ZAMONAVIY ILM-FAN VA TA'LIM: MUAMMO VA YECHIMLAR

ILMIY-AMALIY KONFERENSIYA
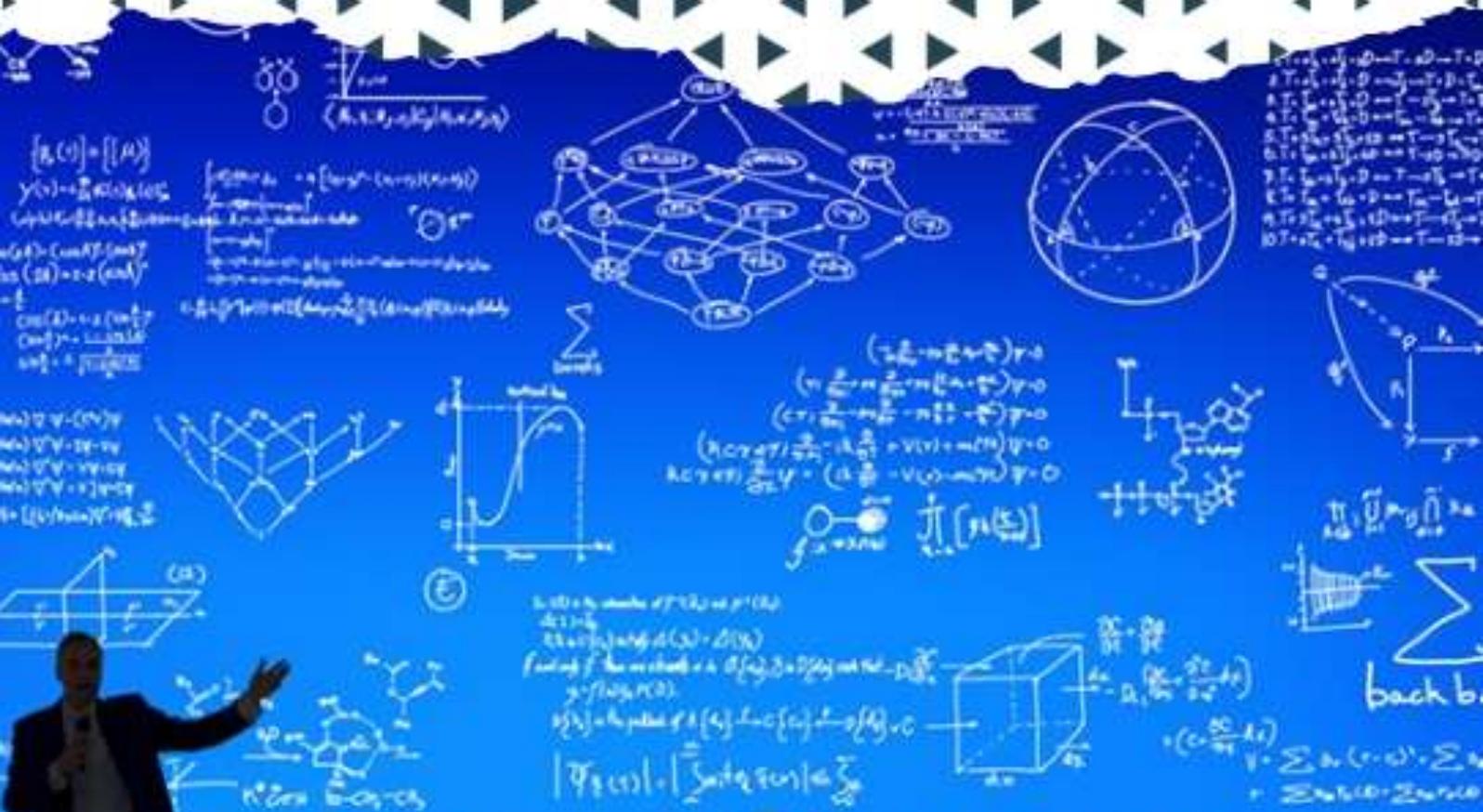
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USING SHORT STORIES TO TEACH FORMAL AND INFORMAL ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT. This article explores the effectiveness of using short stories as a pedagogical tool for teaching formal and informal English in EFL contexts. The study argues that short stories provide authentic linguistic input, natural conversational patterns, and context-based language use, which help learners distinguish between formal and informal styles. Practical methods such as guided reading, dialogue transformation, role-play, and reflective writing are presented. Experimental results indicate that the integration of short stories improves learners' understanding of stylistic differences, enhances communicative competence, and increases motivation.

