

AI Misuse in Reading Assessments: A Case Study of Short-Story Reading in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

This study examined higher education students' experience and reading comprehension after reading short stories. Forty-one students were involved in this research and were chosen by using a convenience sampling method. The design of this research was a mixed-method research employing descriptive quantitative analysis and thematic interpretation. Two instruments were used, namely the reading comprehension test and the questionnaire, to evaluate students' perception of short stories. The students' reading comprehension mean score was 68.26 (categorized as unsatisfactory). Additionally, most students agreed that reading short stories broadened their vocabulary. Moreover, there was an unexpected finding in this research, which was not listed for research purposes, i.e., the misuse of Artificial Intelligence among students to answer reading questions. Furthermore, some students tried to use a translation tool from Google Lens; they copied the translation result on their answer sheet without any changes. The last group of students was caught cheating. They shared similar answers. Those academic violations influenced the reading comprehension means score due to a reduction in scores. In conclusion, reading short stories can be an alternative to teach reading since it opens opportunities to students to come across new vocabulary, which helps them to understand the story as well as grammar knowledge. To avoid the challenges found in this research, it is suggested that English teachers explain the pros and cons of the use of Artificial Intelligence in learning English, issue clear rules of AI usage in the classroom, and keep motivating the students to put more effort to learn English.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Receptive skills, such as reading, assist language learners to improve speaking and writing as productive skills. Having a wide-ranging vocabulary and correct grammatical sentences in speaking and writing results from reading activity. Moreover, writing styles from different writers influence readers as well; their writing styles are similar to their favourite writers (Yesi, 2024). Furthermore, reading enriches one's knowledge so that when they are in discussion or are assigned to write any topic, they have prior knowledge that will help them to have a comprehensive discussion

and outstanding writing products (Saraswati, et al., 2021). The ironic fact of reading is that many EFL learners in Indonesia are unable to comprehend English texts, despite their essentialness.

A group of non-English department students in an English class in one of the colleges in Padang, Indonesia, was identified as having a lack of interest in reading an English text. Once they were invited in a read-aloud, they showed little interest in it. Furthermore, after finishing the reading aloud session, they were asked to discuss the vocabulary in the text. It turned out that most of the students did not know the meaning of more than half of the vocabulary in the text. Consequently, they could not answer the questions in the text. In relation to these facts, incorporating a joyful atmosphere into reading class has the potential to address this issue. Reading English short stories is claimed to be a pleasant activity that increases students' motivation to read more English texts (Nathir & Zubaedah, 2023). It results from dull, short texts. Besides, while reading the text, the students will come across vocabulary, and they will try to find out the meaning of the difficult words in order to fully comprehend the story (Efendi, et al., 2022).

Aside from carrying out delightful activities such as reading short stories, inviting the students to utilize technology to improve their reading comprehension will also be helpful. In accordance with that notion, AI-based reading applications are tailored to those who want to improve their reading comprehension. For instance, Read-AI, a platform to assist language learners in elevating their reading with gamification features such as badge achievement and interactive challenges. In addition, there is a chatbot to consult the meaning of difficult words, the whole text's translation, and any prompts related to texts (Gani & Ismahani, 2025). In addition, a study reveals that AI enables language learners to personalize their reading activities (Hidayat, 2024). Any user can input the prompts of which level of texts they would like to read. Consequently, the students who utilize AI to improve their reading perform better scores compared to those who do not (Yousefi & Askari, 2024; Almutairi, et al., 2025; Silor & Silor, 2025).

Despite the benefits of using AI-based reading applications, the ethical issues in using them should be a major concern. The unethical use of AI violates academic integrity. For instance, in academic writing, students can finish their essays in a few seconds after typing the prompts (Marin, et al., 2025). In the reading context, all vocabulary's meanings, text translation, and questions can be answered via AI chatbots simply by entering prompts. To address this, teachers must balance AI integration in instruction with clear guidance on ethical use (Aljabr & Al-Ahdal, 2024; Garcia-Lopez & Trujillo-Linan, 2025). The further impact from over-reliance on AI is that it erodes students' efforts to think critically, so that there will be no meaningful learning (Zhai, et al., 2024).

