview of the short story as a literary genre and explores its main characteristics.

1.1.2.1. Characteristics of A Short Story:

The short story is a distinctive form of prose fiction characterized by brevity, unity, and narrative focus. Unlike longer forms of fiction such as novels, short stories present a condensed narrative that concentrates on a limited number of characters, events, and settings. Because of their relatively short length, short stories aim to produce a single unified effect on the reader, where every element of the narrative contributes to the development of the central theme or emotional impact (Poe, 1842/2004).

One of the main characteristics of short stories is their concise structure. Authors typically focus on a single plot or conflict that unfolds within a restricted time frame and setting. This narrative concentration allows readers to engage quickly with the storyline while maintaining clarity of understanding. As a result, short stories are particularly appropriate for EFL learners, as they provide manageable literary texts that can be read and analyzed within limited classroom time (Lazar, 1993). Another defining feature of short stories is their limited number of characters. Unlike novels that often include complex networks of characters and subplots, short stories generally revolve around one or two central figures. This narrative simplicity enables readers to focus on character development and thematic meaning without being overwhelmed by excessive details (Carter C Long, 1991). Furthermore, short stories often rely on symbolism, imagery, and implicit meanings to convey deeper themes. Due to the condensed nature of the genre, writers frequently use suggestive language and carefully selected details to communicate ideas indirectly. This stylistic economy encourages readers to interpret meanings beyond the literal level and to engage in deeper literary analysis (Abrams C Harpham, 2015). For these reasons, the short story has become an effective literary genre for educational contexts. Its manageable length, narrative clarity, and thematic richness make it

particularly suitable for use in EFL classrooms, where learners benefit from texts that combine linguistic accessibility with literary depth.

1.5. The effects of short stories on efl learners' psychological BALANCE :

Short stories are a therapeutic tool for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, that helps to low anxiety in the classroom environment, by engaging with stories learners can manage stress, feel more motivated, develop empathy and better understanding of their own emotions .

Pathan (2012) mentioned the possible advantage of stories in making learners understand how to develop their emotional balance by reading stories .

Kohan and Pourkalthor (2013) viewed stories as reliable materials which can be used in education to motivate learners, reduce their anxiety and maintain their critical thinking. However, selecting appropriate stories that matches learners needs remain a challenge for teachers when designing materials. Benediktsdóttir (2016) and Guber (2007) suggested that teachers who want to improve students' self-regulation should focus on using story reading in their lessons.

According to Hall (2017), students learn how to solve their different problems by themselves and control their emotions by following the outcomes of the actions of each character .

Stress affects both academic performance and psychological health. therefore, reducing stress in reading contexts is essential for maintaining learners' psychological balance. as being less socially competent, compared to their peers In EFL classrooms, short stories may help reduce academic and reading-related stress by providing engaging and meaningful reading experiences, thereby supporting learners' psychological balance .

Short stories can function as a therapeutic tool for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, as they help reduce anxiety in the classroom environment. By engaging with narratives, learners are able to manage stress,

increase motivation, develop empathy, and gain a better understanding of their own emotions. Pathan (2012) highlights the potential of stories in helping learners develop emotional balance through reading. Similarly, Kohan and Pourkalthor (2013) view stories as reliable educational materials that motivate learners, reduce anxiety, and foster critical thinking. However, selecting appropriate stories that match learners' needs remains a challenge for teachers when designing instructional materials. Benediktsdóttir (2016) and Guber (2007) suggest that teachers who aim to enhance students' self-regulation should incorporate story reading into their lessons. According to Hall (2017), students learn to solve problems independently and regulate their emotions by observing the consequences of characters' actions. Since stress affects both academic performance and psychological health, reducing stress in reading contexts is essential for maintaining learners' psychological balance. In EFL classrooms, short stories may therefore contribute to learners' psychological balance by providing engaging and meaningful reading experiences that lower academic and reading-related stress.

1.6. Conceptualising psychological balance and well-being:

1.6.1. Definition of psychological well-being

Psychological well-being is a complex and multidimensional concept. Research, particularly in the field of physical health, has examined various positive emotional states and cognitive evaluations associated with well-being. Psychological well-being is defined as the subjective experience of positive emotions and thoughts. These include positive feelings such as calmness and satisfaction, as well as emotions like excitement. However, more existential dimensions of well-being, such as finding meaning in life, may involve neutral or even negative emotions, which can ultimately contribute to the development of positive thoughts and feelings over time. The conceptualisation of psychological well-being has been more clarified through experimental research.

Through the use of factor analysis of Cantril's Self-Anchoring Scale and Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being, Keyes et al.(2002) identified two related aspects: hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. The eudaimonic aspect includes. Autonomy ,purpose of life ,personal growth, positive relationships and self acceptance. On the other hand,the hedonic aspect consists of positive affect, life satisfaction and the absence of negative affect. Keyes (2002)noted that eudaimonic aspects, which focus on deeper life related themes ,show weaker relationships with the hedonic measures like pleasure and happiness.

In educational contexts psychological balance can be understood as a dynamic state derived from psychological well-being. It reflects learners' ability to maintain emotional stability, manage stress, regulate negative emotions, and maintain positive engagement in the learning process. In EFL classrooms, where students often experience language anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and performance pressure, maintaining psychological balance becomes particularly important. Therefore, develop both hedonic aspects of well-being (such as positive emotions and enjoyment) and eudaimonic aspects (such as personal growth, self-confidence, and a sense of achievement) may support to learners' overall psychological balance and academic development.

1.7. Affective variables in sla anxiety enjoyment and motivation:

Language acquisition is a complex process which develops either consciously or unconsciously under different conditions. In educational institutions. It depends on teaching methods and the type of exposure students receive in the classroom. The effectiveness of English language insctuctionom is related to how the language is taught and what⁸ is presented,as well as to learner's individual capacities for acquisition

.Learners of a second language may face difficulties as they called them affective or filters in their acquisition process of the second language,and this

may effect their language proficiency and reduce their ability to communicate effectively . Affective variables may play a role that is equally important in second language acquisition. Schumann (1998) argues that emotion forms the foundation of most, if not all, cognitive processes and suggests that differences in success in SLA are largely influenced by emotional factors. He further maintains that emotions act as a filter through which learning and cognition occur.

For decades there was an exclusive focus on negative emotions in second language acquisition, particularly anxiety, especially following the influential study by Eliane Horwitz and colleagues (1986) Foreign language classroom anxiety was defined as a specific combination of self perceptions,beliefs,emotions,and behaviors associated with language learning in classroom contexts.

According to Michael Eysenck et al.(2007),anxiety exposes individuals to distracting ideas that reduce the efficiency of cognitive processing. Such distractions including fear of failure and concern about peers' judgment (Dewael,2013)may reduce learner's willingness to communicate (zhou et al.,2020).However, with the rise of positive Psychology in SLA ,the field has shifted from focusing on negative emotions to also examining positive emotions ,particularly foreign language enjoyment (FLE),which refers to the experience of pleasure and satisfaction during the process of learning a foreign language (Lee,2020).Positive emotions play an important role in learner's well-being (MacIntyre et al.2019).they are considered essential in developing student's motivation, supporting the language learning process. Enjoyment appears to influence the learning experience both in the classroom and in environments where the target language is used.

Positive feelings toward the teacher, classmates, and one's own sense of security can facilitate and the learning process.

Boudreau et al. (2018) describe foreign language enjoyment (FLE) as a complex and emotional state that differs from simple pleasure. Moreover, FLE and foreign language anxiety (FLA) are conceptualized as two distinct yet related constructs .

A learner's motivation and reasons for studying a language play an important role in the level of proficiency. Research shows that motivation is a multifaceted concept.

It includes different purposes for learning, such as raveling, building friendships personal growth and it includes both intrinsic and extrinsic components.

It is difficult to provide a single, clear definition of motivation because scholars continue to develop new perspectives and concepts. As Zoltán Dörnyei(1996)explains ,the field is not confused by a shortage of motivation theories but by the large number of different theories proposed from psychological viewpoints.

Researchers have found that motivation is not fixed ,but changes over time in response to learner's social and c motivation, but as their language proficiency increases, their reasons for studying psychological needs .Schmidt (1996)observed that learners often begin with intrinsiange to practical purposes.

1.8. Emotional development in adolescence and young's:

Emotion is a mental state that comes from the way we think and feel about a person or situation Emotions are psychological responses or feelings triggered by different situations. They can be positive or negative, primary or secondary Emotional development means learning what emotions and feelings are, why they happen ,and what effects they have .it also involves understanding other's emotions and managing one's behavior in a rational way This process begin around six weeks after birth, when the baby shows a social smile .toddlers

understand shame and pride, preschoolers understand fear ,anger ,happiness .adolescence is emotional stage and can be stressful Emotional quotient (EQ) measures emotional intelligence. Healthy emotional development is essential because it helps individuals become self-aware, manage themselves, build relationships, and make responsible decisions. Therefore, teachers work and support children's overall development so they grow into responsible and well-behaved adults.

Stages of emotional development :

emotional development begins with basic expressions such as smiling, which usually appears around six weeks of age .crying is their primary way of expression feelings by the age of 3_6 months, babies start to laugh, using it as another form of emotional expression

1.8.1. during the toddler years, children begin to experience emotions connected to self-awareness and independence. At this stage they start to recognise feelings like shame and pride

1.8.2. Preschoolers learn to express emotions verbally through social interactions.

1.8.3. At school age ,children develop empathy and have a better understanding of emotional conflicts. They also start acquiring skills to handle challenging emotional situations and learn to control negative emotions when needed.

1.8.4. Adolescence is a particularly intense period for emotional development. Teenagers experience new negative emotions.

The importance of emotional development :

Developed countries place great emphasis on social and emotional learning, recognizing that early development of these skills is essential for building a meaningful future and a productive society. Many institutions implement programs to help individuals understand and manage their emotions. Develop respectful and caring relationships, and solve conflicts without violence.

Researchers indicate that high-quality social and emotional programs can show aggressions and improve children's emotional and social understanding.

Vicki Zakrzewski, Education Director at the Greater Good Science Center, University of California, Berkeley, explains that these core skills are fundamental for well-being and for creating a meaningful and successful life. However, they must be actively developed, as the environment can affect their development. Practicing emotional regulation and related skills helps children develop prosocial habits, enabling them to interact positively with others and succeed.

1.9. Emotional Intelligence:

Emotional Intelligence was once believed to be a fixed trait ,but research shows that it can be learned and improved Unlike IQ,which is stable ,emotional intelligence is flexible and can develop over time .it refers to the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions as well recognize and respond to the emotions of others .

The concept known a recognition in 1990 through the work of Peter Salovey and John D.Mayer, who described it as a set of skills used to guide thinking and behavior later, Daniel Goleman argued that emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of success. He identified five key components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and empathy .A higher EQ score reflects a greater level of emotional intelligence ,meaning that the individual is better able to understand and regulate their emotions ,handle social situations effectively, communicate clearly. While ,a lower EQ score suggests limited emotional intelligence and may face challenges in identifying and managing emotions. Emotional Intelligence plays a role in many areas of life ,including personal relationships ,professional environments and psychological well-being .Some strategies to develop emotional intelligence include self-reflection, self-

awareness, practicing mindfulness ,seeking feedback from other people and professional support when it is necessary .Salovey and Mayer (1990) introduced the concept of emotional intelligence and described it as the ability to perceive, regulate, and use emotions effectively. Over time ,emotional intelligence become the attention of many researchers and now it is regarded as essential factor in many areas of human life .many models of emotional intelligence have proposed, each offering a different perspective on how the concept can be understood and studied .The ability model proposed by Mayer and Salovey emphasizes emotional intelligence as a cognitive ability, focusing on an individual's capacity to receive, understand and use emotions to guide thinking and behavior. In the other hand, Goleman's mixed model highlights the importance of both intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies ,Bar-On's model of emotional social intelligence defines EL as a combination of emotional and social skills that contribute to personal achievement and well-being. Petrides and furnham's trait model focuses on individual differences in emotional experiences and the way emotions are expressed.

