



**Investigating the Impact of Teaching English Literature in Developing the Writing Skill of Sudanese EFL Learners: A Case Study Secondary Schools learners of White Nile State- Sudan**

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**Abstract**

This study tries to investigate “the role of teaching English literature in developing the writing Skill of Sudanese learners at secondary Schools of the White Nile State. Due to the very significance of writing skill to the EFL learners, the researcher tried to explore the effective ways of how teaching literature can improve the writing skill. The descriptive, analytical and the experimental methods were adopted to conduct the study. The pre and post-test were manipulated as data collection tools to measure the differences between the students who study literature and those who do not, to find out whether literature has an effective role to play in developing writing skill or not. In addition to the “questionnaire” which was distributed among (60) Sudanese EFL teachers chosen from different secondary schools inside the White Nile State in order to reflect their views and attitudes towards the role of literature in developing the writing skill of EFL learners. The results have revealed that literature has a vital role in developing the language skills in general, and writing skill in particular. The investigator recommends that schools’ libraries should be positively fixed and the teachers should encourage the students to gain the furthest benefit from it. Textbooks should be well designed to suit the learners’ standard and literature should be a part of the curriculum as a main subject.

Key Words: competition, teaching literature, personal development.

**المستخلص :**

تحاول هذه الدراسة البحث في "دور تدريس الأدب الإنجليزي في تنمية مهارات الكتابة للطلاب في المدارس الثانوية بولاية النيل الأبيض". نظراً للأهمية الكبيرة لمهارات الكتابة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، حاول الباحث أن يكتشف الطرق الفعالة لكيفية تحسين الأدب لمهارات الكتابة. تم استخدام الطرق الوصفية والتحليلية والتجريبية لإجراء الدراسة. تم التعامل مع الاختبار المسبق وما بعده كأدوات لجمع البيانات لقياس الاختلافات بين الطلاب الذين يدرسون الأدب وأولئك الذين لا يدرسون ، لمعرفة ما إذا كان للأدب دور فعال يلعبه في تطوير مهارات الكتابة أم لا. بالإضافة إلى "الاستبيان" الذي تم توزيعه على (60) مدرساً سودانياً في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تم اختيارهم من مدارس ثانوية مختلفة داخل ولاية النيل الأبيض من أجل التعبير عن وجهات نظرهم ومواقفهم تجاه دور الأدب في تطوير مهارات الكتابة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. كشفت النتائج أن الأدب له دور حيوي في تطوير

المهارات اللغوية بشكل عام ، ومهارات الكتابة بشكل خاص. يوصي الباحث بأن تكون مكتبات المدارس ثابتة بشكل إيجابي وأن يشجع المدرسون الطلاب على الحصول على أقصى استفادة منها. يجب أن تكون الكتب المدرسية مصممة جيداً لتناسب مستوى الدارسين ، وينبغي أن يكون الأدب جزءاً من المنهج كموضوع رئيسي.

### Introduction

No doubt, English Language is used globally now. It is a very popular language everywhere in the world. English literature is also used accordingly to accomplish certain aims. Widdowson, (1975: 7)

The use of literature in English classes is motivating material, access to cultural background, encouraging language acquisition, expanding students' language awareness, developing students' interpretative abilities and educating the whole person. Lazar, (1993:18)

Literature is a word of a qualitative implication, not just a neutral term for writing in general. Without the implication and belief on the part of the author, that some qualities of literature are best appreciated when it is presented in a literary history. This effort to put the most memorable English writing in an intelligible historical perspective is offered as an aid to public understanding. The reader will like literature and be curious about it. Literature as a rhetoric enjoys the human sense desire and emotion as it is used to express ideologies and messages of societies in many different ways.

The researchers think that all these definitions together give a general view of the term literature, therefore, the

investigator concludes that literature promotes and sustains learning language process generally and plays a vital role in developing skills specifically. This is an ideal and perfect way to define the term "literature."

Most educational systems present common features which have a strong emphasis on cognitive learning, where results can be measured objectively; the focus is on knowledge, skills and competencies.

