

# **TEACHING SHORT STORIES: CHALLENGES AND ISSUES**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Education**

**In Partial Fulfilment for the Master of Education in English**

**Submitted by**

**Kabiraj Upreti**

**Faculty of Education**

**Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur**

**Kathmandu, Nepal**

**2012**

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge this thesis is original; no part of it was earlier submitted for the candidature of research degree to any university.

**Date:** .....

**Kabiraj Upreti**

## RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCEPTANCE

This is to certify that **Mr.Kabiraj Upreti** has prepared this thesis entitled '**Teaching Short Stories:Challenges and Issues**' under my guidance and supervision.

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**Kabiraj Upreti**



## ABSTRACT

This research work entitled **“Teaching Short Stories: Challenges and Issues”** aims to explore the challenges and issues faced by English teachers of higher secondary level (XI). I have analyzed the challenges and the issues on the basis of responses collected from the questionnaires and check list. For this, I purposively selected 15 higher secondary English teachers who have the experience of teaching English at least of one year from different schools of Kathmandu district. I prepared checklist for class observation with some criteria and questionnaire to find out the responses of teachers of English. From the obtained data it was found that all the students in the class did not get equal opportunity to learn the lesson due to the students themselves. It was also found that teachers faced difficulty in teaching short stories because of the long structures and difficult vocabulary used in the short stories. It was found that to reduce the challenges in teaching short stories trainings, workshops, refreshers courses are to be given regarding teaching short stories.

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter one deals with the introduction, general background, language, literature, genres of literature, teaching language through literature, elements of short stories, types of short stories, characteristics of short stories, review of the related literature, objectives of the study, and significance of the study. Chapter two deals with the research methodology adopted for the study in which sources of data, sampling procedures, tools for data collection, processes of data collection and limitations of the study are included. Likewise, chapter three deals with the analysis and

interpretation of the challenges and the issues in teaching short stories. In this chapter, primarily, experienced teachers responses have been described. Chapter four presents the research findings and recommendations based on the analysis and interpretation of the data. This chapter is followed by references and appendices.

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## **CHAPTER - ONE**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

My research study is about the “Teaching Short Stories: Challenges and issues”. No research has been carried out on the short stories of major English at higher secondary level (XI) in the faculty of English Education Department. Therefore, I am interested in conducting this research.

Challenges simply refer to the hardships or difficulties and on the other hand issues refer to the condition in which the two clear sides appear on the same topic. As a researcher, I am interested to find out the issues and challenges in teaching short stories at the higher secondary level major English from the book named Mosaic

#### **1.1 General Background**

##### **1.1.1 Language**

Language is a very complex phenomenon in human life so much so that it has been taken as one of the mysteries that have confronted people, a topic on which there has been much speculation and no conclusion. How was language born? Many of us are familiar with the story in the Genesis concerning the giving of name by a deity. Another story is about the experiment of the ancient Egyptian king who raised two children in complete isolation from human speech to see what language they naturally speak.

According to Crystal (2002, p. 255), “There is both a functional side to language- the job language does in the human society- and there is a formal side- the way language is structured.” When we observe the following definition of the language we find that in fact both these

aspects of language are covered in that definition. "Language is a voluntary vocal system of human communication." (Crystal 2002, p. 256). This definition is only partially true because it takes account of only vocal symbols that are used in language. In other words, it seems to maintain that only speech or spoken form is language. But we know that there is written form of language which is used in communication. It is true that speech is the primary form of language and perhaps that is why the definition takes account of only speech and not writing.

To understand this definition of language we have to understand the terms voluntary, vocal, system and human communication.

Communication means exchange of message, information or ideas, etc. so language is a means through which information and ideas are exchanged among human beings. It should also be noticed that language is a means of communication only for human beings.

Language uses sounds as a medium of communication. But we should be aware of the fact that all the sounds such as tapping on the table, stamping of feet, etc. although they are sounds and are not used in language but they do convey message. Only those sounds which are produced by vocal organs or speech organs are used in language. Vocal sounds can be distinguished in to different types: voluntary and non-voluntary. Only voluntary sounds are used in language. Likewise the sounds in isolation have no meaning. They are meaningful only when they put into a system which is why language is called voluntary vocal system. Language is systematic. It is obvious from the fact that if language is not systematic then it can't be learned. In fact language is a network of systems. By this we mean there are many systems and subsystems which are at work in a language.

### **1.1.2 Literature**

The word 'literature' was derived from the Latin word 'litteratura' which means 'literate' in English. The term 'literature' was first used in French and it was later used in English. Literature is the result of creative faculty of human mind. It is an artistic, peasant, attractively deviated form of language to express idea, feeling, and experiences. In broad sense literature refers to all the written composition. But in specific, narrow, and serious sense literature consists of feeling, ideas, attitudes, experiences and emotions in an implicit way in the fuller and deeper sense.

Different people define literature in different ways;

Lazar (1993, p.1) defines, "Literature means ... to meet a lot of people ,to know different points of view ,ideas ,thoughts, mind...to know ourselves better! Literature is a successful medium to express human feeling ideas, view and so on.

Similarly Carter and Long (1991, p.6) defines, "Literature is a legitimate and valuable resource of language teaching. It is a kind of lament of flower." So we can say that it is concern with every branch of study. It is a strong medium of thought which language is taught and learnt effectively. Verghese (1989,p.1) says "one person out of every four of earth can be reached through English," English is the people of Great Britain, Canada, USA and Australia.

Thus, Literature is the breath of humanity and is soul of human dignity. It is the land or motherland and dignifies the universe. It is the air of human feature. It is the animated sign to enjoy and spend the life happily. Literature is the expression of emotion, feeling, pains in the



form of language but everything expressed in a word can't be taken as literature. It widens our mind depends our experiences and heightens our awareness the language skills. Thus, literature is widely used in language teaching.

