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Flash Fiction in EFL Pedagogy: A Digital and Collaborative Approach to Linguistic Precision and Narrative Competence

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Abstract

Flash fiction serves as an effective instrument for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) creative writing through its brevity and narrative compression. Writing constrained tasks such as 100- to 300-word short stories or Hemingway's brief six-word story requires economisation of expression, linguistic precision, and stylistic control. Flash fiction is also used in vocabulary expertise, certain syntactic sophistication, competence in narrative production, and creative agency. This form is compact with the digital sapience, allowing it to adapt to online, blended, and multimodal classrooms. The current research locates flash fiction in a digital ecosystem while connecting collaboration, feedback, and experimentation. The three platforms framing the pedagogy are as follows: Switch-Lit, which facilitates turn-authorship for interactive idea generation; BoomWriter, which entails collaborative drafting of materials and peer evaluations; and Frankenstories, which gamifies the refining of narratives through the concise impacts of style-heavy writing. In sum, these form a cyclical model of flash fiction pedagogy, vocabulary, syntax, grammar, and discourse enhancement. This research goes beyond the earlier limitations of short-term studies conducted within classrooms and thereby identifies flash fiction as a literary genre and a dynamic digital practice in the promotion of creativity, critical literacy, and intercultural understanding in English as a Foreign Language context.

Keywords: Creative writing, Flash fiction, Creative writing pedagogy, Flash fiction writing pedagogy

Introduction

Flash fiction holds, today, an enigmatic status in pedagogies: as a formal teaching activity within the creative writing discipline in EFL, perhaps with some subversive overtones. Stories shorter than 1,000 words distinguish flash fiction from conventional short story forms; the latter, by virtue of requiring strict narrative economy, emotional economy, and implication rather than exposition, all have application to language learners refining their vocabulary, grammar, and storytelling through constrained resources. Flash fiction is, according to Burkert and Wally (2019), when "learners are trained to use the language accurately and to become aware of cultural and narrative structures," meaning every word, phrase, and punctuation mark carries significance. This balance of expression limitation and imagination extension is the hallmark of this pedagogy. Thus, in making meaning from these constraints, students acquire "creative reading and writing skills" (Tarrayo, 2019). Constraints spark creativity, Brevity Blog (interview) reports. Mini-texts such as "For sale: baby shoes—never worn by Hemingway" are fine examples of texts that invite inference, interpretation, and engagement with the emotions (Lucht, 2014). The flash fiction form also holds sense in an age characterized by

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digital immediacy in reading culture. Such quickly shareable and consumable work thrives in blogging or micro-platforms and provides authentic material that can engage digitally native youth while also teaching fluency, coherence, and stylistic awareness (Reitbauer, 2019; Sinha, 2024).

The teaching of flash fiction can be implemented in either interdisciplinary courses or online courses. For instance, *Girl* by Kincaid and *Popular Mechanics* by Carver, which are excellent examples of formal economy, ambiguity, and narrative compression, serve as models of style for student works. To enable students to gain syntactic control and creative expression, the instructor is to assign stories of different lengths (100-300 words) based on selected prompts or constraints. Technology is deeply involved in the peer review system by allowing for co-writing and online publication using blogs, Storybird, or Google Docs, thereby reinforcing the idea that writing is always a community activity, not an individual one. Flash fiction provides multilingual written assignments across cultures. It teaches students to write their stories while embedding their cultural perspectives in very few words. These are the kinds of practices that enhance students' confidence, critical thinking, and creative identity, which train them in becoming producers, rather than mere consumers, of literature (Sinha, 2024). In the end, flash fiction can be said to straddle the divide between a literary form and a digital function with respect to EFL learners: linguistically precise, culturally engaging, and collaboratively creative.

Literature Review

Flash fiction has provided innovative teaching opportunities for the practice of creative writing in EFL classrooms: an engagement of linguistic precision with incredible imaginative luxury. Flash fiction is defined as a length of 100 to 300 words, which compels writers to exclude all nonessential elements, thereby sharpening their language skills and helping them develop a creative style and interpretive depth (Batchelor & King, 2014; Tarrayo, 2019). Such mentor texts as Hemingway's six-word short story, "For sale: baby shoes, never worn," lend themselves to analyses of the structures, tones, and implicit meanings of narratives. As Tarrayo (2019) argues, flash fiction's extreme brevity makes it an ambivalent conundrum for baby authors. This complexity is, however, an accessible one in the refining of inferential skills as students construct unstated backstories and learn to extrapolate an ability useful later in longer forms of writing. Such compression-based activities are even further supplementary to this approach. Word-limit constraints require careful lexical and syntactic choices, pushing grammatical sophistication as well as expressing clearer extent and expression. Research in cognitive psychology indicates that creativity tasks using restricted frameworks yield more integrative and original thinking (Marguc, Förster, & Van Kleef, 2011; Haught-Tromp, 2017) with less quantity of work but higher quality (Kumar & Rabideau, 2023). Flash fiction enhances linguistic precision as applied in EFL settings and impacts the developing of vocabulary and making sentence structure stronger (STKIP PGRI Pasuruan, 2018). In-class research statements show that decent flash texts produce students who are capable of voice, style, and narrative architecture alongside argumentative skills such as cohesive thesis formulation and logical conclusions (Batchelor & King, 2014; STKIP PGRI Pasuruan, 2018). Flash fiction also corresponded well to the reading and writing habits of digital native learners (Tarrayo, 2019), while its shortness was a perfect fit within online, blended, and multimodal learning contexts. The implementation would lead to interactive activities such as