Keywords: short stories, formal and informal English, stylistic awareness, communicative competence, EFL teaching methodology.

MAIN PART. Short stories provide learners with opportunities to observe natural language patterns, context-based word choices and authentic conversational structures[1]. Through narrative and dialogue, students are exposed to both formal and informal styles used by characters in real-life situations[2]. For example, formal discourse in stories may include polite expressions, grammatically complete sentences and indirect requests, while informal dialogue often features contractions, idiomatic phrases, and colloquial vocabulary[3]. This dual exposure supports learners in identifying stylistic variations and understanding how language shifts based on context, social roles, and communicative intention[4].

Using short stories helps students develop pragmatic competence, as they learn when and how to use formal language appropriately in academic or professional settings, and how informal English functions in friendly or casual communication[5]. Teachers may implement strategies such as guided reading, where students analyze dialogue and narrative style, focusing on tone, register, and vocabulary differences[1]. Additionally, transformation tasks, in which learners rewrite dialogue from informal to formal or vice versa, enhance flexibility in language use and strengthen metalinguistic awareness[2]. Role-playing activities based on short stories allow students to practice appropriate linguistic forms and improve speaking fluency[3]. Interactive discussion of characters' speech encourages critical reflection on language choice, while peer-feedback sessions foster communicative competence and confidence[4]. Reflective writing tasks, where learners explain why a character

used a particular style, help develop analytical thinking and stylistic sensitivity[5]. Research shows that the use of short stories increases motivation, as students find literary content engaging and relatable[6]. Narrative-based activities stimulate emotional response, which contributes to deeper language retention and creativity[7]. Moreover, exposure to different cultural contexts in stories enhances intercultural awareness and helps learners understand how social norms influence communication style[8]. Pedagogically, integrating short stories into EFL lessons strengthens both linguistic and cognitive development. Students engage with texts actively rather than passively, developing skills in interpretation, synthesis, and evaluation[12]. Teachers can scaffold activities by modeling stylistic analysis, providing comparison charts, and guiding discussion, ensuring that learners gradually internalize formal and informal language features while building autonomy[34]. Additionally, short stories provide opportunities to teach vocabulary variation. Formal English typically uses Latin-based words and precise terminology (e.g., "commence" instead of "start," "purchase" instead of "buy"), while informal English relies more on Anglo-Saxon words, idioms, and contractions (e.g., "gonna," "wanna," "kid," "cool"). Teachers can encourage students to create vocabulary lists from the stories, categorizing words into formal and informal registers. This expands their lexical range and helps them choose the right words in various situations.

Another significant benefit is that short stories stimulate emotional engagement and motivation. When students relate to characters or plotlines, they become more invested in learning. This emotional connection makes it easier for them to remember linguistic features and apply them correctly. Engaging stories may also serve as a basis for interactive activities such as debates, group discussions, and dramatizations, which require students to adjust their language level according to roles and tasks.

CONCLUSION. The findings of this study indicate that short stories are an effective tool for teaching formal and informal English. By engaging in reading, dialogue transformation, role-play and reflective writing, learners improve their understanding of stylistic variation and enhance their communicative competence[1]. This method bridges the gap between grammar and pragmatic awareness, promoting contextual language use, analytical reasoning and creative expression[2]. It is recommended that teachers incorporate short stories into reading and speaking lessons, focusing on identifying formal and informal elements, interpreting narrative style and adapting language for specific purposes[3]. Future research may examine how digital storytelling and audio versions of short stories can enhance multimodal learning and further support the teaching of English styles[4].

In conclusion, short story-based instruction not only improves stylistic competence but also develops intercultural awareness, critical thinking and long-term communicative skills[5].

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