

## Appraising the Efficiency of a Language-Based Approach in Enhancing Literary Competence among EFL Students: An Experiment Study

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*Received: 8/9/2023 Accepted: 21/3/2024 Published: .../6/2024*

### **Abstract:**

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of implementing a Language-Based Approach (LBA) in enhancing the literary competence of EFL students. The study employed an experimental design to compare an experiment group to a control group. The students' level of literary competence was assessed based on reading comprehension, understanding of literary conventions, terminology, analysis, and interpretation. Statistical analysis revealed a significant improvement for the experiment group compared to the control group, indicating that the language-based approach positively impacted the literary competence of the learners. In conclusion, this research establishes that the Language-Based Approach is a potent pedagogical tool for nurturing literary competence among EFL students.

**Keywords:** EFL; Language-Based Approach; Literary Competence; Teaching Literature.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of literature in English as a foreign language (EFL) curriculum has been widely acknowledged due to its significant contributions in terms of providing meaningful input in the target language, fostering the development of linguistic and communicative skills, and enhancing cultural awareness (McKay, 1982; Collie & Slater, 1987). However, many EFL students perceive studying literature as difficult and uninteresting due to inadequate language proficiency and lack of literary background knowledge. According to Paran (2008), teaching literature to beginner students through conventional approaches that emphasise the historical perspective and cultural issues has proven ineffective in capturing the interest of EFL students and expanding their mastery of literary studies. In a related way, Gintings (2020) presents four key justifications for language instructors to prioritise cultivating literary talent among learners. Authentic resources, linguistic enhancement, individual engagement, and cultural enrichment are all precious components to boost the literary competence of the learner.

Developing literary competence for English language learners is an important educational goal. Sage (1978) defines literary competence as understanding, analysing, interpreting, and appreciating literary texts. For EFL students, acquiring literary competence can improve their overall English proficiency by exposing them to authentic, sophisticated language use and cultural references in literary works (McKay, 1982). However, teaching English literature to EFL students can be challenging due to their limited language proficiency and unfamiliarity with the cultural contexts of literary texts (Paran, 2008). In this context, the language-based model has gained increasing attention, which aims to systematically integrate language and literature instruction (Carter & Long, 1991; Watson & Zyngier, 2007). This approach involves exposing students to literary texts containing figurative language and literary devices and understanding how these language features contribute to the text's meaning. Such encouragement of literary text analysis can facilitate their comprehension of how authors employ literary devices and other linguistic elements to aesthetically convey meaning and evoke a profound response from the reader.

Despite its purported advantages, empirical data regarding the language-based approach's efficacy in improving EFL students' literary competence is still being determined. Previous research has investigated the implementation of language-based literature instruction for individuals proficient in English as their native tongue (Farnan & Kelly, 1993). However, empirical evidence is required to explore the effectiveness of this paradigm when applied in the EFL classroom. In this regard, prior studies have centred mainly on students' attitudes and level of involvement rather than assessing the advancements made in their comprehension and interpretation abilities in the realm of literature.

Therefore, the present paper aims to fill these knowledge gaps by examining the effects of language-focused techniques in teaching literature

on enhancing literary competency in EFL learners. The primary questions of this study are as follows:

- 1- To what extent does teaching literature through a language-based approach in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom contribute to developing literary competence among intermediate students?
- 2- What are EFL students' attitudes towards learning literature through language-based approaches?

## **2. Review of Literature**

### **2.1 The Effects of EFL Students' Language Proficiency on Literary Comprehension**

One significant obstacle that constrains literary understanding, as well as the involvement of English as a Foreign Language students, is students' linguistic proficiency, particularly regarding the literary language of the text. According to McKay (1982), the sophisticated language characterising literary texts can often exceed learners' lexical and syntactic abilities, creating challenges in their understanding, analysis, and appreciation of literature. Based on this premise, the initial foundation for achieving literary competence involves the establishment of a solid linguistic framework, which subsequently enables students to progress towards a proper comprehension and analysis of the text. Along similar lines, Cater and Long (1991) argue that literary competence relates to different levels of linguistic competence. Considering the Algerian context, many EFL students may experience a sense of being overwhelmed when they encounter difficult vocabulary, rhetorical devices, and complex sentence structures within the context of different literary genres, including poetry, novels, or plays. This sense of frustration hinders the ability to engage in meaningful literary analysis.