From the historical perspective we are also able to see that the concern that have always been at the center of discussion on how to teach language. Language teaching methods change in course of time. From Grammar Translation Method of Language to Task Based Language Teaching methods it has reached in.

The study of literature makes the literature itself content or subject of language course, while the use of literature as a resource draws on literature as one source among many different kinds of texts for promoting interesting language activities. Clearly if it is the study of literature which is our aim then developing the 'literary competence' of our students is crucial. (Lazar,1993,p.14)

Language teaching is an art and it is the matter of pedagogy. Language teaching receives implications not only from linguistic pedagogy, psychology, sociology but also from literature. So we can say literature is also one of the strong medium in teaching and learning language.

### **1.1.3 Genres of Literature**

A genre is a term, French in origin,that denotes types of classes of literature. The genres into which literary works have been grouped at different time are very numerous and the criteria on which the classifications have been based are highly variable.

There are mainly four forms of literature: essay, poem, story and play. Essay in its purest form uses words to establish ideas addressed directly

by the essayist to the readers. Its basic quality is persuasion. Poem in its purest form uses words to express feelings addressed by a speaker talking or thinking to himself or herself rather than to the reader. Its basic quality is meditation. Story in its purest form uses words to create a view of imaginary persons and events through the report of a story teller to the readers. Its fundamental element is narration. Play (drama) in its purest form uses words to create action through the dialogue of imaginary persons telling to one other rather than to the readers. Its basic element is dialogue.

#### **1.1.4 Teaching Language through Literature**

Teaching language and teaching literature are two different disciplines yet both of them have interrelation. Language is a means to literature. Literature is a motivating factor for language learning. Literature exposes students to complex themes and also fresh, unexpected uses of language. A good novel or short story may be particularly gripping in that it involves students in the suspense of unraveling the plot. This involvement may be more absorbing for students than the Pseudo-narratives frequently found in course books. A play may engage students in complicated adult dilemmas. A poem may elicit a powerful emotional response from students. If the materials are carefully chosen, students will feel that what they do in the classroom is relevant and meaningful to their own lives.

Lazar (1993, p .14-15) writes the following reasons for using literature in the language classroom:

- ) It is very motivating.
- ) It is authentic material.

- ) It has general educational value.
- ) It is found in many syllabuses.
- ) It helps students to understand another culture.
- ) It is stimulus for language acquisition.
- ) It develops students' interpretative abilities.
- ) Students enjoy it and it is fun.
- ) It is highly valued and has a high status.
- ) It expands students' language awareness.
- ) It encourages students to talk about their opinions and feelings.

Literature is a discipline that helps creative writers bring out their inner feelings, emotions, experiences, ideas and opinions in an artistic and aesthetic way that pleases and instructs the reader at once. So literature has provided an essential element in language classroom. Thus, importance of literature in language is paramount.

### **1.1.5 Short Stories**

A Short Story is a short work of prose fiction which usually depicts one characters' inner conflict or conflict with others. It is a work of fiction in prose writing about imagined events and characters. A short story, unlike a poem, does not depend on a verse, matters or rhymes for its organization and presentation. A short story is often contrasted with a novel on the grounds of length, magnitude and complexity. As the name suggests, a short story is shorter than a novel. Some short story is a long one, say fifty to one thousand pages, we call it a novella.

The short story differs from the novel in the dimension that Aristotle called 'magnitude' and this limitation of length imposes differences both in the effects that the short story can achieve and in the choice, elaboration and management of the elements to achieve those effects. Edgar Allan Poe, who is sometimes called the originator of the short story as an established genre, was at any rate its first critical theorist. He defined what he called the prose tale as a narrative which can be read at one sitting of from half an hour to two hours, and is limited to a certain unique or single effect.

American literature contains some of the world's best examples of the short story. Readers around the world enjoy the finely crafted stories of American writers such as O. Henry, Stephen Crane, Jack London, Mark Twain and Edgar Allan Poe. What makes these authors such remarkable short story writers? They are true masters at combining the five elements that go into every great short story; plot, characters, setting, style and theme.

### **1.1.6 Types of Short Stories**

#### **) Frame Story**

Chaucer developed the frame story of journey, dialogue, and interactions of the Canterbury pilgrims to such a degree that the frame itself approximated the form of an organized plot. Within Chaucer's frame plot each story constitutes a complete and rounded narrative, yet functions also both as a means of characterizing the teller and as a vehicle for the quarrels and topics of arguments as route. In its more recent forms, the frame story may enclose either a single narrative or a sequence of narratives. (Abrams- 1993 p. no.286)

## ) **Prose Narratives**

The form of prose narrative which approximates the present concept of the short story was developed, beginning in the early nineteenth century, in order to satisfy the need for short fiction by many magazines (periodical collections of diverse materials, including essays, reviews, verses, and prose stories) that were inaugurated at that time. Among the early practitioners were Washington Irving, Hawthorne, and Poe in America, Sir Walter Scott and Mary Shelley in England, E.T.A. Hoffmann in Germany. (Abrams- 1993 p. no.286)

## ) **Myth**

A myth is a story which is not true and involves supernatural beings or at any rate supra human beings. It is always concerned with creation. It explains how something came to exist. Myth is transferred from one generation to another generation through oral saying.

## ) **Legend**

It is a short story, which is a part of fact and fiction about the life and deeds of a saint a folk hero or a historical figure. Legends are also transmitted orally from one generation to the next.

## ) **Fable**

It is a short and simple story that exemplifies an abstract moral thesis or principle of human behavior. In a fable, animal talk and act like the human being by representing them.

## ) **Parable**

Parable is a kind of short stories that uses familiar events to illustrate a religious or ethical situation. A parable is a very short narratives about

human beings presented so as to stress the tacit analogy, or parallel, with a general lesson that the narrator is trying to bring home to his audience.

