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Assistant Professor Manal Omar Mousa

University of Tikrit College of Education for Humanities

Reem Ayad

University of Tikrit College of Education for Humanities

* Corresponding author: E-mail : reem.a.sabier@st.tu.edu.

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Teaching English Literary Text by Using Personal Response Approach for Iraqi EFL Students

ABSTRACT

Personal response approach is an approach of teaching that help and gives the students chance to learn, practice and solve their problem in learning English. It is one of the literary criticism approach in which readers can involve their personal opinions, feelings, and background knowledge to create meanings of the text. The Current study aims to investigate the influence of teaching English literary text by using Personal Response Approach for Iraqi EFL Students. To conduct the study and fulfill its aim, it is hypothesized that, there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental groups' literary text ability in pre-posttest. To achieve the aim and confirm its hypothesis the experimental design which is Non- Randomized Experimental Group Pretest- Posttest Design is used. The sample of the current study consists of (60) students who have been chosen from fifth scientific stage at Ibn -Al-Muaatun secondary school for boys in Tikrit. (30) students have been chosen to be the experimental group, and (30) students have been chosen to be control group. Both groups have been equalized in such variables levels of educational of parents, testees age, English grades achievement in fourth stage, and the pre-test of both groups. To analyze the obtained data, different statistical means have been used T-test, weighted mean and percentile mean to measure the students' performance. The results obtained by the researcher indicate that there are statistically significant differences between students' performance in the pre-experimental test and their performance in the post-test in favor of the personal response approach. The researcher has written a number of recommendations and suggested a number of proposals for future studies.

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تدريس النص الأدبي الإنجليزي باستخدام نهج الاستجابة الشخصية لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية

أ.م.د. منال عمر موسى/ جامعة تكريت/ كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية

ريم اياد/ جامعة تكريت/ كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية

الخلاصة:

نهج الاستجابة الشخصية هو نهج التدريس الذي يساعد الطلاب ويمنحهم الفرصة للتعلم والممارسة وحل مشكلتهم في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. إنه أحد مناهج النقد الأدبي الذي يمكن للقراء من خلاله إشراك آرائهم الشخصية ومشاعرهم وخلفياتهم المعرفية لخلق معاني النص. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقق من تأثير تدريس النص الأدبي باللغة الإنجليزية باستخدام نهج الاستجابة الشخصية لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. لإجراء الدراسة وتحقيق هدفها ، يُفترض أنه لا يوجد فرق ذو دلالة إحصائية في متوسط درجات الأداء لقدرة النص الأدبي للمجموعات التجريبية في الاختبار البعدي. ولتحقيق الهدف وتأكيد فرضيته ، تم استخدام التصميم التجريبي وهو عبارة عن اختبار تمهيدي لمجموعة تجريبية غير عشوائية. تكونت عينة الدراسة الحالية من (٦٠) طالباً تم اختيارهم من المرحلة العلمية الخامسة في ثانوية ابن المعتم للبنين في تكريت. تم اختيار (٣٠) طالباً ليكونوا المجموعة التجريبية ، و (٣٠) طالباً ليكونوا مجموعة ضابطة. وقد تم معادلة كلتا المجموعتين في مثل هذه المتغيرات: المستويات التعليمية لأولياء الأمور ، وعمر الممتحنين ، وتحصيل درجات اللغة الإنجليزية في المرحلة الرابعة ، والاختبار التمهيدي لكلا المجموعتين. لتحليل البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها ، تم الاختبار التائي لعينتين منفصلتين لقياس تحصيل التلاميذ واختيار الاختبار التائي لعينة واحدة والوسط الحسابي. تشير النتائج التي حصل عليها الباحث إلى وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين أداء الطلاب في الاختبار التمهيدي التجريبي وأدائهم في الاختبار البعدي لصالح نهج الاستجابة الشخصية. وقد قامت الباحثة بكتابة عدد من التوصيات واقتراح عدد من المقترحات للدراسات المستقبلية .

الكلمات المفتاحية : القراءة ، النص الأدبي ، نهج استجابة القارئ ، الفرضية، التعليم .

1.Introduction

There are four skills in English, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among those skills, reading is consider an important skill that makes an important contribution to success to learn the language. We bring knowledge to life in educational performance. Teachers always have to reflect upon issues that are likely to have effect on the practical implementations of what they teach (www.ebookbou.edu).

Most of the problems in EFL literature teaching are low motivation, lack of confidence, inadequate teaching methods, exam stress, under qualified teachers and insufficient in-service training. Students proficiency levels have been always standing out. There is no doubt that students must have sufficient proficiency in the English language to ensure that they are able to keep up with the pace and workload of the English Literature programmer. After all, English literature is a serious academic discipline. Controversy rises when decision-making is

required on the question of what students' mastery levels should be to make them eligible to study English literature (files.eric.ed.gov).

To solve the problem and develop students level in literary text the researcher used personal response approach as a means to help them and increase the student's performance in teaching literary text.

2. Literature Review

Reading is a lifelong skill that students must master to become critical, engaged readers and thinkers in both school and life. Reader response theory stresses the importance of the reader in making meaning from a text. The basic premise of reader response is that readers breathe life into texts through their prior knowledge and personal experiences. Although teachers sometimes find it easier to impart their knowledge directly about a literary piece, students benefit most from reading texts when they are provided opportunities to think critically and thoughtfully on their own terms without first being bombarded by the thoughts of others. Reader response theory supports this process for students to become engaged, thoughtful, and critical readers(Richard,1978,p.83).