1.9.1. Empathy

Empathy is considered a crucial psychological construct in second language learning, as it enables learners to understand and internalize the emotional and communicative experiences of others. According to Guiora et al. (1972), empathy is defined as a process of comprehension in which individuals temporarily merge their self-boundaries with those of others, allowing an immediate emotional understanding that is later processed cognitively. In the context of language learning, this ability plays a significant role in facilitating learners' adaptation to a new linguistic and cultural system. The authors argue that acquiring a second language involves not only mastering grammatical and lexical structures but also adopting a new identity, particularly in spoken communication. Empathy, therefore, enhances learners' capacity to approximate

native-like pronunciation by increasing their sensitivity to subtle interpersonal and emotional cues. Moreover, it helps reduce psychological barriers such as anxiety, fear of failure, and resistance to unfamiliar sounds. Empirical findings from their study confirm that empathy is positively correlated with authenticity of pronunciation, making it a strong predictor of success in second language acquisition. Consequently, empathy contributes to both the cognitive and affective dimensions of learning, supporting more effective and meaningful language use.

1.9.2. Perspective taking in learning language:

Perspective taking originally comes from the field of visual perception, where it refers to the relationship between a person who perceives and what is being perceived. In social and educational contexts, it means the ability to understand another person's thoughts, feelings, and viewpoints.

In language learning, perspective taking plays a central role in developing effective communication skills. When learners try to understand how others think and feel, they improve their social interaction abilities. This skill encourages important interpersonal values such as respect for different viewpoints, openness to diverse interpretations, flexibility, tolerance, and non-judgmental attitudes. These qualities help learners interact more successfully in classroom discussions and real-life communication.

Research shows that perspective taking strengthens social competence. It helps individuals interpret ambiguous social cues, respond appropriately in conversations, and adjust their behavior according to others' expectations.

In the context of language learning, this ability supports learners in understanding implied meanings, cultural references, and the intentions behind spoken or written messages. It also contributes to academic success because interpreting meaning accurately is essential for reading comprehension, speaking, and problem-solving tasks.

Perspective taking is closely connected to empathy. Scholars such as Mark H. Davis have distinguished between cognitive perspective taking (understanding others' thoughts) and affective perspective taking (understanding others' feelings). Both dimensions are important in language classrooms. Cognitive perspective taking helps learners interpret different opinions and arguments, while affective perspective taking enhances empathy and cooperative behavior. When learners perceive similarities between themselves and others, they tend to show more understanding and develop stronger social connections. This ability is also important in multicultural and multilingual settings. Researchers like Y. Wang describe "ethn

cultural empathy" as the capacity to understand and emotionally relate to people from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds. In foreign language learning, this is especially relevant because language and culture are deeply interconnected.

Perspective taking helps reduce stereotypes and prejudice by encouraging learners to see situations from different cultural viewpoints. Studies by Adam D. Galinsky and Gordon B. Moskowitz suggest that adopting others' perspectives can reduce biased thinking and improve intergroup attitudes.

Moreover, perspective taking supports conflict management in classroom interactions. When learners are able to understand differing viewpoints, misunderstandings decrease, and cooperation increases. This contributes to a positive and supportive learning environment.

1.10. Classroom emotions in EFL learning (enjoyment boredom anxiety):

Research on emotions in foreign-language learning has undergone an important transformation over the past decade with the adoption of Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) Complex Dynamic Systems

Theory. Scholars working within this perspective argue that emotions which appear stable over long periods (such as months or years) may actually fluctuate

considerably over short periods (seconds, minutes, or days), and individual learners do not necessarily follow the overall group pattern.

Another key idea is that variables cannot be separated into fixed causes and effects because they continuously influence one another within a specific context. Internal learner factors interact with environmental conditions, producing personal emotional patterns that evolve over time.

An example comes from a Romanian EFL learner observed in Dewaele and Pavelescu: although she typically showed low foreign-language anxiety and high enjoyment and participated actively, her behavior changed when a substitute teacher replaced the regular one. She disliked the lesson, felt no enjoyment, and chose not to speak.

This demonstrates that learners' emotions in language classes are shaped not only by long-term traits (motivation, attitudes, previous experiences) but also by teacher behavior and unpredictable situational factors, which can suddenly increase or decrease enjoyment, anxiety, or boredom

The notion of Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) was introduced by Jean-Marc Dewaele and Peter D. MacIntyre (2014) and is grounded in principles from Positive Psychology, particularly the concept of flow developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990). In their later work, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) described FLE as a multifaceted emotion arising from the Interaction between challenge and perceived competence. It reflects the human tendency to seek achievement when facing demanding tasks.

Enjoyment, in this sense, is more than simple pleasure; it is deeper, more meaningful, and less fleeting. It occurs when learners not only satisfy basic expectations but go beyond them to achieve something novel or unexpected.

Within this framework, FLE is positioned along a continuum of positive emotional valence, ranging from mild enjoyment to an optimal state comparable to flow. The authors did not explicitly address the arousal dimension of emotion,

but they suggested that FLE can be experienced in both moderately stimulating activities (such as quiet reading or writing) and highly activating situations (such as classroom debates or public speaking).

Alongside enjoyment, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) also examined Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA), a concept originally defined by Elaine K. Horwitz and colleagues (1986) as a specific combination of self-perceptions, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors linked to the distinctive nature of language learning. Later, MacIntyre (2017) emphasized that FLCA functions both as an internal psychological condition and as a socially constructed phenomenon. It emerges from the interaction between learners' cognitive and emotional processes and the situational demands of the classroom, including the presence of others.

Horwitz (2017) further argued that FLCA contains both trait-like and state-like qualities. Although it is not innate, it can gradually develop in learners who repeatedly experience anxiety in language classes, eventually becoming a recurring reaction whenever they are required to use the foreign language. One major source of this anxiety lies in learners' limited proficiency, which may prevent them from expressing their authentic selves as easily as they do in their first language. Communicating through a language that is not fully mastered can therefore generate significant tension.

At high levels, FLCA may produce physical symptoms such as sweating, increased heart rate, or dry mouth. These reactions can inhibit participation, reduce concentration, and interfere with the processing and retention of new information, as noted by Peter D. MacIntyre and Tammy Gregersen (2012).

A third classroom emotion that has recently received growing scholarly attention is Foreign Language Boredom (FLB). In general, boredom is viewed as a negative psychological and emotional condition characterized by dissatisfaction, frustration, irritation, inattentiveness, reduced motivation to

continue pursuing goals, and decreased energy (Kruk C Zawodniak, 2018). Kamil Kruk and Jacek Zawodniak describe it as an unpleasant experience that weakens learners' engagement in learning tasks.

Similarly, Chunyang Li and colleagues (2020) conceptualized FLB as a Negative emotion marked by very low activation or arousal, emerging during classroom activities that are either excessively demanding or insufficiently challenging.(P.12)2

1.11. Bibliotherapy and narrative based approaches:

- Bibliotherapy, often referred to in the United Kingdom as Reading Therapy, has gained increasing recognition among healthcare professionals, libraries, bookshops, local authorities, and universities. These institutions acknowledge the value of providing guided reading materials to support individuals' well-being.

NHS Scotland characterizes it as a process of developing personal insight and shared meaning making. Today, bibliotherapy is applied in diverse contexts. It has been used to address issues such as children's self-esteem, living with chronic illness, anxiety, substance misuse, and relationship difficulties, among many others.

The success of bibliotherapy is strongly connected to the broader influence of reading on individuals. Many personal accounts emphasize the deep emotional and transformative effects that books can have on readers.

Reading is closely connected with reflection, as literary texts often stimulate empathy and foster emotional awareness. Through characters and narratives, literature can shape feelings and offer meaningful examples of personal development. The emotional power of literary works has been recognized for centuries (Pehrsson C McMillen, 2007). Prominent writers such as Emily Dickinson and C.S. Lewis have also appreciated the significance of books, highlighting the pleasure, comfort, and sense of escape they provide (Rubin,

1978). In different cultural contexts, reading has consistently been viewed as a source of personal growth and enrichment. Furthermore, the long-standing history of governmental restriction of books illustrates the acknowledged strength and impact of the written word.

NHS Scotland characterizes it as a process of developing personal insight and shared meaning making. Today, bibliotherapy is applied in diverse contexts. It has been used to address issues such as children's self-esteem, living with chronic illness, anxiety, substance misuse, and relationship difficulties, among many others.

The success of bibliotherapy is strongly connected to the broader influence of reading on individuals. Many personal accounts emphasize the deep emotional and transformative effects that books can have on readers.

Reading is closely connected with reflection, as literary texts often stimulate empathy and foster emotional awareness. Through characters and narratives, literature can shape feelings and offer meaningful examples of personal development. The emotional power of literary works has been recognized for centuries (Pehrsson C McMillen, 2007). Prominent writers such as Emily Dickinson and C.S. Lewis have also appreciated the significance of books, highlighting the pleasure, comfort, and sense of escape they provide (Rubin, 1978). In different cultural contexts, reading has consistently been viewed as a source of personal growth and enrichment. Furthermore, the long-standing history of governmental restriction of books illustrates the acknowledged strength and impact of the written word.

- Narrative-oriented methods are grounded in storytelling and lived experiences as ways to help individuals build meaning, cultivate empathy, and promote constructive change, particularly in the fields of education, psychology, and research. This perspective encourages people to separate themselves from their problems, enabling them to examine their challenges more objectively and

to reshape their personal narratives in a more positive and empowering manner. These methods are guided by central ideas such as viewing problems as separate from the person, interpreting life events to create meaning, reinforcing a sense of personal control, and emphasizing resilience and individual strengths. They are used across various domains, including narrative therapy (to support psychological well-being), narrative research (to explore experiences through personal stories), and narrative learning (to employ storytelling as a means of understanding and structuring knowledge).

1.11.1. concept and types of bibliotherapy clinical vs developmental:

- Bibliotherapy is a therapeutic and educational approach that uses reading materials to help children cope with emotional, psychological, and developmental challenges. This section presents the concept of bibliotherapy and discusses its two main types, developmental and clinical bibliotherapy, highlighting their characteristics and applications.
- Developmental bibliotherapy aims to help children understand normal developmental changes and everyday life challenges before they develop into serious problems. Abdullah (2002) and Pardeck (1994) suggest that this type of bibliotherapy is commonly used in educational settings, where carefully selected literary texts support children's emotional awareness and personal growth. By addressing common experiences such as fear, friendship, or loss, developmental bibliotherapy encourages children to reflect on their feelings in a safe and supportive environment.
- In contrast, clinical bibliotherapy is designed to assist individuals, particularly children, in coping with serious emotional or psychological difficulties. This form of bibliotherapy is implemented in structured therapeutic settings and requires the supervision of trained professionals such as therapists, counselors, or psychiatrists (Abdullah, 2002; Cook et al., 2006). Clinical

bibliotherapy often involves the use of targeted self-help materials as part of a broader treatment plan, rather than as an independent intervention.

- Although both developmental and clinical bibliotherapy rely on the use of reading materials, they differ significantly in their purpose and application. Developmental bibliotherapy is preventive and educational in nature, making it more suitable for classroom and school contexts. Clinical bibliotherapy, while potentially effective for addressing serious emotional issues, is limited to clinical environments due to the need for professional supervision.

1.11.2. mechanisms of change identification catharsis and insight:

It was proposed that narrative emotions—such as identifying with a character and becoming immersed in the story world—and aesthetic emotions—like noticing and valuing stylistic elements—would enhance readers' experiences of catharsis and insight following the reading.