Accordingly, competition and achievement do not produce enough preoccupation for the inner life of children. Literature holds a prominent role in children's personal development since the readers become emotionally attached to the story and this has positive effects on not only the personal growth but also overall learning process. From this point of view, the Romanian curriculum for the primary school cycle includes appropriate texts, which can be used for these purposes.

### 2. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To ensure the vitality of literature for learning English language.
2. Finding out whether the absence of literature has a negative effect on developing the learners' writing skills.
3. To Measure and compare the performance of learners who study literature and those who do not.

### 3. Questions of the Study

There are two main questions.

1. Why literature is not taught appropriately in most of the Sudanese secondary schools?
2. To what extent does regular competitions carried in writing through literature can improve learners' writing skills?

### 4. Hypotheses of the Study

The investigator ties to verify the following hypotheses

1. English teachers are not interested to integrate teaching literature with writing properly.
2. Regular competitions in writing through literature can improve students' writing skill.

### 5. Significance of the Study

The study is conducted to focus on the role of teaching literature in developing the writing skills of Sudanese EFL learners at secondary schools. In other words, it will enable learners to write effectively when they use English. In addition, it helps to keep pace with worldwide development in the field of the foreign language learning and furthermore to expand learners' thinking and their command of language. As well as that, the study is planned to aid teachers, students of English in the pursuing of appreciating English literature.

### 6. Literature Review

The word literature comes from the Latin word "littera" which essentially means acquaintance with letters. Literature is generally taken to mean those of writings despite the passing of

years, still, inspire admiration reflection and emotion in readers. There are many ways to define literature:

Literature could be a sort of disciplined technique for arousing certain emotions. Drucker [2015] stated that literature is generally taken to mean those of writings, which despite the passing of the years, still inspire admiration reflection and emotion in readers. Literature is a word of a qualitative implication, not just a neutral term for writing in general. Without the implications and belief on the part of the author, that some qualities of literature are best appreciated when it is presented in a literary history. This effort to put the most memorable English writing in an intelligible historical perspective is offered as an aid to public understanding. The reader will like literature and be curious about it.

The quest to discover a definition for "literature" is a road that is much travelled, though the point of arrival, if ever reached, is seldom satisfactory. Most attempted definitions are broad and vague, as they inevitably change over time. In fact, the only thing that is certain about literature is that the definition will change. Concepts of what is literature change over time as well. What may be considered ordinary and not worthy of comment in a period, may be considered literary genius in another [3]. Most forays into the question of "what is literature" go into how literature works with the reader rather than how the author set about writing it.

It is the reception rather than the writing which is the object of the enquiry. Largely, that we call “literature”, is often a subjective value judgment and naturally, value judgments, like a literary taster, will change.

English literature is the study of literature written in the English Language. The writers do not necessarily have to be from England but can be from all over the world.

### 6.1 Writing Skill

Writing is a set of visible signs used to represent units of language in a systematic way with the purpose of recording messages which can be retrieved by everyone who knows the language by virtue of which its units are encoded in the writing [4]. *Writing is a medium of human communication that represents language and emotion with signs and symbols.*

*In most languages, writing is a complement to speech or spoken language. Writing is not a language, but a tool developed by human society.*

Within a language system, writing relies on many of the same structures and speech such as vocabulary, grammar, and semantics, with the added dependency of a system of signs or symbols. The result of writing is called text, and the recipient of the text is called a reader. Motivations for writing include publication, storytelling, correspondence, and diary [5].

*Writing is the process of using symbols (letters of the alphabet, punctuation and spaces) to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form.*

In English, writing is usually the fourth language skill that we learn. To write

clearly, it is essential to understand the basic system of a language. In English, this includes knowledge of grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. Vocabulary is also necessary as is correct spelling and formatting. [6]

### 7. Methods and Design of the Study

The researcher employed the descriptive, analytical and the experimental methods for conducting the study, and SPSS program was also used in the analysis of the obtained data.