The reading of any work of literature is, of necessity, an individual and unique occurrence involving the mind and emotions of some particular reader and a particular text at a particular time under particular circumstances. The transaction with the literary text is an aesthetic reading. In aesthetic reading, the reader engages with ideas in the text and draws from her own prior experiences. From these she creates a new experience which Rosenblatt considers is a poem, an event, and an evocation(ibid).

2

According to Rosenblatt, the transactional process involves the text and reader together, whereas interactive reading suggests a relation between two separate and distinct entities, as is seen in these different definitions of reading she proposes:

-Aesthetic reading, i.e. the transaction with the literary work, has both a private and public focus, and is different from what she terms effective reading, which is purpose oriented.

-This aesthetic reading with the text is a process in which the reader selects ideas and synthesizes them into a new experience - the evocation - which is created by the reader and the play, story, novel or poem. It is useful to bear in mind that Rosenblatt developed her ideas about Reader Response and transactional reading as a reaction against Richards' ideas for the reading of poetry. Before Richards published his book, Practical Criticism (1928), literature appreciation and commentary were based on two approaches:

a. the moral-philosophical - a literary reader and text to show that both depended work is worthy because it is moving and on each other for meaning and that there morally uplifting and leads us to understand our inner emotions.

b. the historical-biographical - the work was written by a very important person - in our present day, for example, the study of Mao Tze Tung's poetry in China and Sukarno's

speeches in Indonesian classrooms when these leaders were in power (Rosenblatt ,1938,p120).

Another line of research and theorizing was philology where language and literature were studied together in terms of historical development. After Richards' book, practical criticism (or close reading) became the standard practice of literature analysis and evaluation and was called New Criticism. It was seen as a more objective way of analyzing poetry. It had a technical vocabulary with terms such as ambiguity, irony and texture which were found to be useful for interpreting and judging whether a poem was good or inadequate. In most literature classes, some kind of practical criticism is compulsory. Gradually some people began to criticize this practice which they considered a dry and painful exercise which destroyed the beauty of the literary work. Rosenblatt herself said that she wrote Literature as Exploration as a reaction against some of the assumptions of practical criticism. One such assumption is that "the New Critics treated the poem as an autonomous entity that could be objectively analyzed" . She wanted to emphasize the transaction of reader and text to show that both depended on each other for meaning and that there can be more than one meaning or interpretation(Richard,1928,p.82).

3

It could be said that popularization of Reader Response Approach is a result of a revaluation and reclaiming of sorts. In the 1970s and 1980s there was much interest among Trans-Atlantic literature academics in European theories about the exact nature of literature reading. These theories, found in collections of papers on criticism, focused on the role of the reader - the implied reader, the super reader, etc. (e.g. Tompkins, 1980). They tried to answer questions about the role of the reader and the process of literary reading. Rosenblatt's earlier writing, which emphasized the individual reader's response, seemed to fit into these discussions. Her ideas became the accepted approach for literature teaching. Theorizing at the tertiary level has moved on to post-structuralism, deconstruction, and cultural materialism, but the Reader Response Approach is now entrenched, through active promotion by teaching experts, as the most appropriate pedagogy for school literature(ibid,p.83).

Larson's (2009) definition of reader response is that moment when readers breathe life into texts through their prior knowledge and personal experiences(p.12).

Dewey's (1946) epistemological writings, transaction, imply that, during the reading process, the self of the reader and the text are more flexible. Thus, according to the Reader Response Theory, the act of constructing meaning is a personal literary experience and a major characteristic that connects the reader and the text(p.31).

Padley (2006) also acknowledges that in the reader-response theory, "the reader plays the role of an agent who assigns meaning whilst experiencing the text". This theory focusses on the approaches and techniques that are involved in studying how readers respond to a piece of literature and at the same time addresses the strategies used by those readers. This leads to the

implication that teachers can create better readers by permitting the possibility of more than once chance to recreate the meaning of a story in their own particular style(p200).

This statement is further supported by Woodruff and Griffin (2017) who mentioned that this theory supports the process for students to be engaged, thoughtful and critical readers(p,6).

Hirvela (1996) actually proposed a shift in the style of questioning the teacher could use, for example, instead of asking “What does the author mean?” the teacher should ask “How did you feel when reading?” This is because at the secondary stage of development, students have already established their opinions about reading; either they love reading or they do not(p.133).

4

Hendrix and Griffin(2017) creating such an opportunity for the students to interact with the text, it enhances their language competence and develops their literary skills. Through personal growth, the literary text creates not only love but also loyalty that transcends beyond the classroom. It develops students' critical appreciation and assessment skills that prepare the student to well critical appreciation and well reading of the literary text(p.66)

Rooted in the cognitive-constructivist view of learning, reader response theory emerged in the 1930s and gained prominence in the 1960s and 1970s (Powell & Kalina, 2009). The theory was first developed by Louise Rosenblatt (Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978) although other theorists are credited with contributing to reader response theory, including an American university professor of English education, who was born in 1904 and died in 2005, asserted that the reader plays a vital role in the life of any piece of literature in her book Literature as Exploration.

