
Retelling Strategies for Comprehending and Interpreting Short Stories

Santha Mary Louis
Sekolah Menengah Taman Maluri,
Cheras, Selangor

Kulwindr Kaur a/p Gurdial Singh
Faculty of Languages and Linguistics
University of Malaya

Abstract

Recent trends in literature teaching advocate an integration of literature and language. This necessitates an interactive relationship among the student, text and teacher. This study investigated if retelling strategies will improve Form Four students' comprehension and interpretation of a short story. Retelling strategies are based on the language-based approach which can make short stories accessible to upper secondary school students through various techniques, procedures and strategies employed in the literature classroom. They are also linked to Oxford's (1989) Language Learning Strategies which are defined as specific actions, behaviours, steps or techniques students use to improve their progress in comprehending, internalizing and using the second language. Ninety students participated in this nine-week study. The participants were chosen based on their Form Three Trial Examination and their Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR - Lower Secondary Evaluation at Form Three Level) for 2005, and were divided into three levels of proficiency which were high, average, and low. This division into three proficiency levels was to determine if retelling strategies would improve comprehension and interpretation of a short story for proficient and low proficient learners. The ninety participants were taught four retelling strategies which were sequencing, summarizing, paraphrasing and analyzing. They completed four written retellings through four tasks in class using a short story entitled, "The Necklace". A pre-test, post-test, pre-test questionnaire and a post-test questionnaire were used for data collection. The pre-test questionnaire asked about their profile, exposure to English language and their difficulties in comprehending and interpreting a short story. The post-test questionnaire aimed to find out if the retelling strategies taught to them had helped them answer the post-test questions. Findings from the pre-test and post-test revealed that there was improvement in comprehension and

interpretation of the short story to the extent that all the 90 participants improved in their comprehension and interpretation of it after obtaining instruction on using the retelling strategies. Another reason for these results was due to the teacher's explanation and teaching of the story to her students for two weeks before the post-test.

Introduction

The Malaysian Ministry of Education has taken a few important steps to improve the falling standards of English among secondary school students. One of the steps is by introducing the literature component in the English language Syllabus. It is believed that a literature enriched curriculum would allow for an increase of exposure to materials written in English and through this indirectly it is hoped that Malaysian upper secondary students will be encouraged to read and improve their proficiency in English. The Curriculum Development Center (CDC, 2000) has outlined in detail the rationale for introducing the literature component as it believes literary texts could develop in the students:

- 1) an awareness of the value and pleasure of reading good literary works
- 2) an appreciation and deeper understanding of important human concerns and relationships; and
- 3) an ability to appreciate values which could enhance an understanding of themselves and their relationships with others.

In March 2000, the literature component was started with the Form One and Form Four students. The literature component is divided into two levels comprising different texts and levels of difficulties. The first level comprises texts for study in Form One. In Form Two, students will read a novel and in Form Three they are given another novel to read. This batch of students will sit for the Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) English Language paper with a section of the texts studied examined in the paper. The second level comprises selected short stories and poems for the Form Four students and in Form Five they will read a novel. They will take the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) English Language paper.

For the upper secondary school students; however, in the learning of the literary texts prescribed, there persist difficulties among some of the students in comprehending and interpreting these literary texts. Some of the difficulties are due to students' low proficiency, lack of motivation and poor reading habits.

Therefore, this study seeks to determine if retelling strategies help to improve Form Four students' comprehension and interpretation of short stories. In this study, retelling is in the **written form** on task sheets and these task sheets are known as **written retellings**.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to investigate Form Four students' comprehension and interpretation difficulties in the learning of a short story and to determine if the retelling strategies would help to improve their comprehension and interpretation of the text.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. What are the difficulties faced by the participants of this study in comprehending and interpreting a short story in the Form Four literature component?
2. Do retelling strategies improve the participants of this study in their comprehension of a short story in the Form Four literature component?
3. Do retelling strategies improve their interpretation of a short story in the Form Four literature component?
4. Which proficiency group (High, Average, Low) is affected most (based on improvement by percentage) by the use of retelling strategies in the comprehension of a short story in the Form Four literature component?
5. Which proficiency group (High, Average, Low) is affected most (based on improvement by percentage) by the use of retelling strategies in the interpretation of a short story in the Form Four literature component?