The use of literary language significantly diverges from the informal everyday English that students commonly acquire through conversational means (Collie & Slater, 1990). Using literary devices such as figurative language, irony, symbolism, narrative voice, and poetic structures necessitates a proficient mastery of vocabulary and stylistic nuances. Students who are in the process of developing grammatical accuracy and fluency may encounter difficulties in comprehending ambiguous or fragmented language patterns. The disparity between the current language proficiency of undergraduate students and the level of language skills necessary for comprehending fictional narratives presents significant challenges.

To expand, Insufficient vocabulary competency creates a barrier to comprehending words and phrases crucial to exploring literary themes and portraying characters. Furthermore, limited proficiency in grammar hinders the comprehension and utilisation of intricate syntactic structures. This bottlenecks EFL students' use of reading strategies like making inferences or synthesising ideas, as Nergis (2013) highlighted. The cognitive resources allocated to word decoding can divert attention away from more advanced comprehension processes. Consequently, a lack of motivation frequently

arises because of texts that possess excessive linguistic complexity.

To effectively tackle these challenges, teachers should implement scaffolding techniques to facilitate the transition between students' existing language skills and the language requirements for literary analysis. Pre-reading vocabulary instruction, texts with glosses, and syntax workshops facilitate the acquisition of literary discourse before engaging in reading activities. The act of engaging in discussions about vocabulary acquisition strategies enhances one's ability to become self-reliant. In addition, cooperative reading groups facilitate peer assistance in comprehending complex texts. Using discussion guides containing scaffolded questions facilitates the decomposition of analysis tasks, as Lazar (1993) recommended. Providing explicit instruction in literary language serves as a supportive framework for students' comprehension and analysis of literary texts.

Thereby, continual linguistic adaptations facilitate the ability of English as a Foreign Language learners, regardless of their level of proficiency, to engage in meaningful analysis of literary texts. By employing responsive linguistic development and comprehension strategies, it is possible to unlock the enrichment potential of literature.

## **2.2 The Significance of Literary Competence in Language Learning**

Integrating literature into EFL instruction has been shown to provide a myriad of educational and developmental benefits for students. Proficient educators in the field of literature have had the opportunity to observe the significant benefits derived from fostering students' literary proficiency using active involvement with various forms of creative expression, such as narratives, poems, plays, and other artistic written works in the language being studied (Pardede, 2011). The following elucidates the notable ways literature contributes to the advancement of language learning and personal development.

### **2.2.1 Enhancing Language Qualities**

Enhancing language proficiency in areas such as vocabulary, grammar, and reading fluency constitutes a notable advantage of literary competence among students learning English as a foreign language. According to Sage (1987), literature serves as a medium through which language is presented in genuine and significant contexts, thereby exposing students to refined vocabulary and complex sentence structures. Following Day and Bamford (2002), narratives, poetry, and theatrical works offer compelling content that serves as a catalyst for students to engage in extensive reading, thereby enhancing their reading speed, comprehension, and utilisation of reading strategies. Analysing literary devices, such as metaphors, symbols, and irony, facilitates the cultivation of critical thinking skills about the creative use of language (Lazar, 1993). Besides that, students can enhance their oral and written communication abilities by engaging in discussions centred around themes and characters and expressing personal reactions to fictional narratives. To put it all together, the linguistic enhancement offered by literature is of great worth in fostering the comprehensive English proficiency

of students learning English as a foreign language (EFL).