#### 7.1 Subjects

The subjects of this study would be a number of randomly selected English language teachers and their learners at the White Nile state. The total number of populations of the teachers is composed of sixty EFL teachers who were randomly selected from different secondary schools. The total number of the learner is also sixty learners from different secondary schools in the White Nile state; they are nearly of the same age.

#### 7.2 Instruments

The two instruments were manipulated in collecting the data of this study used:

- Questionnaires were distributed to EFL secondary schools’ teachers from different schools in the White Nile State.
- A T-test was applied to the learners from different Secondary schools in the White Nile State too.

#### 7.3 Procedures

To seek for satisfying results, the investigator subjected the learners to the test and distributed the questionnaire among the teachers

The investigator tested a group of (thirty) students who do not study literature in their English lessons (Group A) and group (B) of (thirty) those who study literature in their English lessons so as to find out how literature has a role to play in developing writing skills. The two groups of students sat for the pre-test at the same time as they also did when they sit for the post-test. As to the questionnaire, it composed of twenty items emphasize the teachers' perceptions towards the role that literature can play in developing the writing skills of EFL learners. The investigator considered that the questionnaire as an appropriate tool used for data collection so it helped him to obtain the required data that led to reliable findings at the end of the study. The questionnaire was designed in such organized way to attain the purposes it was intended to achieve. It was constructed and distributed to sixty teachers who teach English as a foreign language (EFL). Each of them responded according to his/her point of view by putting (√) on the alternative that expresses his/her point of view. Finally, the investigator computerized the data adopting the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) in the analysis of the results obtained by both the test and the questionnaire.

#### 7.4 Validity and reliability of the Questionnaire

In constructing the teachers' questionnaire, the investigator tried to ensure that the items are related to the objectives of the study. The questionnaire items were also supported by the available

and relevant literature. Additionally, the reconstructed questionnaire was given to some colleagues and experts in the fields of Teaching English and literature who have done a critical assessment to validate the instrument. It was after their comments were taken carefully, the reconstructed questionnaire was passed to have a face and content validity. The teachers' questionnaire was administered to ten teachers other than the sample. Some of the teachers who participated in the pilot study were not involved in the formal questionnaire of the study. The reliability coefficient of 0.78 was established for the instrument. According to Carrol [7], the reliability coefficient to be found is above 0.77, it is said that there is a high positive reliability. Therefore, these data gathering instruments proved to be stable, dependable, and highly reliable.

#### 7.5 Validity and reliability of the Test

In order to assure the validity of the instrument, it was submitted to a group of colleagues and specialists in the field of testing and measurement. The judges were asked to base their judgment on the following criteria:

- Suitability of each item to the related area,
- Clarity and accuracy of the language.

The judges' suggested amendments' changes, and deletion. Over 75% of their suggestions have been taken into consideration. The test was tried on fifteen students other than the sampled students. Then, two weeks later the test was administered to the same students. Both administrations were scored accordingly.

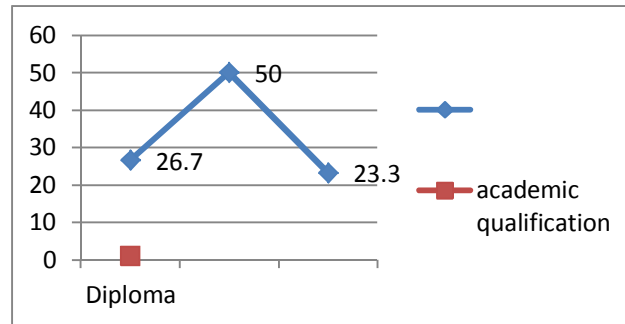
A reliability coefficient of 0.78 was established. According to the statistical equation, such a figure for reliability is considered convincing enough.

Approximately, most of the teachers' responses expressed positive attitudes towards English literature and its vital role in developing writing skills.

