

The Iraqi EFL Learners' Awareness of the Role of Reading Literature in their Creative Writing

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Creative Writing, Reading literature, Language Proficiency, EFL Learners' Academic Abilities.

This study examines the extent of awareness among Iraqi English foreign language learners about the potential impact of reading literature on developing their creative writing abilities. Furthermore, this study investigates the relationship between those who partake in literature reading and their academic skills. It examines the participation of 120 Iraqi EFL learners currently enrolled in the faculties of Arts, Education, and Education in Qurna, affiliated with the University of Basrah. It employs a mixed methods approach, including a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The results demonstrate a significant correlation between reading literary texts and developing creative writing skills. Several literary elements enhance creative writing, including a comprehensive understanding of figures of speech, cultivating critical thinking skills, engaging in literature courses, practicing paraphrasing poetry, and exposure to various literary genres. The findings also demonstrate that EFL learners profoundly understand the impact of engaging with literary texts on their academic abilities.

Introduction

Irrespective of the literary type, literature obtained via formal education is unquestionably the foremost authority in influencing student preferences for texts while also playing a substantial role in fostering dormant creative and intellectual capacities. Active involvement with literary materials may enhance the acquisition of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It enables learners to go beyond acquiring fundamental language comprehension skills and better grasp the language and its underlying mechanisms. Literature is a suitable medium for casually discussing grammar after conversing with a student. This feature facilitates the transition to the standard English language and allows for the omission of broad information as necessary while maintaining it as a point of reference. The use of literature can facilitate the adoption of strategies designed to enhance the understanding and interpretation of diverse occurrences (Widdowson, 1990, pp. 177–180).

In fact, developing a strong reading habit leads to enhanced writing proficiency (Nguyen, 2022: p.105). In contrast to other modes of written discourse, creative writing is mainly intended to provide amusement and enjoyment rather than delivering a direct and objective representation of knowledge and data. The use of imaginative elements in creative writing serves to enhance reader involvement. Hence, students need to grasp the importance of engaging with literary texts regarding their general linguistic proficiency and, more significantly, their aptitude for creative writing. Following Myers (1994: p. 12), the emergence of what is now referred to as "creative writing" may be attributed to a deliberate shift of perspective, whereby literature was reconceptualized as a means of personal expression rather than a subject of analysis. Engaging students with literary works allows them to encounter idiomatic expressions, which may facilitate the acquisition of advanced speaking and writing skills. Students can express their ideas coherently, accurately, and concisely in English.

Literature Review

The existing body of research primarily examines teaching strategies and teachers' perspectives when investigating the impact of reading literature on students' creative writing skills and language development (Knoeller, 2003; Austen, 2005; Urlaub, 2011; Morris & Sharplin, 2013; Noaman, 2013; Adam & Babiker, 2015). The study by Knoeller (2003) proposes that using creative writing activities in an organized fashion might enhance students' understanding of complex literary texts. In some scenarios, integrating the interaction approach with the conventional manner of interacting with literature through critical analysis might provide advantageous outcomes. According to Knoeller (2003), a prominent expert on the subject of English literature, it has been observed that students who first show hesitancy in engaging with creative writing tend to manifest a notable surge in enthusiasm during the undertaking. Creative writing assignments can demister students from using authentic voices in their written compositions. Response prompts can include a broader spectrum of open-ended tasks that extend beyond the mere expectation of students to compose within the same genre as the prescribed reading material.

According to Austin (2009), incorporating creative writing tasks has been shown to have positive outcomes for students studying English literature. Through careful consideration of assignment design and grading methodology, the researcher discovered that educators have the potential to enhance student's learning outcomes in creative writing activities. The assertion that creative writing is viewed as a means to enhance practical skills rather than recognizing its intrinsic value fails to properly comprehend the significance of art in fostering critical thinking among students. Additionally, it was discovered that the availability of creative writing courses in most universities is restricted, necessitating students to be admitted based on a portfolio of their previous work. Consequently, only students who have already exhibited proficiency in creative writing are allowed to partake in the enriching experience of the creative writing process.