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collaborative writing, peer feedback, and digital publishing, hence expanding awareness of critical digital literacies. The format also maintains a culturally sustaining pedagogy by allowing learners to co-create stories emerging from their personal or local contexts, thus nurturing inclusive and diverse perspectives on how stories are constituted. Drafting scaffolding, close readings, and collaborative storytelling would help learners navigate the issues of agency in narrative and creativity. However, few studies exist on this, with flash fiction established to improve motivation and collaborative engagement with almost all types of clarity in language. Most are short-term, cohort-wise, and qualitative in nature, with very few based on comparative studies between print and digital modes or individual and collaborative modes. Very few longitudinal or mixed-methods studies exist, certainly casting doubt on generalization. This study builds on past flash fiction research within EFL creative writing through a blend of individual and collaborative methods within linchpin digitally mediated environments for broader empirical inference.

Methodology

Flash fiction, being pregnant with the idea of brevity (100–300 words), builds up a gauntlet that compels nonessentials to be discarded from a text and sharpens language skills and interpretive depth (Batchelor & King, 2014; Tarrayo, 2019). So, for example, Hemingway's six-word story can offer rich mentor texts that help students to analyze structure and tone, as well as requiring their implicit meaning and refining their inferential skills for constructing backstories. Compression tasks then encourage an elaborate choice of lexicon and syntax, enhancing sophistication and creativity within constraints in the grammatical arena (Marguc, Förster, & Van Kleef, 2011; Haught-Tromp, 2017). It has been empirically demonstrated that this type of writing improves the vocabulary, sentence control, and argumentation skills of students (STKIP PGRI Pasuruan, 2018). Its brevity is attractive to digital natives since it encourages collaborative writing, peer feedback, and digital publishing (Tarrayo, 2019). However, most have been short-term and qualitative in nature, with very few comparative or longitudinal studies. This research, building on previous ones, investigates flash-fiction pedagogy through individual and collaborative modes in digitally enhanced environments.

Findings

It has been noticed that flash fiction is used as an effective means of teaching English as a foreign language creative writing with its antithetical narratives and precision in language. As such, it is inspiring linguistic economy and offering avenues through which students with difficulties in reading longer narratives can overcome those difficulties. Research is worth noting on how virtual spaces seem beneficial to students who need to post, share, and invite peers for feedback, thus improving their learning environments for motivation and engagement. It is still a challenge because the structure's demand involves creative thinking and effort, while research is still limited in multicultural cases as well as in resource-poor contexts. All the same, flash fiction as a tool, especially in the collaborative digital environment, is considered an effective means toward development in learning language skills, creativity, and interactive learning, but it can be further explored for adaptability.

Compressed Narratives in Flash Fiction and Their Pedagogical Possibilities

Microfictions typically refer to compressed written narratives from just a few words up to 1,000 words, and their narrative has always been established as a "univocal" or few words (Burkert & Wally, 2019).

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As opposed to ordinary stories, where various narrative elements can easily condense, it relies on a moment or image and builds layered meaning through implication and subtext. It has immediacy and intensity and is usually launched in media res. Endings, often abrupt and not providing complete resolution, require readers to seek an active interpretation of the story (Reitbauer, 2019). Its developmental history in literature is accentuated by anthologies such as Sudden Fiction (Beck and Simmons, 1986) and Flash Fiction: 72 Very Short Stories (Thomas et al., 1992), which are primarily draped in brevity, resonance, and emotional depth. The minimal story of Hemingway for budding one-liners:For sale: baby shoes. Never worn. This is an example of the potential of minimalistic storytelling that can galvanize profound emotion and narrative implications. Flash fiction to learn precision, creativity, and inferential reasoning in pedagogy. The deliberate choice of words expands one's vocabulary, grammar, and understanding of forming sentences (Burkert & Wally, 2019; Tarrayo, 2019). The genre suits the digital-native reading habits with the short-form literacy and academic benefits that it brings along. Involving students in writing a short narrative, flash fiction develops narrative awareness, critical thinking, and interpretative skills. A skills-mapping framework indicates that flash fiction can foster cognitive, linguistic, creatively effective, and personally formative outcomes. Besides improving grammar and a narrative structure, flash fiction is about developing more inferential reasoning and enhancing student agency while building confidence toward imaginative writing. It's a serious pedagogical tool within the cultural weight of flash fiction as an enhancement in foreign language learning, multimodal literacy, and creative engagement in EFL classrooms, within the spectrum of bridging literate art and the practice of teaching objectives.