## ) **Fairy Tale**

A fairy tale belongs to folk literature and is a part of oral tradition. Fairy tale tends to be a narrative in prose about the fortunes and misfortunes of a hero or heroine, who has experienced various adventures of more or less supernatural kind.

### **1.1.7 Elements of Short Stories**

Widely accepted five elements of short stories are;

## ) **Plot**

The systematic chain of events in a story is called plot. Each link in this chain helps to build suspense and to solve a problem. In other words, the plot stands for all the events in a story which are woven in such a way that they help the writer achieve some particular artistic or emotional effect at the end. Therefore the plot is a planned, logical series of events having a beginning, middle and end.

The short story can have a wide range of plot forms and structures. Broadly speaking we can distinguish three major parts of plot; beginning (introduction of problem), middle (development of the problem), and end (resolution of the problem). In short -

The beginning introduces a problem.

The middle develops the problem.

The end resolves the problem.

## ) Character

Abrams (1993- p no 32) writes, “characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work ,who are interpreted by the reader processing with particular moral, intellectual and emotional qualities by inferences from what they do the action. Thus, a character is a person or sometime even an animal who takes part in the action of a short story or other literary works. There are two meanings for the word ‘character.

a) Person in a work of fiction; protagonist and antagonist

Short stories use few characters. One character is clearly central to the story with all major events having some importance to this character he/she is the protagonist. The opposed of the main character is the antagonist.

b) The characteristics of a person

In order for a story to seem real to the reader its character must seem real. Characterization is the information the author gives the reader about the characters themselves. The author may reveal a character in several ways such as from his/her physical appearance; what he/she says thinks feels and dreams; what he/she does or does not do; what others say about him/her and how others react to him/her, etc.

Characters are convincing if they are consistent, motivated and life-like (resembles real people).They are of different types in short stories. An individual character may be round, many sided and of complex personalities. Madden on this line says, “Characters range from familiar stereotypes, such as the aggressive businessman and the lonely housewife, he archetypal characters, such as the rebel, the scapegoat,

the alter ego, and those engaged in some sort of search”(as in New Paradigm).

Finally, we know that the characters in the short story through the indirect method of 1)physical description, 2)the characters’ thoughts, feelings and words ,3)the comments and reactions of others and 4)the action of the character and the direct method of the author’ stated opinion about the character.

## ) **Setting**

The setting stands for the where and when of a story. Put another way, it refers to the location and the time in which a story takes place.

Authors often use descriptions of landscape, scenery buildings, seasons or weather to provide a strong sense of setting.

For some stories the setting is very important, while for some others it is not. There are several aspects of story’s setting to consider when examining how setting contributes to a story (some or all, may be present in a story):

- a) Geographical location (where the action of story takes place),
- b) Time (when the story is taking place, e. g. Historical period, time of day, years etc.)
- c) The weather conditions (is it rainy, sunny, or stormy)
- d) Social conditions [what the daily life of the characters is like, whether the story contains local color ( writing that focuses on the speech, dress, mannerisms, customs, etc of a particular place)] and
- e) Mood or atmosphere (what feeling is created at the beginning of the story, is it bright and cheerful or dark and frightening?)



## ) **Style**

In layman's terms the style refers to the way in which a story is written. It is often contrasted with the content of the story. The style according to Cuddon (1991-p 922), suggests "how a particular writer says things" (qtd. in New Paradigm). Based on Abrams (1993, P.203) and Cuddon (ibid) we can say that one has to focus on the following aspects of a short story while analyzing its style:

- diction or choice of words;
- its sentence structure and syntax (whether they are periodic or non-periodic);
- the density and types of figurative language
- the patterns of its rhythm and other formal features;
- its rhetorical aims and devices;
- the shape of the paragraphs; and
- every conceivable aspect of the language and the way it is used.

According to language, styles can be scientific, expository, poetic, emotive, referential, journalistic, etc.

## ) **Theme**

The theme of a fable is its moral. The theme of a parable is its teaching. The theme of a piece of fiction is its view about life and how people behave. So the theme in fiction is not generally intended to teach or preach. In fact, it is not presented directly at all. Readers have to extract it from the character, action, and setting that make up the story. In other words, readers must figure out the theme themselves.

The theme is a controlling idea or central insight of the story. "It is the authors underlying meaning or main idea that he is trying to convey." It means that the theme may be the author's thoughts about a topic or view of human nature. The title of the short story usually indicates what the writer is saying and he may use various figures of speech to emphasize his theme, such as symbol, allusion, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, or irony.

### **1.1.8 Characteristics of the Short Stories**

Short stories represent the part of a human life. The short stories are absolute and spontaneous form of literature. They differ from the novel in their length and the representation of human life. Brevity, singleness of unity and simplicity are the major characteristics features of short stories. Some of the characteristics of short stories are given below;

) Short story has the brevity in the number of character, their dialogues, selection of words and the detail about them. It can be read at one setting from half an hour to two hours.

) It represents only one aspect of human life. Plot, character and setting are less elaborated in the short story.

) It has the use of simple, communicative and effective language.

### **1.2 Review of Related Literature**

There are many studies being carried out in the field of English Language Teaching. Many researches are there related to the techniques of teaching the different genres of literature, but very few have been done about the problems faced by the English Teachers while teaching English. Some of the researches carried out are reviewed here:

Khadka (2006) studied, “Strategies used in Teaching Short Stories at Primary Level”. He has compared the strategies of teaching short stories at primary level on the basis of principle. His research tool was class observation checklist. His finding was, narrating short stories are always better than teaching them in primary level.

Joshi(2008) studied entitled “Teaching Short Stories Interactively”. To find out the effectiveness of teaching short stories by means of interactive method and to suggest some pedagogical implications were the objective of his study. He used class observation checklist as his research tool and found that if the short stories are taught interactively the students’ understanding level increases and are motivated in learning easily.