### **2.2.2 Developing Cultural Awareness**

Literature facilitates EFL learners in moving beyond surface-level cultural knowledge to critically examine, question, and reflect on cultural perspectives. Moran (2001) noted that artistic compositions allow critical exploration and interaction with cultural products, practices, and attitudes. Bolstering this claim, Pardede (2011) believes that reading diverse texts from around the English-speaking world expands students' cultural horizons and promotes reflective thinking on their own and others' cultures. Analysing characters, themes, and societal issues in literary works enhances cultural sensitivity, attitudes of openness, and empathy. Hence, students can also examine texts' ideological assumptions and power relations to delve extensively into cultural biases and misrepresentations (Finney, 2002). The text serves as a lens to understand multifaceted cultural realities through the interdisciplinary exploration of the text, which provides students with opportunities to engage with diverse realms of human experience.

### **2.2.3 Building Critical Thinking Skills**

Engaging meaningfully with literature requires and develops higher-order thinking abilities like analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Processes like tracing the plot structure, determining themes, analysing characters' motivations, considering authors' style and intent, and relating texts to personal/social contexts all involve sophisticated cognitive skills (Pardede, 2011). Literary analysis teaches interpretative strategies that sharpen EFL students' critical reading and thinking capacities transferrable to other realms of academic study and daily life. Similarly, discussing open-ended questions on texts' symbols, sociocultural critiques, and moral dilemmas fosters dialogic and divergent thinking (Finney, 2002). Such educational tools facilitate the ability of students to adopt alternative perspectives, thereby promoting the development of empathy. Thus, literature study also encourages students to contemplate the intricacies inherent in the human condition, inviting readers to think and reflect on possibilities.

## **2.3 Theoretical Basis for Language-Based Approach to Teaching Literature**

The language-based approach to teaching literature is underpinned by stylistics theory, which emphasises literary texts as intricate uses of language that warrant linguistic analysis (Short, 1996; Watson & Zyngier, 2007). Stylistics reject the formalism of New Criticism, which treated literary texts as autonomous objects separate from contextual factors (Widdowson, 1975). Instead, stylistics proposes the need to relate literary texts to the communicative conditions of their production and reception (Carter, 1982). From this view, literary competence involves understanding how authors creatively exploit different language features to construct meaning and achieve artistic effects (Simpson, 2004).

Semantic, grammatical, phonological, and rhetorical patterns create the literary style of texts, which skilled readers must decode (Halliday, 1971;

Leech & Short, 2007). In other words, the intricate interplay of the linguistic elements shapes the distinctive literary style of a text; proficient literary analysis requires readers to critically examine and interpret how these complex layers work together to construct meaning. Therefore, stylistics advocates studying literature by systematically studying texts' language features and structures. This approach enables relating literary form to function and equips readers to unpack meanings (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010). For EFL students, the language-focused technique provides an accessible pathway into complex literary works through awareness of how linguistic choices shape artistic expression (Watson & Zyngier, 2007).

In practice, the language-based approach method applies stylistics theory by making language the entry point and focus of the literature study. Lazar (1993) outlines critical principles including:

- Prioritizing literary uses of language over literary history or genres,
- Selection of linguistically rich, complex texts worthy of stylistic analysis,
- Reader-response-oriented tasks requiring close reading and interpretation,
- Attention to lexical, grammatical, figurative language and discourse patterns,
- Examines how writers use language techniques artistically and purposefully.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study aims to address the gaps in the existing literature by investigating whether a language-based approach to teaching literature experimentally implemented over one academic term leads to significantly more significant gains in literary competence compared to regular literature instruction. In pursuit of this objective, the current study utilised a mixed methods design combining experimental research and qualitative interviews to comprehensively investigate the effectiveness of implementing a Language-Based approach in enhancing the literary competence of second-year English as a Foreign Language students. The mixed-methods approach offers a nuanced exploration, combining quantitative and qualitative data, while the true experimental design enables causal inferences by incorporating experimental and control groups (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Shadish et al., 2002).

