



CREATING LESSONS USING PICTURE BOOKS, POEMS AND SHORT TEXTS: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of integrating picture books, poems, and short texts in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Traditional language teaching often isolates linguistic skills, limiting learners' communicative competence and engagement. This research adopts an integrated, literature-based approach to enhance language acquisition through multimodal input. A mixed-methods design was used, involving pre- and post-tests, classroom observations, and learner feedback. Findings indicate that students exposed to integrated literary materials demonstrate improved vocabulary, reading comprehension, and speaking fluency, alongside higher motivation and creativity. However, challenges such as material selection and teacher preparedness remain significant. The study concludes that integrating diverse literary forms creates a more dynamic and effective language learning environment.

Introduction

Language learning is no longer viewed as a process of memorizing grammatical structures; instead, it is understood as the development of communicative competence through meaningful interaction. In many EFL classrooms, however, teaching still relies heavily on textbooks and decontextualized exercises, which can limit student engagement and real-life language use.

Picture books, poems, and short texts offer an alternative by providing authentic, engaging, and context-rich language input. Picture books combine visual and verbal elements, facilitating comprehension. Poems enhance phonological awareness and emotional expression, while short texts introduce narrative structure and functional language.

This study aims to explore how integrating these materials into lesson design influences learners' language development, engagement, and critical thinking. It also examines the practical challenges of implementing such an approach.

Literature Review

The use of literature in language teaching has been widely discussed in applied linguistics. Scholars argue that literary texts provide authentic language exposure and promote deeper cognitive engagement.



Picture books have been shown to support vocabulary acquisition and comprehension, particularly due to their visual scaffolding. According to Cameron (2001), visuals help learners connect meaning with language more effectively.

Poetry has been recognized for its role in developing pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation. Maley (2001) emphasizes that poems encourage creativity and personal response, making language learning more meaningful.

Short texts, including short stories and dialogues, provide contextualized language input. Lazar (1993) suggests that such texts enhance interpretive skills and promote communicative interaction.

Despite these benefits, some researchers highlight challenges, including the difficulty of selecting appropriate materials and the lack of teacher training. Additionally, traditional assessment systems may not align with creative, literature-based approaches.

Learner's Profile

The study involved 60 EFL learners aged 16–18 at an intermediate proficiency level. The learners had:

Basic grammatical knowledge but limited speaking fluency

Moderate reading skills but difficulty interpreting meaning beyond literal understanding

Low confidence in oral communication

Limited exposure to authentic English outside the classroom

Most learners were accustomed to teacher-centered instruction and showed passive learning behavior at the beginning of the study.

Methodology

4.1 Research Design:

A mixed-methods approach was used to combine quantitative and qualitative data.

4.2 Participants:

Experimental group: 30 students (integrated approach)

Control group: 30 students (traditional approach)

4.3 Instructional Procedure:

Lessons in the experimental group followed an integrated sequence:

Picture books → introducing themes and vocabulary

Poems → practicing pronunciation and emotional engagement

Short texts → developing comprehension and communication

Each lesson included:

Pre-reading activities

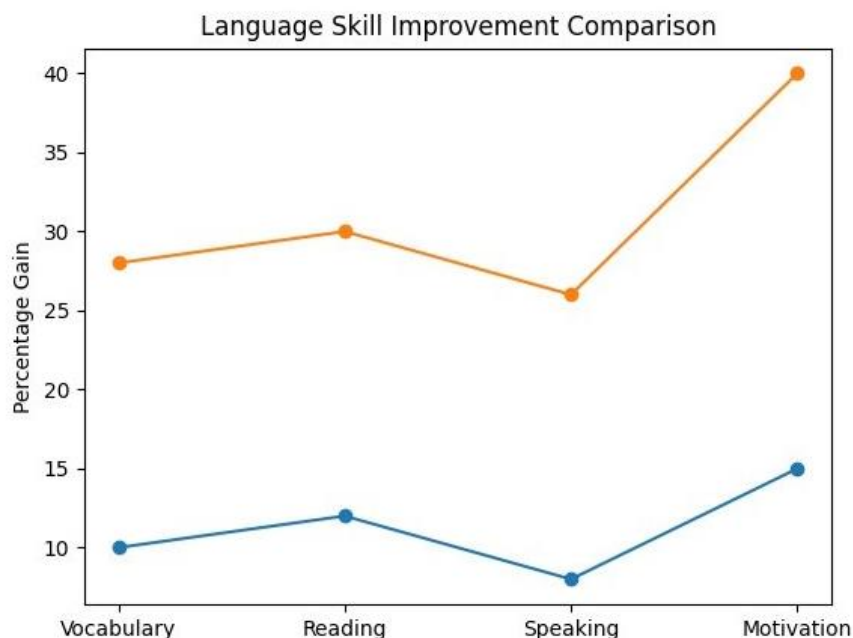
Guided interaction

Post-reading discussions and creative tasks

4.4 Data Collection:

Pre- and post-tests

- Classroom observations
- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Experimental – orange, control group - blue



The experimental group consistently outperformed the control group across all measured areas.

Discussion

The results demonstrate that integrating picture books, poems, and short texts significantly enhances language learning outcomes. The multimodal nature of these materials supports different learning styles and increases engagement.

Picture books help learners understand meaning through visuals, reducing cognitive load. Poems improve pronunciation and emotional connection to language, while short texts provide opportunities for contextualized communication.

However, the success of this approach depends on teacher expertise. Without proper training, teachers may struggle to design effective lessons. Additionally, time constraints and rigid curricula can limit implementation.

The findings suggest that while integrated literary approaches are highly effective, they require institutional support and teacher development.

Conclusion

This study confirms that an integrated approach using picture books, poems, and short texts enhances language proficiency, motivation, and critical thinking. It provides a more holistic and engaging learning experience compared to traditional methods.

To implement this approach successfully:

Teachers need training in material selection and lesson design



Curriculum planners should allow flexibility
Assessment methods should include creative and communicative tasks
Future research should explore long-term impacts and adaptation across different proficiency levels.

References

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