### 8. Data analysis and Discussion of Results

Table 1. Frequency distribution of teachers according to academic qualification

Qualification	Frequency	%
Diploma	16	26.7
Bachelor	30	50.0
Master	14	23.3
Total	60	100%

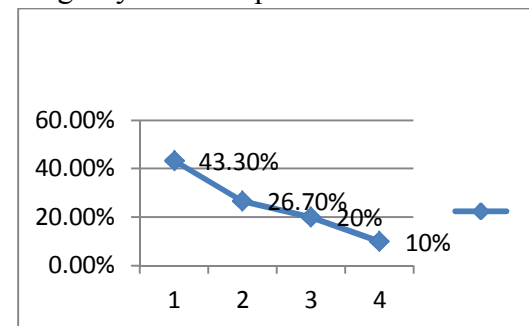


The academic qualifications of teachers understudy as shown in the Table 1 and Figure 1 above. Where 26.70 of them

were diploma holders, 50% were bachelor holders and 23.3% teachers held the master's degree.

Table 2. Frequency distribution of teachers according to years of experience.

Years	Number	%
Less than 5	27	43.3%
6-10	15	26.7%
11-15	12	20%
Above 15	6	10%
Total	60	100%

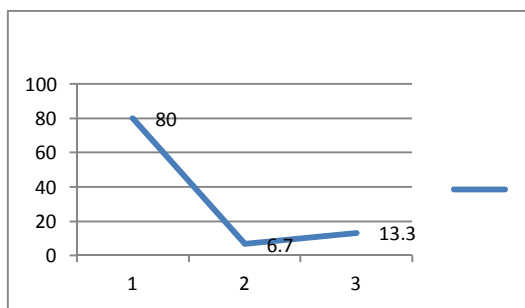


The Frequency distribution of teachers according to their years of experience was presented in Table 2 above which reflected that 43.3% of them their

experience below 5 years, 26.% between 6-10 years, 20% between 11-15 years and 10% were above 15 years.

Table 3. Literature should be a compulsory part of the English curriculum.

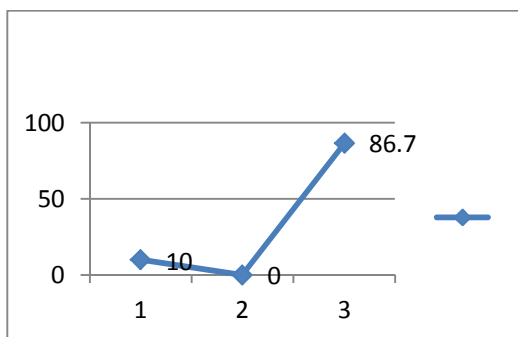
Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	46	76.7
Neutral	4	6.7
Disagree	10	16.7
Total	60	100%



The literature books should be a compulsory part of the English curriculum. The above Table 3 indicated that most of the teachers 76.7% agreed

that literature should be a compulsory part of the curriculum, 16.7% disagreed, and 6.7% were neutral.

Table 4. Literature should be an optional subject

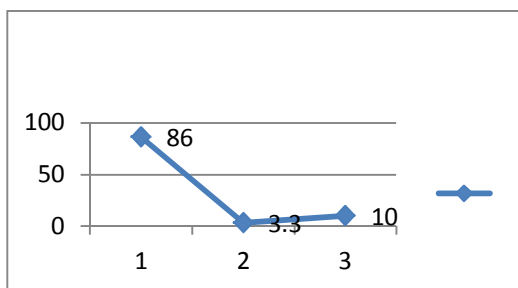


Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	6	10.0
Neutral	2	3.3
Disagree	52	86.7
Total	60	100%

The majority 86.7% of the teachers in the Table 4 above disagreed that literature should be an optional subject,

while 10% of them agreed and 3.3% were neutral.

