

## Effect of Teaching English Literature on EFL Learners' Output

Abdelrazig A bdelghani Mahil Ibrahim

ESP Lecturer – Posh Academy – Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Abstract:** This study aimed at investigating the effect of teaching English Literature on the EFL Learners' output. This study adopted a quasi-empirical method. The sample of the study consisted of (100) English teachers. The population of the study was all English teachers in Khartoum locality in the first period in the academic year 2017 / 2018. A questionnaire was constructed to the teachers to collect data. The study used the SPSS program to analyze the data. The results revealed statistically significant differences in students' output because the study participants strongly agreed to (14) items in the questionnaire, which their average ranged from (4.20 to 5.00) and that means that teaching English Literature is essential and necessary for EFL Learners because its effects on their output in English language. In the light of the study findings the researcher recommended that Curricula designers, educators, and experts should adopt literature-based syllabuses or include at least literature in the syllabuses.

**Keywords:** literature, foreign language, output

### Introduction

#### 1.1. Introduction

English has, lately, established itself as the most popular language in the world. It may be considered the first world language. (Al-Ghunaimi, 2003, cited in Qteefan, 2012) states that the English language has been the language of "globalization". Therefore, English as a foreign language has been of considerable importance in curriculum in most Arab countries to enable students to cope with modern life and develop their countries. In addition to that it is the ultimate method of communication among native speakers and non-native speakers of the English language.

The use of literature as a technique for teaching both basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) and language areas (i.e. vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) is very popular within the field of foreign language learning and teaching nowadays. Many writers in the late nineties have drawn the attention to the importance of literature of English Language as a rich environment for interaction and a good chance for passing values.

Recently literary texts have been accepted as motivating material, an access to culture, a resource for language acquisition and a medium to expand learners' language awareness. Literature in Sudanese basic schools at present is taught as an optional subject not as a compulsory one and no attention is paid to language development.

This study attempts to examine the efficiency of using literature in the teaching of English Language Skills in Sudanese basic schools and how it can help students develop and improve their standard of learning. Recent researches have renewed the debate over the role of Literature, in order to achieve linguistics importance among EFL learners.

Many writers, such as Ghosn and Shrestha (2002, p. 175), claim that literature provides authenticity to language learning. Moreover, literature will help improve and develop each of the language skills separately, namely, writing, speaking, and reading (Khatib et al., 2011p. 102). It is argued that literature is a complex structure that supports the acquisition of the target language and it will help, as a result, the users to be more competent in it .

Labo – Popoola (2010, p. 52) describes literature as the foundation of language learning; through literature, different cultures could be identified. As it is indicated, language is the source of communication, and literature is identified as the cultural transmission from generation to generation. It can be said that literature is the heritage of any culture that can be explored using a language. Through this argument, it can be said that teaching literature has such a beneficial impact on language learning that they cannot be separated.

Interestingly, Labo – Popoola (2010, p. 48) illustrates that language is the source of communication between societies. According to Vethamani et al. (2010), literature is the part of a language, which improves different skills. Additionally, literature will help the process of language learning to be more interesting. In addition, Calia (2009, p. 33) suggests that reading could be the easiest way to learn a language if teaching literature is utilized in this regard, because literature will enrich vocabulary and language content.

According to Naik (2011) Language and literature are indivisible. Their role is not contradictory but complementary to each other. No literature comes to life without language and no language survives without literature. Language records the feelings of the human beings in general. The ancient inscriptions and palm leaves are two good examples of the presence of language before the invention of printing and publication; engraving on rocks and palm leaves was in practice.

Van (2009) maintains that studying literature in the EFL classroom has a number of merits:

- \*It provides meaningful contexts;
- \*It involves a profound range of vocabulary, dialogues and prose;
- \*It appeals to the imagination and enhances creativity;
- \*It develops cultural awareness;
- \*It encourages critical thinking;
- \*It is in line with CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) principles.

On the other hand, (Sidhu 2003 and Savvidou, 2004, cited in Mohamed) believe that the study of literature unconsciously enhances students overall linguistic competence, including their knowledge of syntax,

morphology, semantics and phonetics. Further, they think that literature provides a rich context in which individual lexical and syntactical items are made memorable.

Moreover, (Mackey, 1982, cited in Houria AL-habiri, 2013, p: 37) argues that literature can be used to develop the linguistic knowledge either on a usage or use level. Usage involves the knowledge of linguistic rules, and use requires employing these rules for effective communication (Widdowson, 1978, cited in Houria EL-habiri, 2013).