Rosenblatt (1978) maintained there are two primary types of reading; efferent and aesthetic:

1. Efferent reading : is also called informational reading, the purpose of efferent reading is to learn new information or how to complete a procedure. As such, efferent reading does not call for a variety of interpretations.
2. Aesthetic reading is not concerned with what students learn or remember about a text. The primary purpose of aesthetic reading is for readers to immerse themselves in a text and simply enjoy the reading experience .In addition, he believes that literature was written to provide an aesthetic experience for readers because literature invites readers to consider their diverse cultures, background knowledge, and personal experiences when analyzing texts. “A novel or a poem or a play remains merely ink spots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols”(p.84).

Readers use their prior knowledge and experiences to give meaning to a text, and they are required to justify their unique interpretations of a text with textual evidence. A reader response approach to literacy instruction does not promote chaos or support the creation of far-fetched interpretations without sufficient justification. Furthermore, students are encouraged to use their personal experiences and prior knowledge when interacting with a

text. Also, the reader response approach embraces differences among readers and acknowledges that people view pieces of literature in different manners (Larson, 2009,p.83).

5

Today's classrooms are filled with diverse students who come to school bearing unique perspectives. Because of this increase in diversity, educators realize the importance of connecting students' personal lives to the curriculum if educators wish to grab their students' attention and make learning meaningful (Griffin, Martinez, & Martin,2014,pp.36-73).

Reader response promotes student interactions with each other and the text, and in today's diverse classrooms, incorporating reader response into the curriculum, as opposed to traditional teacher talk, will result in increased reading comprehension and engagement. When reading literature, students are often bombarded with their teachers' interpretations of a particular text(Kelley et al, 2015: 65).

Teachers commonly immerse students in their personal analysis of a literary text simply because they are familiar with the piece and feel more comfortable expressing their thoughts rather than allowing students to interpret it "incorrectly." However, teachers sharing their personal responses to a text before asking students to divulge their own reactions mistakenly teaches students that there is only one correct interpretation of a piece of literature, which could result in students creating an unfavorable opinion about reading in general .Reading is an active process, one in which readers use their background knowledge, diverse perspectives, and personal experiences to make meaning of a literary text. Providing ample opportunities for students to form their own thoughts and opinions of literary texts as opposed to being taught only the teacher's interpretation paves the way for students to connect with these texts on a personal level((Mitchell, 1993,pp.41-53).

Unlocking Louise Rosenblatt's (1978) reader response theory provides pedagogical tools for increasing student interaction with texts(p.19). The reader response theory is a top-down model in which readers gain meaning from texts through transactions between the reader and the text. This theory also acknowledges that different readers will have varied interpretations of literary works (Graves et al., 2011,p.34).

Students feel valued by their teachers when they are able to say what they think about a literary piece. The reader response approach to interpreting a piece of literature is effective because students formulate their own generalizations about the text rather than passively accepting the teacher's response to it . Reader response theory does not support the idea that all interpretations are correct. He explains that teachers often "wonder if using a reader response approach means that anything goes and that their classrooms will become a loosey-goosey mess" (ibid, p. 42).

6

To support a specific response to a text, readers must justify their reactions based on evidence from the text (Graves et al., 2011). Using such evidence ensures students focus on the important textual elements, such as the plot, theme, setting, conflicts, etc. This combination of the reader's reaction as supported from the text can help give life and

meaning to the words in a literary piece. Because reader response theory suggests that the role of the reader is essential to the meaning of a literary text, a further look into the process of using a reader response approach in the classroom will uncover how this particular approach to reading helps secondary students become more critical readers.

2.1 Literature for Reinforcing Language Skills

Language skills are a set of skills needed by the learners to become a successful user of the language, these skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing” . Listening and speaking skills are highly interrelated and work simultaneously in real life situations, this integration aims at promoting effective oral communication. In contrast reading and writing form a strong relationship as skills. They are tools for achieving an effective written communication. The skills are all basic and very important in the process of language learning. However, those who work in the field of ELT believe that basic language skills should never be taught in isolation when using literature in the language classroom, but teachers should teach the skills as “an integral part of oral and written language use to create the interactional and referential meaning” (Hişmanoğlu ,2016,p.54).

According to Povey (1967) “literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, a complex and exact syntax” (p.40).

Collie and Slater (1987) declare that reading a specific text, students are exposed to the formation ,structure and function of sentences and the different ways of linking ideas. All these will expand and deepen students’ writing skills. In addition to that, oral work based on literary texts improves students’ speaking skills and students can develop their listening skills by listening to the recorded literary materials (Karuna,2016, p.19).

Muhammed (2013) claims that literature should be taught in language classes because not only because it greatly uses a powerful language but also it contains the skills needed for language learning (p.28). Rodríguez (2017) clarifies the importance of developing language skills in the classroom in order to strengthen students’ self-confidence to construct relationships through the use of language (p.108).

7

2.1.1 Listening Skill

Listening refers to “the ability of interpreting meaning by matching what listeners hear with what they already have known” (Alderson, 2005,p.138). Listening skill “is a complex process that involves the understanding of spoken data and involves receptive, interpretative, or constructive cognitive processes”. Moreover, listening is regarded as an essential skill of language that usually tied up with speaking skills, listening and listening comprehension have an important impact that affects both reading and writing skills. Listening, Similar to reading skill, involves both “bottom-up and top-down processing” these processes operate simultaneously, rather than processes individually (Barrot, 2016,p.1).