Definition of Retelling Strategies

There have not been many studies in retelling strategies. In most studies (Geist, Eugene A. (2002), Katims and Harris (1997), Wood, Karen D (2000) etc.), sequencing, summarising and paraphrasing have been used to retell stories. Four retelling strategies which are sequencing, summarising, paraphrasing and analysing are taught to the participants to help them comprehend and interpret a short story in the Form Four literature component of the English Language Syllabus.

The four retelling strategies are explained below

Retelling Strategy 1 – Sequencing

Sequencing means arranging a series of events or actions that have a particular order in the short story. Sequencing allows for effective comprehension of a short story from the beginning to the end. They are able to identify an event that happened before or after a particular event. In

this way they are able to capture the main events that form the plot of a short story

Retelling Strategy 2 – Summarising

Summarising involves putting the main ideas into one's own words. Learners may try to find the key words or phrases that provide the gist of the short story read. Only the main ideas and crucial details are necessary to write a summary. By summarising a short story further into dialogue form, it helps to facilitate effective comprehension of the main ideas and the details. Summarising while reading a short story helps learners to monitor their understanding of the information they have read. By doing this, learners understand better the characterization in the short story

Retelling Strategy 3 – Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing means rephrasing the words of an author, putting his/her thoughts in one's own words. A paraphrase can be viewed as a 'translation' of the original source. (Lester, 1976). Paraphrasing is a valuable retelling strategy because the mental process required for successful paraphrasing helps learners to grasp the full meaning of the original text. Effective paraphrasing is achieved when learners reread the original passage until its full meaning is understood. Alternative wording to the author's text may be used to present the ideas of the original text using the learner's own sentence structures as well as their own choice of words.

Retelling Strategy 4 – Analysing

Analysing is a mental process that involves putting one's own ideas after reading a particular passage. It involves critical and creative thinking skills on the part of the learner. Analysing is a cognitive strategy and it is an effective retelling strategy to analyse expressions and feelings of characters in a short story based on what is said by the characters. Analysing guides learners to channel their interpretative abilities and enables them to identify each character's physical description, actions and feelings. In this way, learners are able to interpret each character and translate into their own words what they think of each character.

Retelling strategies are derived from the language-based approach which constitutes techniques, procedures and strategies which are concerned more directly with the study of a literary text. The language-based approach is a stimulating student-centred approach which allows students to experience and appreciate the process of discovering or inferring from the text with the aim of discussing and practicing the language.

Proponents of the language-based approach are Mc Rae (1991) and Carter and Long (1991) who believe in a close integration of language and literature in the classroom.

The retelling strategies, the researcher thinks are closely linked to Oxford's 1989 Language Learning Strategies Taxonomy (Refer to Table 1). Retelling strategies are also learning strategies that learners may use to appreciate a short story. Therefore, they are best reflected in Oxford's language learning strategies. Oxford separates strategies into two strategy orientations which are the direct and the indirect strategies. Oxford's direct strategies comprise memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. The indirect strategies are metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

Table 1. The Language Learning Strategies Taxonomy

DIRECT STRATEGIES	INDIRECT STRATEGIES
<p>1. Memory Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating mental linkages (e.g grouping, associating/ elaborating, placing new words into a context) • Applying images and sound e.g using imagery, semantic mapping, keywords, representing sounds in memory) • Reviewing well (structured reviewing) • Employing action (e.g using physical response or sensation and using mechanical techniques) 	<p>1. Metacognitive Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centering your learning (overviewing and linking with already known material, paying attention, delaying speech production to focus on listening) • Arranging and planning your learning (finding out about language, organizing, setting goals and objectives, identifying the purpose of a language task, planning for a language task, seeking practice opportunities) • Evaluating your learning (self-monitoring and self-evaluating)

In Table 2, the researcher matched the retelling strategies to Oxford's (1989) strategies to show the parallelism between retelling strategies and Oxford's language learning strategies. For example, sequencing is parallel to the memory and metacognitive strategies. Likewise, the other retelling strategies are also parallel to some direct and indirect strategies which can be seen clearly from Table 2.