There have been plenty of studies on the benefits of implementing reading short stories to improve reading comprehension. Despite the known benefits of short stories, little attention has been given to AI misuse during reading assessments. Hence, this research is addressed to fill this gap.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Benefits of Using Short Stories in ELT

Reading short stories in English is considered a joyful activity. Short stories are fictional stories that consist of 1.500 to 5.000 words (Keegan in Novasyari & Fauziah, 2023). The main reason why short stories will be interesting among students is that they accommodate a wide range of interests (Maulidia, 2023). Besides, short stories are completed with illustrative and colorful pictures that catch the attention of readers so that they help them to understand and imagine what the characters and settings look like (Robin, et al., 2022). In accordance with this notion, illustrative pictures in short stories provide an immersive reading experience for the students because they can feel the emotions and be involved in the setting of the story as well (Fadillah, et al., 2024). Hence, the English teacher should consider which short stories will meet students' interests before bringing them into the classroom. For instance, themes related to social critique are best suited to university students since they have good critical thinking skills (Golden, 2023).

Once the students comprehend the chunk of the storyline, they will wonder what is going on after that (Sari & Nasution, 2023). Several studies reveal that reading English short stories is beneficial for students. The biggest effect of this activity is that it improves students' vocabulary and grammar knowledge (Oktaviana et al., 2022). A short story consists of more than 1.500 words. During the reading process, the students will come across the familiar and unfamiliar ones. For an unfamiliar group of words, the students can consult their dictionaries or guess the meaning based on the context clues. This processing makes learning take place because the students are gaining more vocabulary (Sariana, et al., 2022).

Additionally, reading aloud can be an alternative activity to read the short stories. That activity helps the students to improve their pronunciation and intonation, which also escalates their speaking performance (Panjaitan, et al., 2023). The teachers can give corrective feedback for mispronounced words by the students. As a consequence, the students' pronunciation and intonation can be enhanced.

Aside from its beneficial impact on speaking performance, reading English short stories improves students' writing skills as well. It is argued that any grammatical rules found in the short stories can be explained directly by the English teachers so that students' grammatical knowledge is improved. Later, they can use both vocabulary and grammatical rules in their writing, considering grammar as one of the aspects in writing evaluation (Abdulkadir, et al., 2024). The procedures to understand the short stories can be applied to understand other types of English texts, like announcements, exposition, and even research articles, which require the readers to have a B2 English proficiency level (Warnby, 2025).

Furthermore, short stories completed with pictures are proven as a medium to scale up students' excitement to learn (Bhatti, et al., 2022). In line with the previous ones, research conducted by Efendi et al. proved that students' reading comprehension is getting better after experimenting with

short stories in reading activities. They have the intention to read more short stories because they argue that reading short stories is pleasant.

All in all, reading English short stories is not only beneficial to improve students' reading comprehension, but it is also helpful to improve other English skills, such as speaking and writing, as productive skills due to the vocabulary in short stories. Therefore, this activity is regarded as a promising activity in teaching English.

2.2. Students' Reading Difficulties in EFL

Several researchers argue that factors that cause students' difficulty in comprehending English texts can be classified into two, namely internal and external factors. Internal factor refers to any factors that originate from within students and vice versa. An internal factor that is considered the most challenging is language knowledge. English words are different from Bahasa, so when the students read an English text with no prior knowledge, they certainly have no idea about what they are reading (Asani, 2022). In other words, students have to master vocabulary and the structure of English to comprehend the texts.