However, the research undertaken by Urlaub (2011) first thoroughly describes the skills that language learners must acquire to achieve proficiency in reading literary works in their second

language, namely German. The author posits that acquiring advanced reading skills in a second language should be considered. Engaging in activities that integrate creative writing and critical reading can enhance students' proficiency in literary reading, foster a heightened appreciation for literature, and facilitate the effective incorporation of their existing knowledge into their comprehension of literary texts. The research employs written samples and reflective observations from three students with advanced language learning proficiency to emphasize the potential benefits of integrating creative writing activities. The use of guided writing exercises has been seen to facilitate the cultivation of critical skills in students when they engage with literary works, as demonstrated by their creative outputs and reflective practices. Engaging in a meticulous investigation of the original text may foster a more profound understanding and admiration for the formal elements of literature among students.

The primary aim of the study done by Morris and Sharplin (2013) is to critically analyze the existing literature and various methodologies used in the evaluation of creative writing. There is a debate regarding the importance of categorizing students' creative writing abilities on a continuum of development, analyzing the factors that contribute to the superiority of certain students' writing over others, identifying unique characteristics, and establishing the criteria used by instructors to evaluate student work. Due to the diverse range of criteria put forth by scholars, theorists, and professionals, there is a prevailing opinion that including creative writing should be avoided in high-stakes exam environments.

Noaman (2013) stressed the significance of using literature to enhance language learning. It examines the benefits of incorporating theatrical education into the curriculum for students and the significance of integrating literary texts in fostering linguistic development, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. He concluded that literary texts have the potential to facilitate both student and societal development. The authors promote cultivating readers' cultural and educational growth under their emotional attributes. Examining the impact of teaching literary on students' creative writing, with a particular emphasis on the viewpoints of educators, was at the heart of the study by Adam and Babiker (2015). It examines the pedagogical approach that focuses on integrating English novels into the curriculum to augment undergraduate students' creative writing skills. The findings indicate that students' capacity to participate in creative writing is augmented by their exposure to renowned literary works published in English. Specific pedagogical approaches in literature instruction can foster increased incorporation of literary devices, such as allusions and figures of speech, among emerging authors.

According to Elley and Mangubhai (1983: 53), research has shown that L2 students exposed to a wide variety of aesthetically appealing storybooks with captivating content experience higher-than-average improvements in their English language ability. Following these research studies, Iida (2013) examines the significance of second language reading and writing within the context of their research article. The inquiry drove the study, "What are the specific types of texts that instructors choose for language classes, and what are the fundamental rationales behind these choices?" The Classification of Linguistic Patterns in Discourse (CLPD) framework was used to categorize the responses obtained from the interviews. The CLPD model provides a theoretical framework for evaluating data and elucidating the diverse viewpoints of language

teachers about the use of poetry within educational settings. Regrettably, there exists a need for uniform enthusiasm for the topic of poetry among instructors across various educational settings. The educators surveyed in this study unanimously agree that selecting poems for language education requires careful deliberation. They underscore the need to discern the appropriate occasions for incorporating poetry into instructional practices. A significant proportion of polled instructors have expressed concerns over incorporating literary texts into all EFL instructional strategies. Nevertheless, educators commonly recognize that integrating poetry and creative writing inside language programs is appropriate since it presents several benefits for students. The study concluded that a more comprehensive investigation requires either more refined classifications or novel characterization methods. Further research is necessary to ascertain the potential applications of literature in English language instruction across different proficiency levels and contextual settings.

The research conducted by Paesani (2016) examines the relationship between students' reading and writing abilities and their comprehension of Available Designs in the domains of language and design. The study is situated within a French grammar and stylistics course designed for advanced students, focusing on fostering literary comprehension and enhancing creative writing abilities. Upon examination of the data as mentioned above within the theoretical framework of the multiliteracies approach, it was seen that students demonstrated the capacity to discern evident connections between activities centered on interpreting and transforming texts and the subsequent impact on advancing language proficiency. The level of understanding among students about conceptualizing the schematic Available Designs as instruments for constructing meaning and linguistic frameworks, as well as their proficiency in using them for creative writing tasks, remained uncertain. The findings also demonstrated that students could engage in active analysis and revision of texts as a component of activities that facilitated the construction of meaning. Moreover, examining linguistic and textual elements within the context of literature may greatly facilitate the acquisition of a foreign language. Organizing the chronology of the text is another factor that aids in identifying the main idea, extracting specific details, and drawing conclusions about concealed meanings (Phuoc, 2022: p.43).