Count. table 1

DIRECT STRATEGIES	INDIRECT STRATEGIES
<p>2. Cognitive Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicing (repeating, formally practicing with sounds and writing systems, recognizing and using formulas and patterns, recombining and practicing naturalistically) • Receiving and sending messages (getting the idea quickly, using resources for receiving and sending messages) • Analyzing and reasoning (reasoning deductively, analyzing expressions, analyzing contrastively (across languages), translating, transferring) • Creating structure for input and output (taking notes, summarizing, highlighting) 	<p>2. Affective Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowering your anxiety (using progressive relaxation, deep breathing or meditation, using music, using laughter) • Encouraging yourself (making positive statements, taking risks wisely, rewarding yourself) • Taking to your emotional temperature (listening to your body, using a checklist, writing a language learning diary, discussing your feelings with someone else)
<p>3. Compensation Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guessing intelligently (using linguistic clues and other clues) • Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing (switching to the mother tongue, getting help, using mime or gesture, selecting the topic, adjusting or approximating the message, using a circumlocution or synonym) 	<p>3. Social Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking questions (asking for clarification, asking for correction) • Cooperating with others (cooperating with peers, cooperating with proficient users of the language) • Empathizing with others (developing cultural understanding, becoming aware of others thoughts and feelings)

Source: Oxford (1989). *Language Learning Strategies – What every teacher should know*. New York: Newbury House Publishers. (cited in Kulwinder Kaur, 2003:472)

Table 2: Parallelism Between Retelling Strategies and Oxford's Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

RETELLING STRATEGIES	OXFORD'S LLS	
	DIRECT STRATEGIES	INDIRECT STRATEGIES
Sequencing	Memory Creating mental linkages. Reviewing well	Metacognitive Arranging and planning
Summarising	Cognitive Creating structure for input and output	Metacognitive Centering your learning Arranging and planning
Paraphrasing	Compensation Guessing intelligently Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	Metacognitive Centering your learning Overviewing and linking with already known material
Analysing	Cognitive Analysing and reasoning	Social Asking questions Asking for clarification

Methodology

The instruments used for data collection based on the short story "The Necklace" were a pre-test, a post-test, a pre-test questionnaire and a post-test questionnaire. The participants were selected from one secondary school in Kuala Lumpur that is Sekolah Menengah Taman Maluri. They were from three Form Four classes which were of three different levels of language proficiency. (High, Average and Low). Their proficiency groupings were based on their PMR (Form Three) literature results. Thirty participants were chosen from each class and the total number of participants was ninety. The research/teaching schedule is presented in Table 3 to give a better understanding of how and when data was collected.

Table 3: Teaching Schedule

No	Activities
Week 1	Silent Reading of 'The Necklace' in class
Week 2	Pre-test answered by participants Pre-test questionnaire administered to participants
Week 3	Teaching of 'The Necklace' Researcher reads and explains the story in detail to the participants.
Week 4	Teaching of 'The Necklace' Researcher reads and explains the story in detail to the participants. Grouping of participants
Week 5	Teaching of Retelling Strategy 1 – Sequencing Task 1 – Retell sequence of events.
Week 6	Teaching of Retelling Strategy 2 – Summarising Task 2 – Retell from prose to dialogue.
Week 7	Teaching of Retelling Strategy 3 – Paraphrasing Task 3– Retell phrases and sentences.
Week 8	Teaching of Retelling Strategy 4 – Analysing Task 4– Retell characters' feelings and actions.
Week 9	Post-test answered by participants Post-test questionnaire given to participants.