The independent variable was the type of literature instruction approach, with two levels: language-based and conventional. The primary dependent variable is students' literary competence, operationally defined through scores on a literary interpretation skills assessment designed for this study.

These methods and tools must be presented with precision and clarity without exaggeration so that other researchers can re-examine or verify them. The author can describe the tools and techniques used in the form of a scheme, table or diagram for clarification and simplification only in case of complexity. This section can be divided into sub-sections. Its contents vary according to the subject matter of the paper.

### **3.2 Rationale for Mixed Methods**

This mixed methods study employs a true experimental design and phenomenological interviews to integrate the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to derive causal conclusions about the impact of different pedagogies as well as insights into students' lived perspectives and experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The quantitative phase provides objective evidence to assess comparative effectiveness, while the qualitative phase explores subjective experiences. In brief, these findings can corroborate, elaborate upon, and enrich each other through triangulation and interpretation (Bryman, 2006). This will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the language-based literature instruction phenomenon.

### **3.3 Setting and Participants**

The study participants comprised second-year English as a Foreign Language learners in the English Department at the University of El Oued during the first semester of the 2023 academic year. There are approximately 240 students enrolled in the second year of the English department; most participants demonstrate a significant level of perseverance and willingness to engage in this experimental study.

### **3.4 Sampling**

A simple random sample of 80 students from this target population of 240 is selected to participate in the study. Random sampling supports the generalizability of findings back to the target population as each member had an equal chance of being selected, and the sample will likely represent the population demographics (Taherdoost, 2016). Additional stratification prior to random selection may help ensure the sample mirrors the population proportions on critical characteristics like gender, age, and academic performance level. The research's selected sample of 80 students was assigned to either the experimental group receiving the language-based literature instruction (n=40) or the control group receiving the traditional literature instruction (n=40). Equal group sizes maximise statistical power for group comparisons.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

#### **3.5.1 Quantitative Phase: True Experimental Method**

This study utilised a true experimental pre-test/post-test design for the quantitative phase to allow for the most robust causal inferences about the impact of language-based literature instruction on EFL students' literary competence. True experiments exercise maximum control by randomly assigning participants to treatment or control groups, manipulating the independent variable (instructional approach) while controlling all other factors, and measuring changes in the dependent variable. Pre-test scores will be analysed to check for group equivalence at baseline. SPSS software will then compare post-test scores between groups, controlling for pre-test scores, to determine if competence levels changed significantly more for language-based instruction versus traditional instruction. The true experiment's

randomisation, manipulation of the independent variable, and isolation of the causal relationship between instructional approach and competence support strong quantitative causal inferences (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

### **3.5.1.1 Pre-test and Post-test Design**

The pre-test and post-test assessments were thoughtfully structured to comprehensively evaluate students' literary competence, spanning a spectrum of skills. A pre-test was administered to both the experimental and control groups before the start of the intervention to establish a baseline measure of the literary competence of the participants. Upon completing the 8-week language-based instructional intervention, a post-test identical to the pre-test was administered to both groups to assess any advancement in literary appreciation from before to after the treatment period. These assessments were meticulously composed of three distinct components: multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, and a segment dedicated to analytical essays of selected texts.

Based on the gains acquired throughout the first year in the literary texts' module, the tests were written at an appropriate difficulty level for second-year EFL university students. To establish face validity and refine questions, three literature teachers with experience teaching literary texts for more than ten years reviewed the tests' items. Kimberlin and Winterstein (2008) stated that face validity helps ensure that the test items adequately measure the intended construct and are clear, relevant, and representative. Ultimately, a pilot test was also conducted with five students and analysed using item analysis techniques to improve the tests and eliminate ambiguous or unfair questions.

### **3.5.1.2 Quantitative Data Analysis**

Data collected from the pre-test and post-test assessments were subjected to rigorous statistical analysis. Paired-sample t-tests and independent t-tests were employed to determine within-group changes, while analysis of covariance was utilised to ascertain between-group differences. The true experimental design ensured control over confounding variables, isolating intervention effects (Shadish et al., 2002).

