An Investigation into the Effects of Intertextuality as a Transactional Process of Reading on L2 Learners' Engagement with Literary Texts

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Abstract

This study aims to examine intertextuality as L2 readers drew upon prior knowledge and relevant experience in provoking cognitive, behavioural and emotional engagement and literary interpretation of a short story. Data were collected using literary response questionnaires and journal entries from a sample of Algerian Postgraduate English learners. Analysis of questionnaires data revealed participants' willingness to engage, thereby supporting the hypothesis that intertextuality accounted for positive changes in the three aspects of engagement. Further evidence demonstrated deep involvement and evaluation reflecting with high regard their emotional, moral and critical stances toward literary text.

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1. *Introduction*

Traditional approaches to teaching literature often focused their concern on close reading of literary texts (Beach, 1993). Literature classes, following this theoretical stance, emphasize how specific features of text such as setting, character, plot, language and theme fit together in pursuit of meaning. The text, as Vinz and Kirby (1988, p. 90) assumed "is viewed as a concretization of the author's intentions, thoughts, and languaging". As a result, learners fail to engage, appreciate and develop interest in reading literature.

Increasing developments in reading theories and literature instruction have though shifted their attention on readers. This led several foreign language educators to embrace the reader-response pedagogy and experiment with it in their classrooms (e.g. Liaw, 2001; Al-Bulushi, 2011; Khatib, 2011; Biglari& Farahian, 2017; Nafisah, 2014; Carlisle, 2000; Yilmaz, 2013; Al-Mahrooqi, 2011; Harfitt& Chu, 2011; Garzon & Castaneda-Pena, 2015; Sanchez, 2009; Iskhak, 2015; & Iskhak et al., 2017). Reading literary texts from the reader-response perspective "offers readers an experience that they can live through, finding meaning in the text in terms of their own ideas, interests, and needs" (Liaw, 2001, p. 36). It can be employed in EFL/ESL classrooms, for example to stimulate enjoyment, to propel student talk and encourage disclosure of inner feelings, thoughts and experiences, and to provide an avenue for multifaceted interpretations in response to a literary text among learners.

In contrast to traditional literature teaching pedagogies, reader response theory as an instructional tool offers a very useful means for understanding the complex relationship of reader with literary text during the process of meaning construction. Perhaps, one of the most influential figures to inform our conceptualization of response to literature has been the literary exponent Louise Rosenblatt, who formulated her own model of transactional reading to describe how reader interacts with literary text to evoke a personally enriching reading experience. Extending from this foundational theory, explained Rosenblatt (1982), the act of reading is "a transaction, a two-way process, involving a reader and a text at a particular time under particular circumstances" (p. 268). In transactional reading, to focus attention solely upon the text and disregard the impact of the constructions of the reader is invalid (Davis, 1992). Under such circumstances, Rosenblatt (1995) herself urged a reconsideration of literature teaching methods used in the classroom and maintained that teachers need "much insight into the complex nature of the literary experience" (p. 30). It goes without saying that reader response criticism has diverted critical focus from the text as the only authority for determining meaning to the reader as an active agent in the reading process.

1.1 *Transaction and intertextuality*

Historically, the concept of intertextuality was defined as the "process of interpreting one text by means of a previously

composed text" (Cairney, 1990, p. 480). That is, literary texts embrace a complex network of interconnected links whereby meaning is created. In doing so, the reader enters the world of text and analyzes it on the basis of its textual elements, structure, and his or her prior knowledge and personal experience. From this standpoint, the metaphor of intertextuality which was traditionally described as the human phenomenon of making connections between multiple texts plays an integral part in understanding the complex transactions combining text and reader. In the live circuit connecting reader and literary text (Rosenblatt, 1995), meaning is created as a result of the active coming together of text and the reader's cumulative life experiences, and prior intertextual encounters across various signs or texts. In this regard, Kallus (2003) thought as follows:

Comprehension is gleaned through the intertextual connections readers make between the text that is presently being read and their past knowledge, experiences, or readings. These intertextual connections therefore play a pivotal role in readers' transacting with the text to create meaning. Without the one, the other cannot exist (p. 19).

Informed by experiential orientations in reader response theory, intertextuality in this study was then considered an active transaction combining present text and readers' extra-textual sources such as prior knowledge and experiences; whether the knowledge and experiences are situations in life such as family relationships, friends, pets, dreams, and even seemingly imaginary experiences, or in texts read previously.