The method of data analysis was as follows:

1. The pre-test and post-test scores were analysed in three ways as below:

- a) The overall scores for the tests were grouped into three score ranges which were High 61 – 100, Medium 31 – 60 and Low 0 – 30. The Part A (Comprehension) and Part B (Interpretation) scores of the tests were also grouped into three score ranges which were High 34 – 50, Medium 17 – 33 and Low 0 – 16. The shift in scores from one score range to another will determine the extent of improvement in the post-test based on score ranges.
- b) The SPSS (Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences) statistical software version 12.0 was used to analyse the data from the pre-test and post-test. The descriptive statistics procedure was used to analyse the pre-test and post-test scores.

2. Analysis of pre-test and post-test questionnaires

The pre-test questionnaire was analysed and tabulated according to the sections in the questionnaire. The data from the questionnaire was summarised into frequency count and percentages and salient points of the responses were used for discussion.

The post-test questionnaire was also analysed and tabulated. The data from the questionnaire was used for discussion to investigate whether the retelling strategies had helped participants to improve their comprehension and interpretation of the short story.

3. Analysis of the responses of the pre-test and post-test

The participants' responses of the pre-test and post-test were compared to determine in what way the teacher's explanation of the story and retelling strategies had affected the participants' comprehension and interpretation of a short story

4. Analysis of written retellings

The written retellings collected after the four tasks were analysed based on the length/word count, flow of ideas and overall comprehension and interpretation. The 90 participants produced a total of 360 written retellings. The rationale for analysing the written retellings was to identify if the retelling strategies had improved the performance of the participants in the post-test compared to the pre-test.

Discussion of Results/Findings

The discussion of the findings from the instruments of the study will be based on ,

1) Data obtained from the pre-test questionnaire based on the difficulties faced by the participants in comprehending and interpreting "The Necklace" in the four areas (Research Question 1) as follows:

a) Sequencing of Events

48 (53%) of the participants agreed that they had difficulties in sequencing events in the story, while 28 (31%) disagreed that they had difficulties in this area and 14 (16%) were undecided. 43 (48%) of the participants also agreed that they always do not know what happened before an event, 37 (41%) disagreed and 10 (11%) were undecided. 37 (41%) agreed that they always do not know what happened after an event in the short story, 31 (35%) disagreed while 22 (24%) were undecided. All these data are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Sequencing of Events

	Agreed	Disagreed	Undecided
Difficulties in sequencing events in the story	48	28	14
Always do not know what happened before an event	43	37	10
Always do not know what happened after an event	37	31	22

b) Understanding Main Ideas and Details

In understanding main ideas and details, participants also reported that they have difficulty in this area. 49 (54%) agreed that they always cannot identify the main ideas and details, while 23 (26%) were undecided and 18 (20%) disagreed. Participants too had problems in answering questions based on main ideas and details from the short story. 64 (71%) agreed that they had problems in this area, 11 (12%) disagreed, while 15 (17%) were undecided. All these data are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Understanding Main Ideas and Details

	Agreed	Disagreed	Undecided
Always cannot identify the main ideas and details	49	18	23
Problems in answering questions based on main ideas and details from the short story	64	11	15

c) Interpreting Phrases and Sentences

47 (52%) agreed that they always cannot interpret what is read, 26 (29%) disagreed and 17 (19%) were undecided (for question 19 i.e. they always cannot interpret what they have read). 51 (56%) also agreed that they had difficulties in interpreting the phrases and sentences, 23 (26%) disagreed and 16 (18%) were undecided (for question 20 i.e. that they find it difficult to interpret the phrases and sentences). The data are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Interpreting Phrases and Sentences