### **3.5.2 Qualitative Phase: Phenomenology**

The qualitative phase aims to delve into students' subjective experiences and perspectives through a phenomenological approach. It highlights the intention to uncover more profound insights into how students engage with the instructional methods and their perceptions of the learning process. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted using a phenomenological qualitative approach to gain insights into students' lived experiences and perspectives related to the instructional methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Phenomenology focuses on describing the essence of a shared phenomenon from multiple individuals' first-person points of view (Moustakas, 1994). This will allow for developing a richer understanding of how students experience and perceive the phenomenon of the language-based



literature instruction approach. Interview data will be analysed using horizontalisation, cluster of meanings, and textural and structural descriptions to derive the phenomenon's essence without making causal inferences (Moustakas, 1994). Findings will illuminate students' voices regarding engagement, learning, and meaning-making.

### **3.6 Procedure of the Intervention**

This study has taken place over an 8-week literature unit in the participants' regular English literature course. In the experiment group, a carefully structured intervention was designed to immerse participants in a dynamic learning experience. The intervention was meticulously crafted to integrate fundamental principles of the Language-Based Approach, facilitating the exploration of linguistic intricacies, literary devices, the aesthetic value of text, and stylistic nuances within selected literary works. On the other hand, a traditional approach to teaching literature was implemented in the control group. It followed a structured curriculum rooted in conventional teaching methods, emphasising lectures, readings, and assessments to impart literary knowledge. After the conclusion of the instructional intervention, the researcher administered a post-test to participants to assess gains in the outcome variable resulting from the experimental treatment.

### **3.7 Materials**

The instructional materials for this study consisted of two literary texts from the Romantic era that were studied during the 8-week literature unit. The first text was the poem "Tintern Abbey" by William Wordsworth, first published in 1798 in *Lyrical Ballads*. This poem depicts the poet's return to a countryside site after a five-year absence. He reflects on the beauty of nature, feelings of transcendence, and his shift from youthful innocence to a mature outlook. The poem contains 134 lines structured in blank verse with a rhyming couplet at the conclusion. Key features include vivid sensory imagery, metaphors comparing nature to a spiritual force, and introspective first-person narration.

The second text was the short story "Rip Van Winkle" by Washington Irving, published in 1819 in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* This classic tale follows Rip Van Winkle, a farmer who wanders into the mountains, encounters mysterious spirits, and awakens 20 years later to a changed world. Significant themes include change over time and romanticised nostalgia. The story utilises elaborate descriptive details and mazy narrative pacing to create a mood of fantasy and wonder.

These two canonical Romantic era texts were selected due to their rich linguistic elements, complex themes, and literary merit that would allow for in-depth critical analysis and comprehension instruction over the 8-week unit. The poem and short story also represent common genres students needed exposure to develop balanced literacy skills.

### **3.8 Instructive Processes of the Treatment**

In the treatment group, four essential methods were used, including

language-based analysis, examination of the aesthetic value of the authors' language, formalist analysis, and close reading. For instance, Language-based analysis focuses on diction, imagery, vocabulary, and other linguistic choices and their impact on meaning. Analysis of aesthetic value examined the rhythms, sounds, cadences, and poetic devices used to create an artistic experience. Formalist analysis explored the texts' form, structure, and stylistic elements. Close reading involved an in-depth analysis of the texts themselves. Activities were designed to include small group work, class discussions, lectures, close reading, creative projects, and listening exercises.

Adopting a different stance, the control group in this study received a conventional approach to literature instruction that focused on transmitting literary knowledge from instructor to students. Key activities included lecture-based lessons on author biographies and historical context, whole-class reading of literary texts, teacher-led discussions of plot and themes, character analysis, and assigned analytical essays. Specifically, instruction involved an initial lecture providing background details on the author and the historical period of the literary work. Selected passages or full texts were then read aloud in class, allowing students to experience the literature firsthand. This was followed by class discussions of narrative and thematic elements guided by the teacher. Character motivations and development were also analysed as an entire group, with the instructor elucidating key points. Finally, students applied their literary knowledge by writing analytical essays examining prominent themes and symbolism based on assigned topics and questions.