Identification is the foundational, first stage of Bibliotherapy, where a reader connects with a character facing similar emotional, behavioral, or situational challenges, this connection creates a shock of recognition helping the reader feel understood and less alone. There is notable ambiguity and misunderstanding in psychological and psychotherapeutic writings regarding how catharsis should be defined, practiced, or evaluated. The term originates from the Greek *kathairein*, meaning to cleanse or purge. According to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (1993), catharsis refers to:

(a) an emotional purification—particularly of feelings such as pity and fear—often achieved through artistic experience; (b) a cleansing that leads to spiritual renewal and relief from tension; and (c) the resolution of a psychological complex by bringing it into awareness and allowing it to be expressed. From the early development of psychotherapy, through the rise of humanistic psychology and into the 1980s, many body-centered therapeutic approaches viewed catharsis as a central objective. This belief led to frequent—and sometimes exclusive—

use of techniques designed to provoke cathartic release. These methods were favored for several reasons: they were striking and distinctive, appeared to produce rapid outcomes, and often left clients feeling better at the end of a session, while therapists experienced a sense of effectiveness. In body-oriented psychotherapy, cathartic experiences typically involve the release of accumulated tension and the spontaneous loosening of long-held muscular and emotional patterns. Such release is often accompanied by the breakdown or softening of entrenched character defenses and energetic blocks, allowing suppressed emotions to surface and seek expression. This expression may occur physically—through gestures—or vocally, such as crying or laughter, and sometimes verbally, in the form of words or short statements. The overall effect is one of surrender and relief: tension subsides, restoration follows, and previously restrained impulses or thoughts—only faintly recognized before—are finally allowed to emerge and move toward resolution.

Creative and therapeutic moments of realization — similar to a sudden discovery — mark phases in a person's growing understanding of the self as a whole. These realizations do not gradually emerge through intense concentration or mental struggle, when awareness is tight and restricted. Instead, they appear unexpectedly in states of relaxation, when awareness becomes broad and open. In that relaxed state, a person recognizes that the tensions once believed to be purely intellectual actually involve the entire self. However, individuals who carry deep inner conflicts often fear relaxation. To avoid confronting the full emotional weight of these conflicts, modern people narrow their awareness rigidly to the intellectual level. They accumulate knowledge but disconnect from feeling. By overvaluing intellect, contemporary individuals deceive themselves, confusing rigid intellectualization with healthy thinking. Rather than using the mind to deepen understanding, widen awareness, and connect with others, they

retreat into abstract reasoning to escape genuine insight, restrict experience, and avoid meaningful human interaction — including the productive tension that stimulates vitality and creativity.

The modern difficulty in truly relaxing (as opposed to merely escaping), living creatively, and understanding unity, integration, and interdependence arises from an unwillingness to acknowledge and emotionally experience the contradictions embedded in one's overall way of living.

1.12. Reader Engagement and Character Identification:

Reader engagement is a central component of literary reading, particularly in the context of EFL, where emotional and cognitive involvement can significantly enhance comprehension and motivation. One of the strongest drivers of engagement is character identification, a process through which readers align themselves emotionally, psychologically, or morally with fictional characters. According to Louise Rosenblatt, reading is a transactional act in which meaning emerges from the interaction between the reader and the text rather than from the text alone (Rosenblatt, 1978). When learners identify with characters, they draw upon their own experiences, emotions, and cultural backgrounds, thereby transforming reading into a personally meaningful activity. This identification fosters empathy, sustained attention, and interpretive depth, making literary texts more accessible to EFL learners. Research indicates that character-driven narratives encourage readers to infer motives, evaluate actions, and reflect on moral dilemmas, all of which contribute to higher-order thinking and deeper engagement with the text.

1.13. Narrative transportation theory and immersion in story worlds:

Gerrig (1993) introduced the concept of transportation as a theoretical framework for explaining how individuals become deeply involved in narrative worlds. He compared this experience to physical travel, People who are fully

engaged with a story, they mentally enter a new environment created by the author they may experience changes in their attitudes , perspectives or Building on this idea.

Narrative transportation refers to a state in which an individual's cognitive and emotional resources—such as attention, feelings, and mental imagery—are strongly focused on the events of the narrative (Green C Brock, 2000; 2002). When individuals are transported, they experience a sense of immersion in the story, respond emotionally to its events, from a vivid mental representations of its characters and settings. This experience can occur through oral storytelling, written narratives, and audiovisual forms. Importantly Narrative transportation represents a relatively benign experiential state in real-world contexts. It involves cognitive and emotional engagement with a story, as well as the construction of mental imagery (Green C Brock, 2000). Transportation can be described as a flow-like experience in which individuals may lose track of Time They focus deeply on the narrative world . Nevertheless, recent research emphasizes that transportation is not a static condition but a dynamic process (Tchernev et al., 2023). Audiences may shift mentally between reflecting on their own lives and engaging with the narrative world, and this interaction appears to enrich the narrative experience.

Narrative characters are also central to in the reader engagement. Readers or viewers may form connections with characters in multiple ways, such as identifying with them, perceiving similarities, developing affection, or even viewing them as social Partners. Readers are considered immersed in a narrative when they engage with it as though they were participants in the story. Immersion can be understood as “ state of cognitive Emotional and imaginative engagement with the fictional world “ (Hartung et al., 2017b). However, this experience is not uniform across readers, as the nature and intensity of

immersion are shaped by individual preferences (Hartung et al., 2017a) as well as by a person's capacity for imagination and empathy.

1.14. Reader character identification empathy and emotional learning :

Character identification is considered one of the deepest forms of narrative engagement, involving cognitive, emotional, and motivational components. While it is connected to other engagement processes such as narrative transportation, identification represents a distinct psychological phenomenon. A range of factors related to both the audience and the narrative—such as perceived similarity between readers and characters or the narrator's perspective—are believed to enhance the likelihood of identification. Character identification has long been regarded as central to literary engagement and interpretation, with early critics referring to it as ‘‘ a key to literature ‘’ (Bley, 1945 ,p.26) . As a significant experience identification is widely recognized as an important draw for reading and a central element in the aesthetic appreciation of literary texts (Alsup ,2015;Keen ,2011). Nonetheless, scholarly interest in character identification is not limited to literary studies. Researchers across disciplines, including psychology, communication, and education to gain greater understanding of how and to what effect do people relate to characters due to the inter-disciplinary and the multi-faceted nature of this body of work, the concept of ‘identification’’ has been used to describe various psychological modes of character engagement, leading to a lack of conceptual clarity (Tukachinsky C Tokunaga, 2013).

Empathy can be defined as the ability to be psychologically responsive to understand the emotional states and perspectives of another person (Decety C Lamm,2006;SzalavitzC Perry,2010).

- Empathy is categorized into two main forms : affective empathy and cognitive empathy (Davis,1983) Affective empathy refers to the capacity to comprehend another person's feelings without experiencing the same situation,

while cognitive empathy involves the ability to identify and recognize others mental states (Davis,1983).

- Emotional learning in reading combines Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) with literacy instruction, enabling learners to identify, interpret, and regulate emotions while fostering empathy and perspective-taking. Through engagement with literary characters and their experiences, readers enhance both textual understanding and social–emotional competencies, making reading a meaningful process for personal insight and emotional growth.

Although character identification and empathy are frequently associated with positive educational and emotional outcomes, scholars warn against assuming a direct or universal relationship between identification and emotional growth. Keen (2011), for instance, argues that empathic engagement with fictional characters does not automatically translate into lasting empathic dispositions, suggesting the need for more context-sensitive and pedagogically grounded investigations.

1.15. Narrative processes in efl Reading :

Research on readers' beliefs (RBs) highlights their significant influence on how readers process narrative texts, a concept particularly relevant in EFL contexts. Schraw and Bruning (1996) argue that readers hold various beliefs that shape engagement with texts, including beliefs about reading ability, text structure, author credibility, self-concept, and personal ideologies (Shell, Murphy, C Bruning, 1989; Zwaan, 1994; Dole C Sinatra, 1994; Athey, 1985; Wade, Thompson, C Watkins, 1994). These beliefs interact with a mental framework known as "text epistemology," which mediates the transactional relationship between reader, author, and text (Wineburg, 1991). Studies indicate that these epistemic beliefs affect reading strategies and narrative comprehension: professional readers tend to adopt a critical perspective, questioning and transforming text, whereas less experienced readers are less critical and more

accepting of content (Wineburg, 1991; Wade et al., 1994). Schraw (2000) further demonstrated that transactional beliefs positively relate to the number and sophistication of readers' responses to narrative texts, while transmission beliefs show no significant effect. Similarly, Dai and Wang (2007) reported that transactional beliefs enhance comprehension of both narrative and expository texts, whereas transmission beliefs may hinder comprehension; however, both belief types correlate positively with the need for cognition, suggesting they occupy related but distinct epistemic dimensions.

Collectively, these findings simply that EFL learners' epistemic and transactional beliefs can shape how they engage with narratives, interpret characters, and construct meaning from texts.

1.16. Core constructs of positive psychology in education:

Although the positive psychology movement officially emerged around two decades ago, the theories and ideas of a positive-oriented psychology are not entirely new, dating back to decades ago and even to the beginnings of psychology. One of the earliest references to a positive orientation in psychology is attributed to William James who discussed the concept of a healthy mindset years ago (Joseph and Linley, 2006). Nevertheless, positive psychology in its contemporary form is generally dated to 1998; When Martin Seligman, the founder of positive psychology and then president of the American Psychological Association, introduced the concept. Seligman argued that psychologists should refocus on the main missions of psychology, particularly helping individuals recognize and develop own potentials, and broadening the definition of psychology to include positive mental health, rather than the absence of illness (Seligman, 2002).

Positive psychological Principles has been applied across various domains of life, including treatment, parenting, marital life and education (Bradley and

Hojjat, 2017; Davidet al., 2017; Samavi et al., 2019; Waters et al., 2021). Education play a crucial role .It is one of the important tools of societies in preparing individuals for the future world .(Chodkiewicz and Boyle, 2017; Shoshani and Slone, 2017).one prominent educational framework informed by positive psychology is the positive Schooling approach which emphasizes individual support, trust, and respect for differences. Within such positive learning environment, teachers set appropriate goal for each student to be engaged in learning and help other students achieve the goals. As a result , learners level of Hope and self efficacy increase simultaneously (Deb, 2018).Within the field of positive psychology in education, several key constructs have been identified, including academic hope, self-efficacy, mental wellbeing, and quality of life in school. Empirical studies have highlighted the beneficial effects of these constructs on students' academic, motivational, and emotional outcomes (Rand, 2009; Honicke and Broadbent, 2016; Esmaeili et al.,2019). In addition ,Research has shown that positive psychological factors on teachers 'performance (Sezgin and Erdogan, 2015; Poulou et al., 2019). However, the theory of hope (Snyder,2000), and the theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006) Are two key frameworks that have strongly Influenced students' academic and motivational behaviors. Self-efficacy, in particular, has been examined within cognitive and motivational domains, and its effects on academic and motivational variables have been well established. It refers to an individual's belief in his or her ability to learn or perform a task at an acceptable level (Maddux C Gosselin, 2012). Academic self-efficacy is defined as Refers an individual's belief in thier capability to successfully carry out academic tasks or reach specific educational goals (Schunk and Pajares, 2002). This beliefs significantly influence students task choices ,ongoing engagement ,and academic outcomes (Schunk and DiBenedetto, 2021).Moreover, research has consistently shown that academic

self-efficacy influence learners motivation, learning processes and academic achievement (Usher and Pajares, 2006; Yusuf, 2011). In addition to self-efficacy hope has been widely recognized as a positive psychological construct that affects individuals' cognitive and emotional outcomes. High levels of hope have been linked to psychological wellbeing, effective coping with stress, adjusting to emotional distress, self-esteem, social competence, self-efficacy, and academic achievement. According to Snyder's theory, hope represents a positive expectation for achieving goals and consists of two components namely, agency and path. Agency thinking reflects the motivational drive that encourages individuals to pursue their goals, whereas path thinking involves identifying and generating appropriate paths to the goal (Snyder, 2000).