Additionally, literature reading enhances students' proficiency in English, fosters their aptitude for innovative problem-solving, and augments their capacity for critical thinking and analytical introspection. The use of literature as an instructional instrument has shown a notable augmentation of students' cognitive abilities, particularly in critical thinking. The growth of cognitive abilities in students is significantly enhanced by the cultivation of critical analysis and evaluation skills, which enable them to generate meaningful judgments. This process facilitates the fostering of enhanced creative thinking abilities and forming a distinct worldview. The educators promoted collaborative endeavors in order to attain this objective. Educators collaborate to establish a classroom milieu whereby students assume agency over their recreational experiences. Engaging in academic activities can improve students' language and non-linguistic skills and aptitude for learning and critical analysis (Ouhiba, 2022: pp. 483).

The study of literature can expand the intellectual perspectives of students via the promotion of speculative thought, the formulation of conclusions, and the exploration of novel connections. The field of literature offers students a vast collection of genuine information in several ways,

making it an invaluable resource. The acquisition of advanced language proficiency among students may be facilitated via exposure to intellectually demanding materials, with literary competence being a crucial factor in this process (Noaman, 2013: pp. 125-131). Furthermore, as to the findings of Kim (2010), the English literature class he conducted yielded a notable improvement in students' English fluency and their ability to engage in creative and critical thinking on the subject matter.

The perception held by students on the influence of reading literature on their language proficiency and developmental aspects, such as creative writing capabilities, needs to be clarified. Hence, it is crucial to prioritize students' viewpoints on the influence of reading literature on their development of creative writing abilities and language learning. Furthermore, exploring the significance of engaging with literary works in enhancing one's academic proficiencies and competencies is essential.

Research Questions

Given the aims mentioned earlier, this research poses the following questions:

1. What is the connection between the Iraqi EFL learner's creative writing and reading literary texts?
2. What aspects contribute to developing and improving creative writing abilities among Iraqi EFL learners by reading literature?
3. Are Iraqi EFL learners cognizant of the impact of reading literature on their language development skills and their overall academic abilities?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The study focuses on undergraduate students enrolled in the English Departments at the University of Basrah, namely within the College of Arts, College of Education, and College of Education in Qurna. A total of 120 participants were chosen by random sampling to provide responses to the questionnaire items, while a smaller sample of 10 students was included in the semi-structured interviews. A group of ten students was chosen by a non-probability selection technique called quota sampling to participate in the interview and answer the questions. The students were categorized into two groups according to their inclination towards reading literature. Every group consists of 5 people.

Design of the Study

This research uses a sequential mixed-method approach to gather and analyze data: a semi-structured interview and a questionnaire. The survey questions used in this research are based on the questionnaire developed initially by Adam and Babiker (2015), including 15 statements. In order to fulfill the research goals, the statements were appropriately altered. The study centers its attention on three primary domains of investigation: the perspectives held by EFL Iraqi learners about the correlation between creative writing and literary works, the impact of literature on the practice of creative writing, and the extent to which EFL Iraqi learners acknowledge the importance of literature in their overall acquisition of skills. The interview

questions were derived from the questionnaire results, specifically examining the impact of EFL Iraqi learners' literature reading on their writing skills, language proficiency, creativity, communication abilities, and critical thinking aptitude.