Table 1:1

kill Area	**xpected Outcome**	**cademic References**
anguage and Grammar	ecise vocabulary and the control syntax and redundancies.	urkert & Wally (2019) – Conciseness calls for exactness".
arrative Awareness	ocus on a short, compact rrative; in media res, minimal position	eitbauer (2019) trans structural inking.
ritical Thinking	valuate inclusion/Exclusion; infe eaning	rrayo (2019) develops terpretative meaning
diting skills	ewrite and cut the test's essence	apettini (2021) "Identify ad-bearing sentences"
reative Expression	imulates Imagination via onstraint	he Brevity Blog (2022) Creativit rough constraint
udience Awareness	wareness via readers' feedback d Publication	tyowati et al. (2020) Improve volvement and awareness

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ersonal Growth	uilds up confidence, gives a voic d a creative identity.	arrayo (2019) encourages sk-taking
ollaborative Art	osters peer critique and supportiv riting communities	urkert & Wally (2019), the undation for group learning

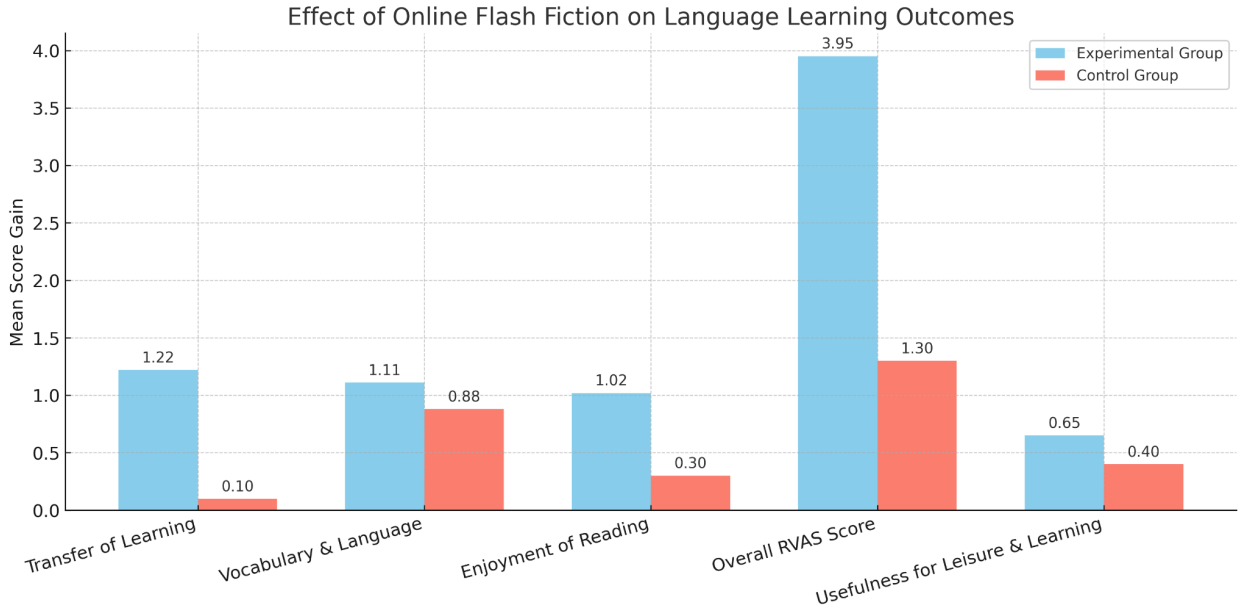

Figure 1:1

The evidence supporting the claim of a difference between the experimental students and the control group is presented in BSUJPC, Volume III Issue VI, November 2025. It shows that the experimental students scored significantly better than their counterparts across five measures informed by the theory of transfer learning: +1.22 compared to control +0.10 for overall performance, +1.11 for Vocabulary and Language Development, and +1.02 for Reading Enjoyment. However, Reading Values and Attitudes demonstrated the greatest growth with scores of +3.95 for essays versus +1.30 for controls, indicating that experimental students exhibited greater motivation and positivity as measured against valence theory or reading value. Although gains in leisure and learning were positive, they could not be said to be statistically significant. It can be concluded that flash fiction is exceedingly effective in teaching while exposed to digital and blended learning environments, as this prompts students to use precise language and express creativity within a short space of storytelling.