Hope is not merely a goal-oriented cognitive process, it is also a structured hierarchical system of beliefs regarding one's capacity to engage in such process. These beliefs operate into three specific levels: the general level or trait hope, domain-specific hope, and goal-specific hope (Snyder et al., 1997). Individuals with high levels of general hope are also hopeful in most areas of life. However, among students, discrepancies often emerge between two levels of hope. For instance, a student may exhibit high overall life hope while experiencing low hope in a particular academic subject. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of students' educational and life goals requires consideration of this hierarchical organization of hope-related beliefs. Since these levels are interrelated, strengths or weaknesses at one level may influence the others.

1.17. Reading short stories for learners well-being :

The ability to read and understand texts in English is a fundamental skill in foreign language learning. In EFL contexts, reading supports not only language acquisition but also academic development and access to global knowledge. Reading involves more than decoding words; it requires interpreting implicit

meanings, making inferences, evaluating ideas, and reflecting on messages. These higher-order thinking skills contribute to learners' cognitive development and encourage active engagement with texts.

Through regular exposure to meaningful reading materials, learners expand their vocabulary, internalize grammatical structures, and develop discourse awareness. Beyond these cognitive dimensions, literary texts— particularly short stories— engage learners emotionally, enabling them to relate textual experiences to their own lives and supporting psychological well-being. Short stories are especially valuable in EFL settings because of their manageable length and focused narrative structure. Unlike longer literary works, short stories can be completed within a limited time frame, which allows learners to experience a sense of achievement. This feeling of accomplishment can increase motivation and self-confidence— two important components of learner well-being. Moreover, short stories often present relatable characters and realistic conflicts, making it easier for students to connect emotionally with the text. When learners identify with characters' struggles, hopes, or transformations, they develop empathy and emotional awareness. Short stories promote well-being by encouraging personal reflection and growth. Literature allows learners to interpret experiences and consider multiple perspectives. Turg'unboyeva and Umaraliyeva (2023) note that literature opens horizons of possibility and enables readers to question reality, while Tasneen (2010) highlights its role in self-reflection and development. Through reflective engagement, learners may reassess their own beliefs, attitudes, and emotions. This reflective process fosters emotional intelligence and helps students better understand themselves and others. As a result, reading becomes not only an academic task but also a meaningful personal experience.

In addition, reading short stories in the classroom can create a supportive and interactive learning environment. Group discussions about themes, characters,

and moral dilemmas encourage learners to express opinions and listen to diverse viewpoints. Such collaborative exchanges enhance social connectedness and reduce feelings of isolation, which are important aspects of psychological well-being. When students feel that their interpretations are valued, their sense of belonging and self-worth increases. Furthermore, literary reading can serve as a safe space for exploring sensitive or complex issues indirectly. Through fictional situations, learners may confront topics such as fear, loss, resilience, or hope without feeling personally exposed. This indirect exploration can help them process emotions and build coping strategies. In this way, short stories function as a bridge between language learning and emotional development. Consequently, short stories act not only as linguistic material but also as a psychological medium through which learners construct meaning, empathy, and emotional awareness. By integrating cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions, reading short stories contributes holistically to learner well-being. Therefore, incorporating short literary texts into EFL instruction can support both academic success and personal growth, reinforcing the idea that language education is deeply connected to learners' overall development.

Chapter Two

Research Methodology

2.1. Introduction:

This chapter presents the methodological framework adopted in the present study. It provides a detailed description of the research design, setting, population and sampling, as well as the instruments used for data collection. It also explains the procedures followed during data collection and the methods used for data analysis. In addition, issues related to validity, reliability, and ethical considerations are addressed.

The main aim of this study is to investigate the impact of reading short stories on the psychological balance and emotional development of EFL learners. To achieve this objective, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of learners' experiences and perceptions. This chapter is organized into several sections. It begins with the research design, followed by the research setting, population and sampling. It then describes the research instruments, including the questionnaire and classroom observation. Finally, it presents the data collection procedures, data analysis methods, and discusses validity, reliability, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study.

2.2. Research Design:

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This approach is particularly suitable for exploring complex educational phenomena, as it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

The quantitative component of the study is based on a structured questionnaire administered to EFL learners. This instrument is used to collect numerical data regarding students' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences related to reading short stories, as well as their perceived psychological and emotional development.

On the other hand, the qualitative component relies on classroom observation. This method provides in-depth insights into learners' real behaviors, interactions, and emotional responses during literature sessions. It allows the researcher to capture aspects that cannot be fully measured through numerical data alone. The study is both descriptive and exploratory in nature. It is descriptive in that it aims to describe learners' attitudes and emotional responses, and exploratory because it seeks to investigate how reading short stories may influence psychological balance and emotional development.

2.3. Research Setting:

The study was conducted in the Department of English at the university level. It took place in an EFL classroom where students attend literature sessions as part of their academic program. The classroom environment was interactive and supportive, encouraging students to participate actively in discussions. The sessions focused on reading and analyzing literary texts, particularly short stories, which served as a central tool for both language learning and emotional engagement. The course observed was a literature session devoted to the analysis of short stories. These sessions aimed not only at improving students' reading comprehension skills but also at fostering critical thinking, emotional awareness, and empathy through literary engagement.

2.4. Population and Sampling:**2.4.1. Population:**

The target population of this study consists of EFL learners studying English at the university level. More specifically, the focus is on undergraduate students enrolled in the Department of English.

2.4.2. Sample:

The sample of this study includes english students. A group of approximately 50–60 students participated in the questionnaire. A convenience sampling technique was used, as the participants were selected based on their availability and accessibility. This method is commonly used in educational research where the researcher has direct access to a specific group of learners.

2.5. Research Instruments:**2.5.1. Questionnaire:**

The primary quantitative instrument used in this study is a structured questionnaire designed for EFL learners. The aim of the questionnaire is to collect data on students' perceptions of reading short stories and its impact on their psychological and emotional development.

The questionnaire is divided into several sections:

Section A: General Information

Includes demographic data such as gender, age, academic level, frequency of reading short stories, and self-assessed reading level.

Section B: Reading and Emotional Engagement

Examines students' enjoyment of reading short stories and their emotional involvement with characters.

Section C: Psychological Balance

Focuses on the effects of reading on stress reduction and emotional stability.

Section D: Emotional Development

Explores how reading short stories enhances empathy, self-awareness, and

emotional expression.

Section E: Open-ended Question

Allows students to express their personal opinions regarding the influence of short stories on their emotional and psychological well-being.

The questionnaire includes different types of questions such as Likert scale items, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended responses, ensuring both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

2.5.2. Classroom Observation:

The qualitative instrument used in this study is structured classroom observation. The purpose of this observation is to capture learners' real behaviors, emotional responses, and interactions during a literature session.

The observation focused on several aspects, including: students' engagement and participation, emotional reactions such as interest, enjoyment, or anxiety, interaction between students and with the teacher, and evidence of empathy and personal reflection. The observation was guided by a checklist to ensure systematic data collection. The classroom observation was conducted with undergraduate L2 learners in the Department of English during a literature session devoted to the analysis of "The Boarding House" by James Joyce. The objective of the session extended beyond textual comprehension to examine how literary engagement can foster emotional intelligence and empathy among learners. The teacher adopted a student-centered approach, positioning students as active interpreters of the text rather than passive receivers of information. The classroom atmosphere was interactive and supportive, allowing students to express their thoughts freely.

The instructional approach was primarily based on the use of questioning techniques, with a particular emphasis on open-ended and hypothetical "what if" questions. The teacher guided learners through interpretive prompts such as asking them to identify characters' feelings, motivations, and internal conflicts.

These questions encouraged learners to move from literal understanding to deeper emotional and ethical reflection. The use of hypothetical scenarios required students to imagine themselves in the characters' positions, therefore bridging the gap between the fictional world and their personal experiences. Learners' interaction throughout the session was notably dynamic.

Teacher–student interaction was characterized by continuous exchanges, where students responded thoughtfully and often expanded on each other's ideas. In addition, student–student interaction emerged as learners reacted to their peers' interpretations, sometimes agreeing and at other times offering alternative viewpoints. This collaborative dialogue contributed to a co-construction of meaning. Furthermore, learners demonstrated personal engagement by using expressions such as “If I were him” or “I would feel,” indicating a shift toward subjective and affective involvement.

The session also revealed significant development in learners' emotional intelligence. Students were able to identify and articulate a range of emotions experienced by the characters, such as fear, guilt, and social pressure. They engaged in perspective-taking by considering different viewpoints, particularly when discussing morally complex characters. This process enabled learners to develop empathy, as they attempted to understand the characters' situations rather than judge them superficially. The diversity of responses reflected varying degrees of empathetic alignment, highlighting the depth of learners' emotional engagement. Overall, the observation demonstrated that the integration of short stories with effective questioning strategies can enhance both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning in an EFL context. The teacher's use of “what if” questions was particularly effective in fostering empathy and encouraging learners to reflect on human experiences. This session supports the view that literature teaching can play a crucial role in developing emotional intelligence among L2 learners. It also underscores the importance of interactive pedagogy

and thoughtful teacher mediation in creating meaningful and transformative learning experiences.

In addition to the descriptive observation, a structured checklist was used to analyze the session more systematically.

The classroom observation was guided by a structured checklist designed to systematically examine teaching techniques, learner engagement, interaction patterns, emotional intelligence, empathy development, and classroom climate. The findings revealed that all targeted indicators were clearly observed during the session. The teacher effectively employed open-ended and hypothetical “what if” questions, encouraging learners to move beyond literal comprehension toward deeper interpretation and reflection. The teacher’s role as a facilitator was evident, as students were actively involved in constructing meaning rather than passively receiving information. Learner engagement was notably high, with students responding actively, volunteering answers spontaneously, and showing genuine interest in the discussion. Interaction patterns were dynamic, characterized by frequent teacher– student exchanges as well as meaningful student–student interaction, where learners built on each other’s responses. In terms of emotional intelligence, students demonstrated the ability to identify and explain characters’ emotions while recognizing multiple perspectives.

Furthermore, clear signs of empathy development were observed, as learners expressed personal opinions using statements such as “If I were...” and showed a deep understanding of characters’ situations without resorting to simplistic judgments. The classroom climate was also highly positive, providing a safe and respectful environment that encouraged open expression and active participation from all students. Overall, the observation checklist confirmed that the use of short stories, combined with interactive teaching strategies, significantly supported both emotional engagement and psychological development among EFL learners.

2.6. Data Collection Procedure:

The data collection process followed several steps:

Permission was obtained from the relevant academic authorities and the teacher. Classroom observation was conducted during a literature session focused on short story analysis. The questionnaire was distributed to students. Responses were collected and prepared for analysis. The data collection took place during the teaching of short stories, ensuring that students' responses were based on actual learning experiences.

2.7. Qualitative Analysis:

The qualitative data were obtained from:

Classroom observation notes open-ended questionnaire responses. A thematic analysis approach was used to identify recurring patterns related to emotions, engagement, and interaction. This method allowed for a deeper interpretation of learners' experiences.

2.8. Validity and Reliability:

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study:

The questionnaire was designed with clear and simple items to avoid misunderstanding.

A pilot test could be conducted to check the clarity of questions.

The observation followed a structured checklist to ensure consistency.

Observations were conducted carefully to enhance reliability.

2.9. Ethical Considerations:

Several ethical principles were respected in this study:

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study. Their identities remained anonymous.

All data were kept confidential. Participation was voluntary, and students had the right to withdraw at any time.

2.10. Limitations of the Study:

This study has some limitations: The sample size is relatively limited.

Time constraints may have affected the depth of data collection. Classroom observation may involve a degree of subjectivity.

2.11. Conclusion:

This chapter has presented a comprehensive account of the research methodology adopted in this study. It has outlined the research design, highlighting the use of a mixed-methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative data. It has also described the research setting, the target population, and the sampling technique employed. Furthermore, the chapter has detailed the research instruments, namely the questionnaire and classroom observation, explaining their structure, purpose, and relevance to the research objectives. The

Procedures followed for data collection and the methods used for data analysis have also been clearly explained. In addition, issues related to validity, reliability, and ethical considerations have been carefully addressed to ensure the credibility of the study.