Data collection & analysis

The survey was administered to a total of 150 English language learners who were enrolled in four-year programs across three different institutions. Specifically, there were 50 participants from the College of Arts, 50 from the College of Education, and 50 from the College of Education-Qurna. The questionnaire was completed by a total of 40 students from each institution. The questions provided are presented in Table. 1, 2, and 3. The responses obtained were analyzed using percentages. Subsequently, the analysis succeeded by conducting interviews with ten of the aforementioned students. The inquiries posed were as follows:

1. Did the literary lectures, theatrical performances, poetry, or short stories enhance your creative writing abilities?
2. Do you see the literature study within the English discipline as indispensable? Further, if the response is affirmative, what function does it fulfill in enhancing our comprehension of the language?
3. Have literary courses played a role in enhancing your overall language proficiency and, specifically, developing your creative writing abilities?
4. What is the impact of studying literature in English language departments on the development of EFL Iraqi learners students' creative abilities?
5. To what degree does studying literary topics impact students' communication skills?
6. To what extent do literary materials influence the development of critical thinking skills in students?

The interview questions were transcribed and subjected to analysis, focusing on the student's writing abilities, language competence, creativity, communication skills, and general capacity for critical thinking.

Results

The survey questions have been formulated to examine three main areas of interest:

- The Iraqi EFL learners' perspectives on the relationship between creative writing and reading literature
- Their views of the influence of literature on creative writing
- The recognition by the Iraqi EFL learners' of the importance of literature in fostering their linguistic development

The outcomes of the EFL Iraqi learners' responses to each category are shown below:

What is the connection between the Iraqi EFL learner's creative writing and reading literary texts?

The results of the first category demonstrate a noteworthy association between EFL Iraqi

learners' proficiency in creative writing and their propensity to participate in critical reading and analytical thinking about literary works. A significant majority of the student population at Basrah University, comprising over one-third, believes that including literary works in English courses is crucial for serving as exemplars of creative writing. They also agree (with a proportion of over 36.4) that most of these courses facilitated the development of student's creative writing skills, yielding a beneficial effect on their cognitive faculties by enhancing their understanding of effective writing techniques. Incorporating diverse literary works encompassing various perspectives, historical periods, and cultural contexts has elicited a favorable response from students (over 40%), as it has significantly contributed to expanding their intellectual and cultural horizons. A consensus among the student population indicates that engaging in reading and writing short stories may notably impact the cultivation of skills necessary to compose longer fictional works. Students' answers suggest that their exposure to poetry can enhance their cognitive abilities. The results obtained from the students are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

The Iraqi EFL Learners' Answers on Creative Writing and Literature Reading Connection

No.	Statements	SA *	A	N	D	SD
1	I think that literary books provide some excellent examples of creative writing.	13.6%	36.4%	40.9%	9.1%	0.0%
2	My literature classes taught me new approaches to various writing styles.	31.8%	36.4%	27.3%	4.5%	0.0%
3	Acquiring knowledge of various literary epochs has significantly expanded my worldview and inspired me for novel creative endeavors.	31.8%	40.9%	13.6%	9.1%	4.6%
4	Mastering the art of constructing short stories has contributed significantly to developing my writing style.	40.9%	40.9%	13.6%	4.6%	0.0%
5	I have seen that reading poetry enhances my cognitive processes related to creativity.	27.3%	45.5%	13.6%	4.5%	9.1%

*SA= strongly agree, A=agree, N=Neutral, D=disagree, and SD= strongly disagree

What aspects contribute to developing and improving creative writing abilities among Iraqi EFL learners by reading literature?

The results of the influence of literary factors on EFL Iraqi learners' creative writing are shown in Table 2. The findings suggest that students' enhanced intellectual and creative abilities may be attributed to their improved understanding of parts of speech. Approximately 40.9% of EFL Iraqi learners believed that acquiring knowledge about diverse elements of speech is essential for developing analytical and creative aptitudes. Research has shown that providing students with instruction on the differentiation between various literary forms, such as poetry, novels, plays, and short stories, may significantly enhance their cognitive development, increasing by more than 27%. In contrast, the analysis revealed no statistically significant improvement in language proficiency after reanalyzing the poetry, with a success rate of 45%. This phenomenon might also be attributed to the pedagogical approach used by most instructors of poetry at Iraqi

institutions, whereby the focus is mainly on the examination of poetry texts via the lens of critics' perspectives rather than engaging in a comprehensive exploration of the many subtleties inherent within the poem itself or encouraging students to actively reinterpret and reconstruct it using their own unique thoughts and linguistic expressions. The results also show that a significant proportion of EFL Iraqi learners, namely 36.4%, perceive that engaging with literary works has enhanced their critical thinking abilities. When examining the impact of lectures on enhancing students' clerical abilities, a significant proportion of EFL Iraqi learners (31.8%) strongly believe in the influential and indisputable nature of literary teachings.