The other internal factor is motivation. Motivation is defined as a mental state that drives students to activate, take action, and lead their behavior to learn (Eriyanto et al., 2021). The students with low motivation do not have a strong desire to learn English. As a result, they tend to be lazy in reading English texts inside and outside the classroom. The situation is getting worse when they do not have background knowledge of English because they cannot grasp the idea after reading the texts (Kaharuddin, et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the external factors behind students' inability to comprehend English texts consist of several things. Textbooks and dictionaries are regarded as two starters in reading activity. Kaharuddin et al. (2023) found that some schools lack those two resources so that the students are not exposed to various English vocabularies and textbooks. Besides, English teachers who promote students' reading skills are in charge of creating meaningful learning by utilizing effective methods and selecting interesting texts to read (Hayati & Puspitaloka, 2022). In relation to this notion, teachers with their classroom environment are impactful on students' reading interest and motivation. The more interesting the reading materials are incorporated with outstanding methods, the more motivated the students will be.

Another external factor that contributes to students' reading comprehension is family background. The students who come from families with strong reading habits will bring their habits to school. Consequently, when they are assigned to read, they will not face any challenges (Hemas, et al., 2023). Parents who are accustomed to reading will influence their children with that habit. Besides, they support their children by providing more English books to read with other supportive resources like internet connection to access digital libraries (Jabbar, et al., 2021). Since the students are exposed to English texts intensively, they will be familiar with

vocabulary and sentence structures. As a result, they comprehend the text easily.

In sum, the diversity of students' reading comprehension in one class is influenced by several factors. To address this issue, the teachers should accommodate that difference by implementing a variety of teaching strategies that can engage students and foster a regular reading habit.

2.3. AI in Language Learning

The problems in reading English texts above can be tackled with technology. Nowadays, educational technology is growing rapidly. There are various platforms and applications available to learn English, whether they are free or paid. Back in the 2000s, technology was adopted massively in education (Mohamed & Selian, 2025). It was marked by the use of interactive boards and e-learning platforms in educational institutions. Fast forward to 2010, education was touched by digitalization. Hence, the space for learning as well as learning sources were broadened as open contents, electronic libraries, virtual narrative, and automatic educational management system have been adopted by the educational institutions (Kolesnikova, 2020).

The digitalization was fully adopted by all schools in the middle of Covid-19 outbreak (Mustapha, et al., 2021). As a result, various digital learning applications and platforms were blooming during that period. The students have had more learning resources to improve their English, especially reading skill. Some popular platforms to improve reading skills are Khan Academy, Readworks, ReadTheory, Storyline Online, National Geographic Kids, Reading Eggs, and Prodigy English (Jongh & Milton, 2022). Regarding this fact, reading English texts should not be a challenging thing to do anymore because of various learning sources that can be accessed 24 hours a day.

Today, AI (Artificial Intelligence) in education has brought massive changes in education. AI itself is defined as machines that can imitate human beings' intelligence (Yatri, et al., 2023). It is admitted that the students have used AI as study assistance (Labadze, et al., 2023). Specifically, it assists the students when they find obstacles in doing assignments and homework; it even improves their learning experiences.

Vocabulary issue is not a big deal anymore since AI can tell the students vocabulary that they do not know by entering the words to the chatbot and asking for their meaning (Alqaed, 2024). Similarly, in terms of grammar, AI also helps students improve their grammar knowledge. The students can check their grammar by using AI tools and get feedback immediately, along with an explanation, which helps the students to understand the grammar rules more (Liando et al., 2025). Furthermore, when it comes to translation needs, AI's role is more favored than the Google translation tool because the translation results are more accurate and clear (Arifatin & Setyaningrum, 2024). Hence, when the students find difficulty in reading English texts, they can consult with AI to get accurate and fast result. The last issue in both speaking and writing skills can be

tackled by AI assistance. The students' pronunciation and fluency in speaking can be improved with the assistance of an AI bot as a speaking partner (Kuswiyanti, et al., 2023). Besides, there is also a feature of AI that can be utilized in writing, namely AI-generated. In writing, it can be used to produce writing products based on the given prompts (Laher, 2025). Thus, this benefit can be used to get the ideas in writing.