Joshi (2011) carried out a research entitled “Effectiveness of Using Technology in teaching short stories”. This study was carried out to find out the effectiveness of using technology (laptop, power point presentation, multimedia, projector and use of internet) in teaching short stories. He gave a set of questionnaire to the students after he taught the short stories without using technology. Again he gave a set of questionnaire after he taught them by using technology and compared the answers. His finding was, teaching short stories with technology is more effective than without using technology.

Baruwal (2011) studied “Developing short story through Picture”. This study was carried out to find out the effectiveness of pictures in developing short story on the students of class 9 of Green Village Secondary School Kirtipur, Kathmandu. He also used class observation checklist and questionnaire as his research tools. He found that the use

of pictures in teaching short stories is far better to make students develop the plot of the short story.

Bhusal (2011) has carried out a research on “Analysis of Teaching Short Stories Through Montessori Technique”. He has analyzed the Montessori technique of teaching short stories. He consulted different books related to Montessori based teaching technique and analyzed teaching short stories. His finding was telling short stories to the students was a fun, and is to be used in teaching.

Chaudhary(2011) carried out a research entitled “Teaching Short Stories at Higher Secondary Level”. He consulted the books related to how to teach short stores at higher secondary level. He found that narrating the plot while teaching rather than engaging the students to brainstorm their opinion about story really hampers on their creativity and comprehension skill, and encouraging them to find out the meaning themselves becomes long lasting.

Although the research work mentioned above are related to short stories none of the research has been carried out on the challenges faced by major English teachers of higher secondary level while teaching short stories. Therefore, this thesis seems different from others.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the present study are:

- a) To find out the challenges and issues in teaching short stories.
- b) To suggest some pedagogical implications.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The study will be useful for those who are involved in the field of language teaching, especially in ELT. It will be very important for the language planners, textbook designers, researchers, language teachers, and students. This will have remarkable contribution in area of teaching short stories.

## **CHAPTER-TWO**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The process involved through the work will be systematic for the achievement of the objectives and the success of work largely depends upon the way it will perform. Since, research is the scientific discipline; it deserves much more attention on the part of the researchers. A systematic study needs to follow a proper methodology to achieve the predetermined objectives. To quote Kothari (1990, p7) “Research methodology is a sequential procedure and methods to be adopted in a systematic study”. The methodology of this research is given below.

#### **2.1 Sources of Data**

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used to meet the objectives of this study.

##### **2.1.1 Primary Sources**

The primary sources of this study were the teachers from higher secondary level (XI) of Kathmandu District who were teaching Major English having at least one year of teaching experience.

##### **2.1.2 Secondary Sources of Data**

I consulted various books on language, literature, like Abrams (2005), Lazar (1993). I also consulted various theses approved in the Department of English Education, other research journals and article on related topics. I also went through different web sites on the related topic.

#### **2.2 Sampling Procedure**

To carry out the research, I selected 15 English teachers of higher secondary level having the experience of at least one year in teaching

the book 'Mosaic'. I observed five classes taught by the English teachers by using class observation checklist. Among the fifteen I selected any five teachers teaching in class eleven with at least experience of one year.

### **2.3 Tools for Data Collection**

The main tool for the collection of data was pre-structured sets of questionnaire with close ended and open ended questions. The questionnaire was constructed related with the challenges in teaching short stories (See Appendix-1).

I also observed 5-10 classes of teaching short stories. (See Appendix-2).

### **2.4 Process of Data Collection**

To collect the primary data the following procedure was followed;

I visited the selected schools and requested concerned authority dealing with the purpose and objectives of the study. Then I established the rapport with the concerned teachers. Then according to the appointment, I distributed the questionnaire to the teachers and collected the questionnaire with the feedback. Then I analyzed and interpreted the collected data.

### **2.5 Limitations of the Study**

This research study has the following limitation;

- ) It was limited to teaching short stories.
- ) It was limited to the higher secondary level (XI) English teachers of Kathmandu District.
- ) The population of the study was limited to 15 higher secondary teachers of major English nearly from 15 higher secondary schools.

) The primary sources of the data collection were emphasized and they were collected from questionnaire and classroom observation.

) The primary aim of this study was only to find out the barriers in teaching short stories.



## CHAPTER THREE

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section is mainly concerned with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from primary sources. The data obtained from the information have been presented analytically and descriptively. The main objectives of the study was to explore the challenges and issues faced by the English teachers teaching short stories of the book Mosaic in class eleven major English. To explore the challenges and issues I collected the fifteen informants teaching short stories in different higher secondary schools or colleges having at least one year of teaching experience. The responses were converted into percentages and analyzed and interpreted descriptively.

For the data collection mainly I used questionnaire and class observation check list. The responses obtained from the questionnaire and class observation checklist have been analyzed under the following two headings:

- ) Challenges in teaching short stories
- ) Issues in teaching short stories

Challenges in teaching short stories further have been interpreted under the following four sub-headings:

- ) Challenges originated by teachers
- ) Challenges related to students
- ) Challenges related to text book/ short stories
- ) Challenges related to methodology

### **3.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Data Obtained from Questionnaire**

Fifteen questionnaires were distributed for the fifteen different higher secondary school major English teacher of Kathmandu district with minimum of one year of teaching experience. On the basis of responses I have analyzed and interpreted the data simply using percentage descriptively.