Table 2

The Influence of Literature on Creative Writing

No.	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Acquiring knowledge about the concept of the figure of speech becomes advantageous in developing my aptitude for creative writing.	13.6%	40.9%	22.7%	13.6%	9.1%
2	Exposing me to various literary genres works as a basis for me to write effectively.	36.4%	27.3 %	22.7%	9.1%	4.5%
3	Paraphrasing poems sharpened my writing skills.	9.1%	4.5 %	22.7%	45.4 %	18.2%
4	My writing skills are facilitated and improved by using literary courses.	50%	31.8%	4.6%	4.5%	9.1%
5	Learning to think critically enhances my literary comprehension.	13.6%	36.4%	27.3%	13.6%	9.1%

Are Iraqi EFL learners cognizant of the impact of reading literature on their language development skills and their overall academic abilities?

The last category presents the outcomes of the EFL Iraqi learners' viewpoints about the significance of engaging with literature concerning enhancing their language proficiency. The response offered by Iraqi EFL learners has shown the importance of connecting with literature written in the English language. For instance, a study revealed that 31.8% of the student body maintained that active involvement with literary works had a noticeable influence on their linguistic abilities. Based on the findings of a conducted survey, it was observed that nearly half of the student participants, precisely 49%, hold the perception that the act of identifying linguistic structures and grammatical patterns plays a significant role in their understanding of language rules while engaged in narrative discourse. A substantial percentage of EFL Iraqi learners, namely 63.6%, maintain that actively involving themselves with literary subjects, such as poetry, may successfully enhance their proficiency in public speaking. Furthermore, a considerable % of EFL Iraqi learners, namely 40.9%, believe that participation in creative writing catalyzes augmenting their capacity to assess literary compositions critically. Finally, it is essential to acknowledge that engaging in reading short stories substantially enhances EFL Iraqi learners' proficiency in aesthetic language. The findings are shown in Table 3, as seen below.

Table 3

The Iraqi EFL Learners' Perceptions on the Impact of Reading Literature on their Language Development

No.	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	My Language proficiency is improved through reading literary works.	22.7%	31.8%	22.7%	18.2%	4.6%
2	The use of advanced syntactic structures and strategic paragraphing is advocated in order to enhance one's comprehension of grammar while composing narratives.	22.7%	40.9%	9.1%	9.1%	18.2%
3	My pronunciation skills are improved through poetry writing and reading.	9.1%	63.6%	18.2%	9.1%	0.0%
4	The enhancement of critical reading may be facilitated by the practice of creative writing.	4.5%	40.9%	9.1%	36.4%	9.1%
5	Short story writing encourages my artistic expression.	31.8%	36.4%	18.2%	4.5%	9.1%

However, conducting a more thorough investigation of these results is essential. In order to get a complete picture of the influence of literary studies on language development in Iraqi universities, a series of in-depth interviews were conducted with a cohort of 10 students. These interviews aimed to investigate the participants' viewpoints on the importance of studying literature concerning their language proficiency. The interview questions focus on the student's writing skills, language proficiency, creativity, communication skills, and overall critical thinking aptitude. Their answers to the interview questions can be summarized as follows:

Creativity and Writing Skills

Many EFL Iraqi learners believe that engaging in the reading and analyzing of literary works, such as novels, poems, short stories, and drama, plays a significant role in fostering a student's capacity to articulate their perspectives on topics within the realm of English literature. This practice is seen as instrumental in addressing a wide range of human challenges, particularly those of a psychological nature. It serves as a means for EFL Iraqi learners to convey their distress experiences through written language. Engaging in literary reading has a discernible impact on EFL Iraqi learners' cognitive abilities, influencing their capacity for creative thinking and the generation of innovative literary compositions. Skilled literary readers possess a distinct methodology for subtraction, characterized by a critical and inventive approach, owing to their extensive familiarity with the novel's original principles. These EFL Iraqi learners possess a significant prospect for skill development, yet they must engage in an atmosphere that fosters diligent effort and physical exertion. This resource focuses on the literary and creative arts of the time and techniques that enhance student proficiency. As a result, it is considered an essential resource for English language departments worldwide.. As for the polite influence of students' abilities, "the teacher and his way of transmitting the information he gives is a shilling because the teacher who doesn't have a spectacle would impact the students' interest in reading". Literature is a "hobby of ideas that one can take advantage of, mainly the literature student, because of the language that creates power and strengthens self-confidence". This is primarily due to the belief that language can generate influence and bolster self-confidence. This is rooted

in the notion that the courteous effect of language positively impacts learners' creative capacities.

Many EFL Iraqi learners believe engaging in extensive literary reading has contributed to their growth and proficiency as writers. Novels, plays, poetry, and short stories are seen as "valuable sources that help develop creative writing. These materials allow you to express your thoughts and feelings in different and varied ways. It enables you to discover the methods of narrative and mental imaging and develop your skills in building characters and creating a plot." This can be attributed to several advantages associated with such actions. It instructs EFL Iraqi learners to organize their thoughts into coherent narratives, exhibiting seamless transitions between concepts. It provides diverse methods for expressing and conveying ideas and emotions.

Engaging in the study of narrative structure is a commendable method to enhance one's cognitive abilities in visualizing scenes and developing and expanding upon character and story ideas. It is accepted that the development of physical abilities depends on "exercise, eating healthy foods, and mental skills. The human body needs to practice mental activities, such as puzzle-solving, cross-wording, or reading books with exciting stories. The reader arrives at the middle of the story when he holds the plot... the stories, the motives for guessing what the story or the play will be".

It expands the vocabulary repertoire of EFL Iraqi learners. This source is widely recognized as a reliable and authoritative reference for a significant percentage of English, including idioms and idiomatic expressions often seen in literature and many forms of creative writing. EFL Iraqi learners may enhance their vocabulary and stimulate their creative writing abilities by studying literary works, such as English plays or critical analyses of poems and short stories. These subjects constitute a tremendous amount of "vocabulary, sentences, and some of the phrases" that they "generally use in writing".

Additionally, literature gives them a valuable perspective on the world and human beings. One additional benefit is the exploration of literature that draws inspiration from the author's anguish and delves into societal or psychological issues, fostering the cultivation of student perspectives among EFL Iraqi learners. The subject matter of "the specific literary work makes a student more creative in expressing uncharacteristic feelings because the literature comes from the real suffering of the writer, who is intended to deal with a social or psychological problem. So, we (readers) interact with it deeply."

Language Proficiency and Communication Skills

The consensus among EFL Iraqi learners is that literature has had a significant role in fostering a general improvement in reading, writing, and speaking proficiency. Integrating literary programs into educational institutions may significantly improve EFL Iraqi learners' cognitive, historical, and linguistic advancement. In addition, maintaining the source language and using traditional language is of utmost importance, transcending the linguistic standards and conventions often observed in formal modes of conversation and interaction.

In order to strengthen their comprehension of literary themes, EFL Iraqi learners should use a wide array of materials. Studying the literary works of well-known poets such as T.S. Eliot and

Emily Dickinson might enhance a person's language skills. Moreover, examining the common characteristics of modern Arab and English poetry might help enhance language proficiency. One participant exemplified her experience of reading English poetry, highlighting the enjoyable nature of it. She expressed her fondness for the poems of Elliot and Emily Dickinson, and also noted, "the connections" she has seen between current Arab and English poetry. These similarities facilitated the development of her "persuasive writing".