2.4. Ethical Concerns and Academic Integrity

Despite the advantages of AI in learning English, AI also raises ethical concerns. It is caused by the misuse of AI to accomplish any assignments, for example, the prompts used to create essays make it easy for dishonest students to finish their essays effortlessly (Shaw, 2025). It diminishes students' critical thinking skills (Vieriu & Petrea, 2025). The further impact of this ethical issue is over-dependence on AI usage. Some studies claim that the students are more dependent on AI in accomplishing their English assignments (Dangin & Hikmah, 2024; Reiter et al., 2025; Balalle & Pannilage, 2025). Their main motive to count on AI is the fast answer they get for their assignments. In accordance with this issue, it is clear that the misuse of AI can lead to the erosion of critical thinking skills. In the English language learning context, students cannot improve their English skills if they count on AI for all their assignments. Therefore, the students have to use AI wisely and the English teacher should teach the students what they can do with AI and what they cannot (Laher, 2025; Liando, et al., 2025).

3. METHOD

This research was a mixed-method research. It is a research that combines qualitative and quantitative methods (Lall, 2021). In other words, mixed-method research involves the use of numerical data and natural social phenomena. In accordance with this research, the numerical data dealt with students' reading comprehension scores, while the qualitative data were students' perceptions of reading short stories.

The reading comprehension scores were obtained from a reading comprehension test, and students' perceptions were attained from questionnaires. The type of reading comprehension test was a formative test, which was designed by adopting some indicators proposed by Perera-Diltz and Moe in Huseynova (2023). They were: answering open-ended questions, evaluating the new information, relating new ideas to real life, and preparing a short report on reading text. The reading scoring rubric was also adopted from Perera-Diltz and Moe. Before the reading test was administered, the reliability of the test was tested by using Cronbach's Alpha formula on SPSS. The results showed that all test items were bigger than 0.6, which meant that they passed the qualification.

To obtain the data of students' perceptions on reading short stories, a questionnaire was administered. It consists of open-ended items and closed-ended items. The results were analyzed by using quantitative data for the closed-ended items, while the open-ended ones were analyzed by using NVivo software. The description of the data would be presented in themes which was derived from coding and categorization procedures.

Before administering the reading comprehension test and questionnaires, the students were assigned to read a book, namely *The Gift of the Magi and Other Stories*, written by O. Henry. That book consists of five titles of short stories, namely *The Gift of the Magi*, *Money Talks*, *The Troubador*, *The Art Game*, and *Soapy's Winter Home*. The total number of participants in this research was 41 non-English department students who were selected by using convenience sampling. All of them took the English 2 course in the same class, so they were all selected based on the purpose of this study.

The blueprint of the reading test with scoring rubric and questionnaire items is attached in the appendices.

Disclaimer

After analyzing the data, an unexpected result was found, which added to the data of this research. Some students were caught using AI to answer the questions and using the Google translation tool to translate the texts. Hence, the data of students' worksheets on Google Forms were attached in the following section. The Research Methodology section describes in detail how the study was conducted. A complete description of the methods used enables the reader to evaluate the appropriateness of the research methodology.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Students' Reading Comprehension

The following table represents students' reading comprehension scores.

Table 1. Students' Reading Comprehension Scores

No	Score	Frequency
1.	60	25
2.	70	2
3.	80	6
4.	84	6
5.	85	1
6.	90	1
	Mean	68.26

Based on the table above, there were 25 students who got 60, 2 who got 70, 6 who got 80, 6 who got 84, a student who got 85, and a student who got 90. Furthermore, the mean score was 68.26 (categorized as unsatisfactory).

The students' reading comprehension scores by indicator is presented in the following table.