Overall, this methodological framework provides a solid foundation for the analysis and interpretation of the data. The following chapter will present the results obtained from the questionnaire and classroom observation, followed by a detailed discussion of the main findings.

Chapter Three

Data Analysis and Discussion

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the questionnaire administered to EFL learners. The aim is to examine the impact of reading short stories on learners' psychological balance and emotional development. The results are analyzed quantitatively and interpreted in relation to the research questions and theoretical framework.

3.2. Description of Participants

The questionnaire was administered to approximately 60 EFL learners. The participants varied in terms of gender, age, and academic level, which provides a diverse perspective on the role of short stories in language learning and emotional development.

3.3. Questionnaire analysis :

Question 1: Gender distribution

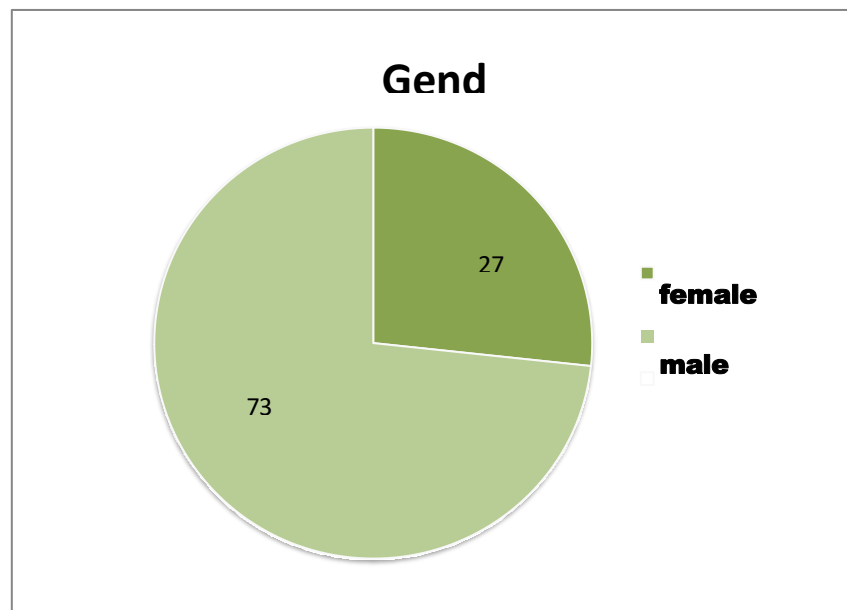


Figure 3. 1:Students gender distribution

The findings reveal that 73 % of the respondents were female, whereas 27 % were male, demonstrating a clear predominance of female participants within the sample. This distribution reflects an imbalance in gender representation, with one category being more substantially represented than the other. Such a pattern suggests that the results may be more strongly shaped by female perspectives. Consequently, this uneven representation should be carefully considered when

interpreting the findings, as it may introduce a degree of gender bias and limit the overall generalizability of the study.

Question 2 : Age distribution

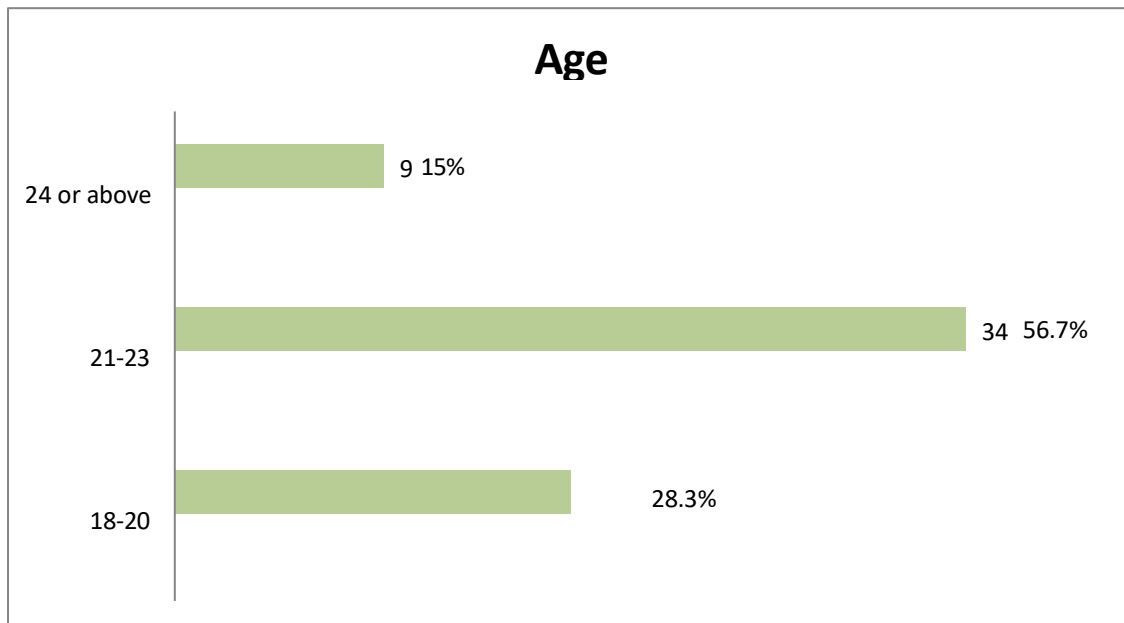
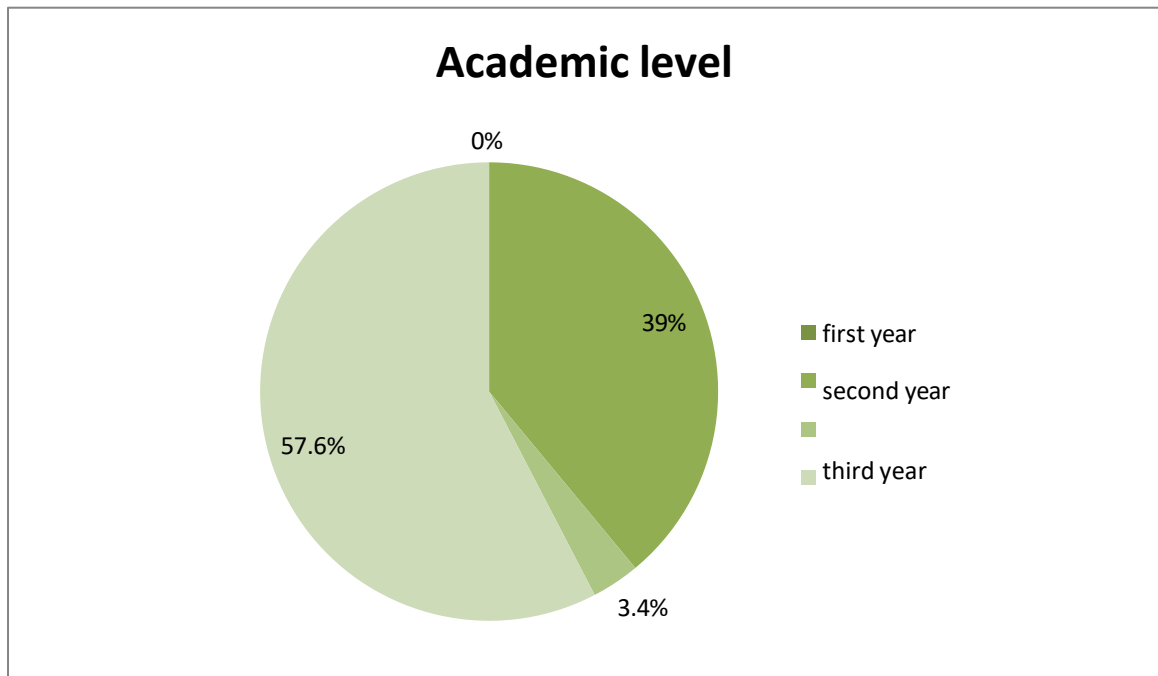
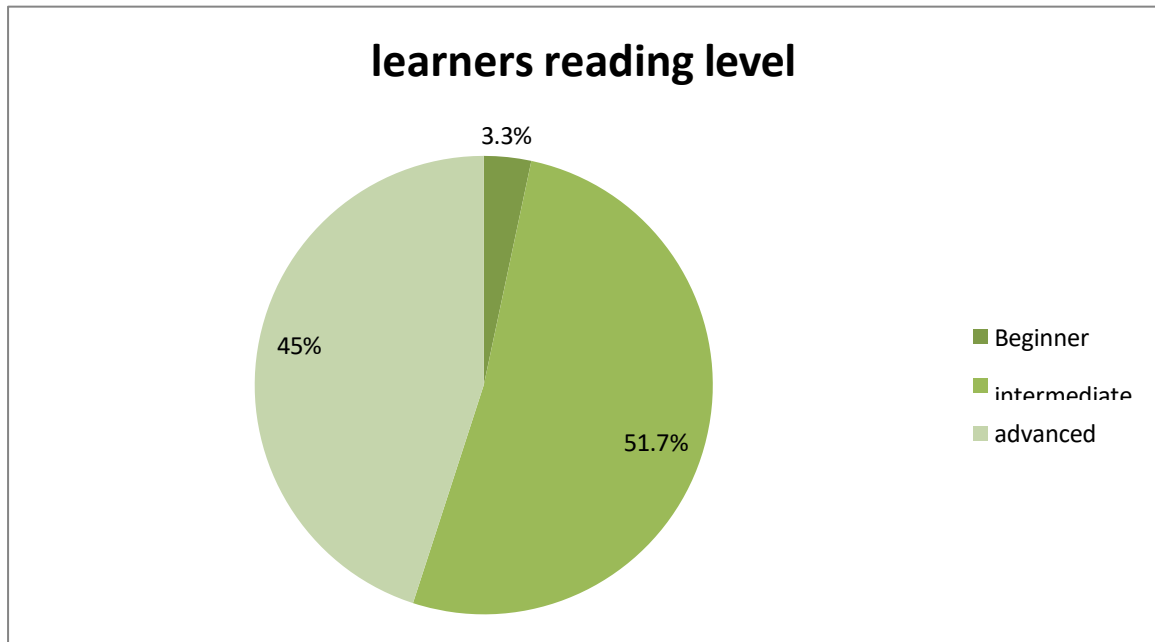


Figure 3. 2:Students age distribution

The findings demonstrate that respondents were distributed across three age groups: 18-20 years (28,3%), 21-23 years (56,7%) and 24 years or above (15%) , with a marked concentration in the 21-23 category .This distribution reflects an imbalance in age representation ,where young adults are more prominently represented than other groups. Such a pattern suggests that the findings are likely to be influenced by the experiences and perceptions of younger learners , most notably university students. Consequently, this ¹⁷uneven distribution should be taken into account when interpreting the results, as it may constrain the applicability of the findings to be broader age spectrum.

Question 3 : Students academic level**figure 3. 3:Students academic level**

The findings show that the majority of respondents are masters students , followed by second-year students ,while third year participants remains minimal and first-year students are not represented. This distribution reflects a clear imbalance in academic level representation, with more advanced students dominating the sample. Such a pattern suggests the results may be shaped by participants higher levels of academic experience and subject familiarity, potentially enhancing the depth and reliability of their responses. Consequently, this uneven distribution should be considered when interpreting the findings ,as the absence of lower academic levels may reduce the diversity of perspectives and limit generalizability.

Question 4 : how would you rate your English reading level ?**Figure 3. 4:learners reading level**

In terms of English reading proficiency, the findings show that the majority of students consider themselves to have a moderate to high level. More precisely, 51.7% of the participants rated their level as intermediate, while 45% identified as advanced. Only 3.3% of the respondents reported being at a beginner level. This indicates that most learners possess sufficient Language skills to engage effectively with literary texts such as short stories.