EFL Iraqi learners use linguistic and textual methodologies, such as text interpretation tools, to comprehend diverse concepts and perspectives. The recognition of the relevance of literary literature in molding the development of synchronism and antagonism within the English language has been fully acknowledged. After a student has reached a particular stage of proficiency in English, "he must test himself by writing a paragraph or an article as a minimum." Pursuing English literature is often seen as a valuable approach to augmenting one's lexicon and understanding grammatical constructs.

Reading literature can augment a student's lexicon and cultivate the aptitude to articulate intricate ideas and sentiments via language. Participating in the acts of reading and writing in the English language contributes to cognitive growth, allowing EFL Iraqi learners to develop critical thinking abilities, effectively express ideas, imitate literary techniques, demonstrate discernment, and communicate verbally with linguistic accuracy, employing words that convey subtle meanings and align with the writer's intended message. Literature "contributes to the development of language skills including knowledge of many subjects and sharing ideas and beliefs".

Improving English as a Foreign Language of Iraqi learners to articulate themselves and promote meaningful conversations may be enhanced by the study of literature that provokes discussion and critical thinking on controversial moral topics, so promoting the examination of other viewpoints. Studying literature allows students to engage with society, whether it is with other students or members of the public. For instance, when he refers to "a short story that reflects the suffering or problem of a group that is not unidirectional", it may be described as a satirical narrative that positively impacts its audience. By making work public, "it is the critique that enhances its future composition".

The acquisition of language necessary for interpersonal communication among students is facilitated by the examination of literary texts and the engagement in discussions centered on ideas, poetry, and characters found within a diverse range of literary works. Consequently, it has influenced students' aptitude to articulate their thoughts via written and spoken means. Engaging in extensive reading and discussions on the material read contributes to developing students' self-assurance and ability to understand and connect with others. Literature is essential in developing communication skills since "it simulates the different ideas of different poets or characters of other plays or novels", ... when we want to communicate with our friends, we're joking with them using vocabulary, the language of a particular story, a play, a poem or a novel".

Critical thinking Aptitude

It is widely held among EFL Iraqi learners that literature can enhance cognitive abilities and facilitate deep engagement with imaginative realms. It helps explore the perspectives of EFL Iraqi learners from many cultural backgrounds since literature reflects the broader societal context. The effect of literature stems from its capacity to foster critical thinking and the development of student perspectives among readers. The demanding nature of studying literature fosters the development of student's analytical and critical thinking skills and their capacity for original thought and future innovation through evaluating and comparing various literary works, historical figures, and their progeny. Literature opens up a great horizon in students' mentality and allows them to be "seduced in this fabulous fantasy world, so we see a lot of students being greatly influenced by poets and writers like Shakespeare and others for their great thought and imagination."

Engaging with and analyzing a fictional character may augment a student's aptitude for analytical reasoning and proficiency in comprehending and assimilating novel characters, symbols, and subjects. These literary subjects are "so profound that they necessitate students to possess a profound philosophy and thinking ability". Consequently, in order to expand their intellectual horizons, "students must engage in critical thinking and comparative analysis of various types of literature, as well as the characters and their successors." This analytical process enables students to develop "their own philosophy and depth of thought, which in turn facilitates their personal growth and fosters a unique perspective." Ultimately, this significantly enhances students' aptitude and prepares them for future endeavors.

Discussion

The research findings indicate a robust correlation between engagement with literary texts and cognitive processes such as critical thinking and creative writing. Engaging with a diverse range of literary works, such as books, novels, and poetry, contributes to enriching vocabulary and enhancing grammatical and expressive conventions. Furthermore, understanding various writing techniques and cultivating imagination and creativity may be beneficial. Engaging in revisiting previous literary works by reading, evaluating, and analyzing may serve as a valuable tool for identifying areas of potential improvement and fostering the development of one's literary aptitude. Engaging with literary texts on the craft of writing may prove to be a fruitful endeavor. Many textbooks and scholarly works exist, serving as invaluable resources that provide insightful counsel and direction for enhancing one's aptitude in literature. The outcomes of this study are consistent with the previous research conducted by Knoeller (2003), Austen (2005), Urlaub (2011), Morris and Sharplin (2013), Norman (2013), and Adam and Babiker (2015).