Table 2. Students' Reading Comprehension Scores by Indicator

No	Indicator	Items	Max Score	Mean	SD	% Achievement	Category
1	Answering open-ended question	6	48	36.12	6.88	75.25%	Good
2	Evaluating the new information	2	20	13.40	3.95	67.00%	Satisfactory
3	Relating new ideas to real life	1	12	6.41	2.91	53.42%	Unsatisfactory
4	Writing short report on reading texts	3	20	12.33	4.10	61.65%	Unsatisfactory
Total Reading Comprehension		12	100	68.26	12.68	68.26%	Unsatisfactory

As shown in Table 2, writing a short report on reading texts was the students' strongest performance (mean 36.12 out of 48), followed by evaluating the new information (mean = 13.40 out of 20). However, they showed the lowest achievement in relating new ideas to real life (mean 6.41 out of 120) and writing short reports on reading texts (12.33 out of 20), both falling into the unsatisfactory category.

At a glance, reading English short stories does not promise to improve students' reading comprehension because 60.97% students got 60 as the lowest score. After reading all the students' answers, it was revealed that some students who belonged to that group were considered to have issues. Here are the details. Some students shared the same answers. They copied and pasted from one source. As a consequence, they were given 60, although their answers deserved a score higher than that. This consequence resulted from the warning before administering the test; the students were not allowed to cheat while working on it, and if they did so, their scores would be reduced.

Aside from sharing the answers, the other fatal mistake made by the students was utilizing *Google Lens* translation. One student was caught doing so. He translated the questions into Bahasa and then copied and pasted them without editing. Moreover, it was also found that a student submitted his answers in Bahasa entirely. The last issue found from the result of the reading comprehension test is that two students were caught using Artificial Intelligence to answer the questions. The answers did not match the questions and sounded like they were AI-generated. To confirm them, QuillBot was used to detect AI-generated texts, and the results were positive. The following pictures are documentation that shows the misuse of AI among students.

4. What is the plot twist from the story? *

.going
2.move
3.worked
4.bars
5. scudder

1.pergi
2.bergerak
3.bekerja
4.bar
5. bajingan

2. You have known all the vocabularies in "The Art Game", now reread the story and try to understand it! After that, rewrite the story with your own words (100 words count)!

**this question aims to evaluate whether you completely understand the story or not

O henry merupakan sydney porter 1862 sampai 1910 seorang penulis cerita pendek yg terkenal dari amerika serikat, keluarganya tinggal di corollina utara,mereka tergolong dari keluarga yg tidak punya banyak uang,pada tahun 1882 wiliam pergi ke texas dan mulai menulis untuk sebuah surat kabar,tapi dia mendapat masalah keuangan ditemlat kerja polisipun memenjarakannya selama 3 tahun dan saat itupun dia mulai menulis cerita pendek

3. How many times Soapy's plan to get his winter home did not work? *

Menerjemahkan teks dengan kamera
2 soap businesses, first entering a restaurant, second breaking glass

Figure 1. The misuse of AI in reading comprehension tests

The number of students who got 60 was 25. The students who got 60 as a genuinely low score were 13. The rest of them violated academic integrity by cheating, using *Google Lens*, and using AI, so they got a 60 as a penalty. The following table summarizes the number distribution based on those three categories.

Table 3. The Quantification of Academic Integration

No	Type of Academic Integrity Violation	Number of Students
1	Cheating	8
2	Using <i>Google Lens</i> translation	2
3	Using AI	2
Total		12

The table above shows the total number of students for each type of academic integration in the reading test. Cheating has the biggest number (8), followed by using *Google Lens* Translation and using AI, with two students for each category.

4.2. Students' Perceptions of Activities of Reading Short Stories in English

4.2.1 The Quantitative Findings of the Questionnaire

Here are the results of questionnaires about students' perceptions of reading short stories in English.