#### **3.1.1 Challenges in Teaching Short Stories**

For this section I have further divided into four sub sections:

##### **3.1.1.1 Challenges originated by the Teachers**

In order to find out the challenges in teaching short stories originated by the teachers themselves confidence of teachers in making interpretation of short stories was the question I asked. Their responses are given in the following table;

**Table no. 1**

#### **Responses on Confidence of Teachers in Making Interpretation of Short Stories**

Responses	Percentage
Yes	20
No	60
Partially	20

The above table shows that 20% teachers responded that they faced difficulty in making their own interpretation of short stories. So they need to overcome this problem by being more frank with the students and comparing the short stories with the students' context. Similarly, 60% teachers responded that there is no barrier in making their own interpretation of short stories. It shows that maximum teachers with one year of experience do not face the challenges of making their own interpretation of short stories. On the other hand 20% teachers responded that they partially have barrier in making their own interpretation of short stories.

Next challenge of teaching short stories originated by the teachers was asked with the question of coping with ambiguity by the teachers while teaching short stories. The responses and percentages were;

**Table no.2**

**Responses on Coping with Ambiguity by the Teachers in Teaching Short Stories**

Responses	Percentages
Yes	20
No	60
Partially	20

By the above table, it is said that 20% teachers cannot cope of the ambiguities of sentences and structures in short stories. That is why it is the great challenge to cope up with ambiguity in teaching short stories.

On the other hand 60% teachers can cope up the ambiguity of short stories but of other 20% teacher have partially challenge to cope up the ambiguity. From this I can conclude that after the teaching experience of one year's still 40% teacher have to face the challenge of coping with ambiguity.

Another challenge in teaching short stories I raised was motivating the students in short stories. Under this topic other three challenges were raised:

- ) Lack of teachers confidence
- ) Not relevant to passing the exam
- ) Don't read much in literary language

**Table no.3**

**The responses and percentage of the challenge lack of teacher's confidence was;**

Responses	Percentages
Yes	7
No	73
Partially	20

The table shows that 73% teachers do not have the challenge with their confidence on motivating the students. Very few teachers i.e. 7% have the challenge to motivate the students, and 20% of the teachers partially

face the challenge of motivating students due to their own confidence level.

**Table no.4**

**Responses on Short Stories are not Relevant to passing the Exam**

Responses	Percentages
Yes	5
No	70
Partially	25

The above table shows that 70% teacher do not have the challenge on motivating the students due to the relevance of short stories to passing the exam. 5% teachers responded that they have the difficulties on motivating the students due to their relevancy with passing the exam.

Still 25% teachers partially have to face the difficulties on motivating the students due to the relevance of short stories to passing the exam.

**Table no.5**

**Responses on Students don't Read much in Literary Language**

Responses	Percentages
Yes	34
No	33
Partially	33

From the responses of the teachers, 34% of teachers responded that students don't want to read the short stories due to the literary language. 33% teachers responded that students read short stories in spite of literary language. 33% responded that due to literary language in short stories students partially read the short stories.

**Table no.6**

**Responses about the involvement of the teachers on orientation class, trainings, workshops, refresher courses and so on regarding teaching short stories;**

Responses	Percentages
Yes	54
No	26
Partially	20

By the above table 54% teachers are trained to teach short stories. 26% teachers have not taken any training courses and 20% teachers have partially taken the training regarding teaching short stories. This data shows that still 26% teachers have the technical challenges in teaching short stories where as 20% partially have to face the technical challenges.

**Table no.7**

**Responses on the Usefulness of those Training Courses in Teaching Short Stories**

Responses	Percentages
Yes	87
No	0
Partially	13

The above table shows that for the 87% teachers, training courses they have taken became useful in teaching short stories. 15% teacher are partially supported by those refreshers and training courses. There were no respondents responding no usefulness of those refresher courses in teaching short stories. In sum it can be said that to reduce the challenges in teaching short stories trainings workshops, refresher courses, orientation classes are to be given regarding teaching short stories.

In my question 'Does the experience of teaching short stories bring change on students in comprehending level?' 90% teachers agreed with the fact that experience of teaching brings positive effect in comprehending the short stories. Still 10% teachers responded that only the experience of teaching short stories is not sufficient to bring change on students comprehending level what they argued was being up to date in the subject matter and presenting it well in the class matters more than year of experience.

In the question ‘What are the activities that they always include while teaching short stories the responses of the almost all of the respondents can be summarized as narrating the short stories, evaluating the students cultural background of the students group works, guessing the games, character sketch, asking to read the stories dealing with the vocabulary, telling the gist or the main idea if the story, fluency practice of the students, etc.

‘How do you evaluate your students after teaching short stories?’ was the next question I had asked. The way of evaluating students after teach9ing stories was found different like; teacher A responded to evaluate them by giving the skeleton of the same story and encouraging them to develop the story with suitable title and moral. Similarly, teacher B’s response to the same question was telling students to narrates the same story, asking them some teacher made questions, telling them to summarize the stories in their own language. In the same way, to same question teacher C’s response was giving homework to narrate the short story, requesting them to present the short story in the class. Likewise, teacher D’s response to the same question was: asking to read the short story first, dealing with difficult vocabulary, telling the gist or the main idea of the short story and interpretation of the short stories.

### **3.1.1.2 Challenges Related to the Students**

To find out the challenges in teaching short stories I analyzed the questionnaire related with the challenges caused due to the students in teaching short stories.



Under the challenge while reading short stories three questions viz. the students show their lazy nature, problem created by the number of the students in the class and all the students don't get equal opportunity to learn the lesson were asked. The responses with percentage are like this

**Table no.8**

**Responses on Students Show their Lazy Nature, Problem Created by the Number of the Students in the Class and all the Students don't Get Equal Opportunity to Learn the Lesson**

Questions	Yes	No	Partially
The students show their lazy nature	26%	34%	40%
The number of the students in class creates problem	7%	26%	67%
All the students do not get equal opportunity to learn the lesson	40%	34%	26%

The above table shows that 34% teachers responded that the students do not show their lazy nature to reads short stories but 26% responded the students feel lazy to read the short stories. Likewise, 40% teacher's response was the students show their laziness in reading short stories.