Irrespective of the literary type, literature obtained via formal education is unquestionably the foremost authority in influencing student preferences for texts while also playing a substantial role in fostering dormant creative and intellectual capacities. In a contemporary setting, it is essential to use language that conforms to contractual obligations and ethical principles without transgressing any boundaries. Nevertheless, it is crucial to underscore certain noteworthy

aspects of English literature. Literature is a reflective medium that offers valuable insights into many facets of human civilization. Gaining knowledge and actively engaging in the literary works of several cultures might provide various advantages. To comprehensively analyze English literature, it is necessary to consider the diverse forms and genres of the works, including narratives, novels, verses, dialogues, and others.

Moreover, paying attention to the linguistic aspects, compositional elements, visual representations, and other essential components included within the texts is essential. This offers a rationale for the variations in literary assessments and the rarity of a single erroneous perspective. It is essential to acknowledge that engaging with classic works of English literature can enhance EFL Iraqi learners' linguistic proficiency, such as creative writing, reading, and speaking. Creative writing functions as a medium through which writers may leave their mark on the annals of history by producing groundbreaking literary creations. The genre of fiction writing exemplifies these phenomena by allowing authors to transcend their ordinary lives and engage with an alternate world that emerges from the underlying symbolism inside their cognitive processes. Enhanced creative writing skills may be attributed to many factors, including a comprehensive understanding of figures of speech, the cultivation of critical thinking capabilities, successful completion of literature courses, proficiency in paraphrasing poetry, and exposure to diverse literary genres. The findings of this study, together with others conducted by Elley and Mangubhai (1983), Widdowson (1990), and Paesan (2016), provide support to the assertion that engaging with literary texts may significantly enhance EFL Iraqi learners' language growth and competency.

In agreement with previous scholarly investigations (Kim, 2010; Noaman, 2013; Ouhiba, 2022), engaging with literary works has been shown to positively impact cognitive abilities, specifically critical thinking, and foster a profound examination of a student's creative capacities. Literature study presents a formidable task for EFL Iraqi learners as it necessitates evaluating and comparing an extensive array of texts, historical figures, and their descendants. This multifaceted endeavor enhances their analytical and critical thinking skills, fostering their capacity for innovative thinking and future creative endeavors.

Conclusion

The use of reading materials may be advantageous for EFL Iraqi learners in Iraq, as it allows them to encounter new concepts, perspectives, and literary techniques across a diverse array of issues. Enhancing critical thinking and reading comprehension skills is directly proportional to the extent of authors' reading. Based on the findings, EFL Iraqi learners who engage in regular reading and writing activities benefit from their exposure to diverse texts. EFL Iraqi learners can improve their writing skills and broaden their perspectives via comprehensive reading and critical analysis of the texts they encounter. Engaging with literary texts can facilitate the student's English grammar and style acquisition. It was observed that Iraqi EFL students had a notable appreciation for the capacity of literature to enhance their overall language proficiency. Linguistic and textual tactics, including the use of text interpretation tools, are employed by students in order to appreciate the perspectives of others entirely. Reading literature has been

shown to have a measurable influence on students' aptitude, enhancing their ability to think creatively and produce original writing pieces. The analysis of literary texts and the discussion of themes, poetic elements, and characters included in diverse literary works contribute to acquiring language skills necessary for interpersonal communication among EFL Iraqi learners. Consequently, there has been an improvement in students' ability to articulate their thoughts and ideas vocally. The research further demonstrates the need to examine students' perspectives on the various methods and approaches used in teaching literature in the English departments of Iraq. This investigation explicitly emphasizes the effectiveness of these tactics in preserving students' academic capabilities. However, the various methods and approaches used in teaching literature in the English departments of Iraq and the effectiveness of these tactics in preserving and promoting students' academic capabilities and skills still need further investigation.

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