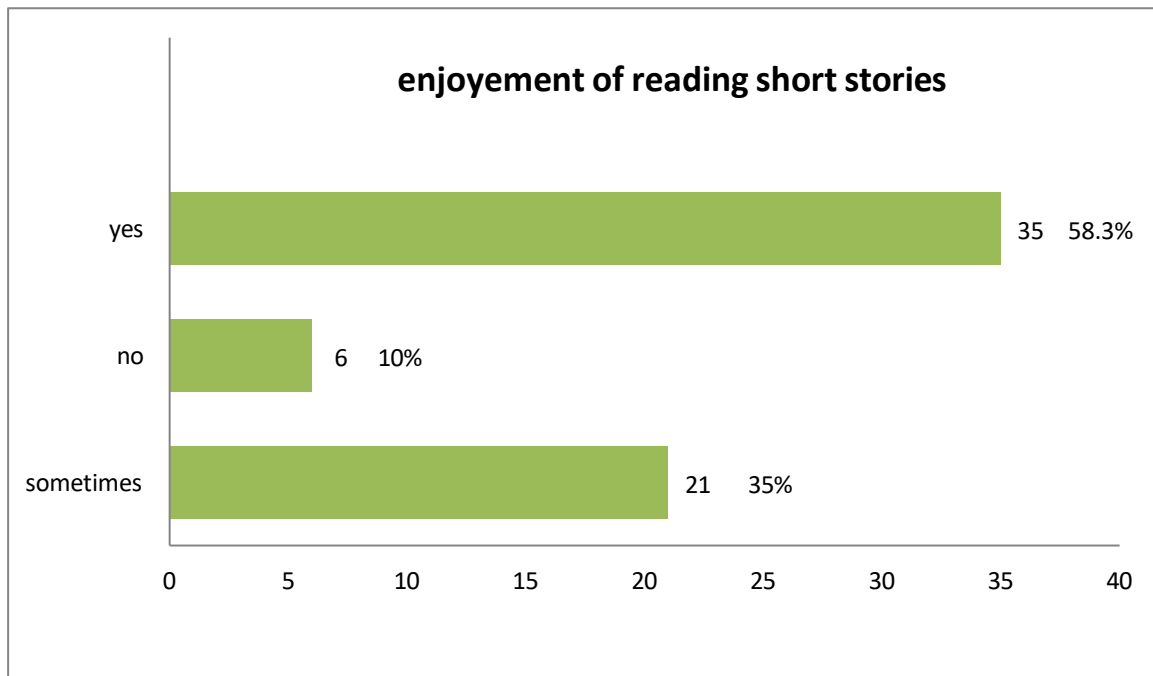
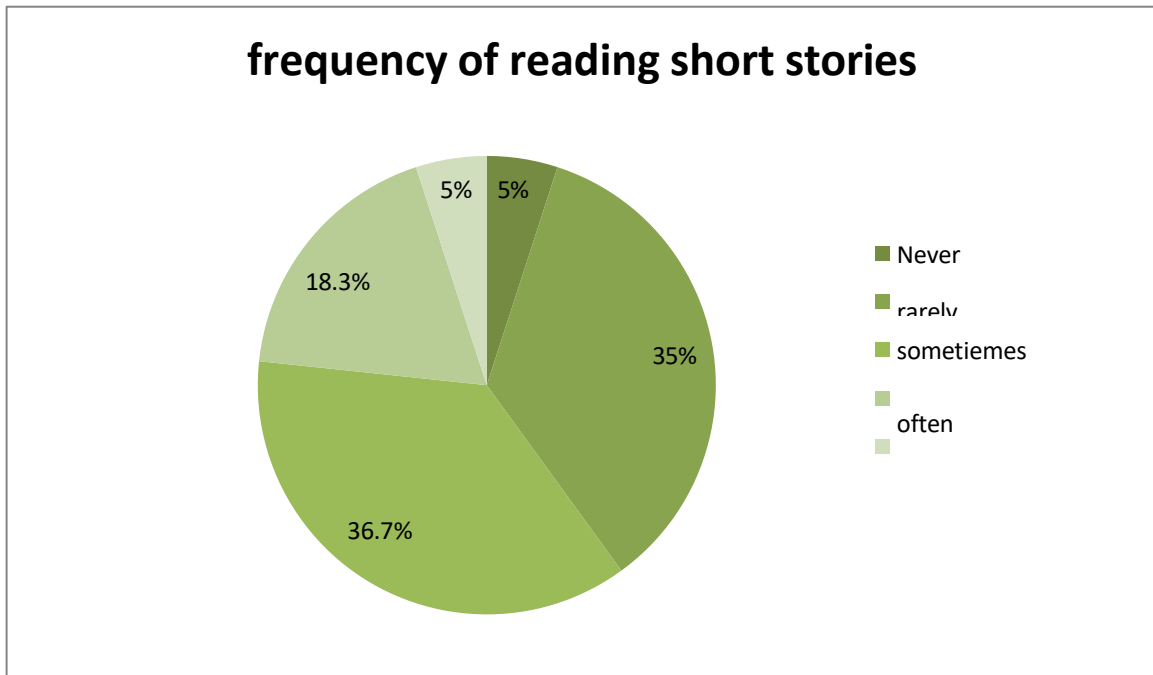
Question 5 : do you enjoy reading short stories in English ?

Figure 3. 5:students enjoyment of reading short stories

The results related to students' enjoyment of reading short stories in English reveal generally positive attitudes. A majority of the participants (58.3%) reported that they enjoy reading short stories. In addition, 35% indicated that they sometimes enjoy them, while only a small proportion (10%) stated that they do not enjoy reading short stories.

These findings suggest that short stories are generally well-received by EFL learners and can serve as an engaging pedagogical tool. The relatively high percentage of students who enjoy or sometimes enjoy reading indicates that literary texts have the potential to increase motivation and interest in the learning process.

Question 6 : how often do you read short stories In English?**figure 3. 6:frequency of reading short stories**

The findings concerning the frequency of reading short stories in English reveal that the majority of students read short stories occasionally rather than regularly. Specifically, 36.7% of the participants reported that they sometimes read short stories, while 35% stated that they rarely do so. In contrast, only 18.3% reported reading short stories often, and a very small percentage (5%) indicated that they always read them. Similarly, 5% of the students reported that they never read short stories. These results suggest that although students are somewhat exposed to short stories, regular reading is not yet a well-established habit among most learners.

Question 7: when reading short stories do you feel emotionally involved with the characters ?

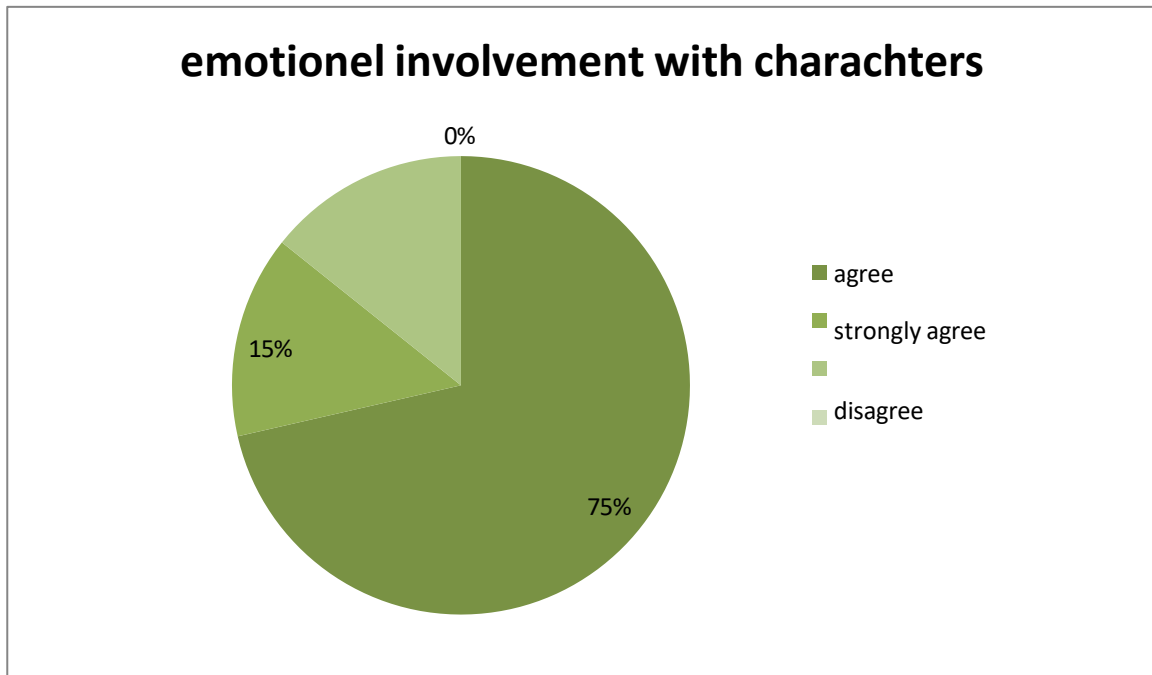


figure 3. 7:emotional involvement with characters

The findings concerning emotional involvement reveal that the majority of participants feel engaged with the characters when reading short stories. Specifically, 75% of the respondents agreed and 15% strongly agreed, while only 10% expressed disagreement and none strongly disagreed. This indicates that most Learners experience a strong emotional connection with the narrative, which enhances their engagement with the text. Such involvement allows students to immerse themselves in the story and relate to characters experiences. Therefore, this finding supports the idea that short stories play a significant role in fostering emotional engagement and empathy among EFL learners.

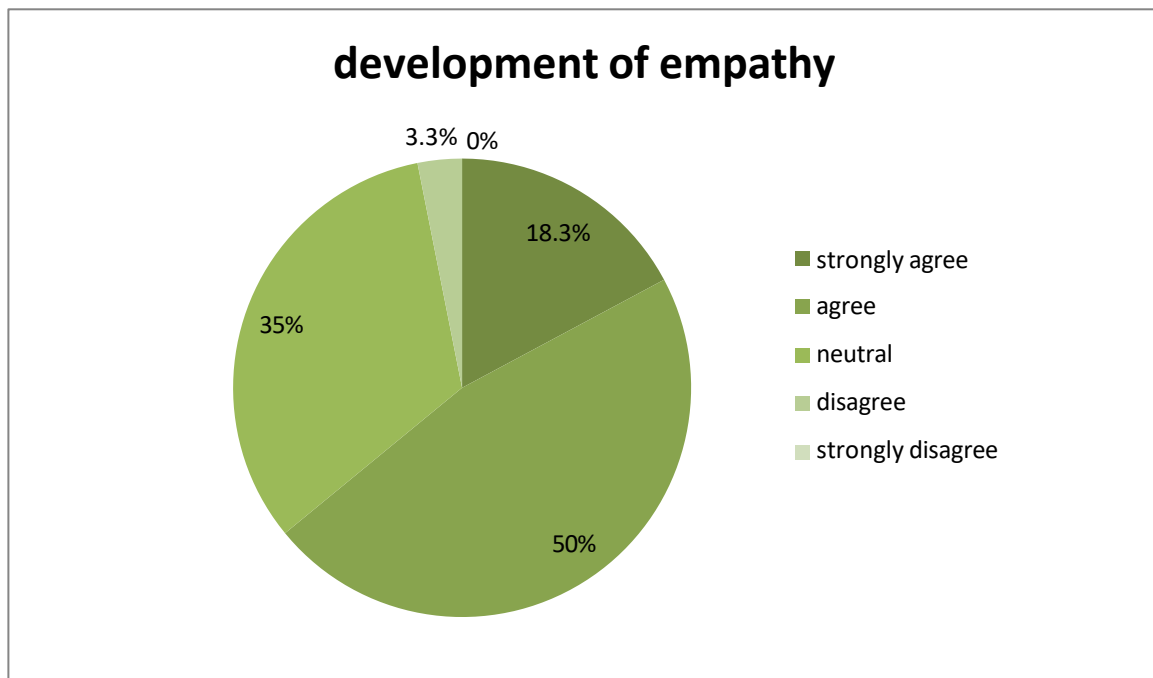
Question 8 : reading short stories help me understand others feelings and perspectives?