	Agreed	Disagreed	Undecided
Always cannot interpret what I have read in "The Necklace"	47	26	17
Difficulties in interpreting the phrases and sentences in "The Necklace"	51	23	16

d) Interpreting characters' feelings and actions

50 (56%) agreed that they found it difficult to interpret the characters' feelings and actions in the short story, 30 (33%) disagreed, 10 (11%) were undecided. 42 (46%) had problems in interpreting what the characters are saying in the short story, 34 (38%) disagreed and 14 (16%) were undecided. All these data are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Interpreting Characters' Feelings and Actions

	Agreed	Disagreed	Undecided
Difficult to interpret the characters' feelings and actions in "The Necklace"	50	30	10
Problems in interpreting what the characters are saying in "The Necklace"	42	34	14

- 2) The pre-test and post-test results were presented and discussed based on whether retelling strategies improved the participants comprehension and interpretation of "The Necklace" (Research Questions 2 and 3)

a) **Overall Pre-test and Post-test Results**

Overall, the participants obtained better results in the post-test than in the pre-test. Before the teacher's explanation of "The Necklace" and teaching of the retelling strategies, 62 (69%) of the participants achieved scores in the low range and 27 (30%) obtained scores in the medium range. Only 1 (1%) participant's score was in the high score range. The majority of the participants were in the low score range and the pre-test scores indicated that these participants had difficulties in comprehending and interpreting. However, after the teacher's explanation of the short story and the teaching of the retelling strategies, 22 (24%) obtained high scores, 62 (69%) medium scores and only 6 (7%) were in the low score range. Although 6 (7%) of the participants were in the low score range in the post-test, their individual scores were higher in the post-test compared to their scores in the pre-test.

The overall pre-test and post-test mean score for all the 90 participants is presented in Table 7. Based on Table 7, it is evident that the mean score of the post-test (48.59) is higher than the mean score of the pre-test (25.81). The standard deviation is 13.36. The findings from the overall post-test results show that the teacher's explanation of the story and the four retelling strategies taught to the participants of this study had helped them to comprehend and interpret the short story with all the 90 participants showing improvement in their post-test scores. The findings from this study support the findings from the study by Gambrell and Koskinen (1991), that retelling strategies are useful instructional tools for learners of proficient and less proficient abilities.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics (Overall Groups A,B and C)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	90	7	62	25.81	13.94
Post-test	90	23	73	48.59	13.36
Valid N (listwise)	90				

The improvement in the post-test shows that the retelling strategies were tools for the participants to monitor how much information they remembered from the short story. They were able to recall in their own words the sequencing of events, main ideas and details, details about the phrases and sentences as well as about the characters. The reconstruction of the short story through the written retellings had guided the participants to develop their comprehension and interpretation skills. The participants were able to organize information they had gleaned from the text and review all they knew about it, select key points that reflect main ideas, sequence events and identify the characters' feelings and actions. Gambrell and Koskinen (1991) suggest that retelling acts as a measure of comprehension by providing insight into the reader's ability to interact with, interpret and draw conclusions from the text. The participants were able to answer the comprehension and interpretation questions in the post-test with a higher measure of comprehension and interpretation of the short story.

b) Part A (Comprehension) Pre-test and Post-test Results.

Overall, the participants showed better results in the post-test scores of Part A than the scores in the pre-test. In the pre-test, none of the participants were in the high score range, 39 (43%) were in the medium score range and 51 (57%) were in the low score range. Compared to the pre-test, in the post-test 22 (24%) were in the high score range, 57 (64%) were in the medium score range and 11 (12%) were in the low score range.