1.2 *Engaged reading*

Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004) proposed that engagement is a multidimensional concept that involves behavioural, cognitive and emotional aspects. Behavioural engagement is manifested in energized behavior. It occurs, for example, when learners adhere to classroom norms, or when they demonstrate effort, concentrated attention, persistence, or continued attempts in the face of difficulty or failure to accomplish learning activities. Emotional engagement refers to students' positive and negative affective reactions to learning such as interest, enthusiasm, boredom, anxiety, anger, happiness...etc. Finally, cognitive engagement "draws on the idea of investment; it incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills" (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004, p. 60). Taken together, the theoretical framework guiding the present investigation defines engagement in response to literature as the joint functioning of cognitive, behavioural and affective processes during reading activities. That is, highly engaged readers build meaning through conceptual knowledge and as such put a lot of cognitive effort in comprehending and constructing literary interpretation. Engaged reading also correlates with positive and negative affective reactions to different reading activities. Other indicators such as perseverance, effort, concentration on text meaning, and time

that students spend on reading tasks are also considered as significant markers of learner engagement.

Learner engagement during classroom reading activities is a prominent and heavily researched educational construct (e.g. Alvermann & Guthrie, 1993; Skinner et al., 2009; Miserandino, 1996; Ivey & Johnston, 2013; Almasi, McKeown, & Beck, 1996; Enciso, 1996; Gambrell, 1996; Guthrie et al., 2004; Wigfield et al., 2008; Reeve & Tseng, 2011; & Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004). The emphasis in current literature on engagement, however, provided only limited information on its multifaceted nature as a construct combining cognitive, behavioural and emotional components. In this line of thought, Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004) claimed that "examining the components of engagement individually separates students' behavior, emotion, and cognition. In reality these factors are dynamically interrelated within the individual; they are not isolated processes." (p. 61). Consequently, engagement in this study is viewed as a multidimensional construct that connects learners with text in ways that are strategic, emotional and motivated.

2. *The study*

This study aimed to investigate the connection between the construction of intertextual links and engagement of second language learners in response to a short literary narrative. More particularly, it intended to closely examine the influence of making intertextual associations in stimulating perceived

engagement i.e. behavioural, cognitive and emotional engagement, appreciation, and literary interpretation of readers in response to literature. In this study, the following research question was developed:

- How does encouraging L2 readers to make intertextual connections enhance the potential for greater reader engagement with and appreciation of a literary text?

2.1 Participants and sampling techniques

The sample for this study included a combined total of sixteen (14 females and 2 males aged 21 to 32) English Language Arts learners who were enrolled in a Postgraduate English Literature course at Djilali Liabes University, located in the North West of Algeria. They were all native speakers of Arabic who spoke French as a Second Language, and who were learning English as a Foreign Language. Participants also did not differ significantly from each other in terms of racial or ethnic background, nor were they significantly different from the population across the district as the majority are of an Arab race.

The choice of this particular group of learners to examine in this study was initially based upon reasons of convenience for the researcher. Also known as Accidental, Haphazard or Opportunity sampling, Convenience sampling is:

A type of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical

criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 2).

Given the fact that this study was conducted in the researcher's previous hometown institution, employing non-random convenience sampling was particularly appropriate as the researching participants were easily accessible and readily available to the researcher both spatially and administratively. Another nonprobability sampling technique named Purposive sampling that occurs when "elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher" (Black, 2010, p. 232), was also used in selecting the relatively small sample of students comprising the study. In this regard, I have based my decision for utilizing purposive sampling on the following major criteria.

First of all, this study required proficient readers who had no considerable difficulty in articulating their thoughts and responses in English. As this project examined a complex phenomenon in literary criticism, students' reading ability in English was considered an important criterion for the purposeful selection of the study participants. Second, it also required learners who had already experienced reading and analysis of literary narratives in their regular textbooks used as part of their English Literature programme. Since this study sought to examine their literary interpretation of plot, setting, point of view, style, characterization and themes of a short literary text, it was thus mandatory

to include learners who had sufficient knowledge and relevant background for analyzing the literary elements of a narrative text. On the basis of these characteristics, learners forming the sample for this investigation were then identified, selected and finalized in collaboration with their classroom teacher.

2.2 Material

Flower Garden (1949) by Shirley Jackson, which deals mainly with the theme of racial discrimination and the effects that it has on people's friendships, is the literary text selected as the source text for this investigation. In choosing this particular literary text, I had to think about several factors necessary for complementing the objectives of the study.

My own considerations first of all were to select an authentic material that is "real, creative and rich in language selection, as well as is amusing and motivational in nature" (Pathan, 2012, p. 28). Concerned that in many simplified stories, cohesion, readability and information density are largely reduced (McKay, 1892), I decided to employ an authentic American literary material in its original entirety. The selection of this text was also based on students' reading ability and language proficiency, as Floris (2004, p. 5) wrote:

If the language of the literary text is quite straightforward and simple or not too difficult in regard to the linguistic level of students, students will want to have more access to literary works and find these texts more relevant to their experience.

The use of language patterns and vocabulary in *Flower Garden* is highly relevant for L2 learners, yet is profound and rich in literary devices such as irony, imagery, metaphor, and foreshadowing that are central to provoking multiple interpretive possibilities and to engaging the imagination of readers.