1. From the five short stories in the book, which one is your favorite short story?

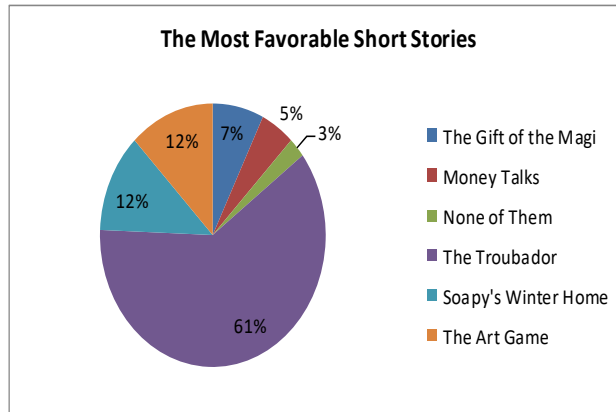


Figure 2. The most favored short stories by students

Based on the chart above, 61% students chose *The Troubadour*, 12% of students chose *Soapy's Winter Home*, 12% of students chose *The Art Game*, 7% students chose *The Gift of the Magi*, 5% students chose *Money Talks*, and 3% students decided not to choose.

2. Do you think the book fits as one of the reading resources?

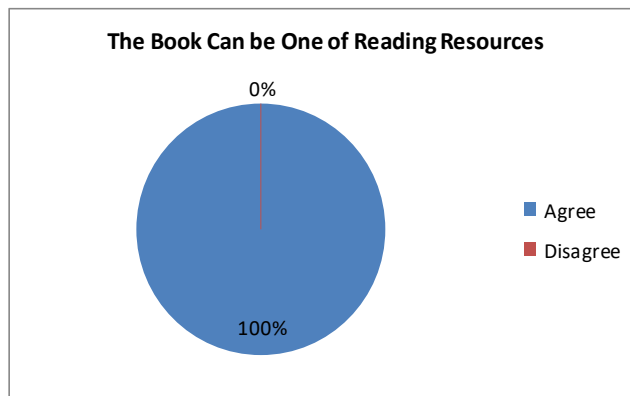


Figure 3. Students' perception of the short story book as a reading resource

The chart above shows that all students agreed that the book could be one of reading resources.

3. Was the book too difficult to understand?

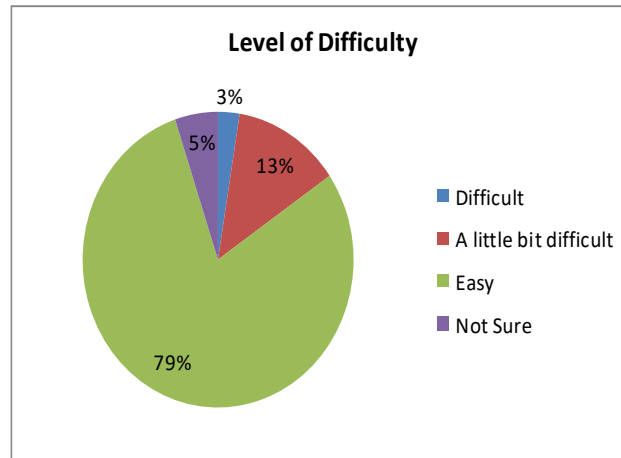


Figure 2. Students' perception of the difficulty level of the book

It is found that 79% students claimed the book was easy to understand, 13% students argued that the book was a little bit difficult to understand, 5% students were not sure about the level of difficulty of the book, and the rest of them claimed the book was difficult to understand.

4. Do you think this activity affects your reading comprehension?

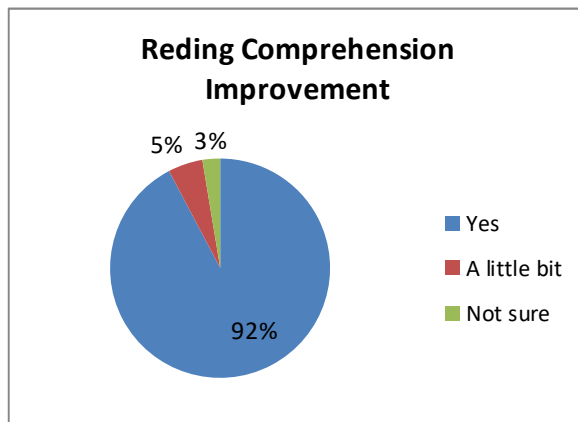


Figure 3. Students' opinions on their reading comprehension after reading short stories

Based on the chart above, 92% students agreed that reading short stories affected their reading comprehension, 5% students claimed that it improved their reading comprehension a little, and 3% students were not sure.