Based on the overall Part A mean score for all the 90 participants, it is evident that the mean score of the post-test is higher compared to the pre-test. As seen in Table 8, the mean score of the post-test is 26.00 and the pre-test mean score is 15.49. The standard deviation is 8.408.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics (Overall A,B and C) (Part A)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pretest A	90	2	33	15.49	8.501
posttest A	90	9	42	26.00	8.408
Valid N (listwise)	90				

The mean score of the post-test for all the three groups showed that retelling strategies 1 and 2 had helped the participants of this study to improve their comprehension of the short story to the extent that all the 90 (100%) participants improved in their scores in Part A of the post-test. The increase

in the post-test scores of Part A indicates that retelling strategy 1 (sequencing) and retelling strategy 2 (summarising) had helped the participants of this study to improve their sequencing of events and in understanding the main ideas and details. Retelling strategy 1 – sequencing had guided the participants to sequence the story in the post-test since sequencing had helped the participants to select events that are important in the story. Reorganising the events helped the participants to remember information and guide them to answer the post-test questions. Retelling strategy 2 – summarising had helped the participants to identify crucial points, key words and details in the story. Participants had shown improvement in the quality and quantity of what they had gained through summarising the text from prose to dialogue form.

c) Part B (Interpretation) pre-test and post-test results.

In the pre-test, 75 (83%) of the participants obtained scores in the low score range and 15 (17%) in the medium score range and none in the high score range. In the post-test, 3 (3%) achieved high scores, 69 (77%) achieved scores in the medium score range and only 18 (20%) were in the low score range. All the 90 participants showed improvement in Part B of the post-test.

In comparing the overall pre-test and post-test mean score of Part B for all the 90 participants, it is evident that the mean score was higher than the pre-test mean score. Table 9 shows the overall Part B post-test and pre-test mean score. The mean score of the post-test is 22.59 while the mean score of the pre-test is 10.33.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics (Overall A,B and C) (Part B)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pretest B	90	2	29	10.33	6.415
posttest B	90	12	37	22.59	6.002
Valid N (listwise)	90				

3) A comparison in performance of the pre-test and post-test mean scores between the high, average and low proficiency groups to determine which group was most affected by the use of retelling strategies.

This study found that based on the overall mean score of the pre-test and post-test for Groups A, B and C, the high language proficiency group (Group A) was the most affected by the use of the retelling strategies. Based on Table 10, it is evident that Group A was the most

affected as the highest mean score of the post test was 62.43 which is the highest among the three groups.

- 4) **A comparison of responses (answers) of the pre-test and the post-test was made to show in what way the participants were affected in comprehension and interpretation of a short story after the use of the retelling strategies.**

Based on the comparison of the pre-test and post-test responses, it was found that retelling strategies 1 and 2 (sequencing and summarizing

Table 10: Overall Post-Test Mean Score

Groups	Mean	Standard Deviation
A – High Proficiency	62.43	7.035
B - Average Proficiency	48.87	6.981
C – Low Proficiency	34.47	6.668

are dealing with understanding) had affected the participants in the way that there was **better understanding** of sequencing of events and the main ideas and details. The participants were able to give accurate and partly accurate answers to most of the questions in the post-test. There was also enhanced quality and quantity of the answers provided. There was a better understanding of the story on the whole. Participants were able to identify the events that occurred before and after an event.

Thus, the responses in the post-test showed there was an increase in participants overall comprehension of the short story

The comparison of pre-test and post-test of Part B showed that the responses in the post-test of Part B were better than in the pre-test. In the post-test of Part B, the participants had provided longer and more accurate answers. In the pre-test, most of the questions were not attempted or the answers given were inaccurate. They were able to show the ability to interpret most of the phrases and sentences and the characters' feelings and actions after obtaining instruction on retelling strategies 3 and 4.

- 5) **Participants written retellings were also analysed to measure the extent of their comprehension and interpretation of the short story.**

Overall, the analysis of the four written retellings 1 – 4 as indicated the quality and quantity of participants' ability to comprehend and interpret the short story. This is evident in the increase of the post-test

scores for all the 90 participants. The participants' written retellings showed proof of how the participants were exposed to the short story through the retelling strategies which finally affected them to the extent that they improved in their post-test scores.