Figure 3. 8:reading short stories and understanding others feelings

Regarding the development of empathy, the findings show that 50% of the participants agreed and 18.3% strongly agreed that reading short stories helps them understand others' feelings and perspectives. However, 35% of the respondents remained neutral, and only a small percentage (3.3%) disagreed. These results suggest that while a majority of learners recognize the role of short stories in enhancing empathy, a considerable number are either uncertain or less aware of this impact. This may be due to differences in individual reading habits or levels of reflection. Nevertheless, the overall trend confirms that short stories contribute positively to learners' emotional awareness and social understanding.

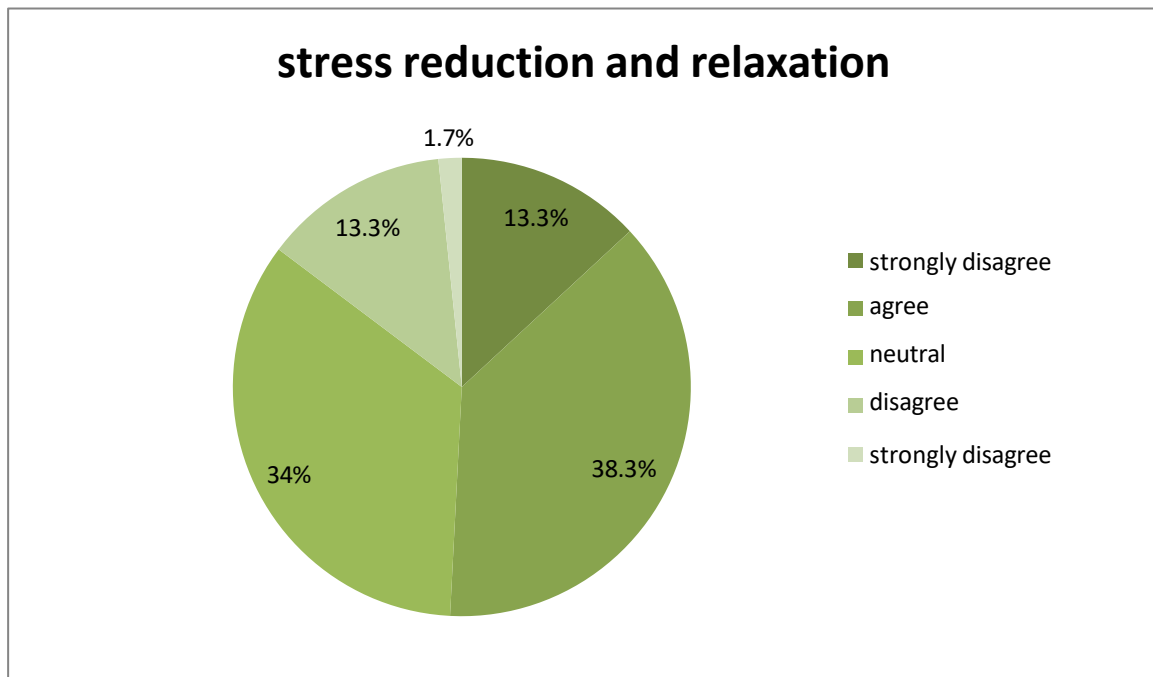
Question 9 : reading short stories help me feel relaxed and less stressed ?

Figure 3. 9:reading short stories and stress reduction

In terms of psychological well-being, particularly stress reduction, the findings suggest a moderate effect. A considerable proportion of participants 38.3% agreed and 13.3% strongly agreed that reading short stories helps them feel relaxed and less stressed. However, 34% of the respondents remained neutral, while approximately 13.3 % expressed disagreement. These results indicate that although reading short stories can be an effective means of relaxation for many learners, its impact is not consistent across all individuals. Various factors, including personal interest, reading proficiency, and academic pressure, may influence learners' perceptions of the relaxing benefits of reading. Nevertheless, despite these differences, the findings highlight...

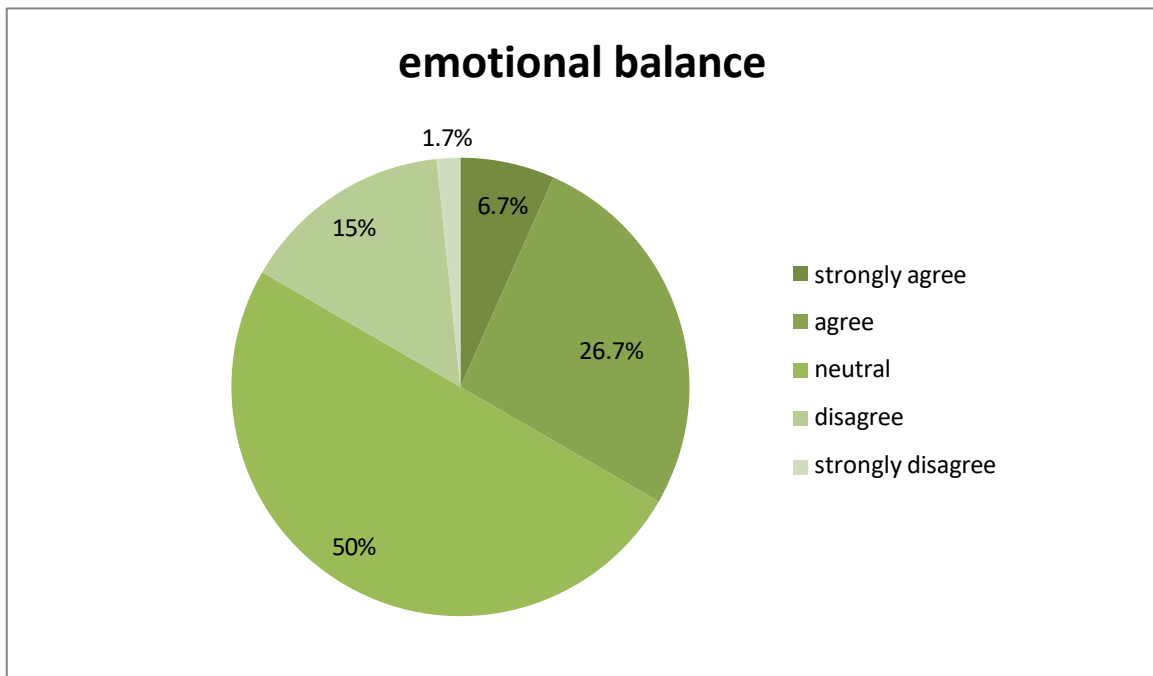
Question 10 : I feel more emotionally balanced after reading short story ?

figure 3. 10 :emotional balance after reading short stories

The results reveal a clearly positive tendency regarding the emotional impact of reading short stories. The largest proportion of participants (50%) selected “agree,” followed by 26.7% who “strongly agree,” indicating that most respondents perceive an improvement in their emotional balance after reading. A smaller group (15%) chose the neutral option, which may suggest uncertainty or a moderate level of engagement with the texts. In contrast, only 6.7% of participants disagreed and a very small percentage (1.7%) strongly disagreed, showing limited negative perception. Overall, these findings suggest that short stories are generally effective in promoting emotional balance among EFL learners, although individual differences in response remain evident.

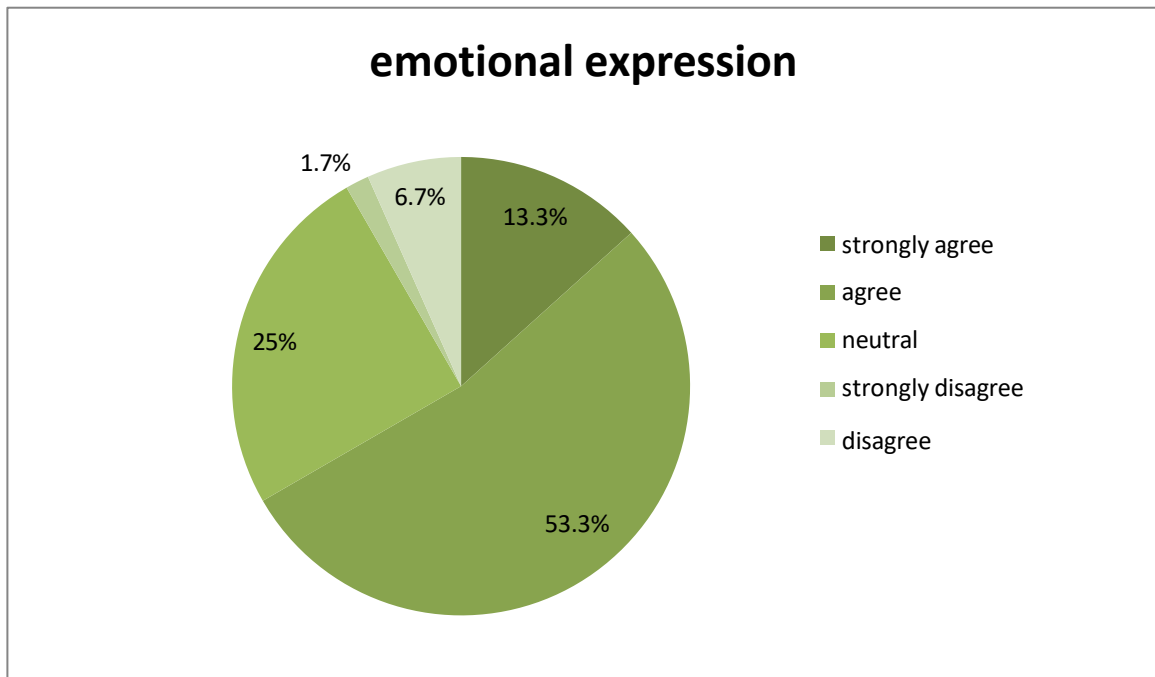
Question 11 : reading short stories improve my ability to express my emotions ?

figure 3. 11:improvement of emotional expression through reading

The results reveal that most respondents believe reading improves emotional expression, with a strong majority expressing positive views: 53.3% agree and 13.3% strongly agree, totaling 66.6%. Meanwhile, 25% remain neutral, indicating some uncertainty or lack of personal experience with this benefit. Only a small minority hold negative opinions, with 6.7% strongly disagreeing and 1.7% disagreeing. Overall, the results clearly suggest that reading is widely perceived as helpful in enhancing emotional expression, despite a moderate proportion of neutral responses.

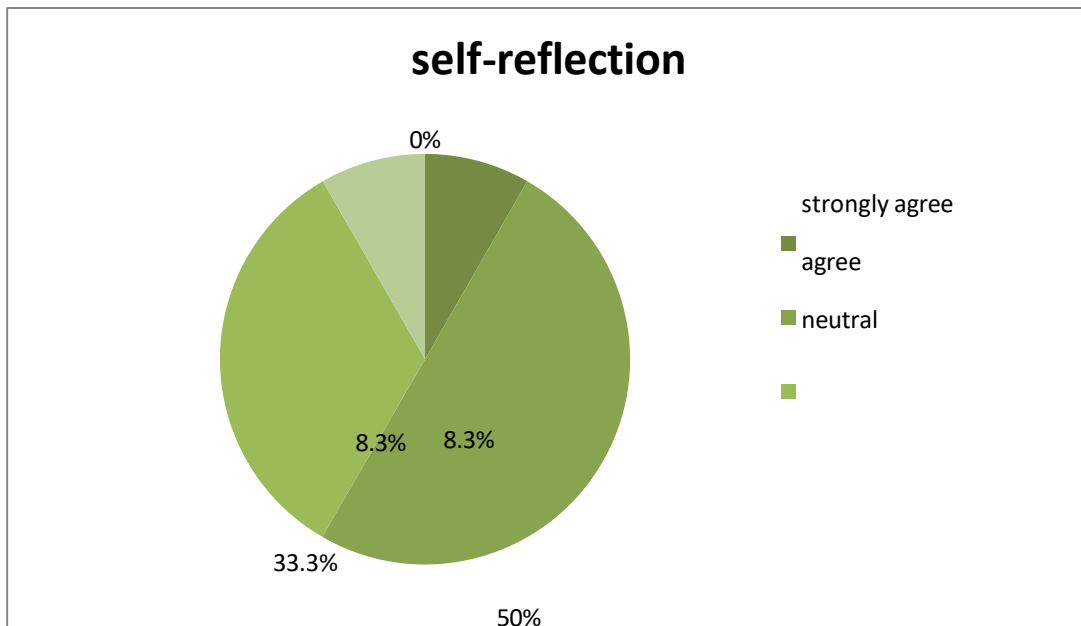
Question 12 : short stories help me reflect on my own feelings and experiences ?

figure 3. 12 :reflection on personal feelings and experiences through short stories

The chart indicates that most respondents believe short stories help them reflect on their own feelings and experiences. Half of the participants (50%) agree, while 8.3% strongly agree, showing that 58.3% have a positive perception. In addition, 33.3% remain neutral, suggesting some participants are uncertain about this impact. Only 8.3% disagree, while no respondents strongly disagree (0%). Overall, these results suggest that short stories are generally perceived as effective in promoting self- reflection and personal emotional awareness.