(Tomlinson, 1985, p. 09, cited in Butler, 2006, p. 50) states that literature is a beneficial element in the language classroom because:

*Poems, stories and extracts from plays, novels and autobiographies can involve students as individual human beings who can gain rich exposure to authentic English, as well as opportunities to develop communication skills as a result of motivated interaction with texts and with their fellow students.*

## 1.2. Significance of the study

This study is significant for a number of reasons:

1-The results of this study can be of great importance to curriculum designers because they are expected to draw their attention to a very rich content to design an integrated syllabus and authentic activities that link students to real life situations.

2-The study is also important for students because in addition to learning the four English language skills and sub-skills in an authentic integrative way, they will live the experiences of the most creative writers. Furthermore, students will have the chance to know about new cultures of the countries where this literature is written and this will help them to avoid a possible cultural shock if they have the chance to visit those countries.

## 1.3. Problem statement and objectives of the study

The researcher of this study, who used to teach the Sudan Practical Integrated National English series (SPINE) for the last fourteen years noticed that the (SPINE) series is not adequate enough to develop students' standard in English Language. Furthermore, the students who finish SPINE series find difficulty to write a paragraph or speak English fluently, even the most talented students cannot speak or write English out of the need for their study .So, the researcher believes that the SPINE series is not enough to enable the students to use English in a proper way.the So this study attempts to examine the efficiency of using literature in teaching of English as a foreign language.

#### **1.4. Objectives of the Study:**

The main aim of this study is to:

- 1-Explore whether teaching English Literature to EFL Learners has a significant influence on the students' output or not.
- 2-Explore the role of teaching literature in reinforcing the English Language skills.
- 3-Show the importance of teaching literature among the English language teachers and the decision makers in the educational field in order to implement new strategies and techniques in teaching English through teaching literature.

#### **1.5. Questions of the study**

The study will attempt to provide answers to the following question:

Are there any statically significant differences in EFL Learners' output in English language that attribute to teaching English literature?

#### **1.6. Limitations of the study**

This study will be limited to (100) English Language teachers in Khartoum Locality in the academic school year 2017 2018.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Study Design:**

This is an analytical study its aim is to investigate the effect of using a literature-based syllabus on EFL learners' Achievement of English Language in the Sudan Secondary schools in Khartoum Locality in the academic school year 2017 – 2018.

### **Study population and sampling:**

The population of this study is all English Language teachers in Khartoum State in the first term of the academic school year 2017- 2018.The The sample of the study consisted of (100) teachers chosen randomly.

### **2.2. Data collection**

The data of this study have been obtained by using a questionnaire.

The questionnaire is structured into two parts, part one which includes:

Participants' personal information, academic qualification, the participants' experience in English language teaching, and Courses that attended by the participants in the field of (ELT).

Part two includes:

The findings related to teachers' point view in teaching English Language Literature to EFL Learners and its effect on students' output in English language, which includes (16) statements.

This structure of the questionnaire eases the balance in items between the knowledge areas to be controlled and for relationships between topics to be investigated (see Appendix (1) for a full list of questions

statements in the questionnaire). All items are multiple choice with varying number of response options. The items required respondents to select their views on a statement with the degree varying from strongly agree to strongly disagree. However, all the statements were common for all respondents to facilitate comparison between them in regard to factors such as personal information, academic Qualification and variables concerning English language teaching.

### 2.3. Validity of the questionnaire

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire a jury of three university professors (Pro. Ahmed Babiker, Dr. Mohamed EL-Amin EL-Shingeity, and Dr. Ahmed Al-Sadiq Brair) and two EFL teachers (Mr. Suliman Metre Khalifa, and Mr. Ghareeb-allah Mohamed Dawood) were consulted. They all agreed on the content and the structure. The final form of the questionnaire was drawn out after taking their comments, opinions and advices into consideration.

### 3.4. Reliability of the questionnaire

When using Likert-type scales it is very important to calculate and report Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency reliability for any scales or subscales one may be using. To assess the reliability of the teacher's questions (the scale), Cronbach's coefficient alpha, which is the most commonly used method to compute the internal consistency reliability was used (Leech *et al.*, 2005). As shown in Table 1, the coefficient of the scale is 0.809 which indicated a high level of reliability, so this instrument is suitable to be used for the purposes of the study. On the other hand, the internal consistency reliabilities of scores represented by Cronbach's alpha for the individual statements were estimated to vary from 0.84 for (literature helps generate purposeful referential questions.) to 0.949 for (Literature enhances language proficiency). These indicated that scales' statements had high sufficient internal reliability.