6) **The participants' feedback from the post-test questionnaire.**

On the whole, the responses from the post-test questionnaire indicated a positive response towards the retelling strategies. The majority of the participants agreed that the retelling strategies had helped them to appreciate the short story read effectively 84 (93%) of the participants agreed that retelling strategy 1 had helped them to sequence the events. 74 (82%) of the participants agreed that retelling strategy 2 which was summarising had helped them to understand the main ideas and details while 16 (18%) disagreed. 70 (78%) agreed that retelling strategy 3 had helped them to interpret the phrases and sentences from the short story while 20 (22%) disagreed. 71 (79%) of the participants agreed that retelling strategy 4 – analysing had helped them to interpret characters' feelings and actions compared to 19 (21%) participants who disagreed.

Conclusion

The findings are consistent with findings in a research done by Gambrel and Koskinen (1991). They found that retelling strategies had helped to improve comprehension and interpretation of both proficient and less proficient learners. The participants of all levels of language proficiency had shown significant improvement in comprehension and improvement in interpretation.

Another study by Catherine E. Stoicovy (1994) suggests that retelling shows an increase in students' self-confidence and in the quality and quantity of their reading and writing. Similarly, the findings from this study also indicate an increase in participants' self-confidence as the retelling strategies when used in the language classroom, requires social engagement as the participants were involved in reading, writing and talking. The tasks required the participants to skim, scan, locate information, to read critically, and also encourage discussion based on the information in the short stories.

Learners displayed the use of learning strategies as proposed by Oxford (1989). The metacognitive strategy was applied as the participants were able to focus on the important parts of the text by redesigning, scanning for main ideas and summarizing. The importance of the retelling strategies for learners and teachers in teaching these strategies in class for comprehending and interpreting short stories can be specifically explained as below:

- a) The application of the retelling strategies raises the awareness of language use among learners by increasing the understanding of literary texts. By retelling, learners learn more than just listening to the teacher explaining.
- b) Learners of all levels of language proficiency will profit from the retelling strategies used for learning of literary texts not only of short stories but others as well.
- c) Teachers may find a new way of approaching a literary text compared to the traditional way of teaching. They will know what instructions can be applied and adapted accordingly to suit learners of different abilities.
- d) Teachers will be able to stimulate, maintain and reinforce students' interest towards achieving successful comprehension and interpretation of literary texts.

As for the English Language teachers, the retelling strategies can be applied with the selection of suitable tasks to further facilitate the process of teaching a short story. Lessons too can be made more enjoyable and motivating. Teachers may use the retelling strategies to help their learners to achieve comprehension and interpretation skills in the appreciating of literary texts in the classroom. The retelling strategies are recommended for teachers who are teaching literature in the language classrooms. Teachers should make retelling strategies as a part of their teaching culture. They would find retelling strategies interesting and beneficial for their learners.

In conclusion, it is hoped that through the retelling strategies, our students' skills in learning short stories can be motivated and enhanced. It is also hoped that this study will give English Language teachers valuable information on how learners process information, plan and select the most suitable strategies to solve a problem. As a result, teachers may be able to help their learners comprehend and interpret literary texts by using appropriate strategies. As Rosli Talif (1995) proposes, any teaching strategies or techniques can help students to achieve successful comprehension and interpretation of literary texts as these techniques or strategies are able to expose students to a variety of literary materials, provide meaningful, relevant and enjoyable reading experience and encourage students to use their background knowledge to stimulate new knowledge from their readings.