4.2.2 The Results: Thematic Analysis of the Questionnaire

After analyzing the open-ended items of the questionnaire by using NVivo software, two themes were found, and they are described below:

1. Interesting activity as well as story lines

Most of the students agreed that all the short stories from *The Gift of the Magi and Other Stories* are interesting to read. Each story had a different theme and plot. This finding aligns with the claim that argues reading short stories enhances students' reading motivation (Bhatti et al., 2022). In relation to this finding, the students showed greater interest while reading the short stories in the classroom. They were motivated and fully participated in the lessons.

“I found pleasant while reading all the short stories from the book. They relate to real-life situation. I would like to read more short stories.”

“Unlike reading more scientific texts, reading O. Henry's book scales up my excitement to reads because of the good stories. I followed your instructions like listing difficult words to figure out their meaning and then rereading the whole text to comprehend the plots. It works! It turns out that short stories in the book are interesting to read.”

“I prefer short stories to scientific texts. Reading *The Gift of the Magi and Other Stories* kills my boredom in reading because of familiar vocabularies and fascinating plot stories.”

“I like the book. I am not bored anymore in reading session. Besides, I know American's culture from the story *The Gift of the Magi*, especially about Christmas' gift exchange. It is interesting to know that culture.”

The claims above show that the students enjoyed reading short stories. This finding confirms the result of item 2, which reveals 100% of students agreed that *The Gift of the Magi and Other Stories*, written by O. Henry, can be one of the reading resources to improve their reading comprehension.

2. Vocabulary Improvement

Finding unfamiliar words while reading English texts blocks the students from comprehending them. To address this issue, reading a lot of English texts is required. It is because the more the students are exposed to vocabulary in reading, the wider their vocabulary will be. It is argued that

reading English short stories improves students' vocabulary mastery, resulting from students' curiosity about the plots (Sari & Nasution, 2023; Abdulkadir et al., 2024). They try to figure out the meaning of unknown vocabulary in order to understand the plots (Nathir & Zubaedah, 2023). In accordance with the findings of this research, the participants assert that they learn the new vocabulary and use it in speaking and writing.

“Why don't we keep reading short stories for every reading session? It excites me while discussing the short stories in your class. I know how to deal with difficult words' meaning and find out the next plot in next paragraphs in class discussion.”

“I get new vocabulary from the book and I will apply it in speaking and writing.”

“... I found the new English words from the short stories and they help me to communicate in English.”

“I don't know why I am more excited to figure out unfamiliar English words in reading short stories than in reading academic texts. The vocabulary in short stories relates to everyday language so that I can use it every day. In contrast, not all the vocabulary of academic texts can be used for everyday language.”

Several quotations above proved that reading short stories improved students' vocabulary. They had the intention to use the new words they found in the short stories.

5. DISCUSSION

After collecting and analyzing students' works, it is safe to say that the students had low motivation to read and comprehend the book. They counted on technology, Artificial Intelligence, and friends' sharing to answer the questions, which caused them to get unsatisfying reading test scores (mean 68.38). The findings do not match the purpose of the reading test, which has been designed based on the validity of the test, because of a violation of digital ethics.

Reading short stories was done in two meetings before the students took the reading test. From those activities, two titles of short stories were finished in the classroom (*The Gift of the Magi* and *Money Talks*), while the rest of the short stories were assigned to be read at home. Whether the students read or did not read the book comprehensively could not be observed and controlled. Therefore, there was an opportunity to violate academic integrity by utilizing AI and other technology.