Table 5. Textbooks and literature books

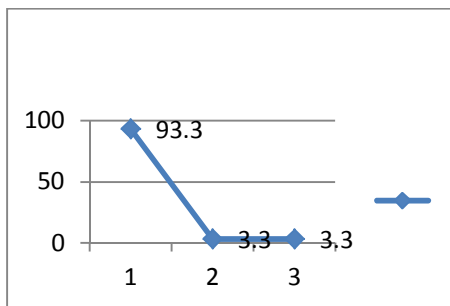


Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	52	86.7
Neutral	2	3.3
Disagree	6	10.0
Total	60	100%

The textbooks and literature books are not well-designed to suit the learners' needs of writing skills. As shown in Table 5, most of the investigated views Table 6. English library is important for developing secondary school learners' writing skills.

of teachers 86.7% agreed that textbooks are not well-designed, 10% disagreed and the rest 3.3% were neutral.

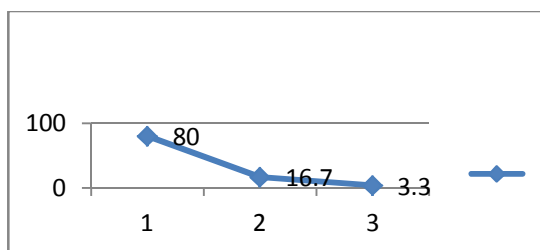
Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	56	93.3
Neutral	2	3.3
Disagree	2	3.3
Total	60	100%



Most of the teachers according to the Table 6, 93.3% agreed that English library is very important for secondary Table 7. English teachers are not well-trained to integrate teaching literature with writing properly.

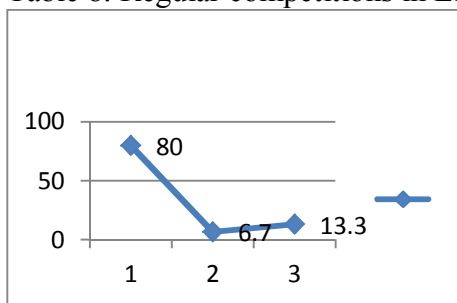
school learners while 3.3 % disagreed and 3.3% were neutral.

Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	48	80.0
Neutral	10	16.7
Disagree	2	3.3
Total	60	100%



It is noticeable that in the Table 7 above that most of the teachers 80% agreed that English teachers are not well-trained to Table 8. Regular competitions in English writing improve students' writing skills.

teach literature in an interesting way, 3.3% disagreed and 16.7% of them were neutral.



Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	48	80.0
Neutral	4	6.7
Disagree	8	13.3
Total	60	100%



As manifested in the Table 8, that 80% of views of teachers agreed that regular competitions in English writing improve

learners' writing skills, 13.3% disagreed, and the rest 6.7% were neutral.

Table 9. Independent Sample T-test Between Pre and Post test

Test	Mean	STD	T- Test Value	D.f	Sig
Pre-Test	4.30	2.23	4.85	53	0.00
Post Test	7.02	2.04			

The result according to Table 9 shows that there is a significant difference between the means of the learners' performance in the pretest and posttest. It is noticed that the expected means in the post-test is greater than the expected means in the pre-test which reflects a significant difference between the learners' performance in both tests where the sig value 0.00 is less than 0.05.

In the light of the above manifestation of discussion and results, it is noticed that all the above-discussed statements and learners' performance in the test, is in support of the hypotheses posed by the study. It calls for the positive effect and role literature in developing the writing skills of EFL learners at the secondary schools at the White Nile State.

### 9. Conclusion

Based on the analysis and description of the procedures that are carried out by the research, test and the questionnaire, the study offered the following findings as a result of the learner's scores as reflected in the pre and post-test; these findings can be outlined as follows:

1. Literature should reintroduce as a compulsory part of the English curriculum,
2. Literature should be an optional subject in the final exam.
3. Textbooks and literature books are not well-designed to suit the learners' needs of writing skills,
4. English library is important for developing secondary school learners' writing skills,
5. English teachers should be well-trained to teach literature properly and regular competitions in English writing can improve learners' writing skills.

Furthermore, as literature does have an effective role to play in developing writing skills from one hand, it can enhance the learners' command of language on the other hand. The findings of this study suggest that literature should be integrated into the Sudanese course as a main as other topics and should be taught at all levels intensively at secondary school stage.



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