### **3.9 Assessment Criteria for Literary Competence**

The assessment of literary competence for the treatment group and the control sample was structured around four distinct criteria, each designed to comprehensively evaluate participants' proficiency in engaging with and interpreting literary texts. The criteria encompassed Reading Comprehension (Comprehension Skills), Understanding Literary Conventions and Rules (Textual Skills), Literary Terminology (Rhetorical and Aesthetic Skills), and Critical Analysis and Interpretation (Critical Skills).

## **4. Results and Data Analysis**

### **4.1 Pre-tests Results**

The pre-test aims to assess the student's initial literary competence levels. To this end, the criteria mentioned earlier were considered (comprehension, rhetorical, aesthetic, and critical skills). For each standard, students could earn a score between 0-5 points, with 5 indicating a high level of proficiency. By adding up the scores across all four criteria, the overall marks on the test vary from 0, the lowest achievable result, to 20, the highest feasible quantity. Following a thorough evaluation of the results obtained from the participant's sheets, data was collected through a pre-test and post-test administered to the experiment and control groups. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software analysed the results. Table (1) displays the outcomes of the pre-test.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of the pretest scores

		<b>Comprehen sion Skills</b>	<b>Textua l Skills</b>	<b>Rhetorica l Skills</b>	<b>Critical Skills</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Experime nt Group</b>	N	40	40	40	40	<b>40</b>
	Mean	2.750	2.150	1.850	1.375	<b>8.025</b>
	Median	3.00	2.00	1.500	1.375	<b>7.500</b>
	Std.De.	1.230	0.973	1.375	0.843	<b>4.340</b>
<b>Control Group</b>	N	40	40	40	40	<b>40</b>
	Mean	2.600	2.250	1.700	1.350	<b>7.650</b>
	Median	3.00	2.00	1.500	1.250	<b>8.00</b>
	Std.De	1.410	1.006	1.295	0.914	<b>4.048</b>

In the experiment group, the results demonstrate that students' scores on the assessment spanned from 0.5, earned by five students, to 15, attained by one participant. Most scores clustered within the lower performance range, as thirty students (75.3%) failed to achieve average marks. Instead, this subset accrued fluctuating grades between the minimum of 0.5 and a moderate value of 9, underscoring most learners' competency deficiencies. The experiment group's mean score on the literary competence post-test was 8.025 out of 20. This score stands above the midpoint of the scale, indicating that, on average, participants attained a level of competence that exceeds the halfway mark.

Analogously, the control group's results are between zero abstained by four participants and a top mark of thirteen by two learners. Not far from the treatment group, thirty-one students, constituting 76% of the total, could not attain the average marks. The control group achieved a mean score of 7.650 out of 20 on the literary competence post-test. This score, while below the scale's midpoint, provides valuable context for comparison. It signifies the participants' initial level of literary competence before any intervention.

With a mean score of 7.650 in the control group and 8.025 in the experiment group, a notable proximity in the levels of literary competence between both cohorts becomes evident. It is apparent that the early level of literary competence is not at the desired threshold. These scores indicate room for growth and development in the students' grasp of literary concepts. The figures suggest that the participants' understanding of literary language may be less comprehensive than desired.

#### **4.2 Post-test Results**

After the experimental intervention, the control and treatment groups were administered a post-test to evaluate participant competency level enhancements. The quantitative results of the post-test are delineated in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics of the post-test scores.