Question 13 : in your opinion , how does reading short stories influence your emotions or psychological well-being ?

The analysis of the open-ended responses reveals that the majority of participants perceive short stories as having a positive impact on their emotional and psychological well-being. Many respondents highlighted that reading short stories helps them experience a wide range of emotions, including happiness, sadness, and empathy, which allows them to connect deeply with characters and situations. Several participants emphasized that short stories provide a sense of relaxation and serve as a means of escaping daily stress, contributing to improved mood and reduced anxiety. Additionally, a significant number of learners reported that reading short stories enhance their self-reflection and helps them better understand Their own feelings as well as others' perspectives. Some responses also pointed out the role of short stories in developing critical thinking and emotional expression, as they encourage readers to analyze situations and relate them to real-life experiences. However, a minority of participants expressed neutral or negative views, stating that short stories do not always influence their emotions or lack sufficient depth to create strong emotional attachment. Overall, these findings indicate that, despite some individual differences, short stories are generally perceived as an effective tool for fostering emotional awareness, psychological comfort, and personal growth among EFL learners.

3.4. Limitations of the Study:

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample size is relatively small, consisting of only 60 participants, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the sample is not fully balanced in terms of gender, as female participants represent a large majority. This imbalance may influence the results, as the findings could reflect female perspectives more strongly. Another limitation

concerns the academic level of the participants. Most respondents are Master's students, while lower academic levels are underrepresented. This may affect the diversity of responses, as more advanced learners may have different reading habits and levels of awareness compared to beginners. Moreover, the study relies primarily on self-reported data collected through a questionnaire. Such data may be subject to bias, as participants may provide socially desirable answers or may not accurately evaluate their own emotional experiences. The high percentage of neutral responses in several questions also makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about certain variables, particularly psychological balance. Finally, although an open-ended question was included, the qualitative data remains limited in depth. More detailed methods, such as interviews or classroom observations, could provide a deeper understanding of learners' emotional and psychological responses.

3.5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for both teaching practice and future research. First, EFL teachers are encouraged to integrate short stories more frequently into their teaching, as they have been shown to enhance emotional engagement, empathy, and self-reflection. Teachers should carefully select stories that are relevant to students' interests and experiences in order to maximize their emotional impact.

Second, it is important to accompany reading activities with interactive tasks, such

as discussions, role-playing, and reflective writing. These activities can help learners engage more deeply with the text and become more aware of their emotional responses. Third, students should be encouraged to develop regular reading habits, as the results indicate that most learners read short stories only occasionally. Promoting frequent reading may strengthen the psychological and emotional benefits observed in this study. For future research, it is

recommended to use a larger and more diverse sample in order to improve the generalizability of the findings. Researchers should also consider using additional qualitative methods, such as interviews, to gain deeper insights into learners' experiences and perceptions.

3.6. Conclusion:

This chapter has presented and analyzed the data collected through the questionnaire in order to examine the impact of reading short stories on EFL learners' emotional and psychological development. The findings reveal that short stories play a significant role in enhancing emotional involvement, empathy, emotional expression, and self-reflection among learners. However, the impact of short stories on psychological balance, particularly in terms of stress reduction and emotional stability, appears to be moderate and varies among individuals. Despite these variations, the overall results support the idea that short stories are not only beneficial for language learning but also contribute to learners' emotional awareness

And personal development. In conclusion, integrating short stories into EFL instruction can provide both linguistic and psychological benefits, making them a valuable tool for a more holistic approach to language teaching.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the impact of reading short stories on the psychological balance and emotional development of EFL learners, with a particular focus on both cognitive and affective dimensions of language learning. The findings of this research confirm that integrating short stories into EFL classrooms goes beyond enhancing linguistic competence, as it significantly contributes to learners' emotional well-being and personal growth. From a cognitive perspective, short stories provide meaningful and contextualized input that supports vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and critical thinking. At the same time, the affective dimension of reading plays a crucial role in shaping learners' motivation, engagement, and attitudes toward language learning. The results demonstrate that when learners are emotionally involved in narratives, they become more active participants in the learning process, which ultimately facilitates deeper understanding and retention.

Moreover, the study highlights that short stories serve as an effective tool for promoting psychological balance. Through identification with characters and immersion in narrative worlds, learners are able to explore emotions, reduce anxiety, and develop coping strategies in a safe and indirect way. This aligns with the principles of Positive Psychology and developmental bibliotherapy, which emphasize the importance of emotional experiences in fostering well-being and resilience.

The findings also reveal that reading short stories enhances key aspects of emotional development, including empathy, self-awareness, and emotional regulation. Learners demonstrated the ability to interpret characters' feelings, adopt different perspectives, and reflect on their own experiences, which indicates a meaningful connection between literary engagement and emotional intelligence.

Despite certain limitations related to sample size and context, this study provides valuable insights into the role of literature in EFL education. It suggests that

General Conclusion

language teaching should not be limited to purely linguistic objectives but should also address learners' psychological and emotional needs.

In conclusion, short stories represent a powerful pedagogical resource that integrates language learning with emotional and psychological development. Their use in EFL classrooms can create a more engaging, supportive, and holistic learning environment, ultimately contributing to both academic success and learners' overall well-being.

Bibliography

Bibliography

List of Bibliography

1. Abrams, M. H., & Harpham, G. (2015). *A glossary of literary terms* (11th ed.). Cengage Learning.
2. Benediktsdóttir, H. (2016). *Icelandic secondary school students' attitudes towards literature in the English classroom: A qualitative study* (Master's thesis, University of Iceland).
3. Boudreau, C., MacIntyre, P. D., & Dewaele, J.-M. (2018). Enjoyment and anxiety in second language communication: An idiodynamic approach. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 8(1), 149–170.
4. Carter, R., & Long, M. N. (1991). *Teaching literature*. Longman.
5. Collie, J., & Slater, S. (1987). *Literature in the language classroom: A resource book of ideas and activities*. Cambridge University Press.
6. Csíkszentmihályi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. HarperCollins.
7. Dewaele, J.-M. (2013). The link between FL classroom anxiety and psychoticism, extraversion, and neuroticism among adult bi- and multilinguals. *The Modern Language Journal*, 97(3), 670–684.
8. Dewaele, J.-M., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2014). The two faces of Janus? Anxiety and enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 4, 237–274.
9. Dewaele, J.-M., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2016). Foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety: The right and left feet of FL learning? In P. D. MacIntyre, T. Gregersen, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *Positive psychology in SLA* (pp. 215–236). *Multilingual Matters*.
10. Duff, A., & Maley, A. (2007). *Literature* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
11. Eysenck, M. W., Derakshan, N., & Calvo, M. G. (2007). Anxiety and cognitive performance: Attentional Control Theory. *Emotion*, 7(2), 336–353.

Bibliography

12. Guber, P. (2007). The four truths of the storyteller. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(12), 1–9.
13. Guiora, A. Z. (1972). Construct validity and transpositional research: Toward an empirical study of psychoanalytic concepts. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 13, 139–150.
14. Hall, G. (2017). *Exploring English language teaching: Language in action*. Routledge.
15. Horwitz, E. K. (2017). On the misreading of Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) and the need to balance anxiety research and the experiences of anxious language learners. In C. Gkonou, M. Daubney, & J.-M. Dewaele (Eds.), *New insights into language anxiety: Theory, research and educational implications* (pp. 31–50). *Multilingual Matters*.
16. Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70, 125–132.
17. Keyes, C. L. M., Shmotkin, D., & Ryff, C. D. (2002). Optimizing well-being: The empirical encounter of two traditions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82(6), 1007–1022.
18. Kohan, N., & Pourkalhor, O. (2013). Teaching reading comprehension through short stories in advanced classes. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2(2), 52–60.
19. Kruk, M., & Zawodniak, J. (2018). Boredom in practical English language classes: Insights from interview data. In L. Szymański et al. (Eds.), *Interdisciplinary views on the English language, literature and culture* (pp. 177–191). *Uniwersytet Zielonogórski*.
20. Lazar, G. (1993). *Literature and language teaching: A guide for teachers and trainers*. Cambridge University Press.
21. Lee, J. S. (2020). The role of grit and classroom enjoyment in EFL learners' willingness to communicate. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 41(1), 1–17.

Bibliography

22. MacIntyre, P. D., & Gregersen, T. (2012). Emotions that facilitate language learning: The positive broadening power of the imagination. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 2, 193–213.
23. Patham, M. M. (2012). Advantages of using short stories in EFL classroom and Libyan EFL learners' perceptions towards them for developing reading comprehension skill. *Arab World English Journal*, 4(1), 28–41.
24. Poe, E. A. (2004). The philosophy of composition. In *Classic essays on poetry*. (Original work published 1842).
25. Rubin, J. (1978). *Using bibliotherapy: A guide to theory and practice*. Onyx Press.
26. Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185–211.
27. Schmidt, R., Boraie, D., & Kassabgy, O. (1996). Foreign language motivation: Internal structure and external connections. In R. Oxford (Ed.), *Language learning motivation: Pathways to the new century* (pp. 9–70). University of Hawaii Press.
28. Schumann, J. H. (1998). The neurobiology of affect in language. *Language Learning*, 48(Suppl. 1).
29. Shirvan, M. E., Khajavy, G. H., MacIntyre, P. D., & Taherian, T. (2019). A meta- analysis of L2 willingness to communicate and its three high-evidence correlates. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 48(6), 1241–1267.
30. Zakrzewski, V. (n.d.). *Social-emotional learning: Key to well-being and success*. Greater Good Science Center, University of California, Berkeley.
31. Zhou, L., Xi, Y., & Lochman, K. (2020). The relationship between second language competence and willingness to communicate: The moderating effect of foreign language anxiety. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–15.

Appendices

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A: students' questionnaire

General Information

Gender

- Male
- Female

Age

- 18–20
- 21–23
- 24 or above

Academic Level

- First Year
- Second Year
- Third Year
- Master

Section A: General Information

1. How often do you read short stories in English?
 - Never
 - Sometimes
 - Often
 - Always

Appendices

2. How would you rate your English reading level?

- Beginner
- Intermediate
- Advanced

Section B: Reading and Emotional Engagement

3.

Do you enjoy reading short stories in English?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

4. When reading short stories, do you feel emotionally involved with the characters?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. Reading short stories helps me understand others' feelings and perspectives.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Appendices

Section C: Psychological Balance

6. Reading short stories helps me feel relaxed and less stressed.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

7. I feel more emotionally balanced after reading a short story.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Section D: Emotional Development

8. Reading short stories improves my ability to express my emotions.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

9. Short stories help me reflect on my own feelings and experiences.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Appendices

Section E: Open-ended Question

10. In your opinion, how does reading short stories influence your emotions or psychological well-being?