Flash Fiction in the Classroom: Precision, Imagination and Relevance

Flash storytelling requires precision in language and imaginative inference, is characterized by its educational significance to meet today's learners' needs, and has a strict taxonomical structure to its syntax (Tarrayo, 2019). It suspends everything to illuminate syntax, diction, or grammar and serves as a micro-workshop: every word pregnant with promise or war. Students expose their wit and perception in a way that defies compression. McCormack reports that flash fiction treats time very precisely neither too early in the main opening nor too late in the ending. This discipline hones awareness of

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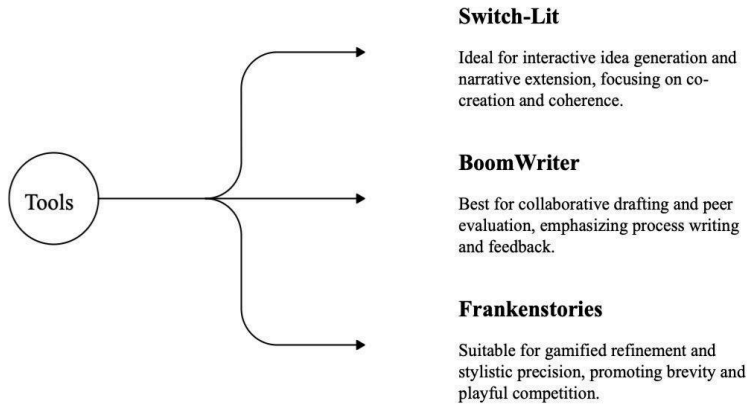
pacing while anchoring themes and resonance. Equally crucial is imaginative inference. Capettini's (2021) exercise had students turn a two-page story into its "load-bearing" sentences only. It was a hefty pruning, resulting in interpretative clarity. This economy of words is attractive to the digital generation, for whom flash fiction is said to be intimidating yet gentle (Tarrayo, 2019): lightning speed versus attention span. The curriculum includes flash-fiction "labs," where students play with the structure, testing out list narratives, triptychs, and outline-driven works, where craft is rejuvenated. So collaborative exercises also thrive, as students write interlinked pieces through motifs and common settings. Thereby, flash fiction serves as an advanced tool for linguistic and narrative precision and creativity, as well as a platform to produce critical readers and imaginative writers.

Digital Platforms for Collaborative Flash Fiction in EFL Contexts



The genre of flash fiction promotes lexical precision, syntactic economy, and clarity in the EFL classroom within 1,000 words (Ostman, 2020; Sinha, 2024). When digitized, it transforms from an individual composition into a collaborative, interactive practice that scaffolds language and nurtures creativity (Datau & Setyorini, 2023; Christiansen, 2021). Evidence of this shift comes from the digital tools utilized: Switch-Lit for co-construction of meaning and stylistic negotiation, BoomWriter for process writing supported with peer review and revision, and Frankenstories for gamifying micro-narrative creation through constraints and voting. Collectively, such platforms are designed to promote vocabulary, syntactic diversity, accuracy, and discourse cohesion to situate flash fiction in the cyclical pedagogy of creativity and collaboration. Collectively, these platforms comprise a cycle of flash fiction pedagogy. Together, they thus nurture vocabulary growth, syntactic depth, grammatical accuracy, and discourse cohesion. Yet, more importantly, they place writing within a legitimate, playful, and dialogic paradigm, thus lowering the affective filter and stimulating creativity and engagement. When embedded within flash fiction units, these tools allow teachers to reconceptualize EFL writing not as an isolated composition, but as a socially situated practice in which learners are simultaneously acquiring language competency and narrative artistry. Such integration of digital platforms indicates flash fiction's potential for a bridge between creative expression and academic literacy in contemporary EFL pedagogy.

Conclusion

To sum up, flash fiction is regarded as an exceptionally powerful tool to teach EFL creative writing, compressing narrative into linguistic economy for sharpening precision, syntactic control, and inferential reasoning. While working with mentor texts and word-limited tasks, students become aware

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of being conscious decision-makers in the narrative process while retaining vocabulary and engaging meaningfully with the texts (Ahmed, 2024). Its capacity to be taught and experienced over digital and multimedia platforms enhances its relevance, allowing for collaborative creativity, narrative engagement, and learner motivation (Chen, 2004). And when employed alongside close reading, scaffolded drafting, and co-creation, flash fiction cultivates linguistic finesse, narrative awareness, and creative agency in ways that often escape the traditional pedagogy. This, from the standpoint of EFL education, indicates that flash fiction can stand as a dynamic and culturally relevant platform and framework, achieving literary and linguistic competencies well beyond the walls of the classroom. This way, the present study takes flash fiction not just as a method of teaching but as one that is sustainable in creativity and engagement for diverse learners.

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