**Table (1): Item-Total Correlation and Cronbach's Alpha Values for the teachers' scale**

<i>Statements</i>	<i>Item-Total Correlation</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</i>
1. Literature is a stimulus for language acquisition.	.919**	.986
2. Literature expands pupils' language awareness.	.919**	.986
3. Literature develops pupils' interpretative skills.	.910**	.986
4. Literature stimulates critical thinking	.944**	.986
5. Literature develops emotional awareness.	.937**	.986
6. Literature enhances language proficiency.	.949**	.986
7. Literature develops comprehension skills.	.850**	.987
8. Literature enriches pupils' vocabulary	.814**	.987
9. Literature helps generate purposeful referential questions.	.900**	.986

10. Teaching literature stimulates the learners' imagination.	.923**	.986
11. Teaching the elements of literature enrich EFL learners' narrative writing skills.	.913**	.986
12. Teaching literature bridges the cultural gap between the EFL learners and the target language.	.908**	.986
13. Literature encourages pupils to talk about their opinions and feelings.	.929**	.986
14. Literature represents a language 'at its best' and thus provides an ideal model for language learning.	.924**	.986
15. Literature has the potential to consolidate the four language skills.	.915**	.986
16. Literature broadens intellectual perspectives, and boosts cognitive maturation.	.908**	.987
<b>Overall Scale</b>		<b>0.987</b>

\*\* Significant at level 0.01

### 3.5. Population of teachers' questionnaire

The population of this questionnaire was all teachers of English Language in Khartoum Locality. The sample comprises 100 English Language teachers who were randomly chosen in Omdurman Locality.

### 3.6. Procedure of the questionnaire distribution

The questionnaire was distributed randomly by hand to (100) English Language teachers from different schools in Omdurman Locality. The content of the questionnaire was clarified so that it could be easily understood and answered. Luckily, most of the teachers who participated in the questionnaire expressed a real sense of enthusiasm in answering all the items and this was a real pleasure to the researcher. All the participants in the questionnaire were thanked by the researcher for their collaboration in completing the experiment. The questionnaire's data will be analyzed statistically to measure the objectives and hypotheses of the study.

## 3. Data analysis

The data were coded, entered and analyzed by using (IBM SPSS Statistics 20) program. The analysis procedures included two parts as follows:

**Part 1) Descriptive statistics.** this part addressed and analyzed personal information, variables regarding academic qualification, variables regarding English language teaching and teachers' responses to the scales' statements by producing distributions, frequencies, percentage, means and standard deviations of the variables. And to make the statistical analysis easier, the responses towards scales' statements were



The results in Table (3) show that the study participants include male and female teachers, where the proportion of females was higher than male ratio (59.0% and 41.0%), respectively, i.e. female ratio was more than half of the total sample by a remarkable percentage (8.0%).

**Table (4): Frequency distribution of the study participants regarding their age**

<i>Age group (years)</i>		<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>
	(50-60)	30	30.0
	(40-49)	43	43.0
	(30-39)	12	12.0
	(20-29)	15	15.0
<i>Total</i>		<i>100</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Concerning the age of the study participants, the results in table (4) show that the majority of them their age is between 40 to 49 years (43.0%), while (30. %) of the participants, their age lies between 50 to 60 years, but (15.0%) of the participants' age is between age 20 to 29 years, whereas (12.0%) their age is between 30 to 39 years old. Regarding these results we can conclude that 73% of the teachers involved in this study, their age is between 40 to 60 years, while the percentage of the young ones is only 27.0%.

## 2. Participants' academic qualification

The following table will present the results of this variable.

**Table (5): Frequency distribution of the study participants regarding their qualifications**

<i>Qualification</i>		<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid percent</i>
	Intermediate Diploma	17	17.0	17.17
	Bachelor	53	53.0	53.54
	Higher diploma	20	20.0	20.20
	MA.	4	4.0	4.04
	PhD	-	-	-
	Intermediate Diploma+ Bachelor	3	3.0	3.03
	Bachelor + higher diploma	2	2.0	2.02
	Not specified	1	1.0	
<i>Total</i>		<i>100</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	

As shown in table (5), most of the teachers who participated in this study (53.54%) of them are a Bachelor degree holder as qualification, 20.20% has higher diploma and 17.17% has intermediate diploma, while only 4.04% of the participants have post graduate degree (MA). On the other hand, there were 3.03% of the participants have an intermediate Diploma plus Bachelor degree as qualification, similarly, there were 2.02% of the participants has a Bachelor degree plus higher diploma as a qualification. It is worth to mention



that there is one of the study participants has a PhD as a qualification. Also, there is a proportion of 1.0% of the study participants did not mention their qualification.