The use of AI in reading tests in this research adds one more case of the misuse of AI in English language learning. Previously, it was found that a lot of students had over-dependence on AI in accomplishing their tasks (Dangin & Hikmah, 2024; Reiter, et al., 2025; Balalle & Pannilage, 2025). While it is true that AI can be a learning assistance and open more opportunities for students to get more learning sources, the misuse of AI can be an overwhelming challenge for English teachers. In this research, for instance, AI became a boomerang for the students because they did not try to be independent in using their critical thinking when answering reading questions. As a result, their reading skill cannot be improved (Vieriu & Petrea, 2025; et al., 2024).

If the students had the integrity to finish their reading test, they would be more likely to have better reading comprehension, since the vocabulary, grammar, and clues that came together during the reading test could help them to be more critical. They could be trained through those elements they found in the reading test, and they could apply the same technique to other reading assignments (Warnby, 2025). Hence, the misuse of AI among students should be a big concern since AI features are updating day by day. If not so, English language learning will not be meaningful anymore due to the erosion of critical thinking skills and lack of language practice as keys in language learning (Laher, 2025; Liando et al., 2025).

Based on questionnaire analysis, all students agreed that the book entitled *The Gift of the Magi and Other Stories* could be one of the reading resources. Several students completed their answers with an argument. A student claimed that the pictures in the book prevented boredom. This finding is in line with the previous study conducted by Bhatti et al. in 2022. It is proven that supporting pictures in short stories scales up students' excitement to learn. In addition, a couple of students argued that the plots were good and they found relevant sentences for the lessons. Some students claimed that the vocabulary in the short stories was easy, and the rest of them said that there were lots of new words they read for the first time. Reading short stories will expose students to new words and grammar so that those two aspects of language can be improved (Oktaviana, et al., 2022).

Furthermore, students' agreement on the effectiveness of the book as a resource for reading is in line with their perception of the level of difficulty of the book. Most of them claimed that the book was easy to understand. They could comprehend the short stories due to familiar vocabulary. It deals with prior knowledge derived from reading habits. When one is more frequently exposed to vocabulary and sentence structure, they will find it easier to read and write anything (Saraswati, et al., 2021).

When it comes to students' perception of the effectiveness of reading English short stories, 92% students agreed that this activity affected their reading comprehension. It was the same as the previous study, which proved that students' reading comprehension was escalated after getting this treatment (Efendi, et al., 2022). During the reading process, the students will come across the familiar and unfamiliar ones. For an unfamiliar group of words, the students can consult their dictionaries or guess the meaning

based on the context clues. This processing makes learning take place because the students are gaining more vocabulary (Sariana, et al., 2022). Further impact from this activity is that the students can understand various short stories and even other genres of texts.

The findings of this research underscore the importance of designing AI-aware reading assessments. The increasing use of AI by students to complete their reading assignments has transformed AI from a learning assistant into a potential threat (Marin, et al., 2025; Yousefi & Askari, 2024). Furthermore, the teachers should supervise reading tasks comprehensively and guide the students regarding digital literacy and ethical issues so that similar cases will not occur in the future.

6. CONCLUSION

In sum, almost all students claimed that reading English short stories gives them more new vocabulary and grammatical structure knowledge. They said that those skills help them to communicate in English. Therefore, this activity can be an alternative to teaching reading. Even so, there is a gap in this study: the students' reading comprehension scores are not in line with their perceptions. Its mean score was 68.26 (categorized as unsatisfactory). It was caused by a lack of reading practices, which were done twice in the classroom. What students did during their reading test at home could not be monitored, so they cheated, consulted with AI, and shared the answers.

Therefore, future researchers are suggested to address this gap by incorporating engaging supporting media into the reading of short stories, which can boost students' motivation. This research also highlights the real threat of AI misuse in reading short-story assessment. Hence, it is suggested that English teachers guide the students on the ethical use of AI. To do so, the English teachers should explain the disadvantages of over-dependence on AI, issue clear rules of AI usage in the classroom, and conduct offline reading tests to maintain academic integrity.

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