References

- Anderson, R.C. 1994. *Role of the reader's schema in comprehension, learning and memory. Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading*. Newark. Delaware in www.sil.org/lingualinks/literacy/implementationliteracyprogram/schematheoryoflearning Date Accessed: 25 June 2003.
- Basnet and Mounfold. 1993. *Using Literature in Teaching English as a Foreign/ Second Language. The One Stop Magazine*. in www.onestopenglish.com/news/magazine/Archive/tefl_literature.htm Date Accessed. 25 June 2003.
- Carr, 1985. Guidelines for Using Story Retellings to Assess Reading Performance. in <http://www.handheldeducation.com/readingscene/abc/readtheory.html>. Date Accessed. 25 June 2003.
- Carter., R.A. 1987 'Reading Literature in a Foreign Language: Language-Based Approaches in Praxis,11/3.pgs.352-361
- Carter, R.A. and Long, M.N 1990. Testing Literature in EFL Classes: Tradition and Innovation. *ELT Journal*, 44/3, pp. 215-221.
- Carter, R. A. and Susan Holden. 1988. *The Integration of Language and Literature in the English Curriculum. A Narratives on Narratives in Literature and Language* .(eds). Cambridge University Press.
- Curriculum Development Centre 2000. *Module: English Language Syllabus for F1 – F5 in the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools*. Kuala Lumpur DBP
- Eisterhold, J 1983. Schema Theory and ESL Reading Pedagogy. *TESOL Quartely*. 17(4): pgs 553-573.
- Gambrell, L. 1984. *Literature Review: Story Retelling in* http://www.bridgew.edu/library/CAGS_Projects/TPALINGO/web%20page/srlitrev.htm Date Accessed. 14 August 2003.
- Gambrell, L. & Koskinen, P 1991. *The effects of practice in retelling upon the reading comprehension of proficient and less proficient readers*. (Report No.(s-008-735), Austin,TX. National Reading Conference.ERIC Document Reproduction Service. No;ED280007)inwww.bridgew.edu/library/CAGS_projects/A2SMITH/webpage/litrev.htm Date Accessed. 14 August 2003.
- Geist, Eugene A. 2002. "The effect of using written retellings as a teaching strategy on students performance on the TOWL -2 Statistical Data Included" *Journal of Instructional Psychology*.June 2002 in http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_mOFCG/is_2_29/ai_88761507/pg.4. Date Accessed. 15 January 2004.
- Hill, Jennifer 1986. *Using Literature in Language Teaching* London. Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
- Lester,James.D. 1976. Paraphrase: restating ideas in your own words. in <http://www.asu.edu/duas/wcenter/paraphrasing.html> Date Accessed: 28 February 2006.

- Katims and Harris. 1997 "Literature Review: Story Retelling" In http://www.bridgew.edu/library/CAGS_Projects/TPALINGO/web%20page/srlitrev.htm. Date Accessed. 14 August 2003.
- Mc Rae. 1991 *Literature with a small "l"* London: Macmillan.
- Mc Rae. 1994. *Literature and Ideas: Teacher's Guide*. Torino: Loescher
- Morrow, L.M. 1985. "Effects of story retelling on story structure" in Niles J.(ed). *Changing Perspectives on Research in Reading Conference 33rd Year book*. Chicago IL: National Reading Conference in http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/Morrow/Lesley_Morrow_Vitae_2-23-03.pdf Date Accessed: 22 August 2003.
- Oxford, R. L. 1989. *Language Learning Strategies: What every teacher should know*. New York: Newbury House.
- Rosli Talif. 1995. *Teaching Literature in ESL. the Malaysian Context*. Penerbit Universiti Pertanian Malaysia.
- Stern. S.L. 1987 *Expanded Dimensions to Literature in ESL/EFL An Integrated Approach*. *English Teaching Forum*. 25/4 Pgs 47-55
- Stoicovy Catherine.E. 1994. *Retelling as a Culturally Responsive Strategy for Micronesian students Eduard's Story* in <http://www.readingmatrix.com/articles/stoicovy/reference.html> Date Accessed: 15 February 2004.
- Wood, Karen (2000). "Benefits of Group Retellings: Flexible Grouping and Group Retellings Include Struggling Learners in Classroom Communities " In http://www.idonline.org/Id_Indepth/teaching_techniques/group_retellings.html. Date Accessed. 25 January 2006.