Literature ,as Lazar (1993) suggests, may provide a particular direction of stimulating acquisition, for it provides meaningful contexts for processing and developing new language .If recorded literary material is available in language classes, students can acquire new language by listening to it. EFL Students, in many countries around the world, have limited access to spoken English, while written literary texts often value primary importance for stimulating language acquisition(p.17).

In order to facilitate learners' listening comprehension to the literary works, listening pedagogy involves the increase of metacognitive strategies. Often, metacognitive strategies can be divided into 3 stages: planning, monitoring and reviewing. In these strategies, learners learn how to plan, monitor, and evaluate the collected information from the listening part. The most widely adopted metacognitive strategies for listening include planning for listening , self-monitoring, evaluating comprehension process, and determining listening difficulties(Barrot ,2016, p.2). According to Wenden (1998) learners who use metacognitive strategies can learn faster and integrate the knowledge outstandingly, can be constant receivers and deal with all situations, have self-confidence to get help from partners, teachers, or family, and can observe and assess themselves (p.517).

Language teachers can make listening comprehension and pronunciation interesting , motivating and contextualized at the upper levels, playing a recording or video of a literary work, or reading literature aloud themselves. Having students read literature aloud contributes developing speaking as well as listening ability. Moreover, it also leads to improving pronunciation. Pronunciation may be the focus before, during, and / or after the reading. (Hişmanoğlu,2005, p.59).

8

These listening activities for advanced listeners, are convenient techniques merged with speaking, reading, and writing. With any listening activity, students will need some kind of preparation and tasks so that they can be actively engaged. They might be asked to check predictions that arose from a warm-up discussion, or to identify stressed words and syllables while listening to recorded or live reading literary texts (Vural ,2013,p.16).

2.1.3 Speaking Skills

Speaking is “an oral expression which contains the use of right patterns of rhythm and intonation”, in order to receive, produce, and process information (Zyoud, 2016 ,p.3). Precisely, speaking is defined as “the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal or non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts.” (Chaney and Burk, 1998, p. 13).

Widdowson (1994, p.59) defines speaking as “the active production skill and use of oral production and it is the capacity of someone to communicate orally with others”. Widdowsen regards speaking as a communication tool to transform ideas, express feelings, explain about discoveries, and discussions and responding to others (Conrad and Dunek, 2012,p.74). It is believed that the fundamental purpose of learning a foreign language is to be able to

communicate in a foreign language in oral and written forms, including its literature (Vural ,2013, p.16).

Koutsompou (2015) argues that the main purpose of using literature in EFL classroom is to make the class “interactive and it can be stated that an interactive class can obviously improve communicative competences of the learners and keep a lasting impact on their mind” (p. 75).

In order to communicate fluently, which is relevant to assessing students’ progress, students must learn knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and intonation. Literary works can also be a powerful and motivating source for teaching both speaking and listening, as reading aloud can develop students’ speaking as well as listening skills (Pardede,2011 ,p.22).

Classroom activities facilitate and accelerate development of the speaking skills and give importance to pronunciation practice , they motivate students to achieve a clearer comprehension of literary works . Classroom activities can assume many forms like; Oral reading, improvisation, reenactment, general class discussion, small-group work,

role-playing and dramatization which requires classroom performance of scripted materials (Stern,1991 ,p.337).

9

The teacher can operate literary texts to develop the students’ speaking skills , Phat (2013,p.676)declares some effective activities to add interests and involvements in literary classes and foremost improve the students’ speaking abilities :

- Making connections; The students are asked to share their thoughts and link what they have read in the literary texts with their own experience.

- Debate, to enhance students’ linguistic competence students are encouraged to share their arguments confidently.

- Role play, This activity can enhance the students’ creativity, their communication skills as well as the language skills in which the students can listen and read literary text, develop the story in their own words and write their own dialog.

- Presentation, students are encouraged to make presentations on the literary text to enhance not only their speaking skills besides linguistic competence.

2.1.3 Reading Skills

Reading is one of the most important skills acquired in the life of the individual. It is the key to acquiring a variety of sciences and knowledge(Khalaf and Sabah,2018,p.1).

Reading refers to “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with the written language” (Snow, 2002, p.11).

Reading contributes largely to develop further reading skills like using and deducing of unfamiliar lexical meaning, understanding the function of utterances”(Liach ,2007,p.11).

In a foreign language context, reading authentic texts or in their original form is one of the best ways of language development. The best way to improve your foreign language is to go and live among its speakers ,the next best way is to read extensively since the first option is not available to the majority of foreign language learners”.When students are reading literary texts, this builds their reading confidence and promotes their ability to use the language. Reading , consciously or unconsciously, helps the foreign language learner acquires not only more meanings and vocabulary, but it also develops syntactic knowledge (Daskalovska and Dimova, 2012, p.1184). Similarly, Rodríguez (2017) states that “by reading a piece of literature learners can understand the diverse use of words, phrases, phrasal verbs, multiple meanings, idioms, among others ”(P.107).