#### Participants' experience in English Language teaching:

The following table will show the results of this variable.

**Table (6): Frequency distribution of the study participants regarding their teaching experiences**

<i>Teaching experiences</i>		<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>
	More than ten years	70	70.0
	Ten years	7	7.0
	Five years	14	14.0
	Two years	9	9.0
	One year	-	-
	Less than one year	-	-
<i>Total</i>		<i>100</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Regarding the number of years of experience in teaching, the results show that the majority of the study participants have long years of experience in teaching (70.0%) followed by those who have five years of experience (14.0%), while (9.0%) of the teachers have two years of experience. However, only (7.0%) of the teachers have ten years of experience in teaching and no one of the participants has one or less than one year of experience in teaching. Table (6)

#### Training courses that attended by the participants in the field of (ELT)

The below table shows this variable:

**Table (7): Frequency distribution of the study participants regarding the training courses they attended in ELT**

<i>Training courses in ELT</i>		<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>
	Yes	83	83.0
	No	17	17.0
<i>Total</i>		<i>100</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

The results in Table (7) show that the majority of the participants followed training courses in English Language teaching. (83.0%), while only 17.0% didn't do so.

#### Findings related to teachers' point of view in teaching English literature and its effect on EFL Learners' Output

The next part will display teachers' point of view in teaching English literature and its effect on EFL Learners' Output.

**Table (8): Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations of teachers' responses towards the statements on the questionnaire**

Statements			Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Literature is stimulus for language acquisition.	No	62	34	3	0	1	4.56	0.66	5
		%	62.0	34.0	3.0	0.0	1.0			
2	Literature expands pupils' language awareness.	No	59	36	5	0	0	4.54	0.59	6
		%	59.0	36.0	5.0	0.0	0.0			
3	Literature develops pupils' interpretative skills.	No	61	36	2	0	1	4.56	0.64	4
		%	61.0	36.0	2.0	0.0	1.0			
4	Literature stimulates critical thinking	No	48	38	9	5	0	4.29	0.83	13
		%	48.0	38.0	9.0	5.0	0.0			
5	Literature develops emotional awareness	No	50	39	10	1	0	4.38	0.71	10
		%	50.0	39.0	10.0	1.0	0.0			
6	Literature enhances language proficiency.	No	49	38	10	3	0	4.33	0.78	12
		%	49.0	38.0	10.0	3.0	0.0			
7	Literature develops comprehension skills.	No	70	28	0	2	0	4.66	0.59	2
		%	70.0	28.0	0.0	2.0	0.0			
8	Literature enriches pupils' vocabulary	No	78	19	2	0	1	4.73	0.60	1
		%	78.0	19.0	2.0	0.0	1.0			
9	Literature helps generate purposeful referential questions	No	41	46	12	1	0	4.27	0.71	14
		%	41.0	46.0	12.0	1.0	0.0			
10	Teaching literature stimulates the learners' imagination.	No	63	29	7	1	0	4.54	0.67	7
		%	63.0	29.0	7.0	1.0	0.0			
11	Teaching the elements of literature enrich EFL learners' narrative writing skills.	No	45	46	8	1	0	4.35	0.67	11
		%	45.0	46.0	8.0	1.0	0.0			
12	Teaching literature bridges the cultural gap between the EFL learners and the target language	No	39	46	10	5	0	4.19	0.81	15
		%	39.0	46.0	10.0	5.0	0.0			
13	Literature encourages pupils to talk about	No	58	38	2	2	0	4.52	0.64	8
		%	58.0	38.0	2.0	2.0	0.0			

	their opinions and feelings.									
14	Literature represents language 'at its best' and thus provides an ideal model for language learning.	No	50	45	4	0	1	4.43	0.67	9
	%	50.0	45.0	4.0	0.0	1.0				
15	Literature has the potential to consolidate the four language skill.	No	61	35	4	0	0	4.57	0.57	3
	%	61.0	35.0	4.0	0.0	0.0				
16	Literature broadens intellectual perspectives, and boosts cognitive maturation.	No	35	45	16	2	2	4.09	0.88	16
	%	35.0	45.0	16.0	2.0	2.0				
<b>Total mean</b>								<b>4.44</b>	<b>0.64</b>	