In the question whether the number of students in the class creates problem' only 7% teachers agreed, 26% teachers disagreed. But, 67%

teachers partially agreed. It shows that the number of students partially only creates problems but it creates the problem totally cannot be said.

Next raised challenge was 'All the students' do not get equal opportunity learn the lesson' 40% teachers agreed and 34% teachers disagreed. But 26% teachers partially only agreed. So giving equal opportunity to learn the lesson in the class is a challenge in the teaching short stories.

**Table no.9**

**The Responses in 'Problems Students have in comprehending the Short Stories'**

Questions	Yes	No	Partially
Understanding the plot	26%	40%	30%
Understanding the characters	19%	67%	14%
Understanding the vocabulary	40%	13%	47%
Understanding the language	19%	26%	54%
Understanding the role of the narrator	26%	55%	19%
Narrator can shape or influence the way story is told	33%	34%	33%

From the table in the problems of students in comprehending the plot 26% teachers agreed but 40% teachers disagreed. Similarly 30% teachers responded partially only the students face problem in comprehending

them. That is to say it is not the great challenge to the teachers to make the students comprehend the plot of the short stories while teaching.

Likewise, in comprehending the character 67% teacher's response was that the students do not have the problem comprehending the characters while 90% agreed with the challenge. But 14% teachers partially only agreed in the challenge due to the students in comprehending the character while teaching short stories.

Similarly, in the challenge of understanding the vocabulary 40% teachers agreed as the challenge, 13% disagreed and 47% partially agreed.

Somehow it is the challenge to the higher secondary major English teachers of short stories.

To understand the language of the short stories, 54% teachers partially agreed as the challenge, 26% disagreed and 19% agreed. That is to say, as per the short stories the challenge differs and problem may be created partially.

On the next challenge asked as understanding the role of the narrator, 55% teachers disagreed with it, 26% agreed and 19% partially agreed. It means maximum teachers did not take 'understanding the role of the narrator' as the challenge in reading short stories.

In the question about student's language background as the challenge in teaching short stories, 47% teachers agreed in the fact that student's language is a challenge in teaching short stories. On the other hand 53% teachers partially agreed in the point that student's language background is the challenge in teaching short stories.

In the next question the way of short story telling by the narrator influences the meaning of the short story to understand it, in all the

responses approximately same responses came that it influences the meaning of the short stories.

In the question 'Out of six short stories of Mosaic which of them most of the students like and why? And what aspect of the short stories shows less interest in reading short stories? Why?' 52% teachers responded that their students liked the short stories 'Paper' much with the reason like ; this story represent the dreams of youths and helps to analyze how difficult it is to fulfill the dream, contextual, use of language, development of the plot, climax and ending is interesting and motivating to the students, a strong moral lesson for all human beings, etc. on the other hand maximum teachers i.e. 56% teachers agreed that their students do not show much interest to read the short story 'An insolvable Problem of Genetics because of the reasons like; the language of the short story is not lucid, characters are not clear, the development of the plot is vague, vocabulary is also difficult, having no any inspiration to the young students of class 11. It shows that short stories can be itself a challenge to teach because of its vocabularies, language, structure, plot, moral, character, etc.

### **3.1.1.3 Challenges related to the Short Stories or the Text Book**

In this sub-section I have interpreted the challenges in teaching short stories due to the text book or short stories. The responses on the textbook with their percentages;

#### **Table no. 10**

**The responses on the challenges in teaching short stories due to the textbook or short stories**

Responses	Yes	No	Partially
Lengthy and uninteresting	-	67%	33%
Difficult to finish in an academic year	7%	67%	26%
Less communicative	19%	67%	34%

When the question was given to keep their view about the Mosaic book as lengthy and uninteresting, no teacher agreed as the book Mosaic being lengthy and uninteresting. 67% teachers directly disagreed for the book Mosaic to say lengthy and uninteresting. But 33% teacher partially agreed on the uninteresting

Similarly 67% teachers disagreed to say that it is difficult to finish the book Mosaic in an academic year. But 7% teachers agreed as difficult to finish the book Mosaic in an academic year, 26% teachers partially only agreed to finish in an academic year. In short, it is not the challenge to finish the book Mosaic to teach in an academic year.

'The book Mosaic is less communicative was the next challenge. I rose in the questionnaire. According to the above table, 19% teachers agreed that the book Mosaic is less communicative, but 47% teachers didn't agree to say the book Mosaic less communicative. 34% teachers partially agreed to say the book Mosaic less communicative.

When the question was asked about the conceptuality of the short stories included in the book Mosaic; 80% teachers responded that the short stories are contextual. 20% other teachers responded that the short stories of the book Mosaic are not contextual. It means that the

short stories included in the book Mosaic do not create the challenge to the teachers while teaching. But 20% teachers disagreement in this contextuality shows that one or two stories are still not contextual and creates challenge to teach them to Nepalese students due to its conceptuality.

Similarly, in the question what sorts of short stories are to be included? , the teachers responses were contextual, interesting, non-fictional, humorous, simple in language, twisted and unpredictable ending, imparting some lesson, problematizing the issues of our life, narrative and encouraging stories that shows how to get success in the time of difficulty and frustration, contemporary, with good moral, , stories that can remove social discrimination, stories about life and art, self-delusion and discovery and mostly written by Nepali writers.

#### **3.1.1.4 Challenges due to the Methodology**

In this sub section, I have interpreted the data obtained from the question related to the challenges in teaching short stories due to the methodology.