Reading literary works will improve and increase the students' general understanding of language and their ability of reading and learning strategies , literature helps the transfer of reading skills and strategies from the mother tongue to the target language. This will contribute to the development of their reading fluency, proficiency and accuracy. As a result there may be an increase in students' reading speed and self -confidence, motivation and positive perceptions towards learning the target language and thus the students are able to pay more attention to the overall meaning of what they are reading (Vural,2013, p.17).

10

Through reading literary works, learners can deepen their cultural understanding; learners see a world through writer's eyes, observing human believes and discovering how others living in very different societies, learner become broadly aware of the social, cultural, political, historical events happening in a certain society (Pardede,2011,p.16).

Özkan and Tongor (2014) remind us, through extensive or intensive reading of works of literature, students are exposed to lexical items that enables them to gradually acquire meanings as native speakers do. While reading literary texts, students have a variety of literary experiences, that is, metacognitive awareness, application of previous knowledge, making predictions ,drawing inferences, analyzing ,and summarizing information ,improving and answering their own questions. Therefore, literary courses provide opportunities for developing skimming and scanning strategies for speed reading (p.68).

Stern (1991) argues that reading literary works compress three levels , begin at the literal level with direct discussion of setting, characters, and plot. Then, they move to the inferential level, where they make interpretations concerning the characters, setting, and theme, and the author's point of view. The third and final level, the personal evaluations level, stimulates students' creative thinking and problem-solving abilities (Stern ,1991, p.332).

Lazar (1993) states that literary works may help students to obtain the habit of reading and enhance fluency in the target language. Literary works are precious materials to be

contributed for reading comprehension activities because literature facilitates students' ability to deduct from the literary works and create new interpretations (p.82).

Moreover, Lazar (1993) suggests crucial tasks and reading comprehension activities for literary works; pre-reading activities which support students' cultural background, stimulate students' interest in the story and pre – teaching vocabulary. While-reading activities include helping students to understand the plot, the characters, style and language. The final suggested activities are post-reading activities which help students to make interpretations of the text and supply writing activities and fluency practice (p.83).

2.1.4 Writing Skill

Writing is a demanding process which requires students' ability to use high thinking skills, organizing sentences and paragraphs intelligibly, use vocabulary and syntax accurately, punctuating and spelling correctly, and considering cohesion and coherence (Heaton ,1975,p.138) . Alderson (2005) stats that writing includes student's skill to give and exchange information develop and argue their points of view , besides using writing for different purposes ;the most popular are to inform, to entertain, to explain, or to persuade (p.154).

In other words, it is the “transformation of one's thoughts, ideas, and feelings into written language and, so, incorporates different interrelated components. It is a demanding process in which students are required to use high thinking skills, organize ideas efficiently, and utilize appropriate language structures and writing mechanics” (Abaas ,2016, p.36).

Pardede(2011)emerges that literature can be a powerful and motivating source for writing as a model and as subject matter. As a model occurs when students' writing becomes widely similar to the original work or imitates its theme , content, organization, or style.

11

However, literature is a subject matter of the language when learners show interpretation, analysis and stimulation creativity(p.21).

Collie and Slater(1987) illustrates that literary work provides students with a “the formation and function of sentences, the variety of possible structures, and the different ways of connecting ideas” which regarded as a “rich context in which individual or lexical items are made memorable”, for Collie and Slater, these features of the written language are presented at many levels of difficulty in literary works . Literary works give students a clear idea about the syntactic structure of a written text and how written language differs from the spoken language.

By being exposed to literary works students are likely improve their writing skill, expand their vocabulary, and think freely, creatively, and critically. This training promotes them formulate ideas, make generalizations and help them in other school subjects which involve logical reasoning, analysis of the text and independent thinking (Johanforouz, 2018,p.4).

Literary works give students opportunity to increase their writing self – efficacy .Writing self-efficacy means to students' beliefs in their ability to perform written English task successfully. Such tasks include composition, punctuating writing and grammatically correct

writing tasks. Students' writing skill improve when they are provided with specific strategies to improve their writing and regular feedback regarding how well they are using such strategies (Bandura, 1994, p.73).

Finding appropriate material for students to write on is not an easy task, One benefit of literary courses is that literary texts become the subject matter for compositions writing as literature conjoins variety of themes to write on .Hismanoglu (2005) cites two main kinds of writing useful for EFL classes based on literary courses as subject matter: "writing on or about literature, and writing out of literature". Writing "on or about literature" contains the traditional assignments; answer the questions, paragraph writing , essays writing , compositions writing and group discussion, in which students consider on literary texts and style or analyze the literary works. This technique occurs before students begin to read a text based on teacher's discussion and their own life experience. On the other hand, " writing out of literature" may take many forms like: changing the work , students can write imaginary episodes to fill in the literary works or literary works can be rewritten in whole or they can make up their own endings.

Speaking and Writing are the most commonly used and effective means of self- expression in all fields of human life, whether personal, social or professional (Muthana Badie,2020,pp44-55).

2.2 Literature as a Model for Writing

Stern (1991) stated that there are three main kinds of writing that can be based on literature as a model:

a. Controlled Writing: Controlled model-based exercises which are used mostly in beginning-level writing typically require rewriting passages in arbitrary ways to practice specific grammatical structures.