		<b>Comprehe nsion Skills</b>	<b>Textual Skills</b>	<b>Rhetoric al Skills</b>	<b>Critica l Skills</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Experime nt Group</b>	N	40	40	40	40	<b>40</b>
	Mean	3.480	3.270	2.700	1.800	<b>11.25</b>
	Median	3.250	3.00	2.120	1.880	<b>9.620</b>
	Std.De.	0.53	0.850	1.050	0.640	<b>2.85</b>
<b>Control Group</b>	N	40	40	40	40	<b>40</b>
	Mean	2.950	2.400	1.950	1.750	<b>8.885</b>
	Median	3.00	2.250	1.750	1.250	<b>9.120</b>
	Std.De	0.900	0.880	1.030	0.750	<b>3.260</b>

**4.2.1 Analysis of Post-Test Scores: Independent-samples t-test**

To compare the post-test scores of students in the experiment and control groups after the treatment through an independent-samples t-test analysis, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

**Null Hypothesis (H0):** There is no notable variance in the mean post-test scores between the experiment group and the control group, which means that there is no statistically significant difference observed between the mean total post-test scores of students who received the language-based experimental instruction and those who received traditional instruction in the control group.

**Alternative Hypothesis (H1):** There is a marked difference in the mean post-test scores between the experimental and control groups.

The independent-sample t-test was conducted using the SPSS software. This allowed for a robust analysis of the data to test the hypotheses. Levene's test was first run to check the assumption of equal variances between the groups. It indicated that the assumption of equal variances was not violated ( $F=0.13, p>0.05$ ). The analytic output provided key parameters, including measurement of the P-value, T-value, degrees of freedom, and mean difference to interpret the results. Table 3 below presents these findings from the independent-sample t-test.

**Table 3.** Independent sample statistics of the experiment and control groups

	<b>Experiment Group</b>	<b>Control Group</b>
N Sample	40	40
Mean Post-Test	11.250	8.850
<b>Test Parameters</b>	<b>Paired Differences</b>	
T-value (T-Statistic)	3.579	
Critical t-value ( $\alpha=0.05$ )	1.990	
Pooled Standard Deviation	3.037	
Degrees of Freedom Df	78	
Significance Value (P-value)	0.001	
Significance Level ( $\alpha$ )	0.05	
Mean Difference (Group 1-2)	2.40	
95% Confidence Interval [Lower Bound, Upper Bound]	[1.781, 3.139]	

The analysis of the post-test scores comparison between the treatment sample and the control group reveals significant insights into the Language-Based Approach's impact on enhancing EFL students' literary competence.

Table 3 reveals that the t-statistic value calculated is 3.579 with 78 degrees of freedom. The significance value (Sig.), also known as the p-value of 0.001, is less than the conventional  $\alpha=0.05$  threshold. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference in mean post-test scores between the experiment and control groups at the 5% significance level. Additionally, the 95% confidence interval of [1.045, 3.755] provides a range within which we are confident that the actual mean difference between the two groups lies. Since the break does not include zero, it reinforces the observed difference's statistical significance, which provides evidence that the experimental intervention had an impact. Hence, the Language-Based approach likely contributed to the improvement in post-test scores.

#### **4.2.2 Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test in the Experiment Group**

To assess the progression in literary competence following the implementation of the Language-Based Approach among participants in the experiment group from pre-to-post-testing, a dependent t-test was conducted. Table 4 below presents the mean scores and standard deviations of the pre-test and post-test and the results of paired t-tests comparing changes over time.

**Table 3.** Paired sample statistics of experiment group pre-post tests

<b>Experiment Group</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
Mean	8.025	11.250
Standard Deviation	4.340	2.850
<b>Paired Differences Values</b>		
Mean Difference	3.225	
Standard Deviation (Sd)	3.853	
Standard Error (SE)	0.609	
T-value (T-Statistic)	5.307	
Degrees of Freedom (Df)	39	
Significance Level ( $\alpha$ )	0.05	
Critical t-value	$\pm 2.703$	
Significance Value (p-value)	< 0.00001	
95% Confidence Interval	[1.607, 4.843]	

Table 4 provides insights into shifts in the central tendency and variability measures for participants' pre-test and post-test scores. Notably, results indicate progression evidenced by a mean difference of 3.225, standard deviation of 3.853, and standard error of 0.609.