Which of the method do you use while teaching short stories? Was the question asked for the teachers? The responses of percentages were:

**Table no. 11**

GT	7%
Direct	9%
Communicative	26%
Mixed	58%

7% teachers responded that they follow the Grammar Translation method in teaching short stories 9% teacher's response was on direct method as the method of teaching short stories. Likewise 26% teachers responded that they used communicative method in teaching short stories 58% teachers response was on the use of mixed method. It showed that the teachers with more than 5 years of teaching experience used Grammar Translation Method in teaching short stories. The teacher with 3 or 4 years of teaching experience responded in direct method. But those teachers who have just the experience of 1 or 2 years focused on using communicative method of teaching short stories. As a whole majority of the teachers used mixed method of teaching short stories to make students understand the short stories.

When the question was of language in teaching short stories 55% teachers responded that they use other languages as well in teaching short stories in addition to English language and 45% teachers response was that they used English language only in teaching short stories. It shows that maximum teachers teach the short stories using other language in addition to English. It is itself a challenge in teaching English short stories.

In the next question the short stories are to be narrated or taught. 65% teachers responded to narrate the short story but 35% teachers response was on the side of teaching the short stories. It means story are for its narration not for the teaching. By narrating the stories, languages and vocabulary is taught for the students. If narrated the students are motivated automatically.

### **3.1.2 Issues in Teaching Short Stories.**

For my research purpose 'issues' refer to the condition in which the two clear sides appear on the same topic. In this sub-section I have analyzed the 'issues' which occur in teaching short stories.

The next was the issue that I raised in teaching short stories either summarizing the short stories or going line by line while teaching the short stories. As it was issue 45% teachers response was to summarize the short stories by keeping the logic of if the students cannot be motivated in the list of short stories, they feel bored to read all the lines and finally teaching short stories becomes fruitless. The other 45% teacher responded that while teaching short stories they taught the students line by line with the argument that the purpose of teaching short stories is to make them know the language and for that every words structure are to be given due concern. Summarizing the short stories is useless and it is just exam oriented. But remaining 10% respondents were in the use of the ways of teaching short stories. To avoid the weakness of both they followed the both (summarizing and going line by line of the short stories.)

When the next issue was kept as the need of the making written lesson plan, 60% of any respondents' responses were in making written lesson plan and 40% responded to make the plans of teaching short stories but not the written lesson plans. The respondents whose responses were in making written lesson plan were with the qualification of education background and the teachers whose qualifications was normally M.A. they were in the side of teaching short stories without written lesson plans. Although clear majority of teacher was on the side of making



written lesson plan, some teachers still stand on the side of no need of written lesson plan by looking the practically.

About the methodology, the issue of changing the method of teaching short stories, 45% teachers responded that they didn't change the teaching methodology because for the same short story of the same level same method is to be used. But other 55% teachers' response was on the side of changing the method they used because teaching is a technique that depends upon an individual teacher and is to be taught according to the context.

The next issue in teaching short stories was the large number of students creates problem or not, in this issue 54% teachers responses was on the side of the large number of students doesn't create the problem in course of teaching short stories. That's why to make effective teaching of short stories the number of students in the class should be also appropriate maximum 20 to 25.

Likewise, whether the availability of instructional materials that the teachers plan to use is there or not was also kept as a question as the issue in teaching short stories. 27% teachers' responses were that there is no availability of the instructional materials that they plan to use. But 73% teachers responded that they get the instructional materials that they plan to use in the lesson. It means due to the in access to teaching materials in teaching short stories, the teachers they don't have to face maximum difficulty although small portion of difficulty exists.

In the issue 'Do the teachers face difficulty in teaching short stories due to the difficult vocabulary and the long structures? 54% teachers responded that they face difficulty in teaching short stories because of

the long structure and difficult vocabulary, on the other had 46% teachers responded that they don't face difficult in teaching short stories just due to the difficult vocabularies used in the lesson and long structures. It means there is still ongoing debate on whether difficult vocabulary and long structures in the short stories is problem or not. That's why it is an issue in teaching short stories.

Similarly, are the short stories of Mosaic contextual was the next issue I raised. In this question only 20% teachers disagreed with this question but large portion of the respondents agreed that the short stories of the book Mosaic are contextual. So due to the conceptuality of the short stories, it has not become difficult in teaching short stories.

### **3.2 Analysis and Interpretation of the Data Obtained from the Class Observation Check List.**

To find out the challenges and issues of teaching short stories I made class observation checklist and observed 5 teachers' classes while teaching the short stories 'Paper', 'I am a Cat', 'Wet Saturday'. While observing the classes I based my checklist on the suggestion given Lazar (2009, p.84) as pre-reading activities, while –reading activities and post reading activities. While observing the classes, I focused on methodology of those teachers. From beginning to the end of the classes with the help of the checklist various points were carefully observed (See Appendix 2).

Under the topic warming up activities with the ranks of good, tolerable and poor was kept. After the teacher's warm up if the students were motivated to read then I ticked to the rank of good .Similarly, when half of the students got ready to read the short stories then ticked in the

rank tolerable. But in the condition when the students do not show interest to read the short stories then I have ranked in 'poor'. Among the classes I observed, almost all the classes were good in case of warming activities. To create students' interest in the short story following ways were used by the teachers in common;

) They made students make very general predictions about the story using pictures, jokes, mimic. Afterwards students were interested in listening what the teacher said. It means there was no difficulty to the teachers to motivate the classes.

) Group discussion about what the title of the story suggests

) Prediction about the story based on reading the first paragraph only.

My next observational point was 'revision of previous lesson'. When the teacher revised the previous lesson by spending about 5 minutes of time in question answer method or telling one or two students to present the lesson in the classes I ticked in the rank 'good'. Just linking previous lesson with lesson of the observed day was ranked tolerable and no revision of the previous lesson was ranked 'poor'. Out of 5 teachers I observed 4 teachers didn't revise the previous lesson. Only one teacher tried to link the previous with the lesson to be taught. In sum, it is a barrier of the teachers to revise the previous lesson before they start teaching short stories.