12

b. Guided Writing: This activity corresponds to intermediate-level ESL / EFL. Students respond to a series of questions or complete sentences which, when put together, retell or sum up the model. In some cases, students complete the exercise after they receive the first few sentences or the topic sentence of a summary, paraphrase, or description. Guided writing exercises, especially at the literal level, enable students to comprehend the work. Model approach and scenario approach are very beneficial in this respect

c .Reproducing the Model: This activity comprises techniques like paraphrase, summary, and adaptation. These techniques are very beneficial ESL / EFL writing exercises. In paraphrasing, students are required to use their own words to rephrase the things that they see in print or hear aloud. Since paraphrase coincides with the students' trying to make sense of the poem, it is a strikingly useful tool with poetry. Summary work goes well with realistic short stories and plays, where events normally follow a chronological order and have concrete elements like plot, setting, and character to guide student writing. Adaptation requires rewriting prose fiction into dialog or, reversely, rewriting a play or a scene into

narrative. This activity enables students to be aware of the variations between written and spoken English (p.333).

2.3 Literature as Subject Matter for Writing

Finding appropriate material for their writing classes is sometimes difficult for composition teachers since writing has no subject matter of its own. One benefit of having literature as the reading content of a composition course is that the readings become the subject matter for compositions. In a composition course whose reading content is literature, students make inferences, formulate their own ideas, and look closely at a text for evidence to support generalizations. Thus, they learn how to think creatively, freely and critically. Such training helps them in other courses which require logical reasoning, independent thinking, and careful analysis of the text (Spack 1985:719).

There are mainly two kinds of writing based on literature as subject matter: writing “on or about” literature, and writing “out of” literature. These categories are suitable and useful for ESL / EFL.

1. Writing “On or About” Literature

Writing “on or about literature” comprises the traditional assignments - written responses to questions, paragraph writing, in-class essays, and take-home compositions - in which students analyze the work or in which they speculate on literary devices and style. Writing “on or about” can occur before students begin to read a work. The teacher generally discusses its theme or an issue it raises, and the students write about it with reference to their own life experience. This helps interest them in the work and makes them ready for reading and writing about it. Most writing assignments done during as well as after the reading, however, derive from class discussion. They take many forms, such as questions to be answered, assertions to be debated, or topics to be expanded, discussion groups to be established (Hismanoglu, 2005, p.59).

13

2. Writing “Out of” Literature

Writing “out of” literature means making use of a literary work as a springboard for composition - creative assignments developed around plot, characters, setting, theme, and figurative language. There are many forms of writing out of literature, such as Adding to the Work, Changing the Work, Drama-Inspired Writing and A Letter Addressed to Another Character, etc.

- Adding to the Work: This comprises writing imaginary episodes or sequels, or, in the case of drama, “filling in” scenes for off-stage actions that are only referred to in the dialog.

- Changing the Work: Students can make up their own endings by comparing the author's ending to their own. Short stories can be rewritten in whole or in part from the point of view of a character versus a third person narrator or of a different character.
- Drama-Inspired Writing: It is possible to derive drama-inspired writing activities from plays, short stories, novels, and sometimes poetry. The student steps into the consciousness of a character and writes about that character's attitudes and feelings.
- A Letter Addressed to Another Character: The student can write a letter to one of the characters, in which he / she gives the character personal advice about how to overcome a particular problem or situation (Stern, 1991, p. 336).

2.4 The Conceptual Notion of RRT

Originated from literary theory and critical theory (literary criticism) issue (Sinha, 2009) and initiated from Rosenblatt's speculation on the Dewey's democratic education (Connell, 2000, 2008), RRT 'remains relevant for cotemporary educators' (Connell, 2000, p. 28), and is called transactional theory (Connell, 2008). Though in several decades RRT has not been popular among scholars, its framework is recently used across contexts of language educations. RRT was first introduced by J Richards, as one of predecessors (Rosenblatt, 1978), as response to the idea of teaching reading that promoted structure-oriented views on reading text. As developed in the area of literary criticism and critical theory, Rosenblatt's RRT was gradually acknowledged for its powerful influences to the success of teaching reading (e.g. Kelly, Farnan, & Richardson, 1996; Langer, 1996; Lewis, 2000, 2020). The notion 'response' in this perspective refers to both intellectual and emotional reactions towards the texts being interpreted. In response-based approach, it is believed that readers of literature transact their ideas and lived through experiences of reading with the texts. While engaging and transacting with texts, readers try to manifest their self-actualization in cultivating interpretive capacities and fund of knowledge to make sense of the interpretation process and results.

RRT application in the well- and balanced classroom program allows students to have freedom and optimal chances to express their voices. Ideally, as Rosenblatt strongly advocates, transacting process of texts in more nonthreatening atmosphere can possibly nurture democratic participation (Raines, 2005). Democratization in the classroom setting is of course sensitized in the process of respecting others' different opinions in terms of literacy events as triggered by classroom discussion (Kosnoski, 2005).

14

As literacy is shaped as social practice (Luke, 1991), collaboration and cooperation in (re)making and (re)constructing (new) meanings play important essences in response-based pedagogy (Wood, Roser & Martinez, 2002).

The direction of reading class that promotes collaborative reading also echoes the very basic personal relationships while reading and interpreting process, which is another educational benefit beyond the teaching (Watkins, 2020).