Notably, the difference between pre-and post-test scores was

statistically significant based on inferential statistical analyses. A key indicator of treatment efficacy is the t-statistic ( $t=5.307$ ), which exceeds the value expected by chance given the degrees of freedom ( $df=39$ ). Moreover, the paired samples t-test yielded a p-value of less than one per cent ( $p=0.00001$ ), allowing rejection of the null hypothesis that no actual difference exists between the mean scores. The narrow confidence interval bracketing the population mean difference further verifies these findings.

Taken together, these quantitative analyses offer compelling support for adopting a language-based model for teaching literature meaningfully enhanced participants' literary abilities throughout the experiment, as evidenced by their performance on pre- and post-measures. The rigorous statistical approach employed lends credibility to conclusions that can be drawn regarding the impact of this pedagogical intervention.

### **4.3 Qualitative Data Collection**

To gain a rich understanding of student experiences and perspectives, semi-structured interviews were conducted as a follow-up to quantitative pre-/post-testing. A purposeful sample of 10 participants was selected from the 40 students in the experiment group who received the language-based literary instruction. Efforts were made to choose a range representative of achievement levels and gender.

Interviews averaging 30 minutes were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis involving open coding, theme identification, and constant comparison across participant responses. To maintain rigour, an interrater agreement process was utilised to ensure coding reliability. Quotes were also extracted to feature participants' voices within the qualitative reporting.

#### **4.3.1 Qualitative Findings and Analysis**

Students expressed a moderate level of conviction in this method. While some acknowledged difficulties with literature generally due to their English proficiency, most conveyed the effectiveness of this approach in enhancing comprehension of literary devices and rhetoric. One student said it enabled a "deeper appreciation for aesthetic elements within texts."

Approximately 70% endorsed positive aspects, especially staying focused on literary language construction without initially being overwhelmed by cultural and historical context. Several noted that this framework built a solid base to engage critically with other textual features later. As one explained, "Starting with language helped grasp meaning before considering outside details."

However, a small minority lacked complete confidence in their abilities when studying materials exclusively through this lens. One suggested occasionally including relevant context "as support without overloading information." Another proposed reinforcing literary terminology to navigate texts more efficiently.

Overall, findings suggest this group attained modest gains in literary skills from the language-centred intervention relative to their intermediate

English level. While most reactions were constructive, there remains room to develop the approach based on differing learner needs and preferences in qualitative responses. Continued refining may optimise outcomes over time.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This research provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the Language-Based Approach in enhancing literary competence among EFL students. The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methods reinforces the findings. Firstly, quantitative results demonstrate a significant improvement in post-test scores for students who received the Language-Based Approach compared to those taught through traditional methods. This underscores the potential of this approach to bridge the gap in literary competence in an EFL context. Furthermore, Qualitative findings complement the quantitative data by shedding light on students' experiences and perceptions. While most students responded positively to the approach, their feedback suggests room for refinement to accommodate diverse learner needs.

Based on these findings, the researcher argues that the study presents compelling evidence that language-focused methods are up-and-coming for EFL contexts but raise essential questions about differentiation. Tailoring scaffolds to proficiency levels, learning styles, and text complexity may maximise outcomes. A balanced approach harnessing linguistic examination and strategic activation of contextual knowledge could prove invaluable for intermediate learners. This may involve pre-teaching essential vocabulary, providing background details in moderation, or cycling between textual analysis and contextualisation.

Pedagogically, this study encourages educators to consider adopting the Language-Based Approach to improve literary competence among EFL students. It highlights the importance of balancing language and context in teaching literature and emphasises developing critical thinking skills. In brief, the Language-Based Approach offers a promising avenue for enhancing the EFL students' abilities in literature. Further research and pedagogical refinement can unlock its full potential in nurturing students' appreciation and understanding of literature in a foreign language context.

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