Table (8) shows teachers' point of views regarding teaching English literature and its effect on EFL Learners' Output. The results revealed that the overall average of teachers' point of view regarding the content of the scale reached (4.44 out of 5) and by 5-points Likert scale which used in this study, indicates that teachers strongly agreed on the content of the statements included in this scale. When we discuss the results of this measure in details, we find that teachers strongly agreed to (14) items, which its average ranged from (4.20 to 5.00) as follow:

1. Literature enriches pupils' vocabulary
2. Literature develops comprehension skills.
3. Literature has the potential to consolidate the four language skill.
4. Literature develops pupils' interpretative skills.
5. Literature is stimulus for language acquisition.
6. Literature expands pupils' language awareness.
7. Teaching literature stimulates the learners' imagination.
8. Literature encourages pupils to talk about their opinions and feelings.
9. Literature represents language 'at its best' and thus provides an ideal model for language learning.
10. Literature develops emotional awareness
11. Teaching the elements of literature enrich EFL learners' narrative writing skills.
12. Literature enhances language proficiency.
13. Literature stimulates critical thinking
14. Literature helps generate purposeful referential questions.

While the teachers less agree to only two items of the scale (the items that its average ranged between (3.40 to less than 4.20) as follows:

15. Teaching literature bridges the cultural gap between the EFL learners and the target language
16. Literature broadens intellectual perspectives, and boosts cognitive maturation.

### 3.4. Results and discussion:

**Q1:** Are there any statically significant differences in the achievement level of basic students in English language that is attributed to the strategy of using a literature-based syllabus?

**H1:** There no statically significant differences in the achievement level of basic students in English language that is attributed to the strategy of using a literature-based syllabus.

The answer to Question One comes from the Findings relating to teachers' questionnaire which consisted of sixteen statements. The tables from (3) to (7) show the sample populations' responses and the frequencies. Table (8) shows the final results of the sixteen statements. We find that teachers strongly agreed to (14) items, which its average ranged from (4.20 to 5.00). While the teachers less agree to only two items of the scale the average ranged between (3.40 to less than 4.20) this means that teachers involved in this study *strongly agreed* that teaching English Literature is essential and necessary for EFL Learners because of its effect on their output in English Language.

To conclude, using literature in language schools is not a new phenomenon; still it is a debatable matter among language teachers. Some believe that learning a language must entirely include those aspects that are related to the activities of daily life (speaking, listening, and so on). In this case, spending much time on trying to understand literary texts probably written in old English has nothing to do with the overall process, however, another group has come to see literature as significant and vital as any item in EFL / ESL curricula. They emphasize that language is a part of the human heritage, and literature could be used to interpret human thoughts.

### 3.5. Recommendations:

In the light of the above findings, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

Curricula designers, educators, and experts should adopt literature-based syllabuses or include at least literature in the syllabuses.

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#### الملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة الي تقصي أثر استخدام تدريس الادب الانجليزي علي تحصيل دارسي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية. وقد اعتمدت هذه الدراسة طريقة شبه تجريبية. وتكونت عينة الدراسة من (100) معلم ومعلمة لغة إنجليزية. وتكون مجتمع الدراسة من جميع معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في محلية الخرطومفي الفترة الأولى من العام الدراسي 2018/2017 م. وقد تم تصميم استبانة لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لجمع المعلومات. استخدمت الدراسة برنامج ال (SPSS) لتحليل البيانات. أظهرت النتائج وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في تحصيل الطلاب لأن المشاركين في الدراسة وافقوا بشدة علي (14) فقرة واردة في الاستبانة والتي يتراوح متوسطها ما بين (4.20 إلى 5.00) وهذا يعني أن تدريس الأدب الإنجليزي ضروري لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لأن ذلك يؤثر على تحصيلهم في اللغة الإنجليزية. وعلي ضوء نتائج هذه الدراسة قدم الباحث مجموعة من التوصيات منها:علي مصممي المناهج والمعلمين والخبراء اعتماد مناهج مبنية علي الأدب أو ادخال الأدب في المناهج الدراسية علي أقل تقدير.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الادب ، لغة أجنبية ، تحصيل