Readers' role in reading-writing events seems to be very meaningful in (re)constructing and (re)making meaning after getting involved in interpreting the texts assigned. 'Transacting' means a process that empower readers to self-actualize text-meaning construction in the framework of cognitive and metacognitive as well as socio-affective nurturing process. When readers focus on the text-investigation, the strategy of 'efferent' is used, while readers try to involve their emotional and personal accounts, 'aesthetic' stance is used (Rosenblatt, 1978).

RRT-based project in reading-writing literary works generally results in creative responses that represent readers' intellectual and emotional accounts. Research suggests, though still limited to its diversity, some models of assessing its dimensions. Empirically, studies on dimensions and predictions of literary response tend to embrace such psychological reactions like emotional indications: interests, anger, happiness, sadness, courage, and jealousy (e.g. van Schooten, Oostdam, & de Glopper, 2001).

2.5 Socio-constructivism Views

Learners' sensitivity of collaboration and cooperation as demanded in educational empowerment to shape classroom community that is enacted by RRT application should be taken into consideration by the teachers in designing reading courses. In this sense, regarding the emergence of the Vygotsky's socio-constructivism views, Holzman (2008) promotes peer-feed-backing process of learners' (readers') written responses as expressed in RRT project. Scaffolding then occurs when the learners share constructive inputs or revisions to their works through ongoing drafting of the journal writing (see also Donato, 2000). In reader-response approach to teaching, scaffolding means to be a very influential strategy in the process of guiding the steps (Rashtchi, 2019; Reynolds, 2017) by which the students get chances to be guided to gradually be tapped into activities of voicing ideas in more meaningful classroom interaction.

2.6 Critical Pedagogy and Literacy

The critical classroom dynamics will consequently encourage the classroom members to feel safe to express their voices. At the same time that driving classroom force can improve their target language in the perspectives of critical literacy (e.g Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014), considered as an empowerment of students, which implicitly corresponds to Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy. In this way, critical literacy "promotes textual engagement that emphasizes consuming (reading, listening, viewing), producing (writing, speaking, designing), and distributing texts for real-life purposes and audiences" (Borsheim-Black, Macaluso, & Petrone, 2014, p. 123). Thus, philosophically speaking, the interplay of critical literacy and critical pedagogy strongly boosts the pedagogy of literature teaching that promotes reading-writing (literacy) activities.

2.7 Characteristics of Reader-Response Theory

Eagleton (1983) has characterized the history of modern literary theory as occurring in three stages: a romantic “preoccupation with the author”, a new critical “exclusive concern with the text”, and finally, “a marked shift of attention to the reader over recent years”(P.74). This is due in large part to the emergence of RRT. The origins of this theory are in the field of literary criticism from the pioneering work in the 1930s of the literary theorists, Louise Rosenblatt. Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reading places emphasis on the relation between reader and text while constructing meaning. The term transaction, adopted from Dewey’s (2008) epistemological writings implies that, during the reading process, the self of the reader and the text are more flexible. Hence, in the RRT the construction of meaning in the personal literary experience is the main characteristic when thinking of the connection between the reader and the text.

According to Connell (1996) “Dewey’s epistemological position stresses the transactional character that ties mind and body, subject and object, knower and known” (396) . This perspective focuses on the process of knowing, the active role of the knower, and the need for communication among inquirers. Drawing on these epistemological constructs, it can be explained how the RRT is considered as a response to Dewey’s position, as it highlights that meaning is constructed based on the reader’s aesthetic experience of a text. Construction of meaning occurs as the reader selects and reflects on his or her own responses. Rosenblatt agrees with Dewey’s work on the way that her reading theory does not ignore the way human beings transact with the environment, changing themselves and the conditions simultaneously.

2.8 The Reader-Response Theory in Language Teaching

It is strongly held by the advocates of the application of the reader-response theory in ELT that there is an apparent superiority in the advantages it can bring about in language teaching contexts in comparison to the traditional approaches (Carlisle, 2000; Hirvela, 1996). Having a long history of being practiced in language classes, the traditional approach devises the role of the sole conductor of the flows in the class to the teacher and it seems apparent that in such an atmosphere, and particularly while dealing with literary texts, students have the part of rather passive recipients, unable to exercise interpreting and analyzing a given text with much creativity or diversity from what is aimed at by the teacher.

On the contrary, in the reader-response theory, the act of reading is considered as an active, dynamic process, constantly prone to change in which readers are in charge of the creation and development of meaning. In such a context, the paramount role of readers in the process of meaning making of a text cannot be neglected or undermined by any means and thus, the interaction between the reader and the text is viewed as having utmost importance. This is the reason that in this approach to literature a variety of personal interpretations and analyses, based on not only the textual elements but also the reader’s personal views, experiences and feelings, are welcomed (Diyanni, 2000; Kirsznner and Mandell, 2001; Padley, 2006; Tyson, 2006).