On the point 'confidence of the teachers' with the ranks good, tolerable and poor was also observed all the five teachers were fully confident to teach the short stories. In using the simple words, explaining the characters and simplifying the vocabulary the teachers were found full of confident.

Likewise, regarding use of materials appropriacy of materials, teacher's guides and use of reference materials were also the observational points in the class observation checklist. From my observation I came to know that almost all the teachers felt easy to use teachers guide. Teachers guide only was the material they used in teaching short stories. As I observed the lesson 'Wet Saturday', 'Paper', and 'I am a Cat' in five different classes, teacher A used a paper house as a teaching material but in other classes I didn't find the teachers teaching short stories with materials. Just daily used materials were used not the reference materials. That is why there lies the challenge for the teachers to use teaching materials with reference materials in teaching short stories.

'Use of English language' by the teachers was my next observational point. I found the teachers teaching short stories in mixed language (Nepali and English). The teachers were trying to use English language in the class but the students were trying to listen in Nepali. Then both Nepali and English languages were used by the teachers.

To describe the plot, different technique were used by the different teachers. To list them;

- ) Teacher A provided students with two or three overall questions to check they have understood the gist of the story.
- ) Teacher B gave three slightly different summaries; the students had to decide the best one.
- ) Teacher C asked to provide the 'titles' for each paragraph of the short stories.
- ) Teacher D told students to write a brief summary of the plot in about fifty words then the students were again asked to write

another summary in about hundred words. His focus was to see what the students added in the summary developed second time.

Beside them, I suggested to give sentence completion activities and a series of jumbled sentences which summarize the plot which the students have to order them. Although the techniques were different they did not face the huge challenge in describing the plot. So my response was 'good' for them.

On the next observational point 'description of the character' I observed mainly the way teachers described about the characters of short stories. To describe the characters teacher A gave a list of adjectives from which the students have to choose which ones are most appropriate for describing a particular character. Similarly teacher B told the students to rank the characters in the story according to the certain traits like the most or the least active, passive, gentle etc. description of the character was the easiest work which I found from the information of questionnaire as well. Similar was the case from the class observation too. That is why description of the character was the least faced challenge in teaching short stories by higher secondary major English teacher.

To find the whether the description of the vocabulary was a also a challenge in teaching short stories description of vocabulary was my next observational point. While describing vocabulary teacher B provided definitions for certain words in the text the n the students match the word to the definition. Teacher c provided multiple choice questions to encourage the guessing meaning from the context. Teacher D gave the text to a group of student in advance, let them look up any

difficult words in a dictionary and prepare a glossary for the others. Although different techniques were adapted by the teachers the teachers could not go smoothly in describing the vocabulary. Small or large, they were facing difficulty to make the students understand vocabulary.

Description of theme was also my observational point. I observed that how the teachers describe the theme while teaching short stories. To describe the theme of short story teacher E provided students with different critical interpretation of the story which the students discussed and they gave a conclusion and something important was added by the teacher. Teacher B provided a general question to debate focusing on any contentious points in the story. Teacher on the other hand gave some sentences with symbolic meaning and asked the students to guess the theme of the story. To sum this describing the theme was the challenge for the teachers because after the teacher's description the theme I could observe the students not being clear or confused about the theme of the story.

Raising the issues of teaching short stories as focus on general meaning or every word, I observed the classes, some teachers focused on general meaning and some focused on every word. Although the debate goes on whether to focus on general meaning or every word, after my observation majority of the teachers focused on general meaning. Still the teachers teaching short stories with their focus on every word are also there. That is why to focus on general meaning or every word is an issue in teaching short stories. One of my observational point was about the use of communicative method making the students active. In regard to this point, I didn't find the teachers being able to make the students

active in reading short stories, the classes were found to be controlled and disciplined. That is why, on this point, my observation showed that it is a challenge for the teachers to use the communicative method in teaching by making the students.

'Use of Direct Method being the teacher active was my next point of observation. Almost all the teachers were active to use direct method in teaching short stories. The teachers became active themselves and during their teaching all the teachers were conscious to use simple vocabulary and well structured and organized sentences. Again it is also a method of teaching makes students passive.

As the 'evaluation part' I observed the points; students' participation, concluding the short story and summarizing the short story. Students' participation was the weak points of many teachers because they became active themselves while narrating the short stories. But to conclude and summarize the short stories many teachers were successful. So it is the challenge to the teachers to make the equal and more participation of the students in the learning activities.

## CHAPTER- FOUR

### Findings and Recommendations

This chapter is concerned with some findings and recommendations.

They are the following:.

#### Findings

- ) Most of the teachers with one year of teaching experience do not face any kinds of experience in making their own interpretations of short stories.
- ) To reduce the challenges in teaching short stories trainings, workshops, refresher course, orientation classes are to be given regarding teaching short stories.
- ) If the number of students in class is more than 20/25, that creates problem in teaching short stories.
- ) All the students in the class don't get equal opportunity to learn the lesson due to the students themselves.
- ) The language proficiency of the students also creates problem in teaching short stories.
- ) Almost all the teachers use both Nepali and English language in teaching short stories. There are very few teachers who teach short stories in English language only
- ) Most of the teachers teach short stories without materials.
- ) There is clear debate whether to teach the short stories or narrate them.



## **Recommendations**

- ) The teachers should be given the trainings, workshops, refresher course, orientation classes regarding teaching short stories.
- ) While teaching vocabulary of short stories the teachers are recommended to use pictures, give definitions, synonyms, antonyms, matching items, examples of the different uses, etc.
- ) Teaching short stories with materials makes the class live and more effective, that imparts the prolong understanding that's why teachers are recommended to use teaching materials.
- ) The students' language proficiency can be overcome by making students participate in the different teaching learning activities.
- ) The number of students in the class should be within 20-25.
- ) Short stories are better to narrate than to teach.
- ) Simple language in English should be used in narrating short stories.

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