3 . Procedures

3.1 Population and Sample

The whole population of the present study includes (75) fifth year students of the Ibn-Al-Muaatun Secondary School in Tikrit, during the academic year 2021/2022. The students are grouped into two sections: (A and B). (A) and (B) have been randomly selected to be the experimental and control groups whose total number is seventy-five . Section (A) consists of thirty-seven students while section (B) consists of thirty-eight students. Seven students are excluded from section (A) and eight students are excluded from section (B). Those students are employed for the purpose of the pilot study. Thus, thirty students have been selected from section (A) as an experimental group and thirty students from section (B) as a control group. Therefore, the total number of the involved sample is sixty who represent (80) percent of its original population, as shown in table below:

Groups	No. of Population	No. of Pilot Students	No. of sample Students
Experimental	37	7	30
Control	38	8	30
Total	75	15	60

3.2 Test Construction

The post-test is used to discover the results, so the researcher designs a test based on the topic that has been chosen at the beginning of the study to measure whether there are statistically significant differences between the control and experimental groups. The post-test contains (5) questions, each question consisting of different elements from the other. Question one asks the pupils to read the scene from “Baghdadi bath” and answer to the questions below. It consists of five items. The purpose of this question is to enhance linguistic and literary students’ achievement and ability. The total scores of the first question is (25), the correct answer gains five score and the incorrect gains zero. Question two consists of (A) and (B) : A-which is consists of five items , each item is given three marks. The purpose of this question is to enhance students’ performance in remembering information. Also (B) includes five items, each item is given two marks. The purpose of this question is to enhance students’ knowledge and comprehension. The total score of this question is (25). Question three is to complete the sentences.

It consists of five items, each item is given two marks. The purpose of this question is to enhance student’ production. The total score of this question is (10). The fourth question is to explain some questions about two stories, this question consists of five items, each item is given four score. The purpose of this question is to enhance students’ creativity and prior knowledge. The fifth question is to analyze the main idea of the text. The purpose of this

question is to enhance students' ability to translate a literary text. The total score of this question is (20).

3.3 Validity of the Test

Validity is a very important and useful concept in all forms of research methodology. Face validity is a subjective judgment on the operationalization of a construct. To ensure face validity of the test, it has been exposed to experts in the field of methodology of EFL and linguistics who are requested to give their agreement, modification or any additional comments about the test in order to evaluate the suitability of questions for the objectives of the study and for the students' level. The content analysis of the test items is based on Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive domains to state the behavioral objectives. The cognitive domain begins with the lower cognitive level and ends with the higher cognitive level, which is creation.

3.4 Reliability of the Test

The coefficient is calculated, it is determined to be (0.77), which is considered appropriate.

3.5 Difficulty Level

Item difficulty refers to the extent to which an item appears to be complicated or facilitated for a given number of tests. It just reflects the percentage of learners who respond correctly to the object. The most suitable test item will have item difficulty varying between 0.15 and 0.85. It was found that the current test items' DL range from (0.33) to (0.70).

3.6 Discrimination Power

Item discrimination refers to the degree to which an object makes a difference between good and poor testers. An object has the good power of discrimination if it collects the right answers from the good students and the wrong answers from the bad students. It is worth noting that the high power of discrimination will be close to 1.0, and no power of discrimination will be nil at all (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010, p. 71).

18

It is worth noting that the high power of discrimination will be close to 1.0, and no power of discrimination will be nil at all. The results obtained indicate that the test item DP ranges from (0.26) - to (0.66).

4 . Results

4.1 Comparison between Experimental Group in the Pre- Post-Test Scores

It is found that the mean score of the difference between the students' performance of the experimental group in the post-test is (70.20) with a standard deviation of (9.98). Whereas that of the pre-test is (41.43) with a standard deviation (18.58). The calculated t-value is (8.093), which is found to be higher than the tabulated t-value which is (2.04) at (0.05) level of significance when the degree of freedom is (29).

The obtained results indicate that there are statistically significant differences between the students' performance in the Experimental in the pre-test and their performance in the post-test in favour of the personal response approach. as shown in Table (4.1).

Table (4.1)

The T-test Value of paired samples, the Experimental Group Performance in the Pre-Test and Post-Test

Group	No. of students	Mean	SD.	T-Value		DF	Level of Significance
posttest	30	70.20	9.98	Calculated	Tabulated	29	0.05
pretest	30	41.43	18.58	8.093	2.04		

A literature helps students acquire a native-like competence in English, express their ideas in good English, learn the features of modern English, learn how the English linguistic system is used for communication, see how idiomatic expressions are used, speak clearly, precisely, and concisely, and become more proficient in English, as well as become creative, critical, and analytical learners. literature can open horizons of possibility, allowing students to question, interpret, connect, and explore . In sum, literature provides students with an incomparably rich source of authentic material over a wide range of registers. If students can gain access to this material by developing literary competence, then they can effectively internalize the language at a high level. Especially, for students with verbal / linguistic intelligence, the language teacher's using literature in a

19

foreign language class serves for creating a highly motivating, amusing and lively lesson. Literature is not only a tool for developing the written and oral skills of the students in the target language but also is a window opening into the culture of the target language, building up a cultural competence in students.

Also from the study and the participants' reactions, several conclusions can be drawn. One of the conclusions is that the implementation of the reader-response approach in a literature classroom may be beneficial, promote students' participation and their responsiveness towards literary texts. Another benefit is increasing students' awareness that literary texts are relevant and relate to students' lives, beliefs and values.

The benefits of implementation of reader response approach in the Literature/Writing program. Among the goals of the program listed, the following can be emphasized:

1. Students will learn about themselves, via reflecting upon their behavior and their experiences.
2. Students will learn about others, developing their empathy and understanding.

3. Students will learn about cultures and societies, their varying concepts and issues of human experience.
4. Students will learn how texts shape our thoughts or our emotions, how these texts encourage an individual to see things in certain ways.

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