Second, it was also important to consider the cultural dimensions of the literary work as recommended by Carter and Long (1991). In *Flower Garden*, Jackson touches upon a wide variety of themes such as social pressure, prejudice, hypocrisy, racism, friendship and jealousy among women in society that go to the heart of the human condition. In this context, I believed that experiencing major issues such as racist sentiments, social injustice, abuse and inequality through literature which are common in society would help learners "understand that literature is neither useless nor faraway, and that literature is part of our life" (Tseng, 2010, p. 54). In terms of this criterion, selecting a short story whose themes were close to the personal experiences and challenges of other cultural groups would also be appropriate for learners to generate connections, identify with similar events happening around them, and to become more reflective and perceptive about their thoughts and feelings. In this perspective, Nafisah (2014) perceived that "the closer the text's settings and themes to the readers' background knowledge, the easier it is to interpret" (p. 164).

Last but not least, another significant feature of short fiction is its brevity and practical length "which allows the student to conclude the task of reading on one sitting, or depending on the teachers' approach, it can be entirely read within one or two class lessons" (da Silva, 2001, p. 173). Given the time limits and the load of work that the participants had to complete during this study, I believed that reading a short story rather than a novel would likely be more convenient. Short stories can also be good resources for engaging and encouraging language learners to continue reading and to not get frustrated (Erkaya, 2005). Despite the previously mentioned criteria, subjectivity was also a determining element in selecting the above literary text.

2.3 Research design and data collection procedures

In addressing its major objectives, this study employed personal reading logs i.e. text-based and reader-oriented written entries as well as literary response questionnaires as the main sources of data collection. Using a mixed methods research design, this study combined two distinct methodologies including both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. In integrating multiple sources and techniques of data collection and analysis, the aim of employing a mixed methods design, as Reams and Twale (2008, p. 135) put it, was "to uncover information and perspective, increase corroboration of data, and render less biased and more accurate conclusions" (as cited in Loren, 2013, p. 27). Using this paradigm, McKim (2017) explained further, also offers researchers confidence in generating valid conclusions, and as such can help them

cultivate ideas for future investigations. Dornyei (2007) shared a similar perspective emphasizing that through the convergence of multiple techniques, mixed methods research can increase validity and generalizability of a study's findings.

In this study, two major factors determined the implementation of a mixed methods design as suggested by Lopez-Fernandez and Molina-Azorin (2011):

- Priority: this concept refers to the weight or status that the researcher can give to either qualitative or quantitative aspects of a study such as equal weight designs and different weight designs.

- Implementation of data collection: in a mixed methods study, the researcher can collect qualitative and quantitative data at the same time i.e. simultaneous, concurrent, or parallel designs, or at different points i.e. sequential or two-stage designs.

In terms of priority, more weight was given to the qualitative method. Second, qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same time. Taken together, the present study utilized a different weight, simultaneous (QUAL+quan) mixed methods design. In applying these criteria, data for this study was then collected across two main stages which took place during a two-week timescale as illustrated in Table 1.

2.4 Methods of data collection

While different methods of data collection can be used to investigate literary response, in this empirical study I incorporated multiple sources of evidence that included text-based guiding questions, participants' reader-oriented logs, and literary response questionnaires. In what follows, I describe in detail each of the data collection techniques that were employed during this study in order to answer the research question.

2.4.1 Text-based guiding questions

One research method used for collecting verbal data at the outset of this study comprised a set of text-based guiding questions intended for determining an overall interpretive analysis of a short literary narrative. The questions used as part of this reading log were constructed using Behrendt's (2014) guide for analyzing literary elements of short fiction. Each was designed with an objective in mind for generating detailed examination of characterization, plot, narrative manner or point of view, textual themes, setting, and any other related literary devices as imagery, symbolism, or use of figurative language.

2.4.2 Reader-oriented logs

In order to gain further insights into students' interpretive responses to literary text, data collected during the second stage of the study was obtained using reader-oriented logs, which were designed with reference to Probst's (1988) 'Dialogue with a text' and Hancock's (1993) 'Exploring and extending personal response through literature journals'. They included prompting questions that focused on assessing initial reactions to text,

thoughts, ideas and predictions, insights and feelings toward characters, visual images, memories, literary associations, emotions, involvement or engagement with text, judgements or literary evaluations, and assumptions about the author. Each of these response categories was designed as a foundation for encouraging readers to develop their own multifaceted interpretations, enhance their reflection, and strengthen their engagement with text. In constructing meaning, learners were stimulated to draw upon their own feelings, thoughts, attitudes and prior experience including prior intertextual encounters that are crucial to developing and refining their interpretive responses to literary text.

2.4.3 Literary response questionnaires

Student engagement during learning activities has generally been defined as a multidimensional component combining behavioural, emotional and cognitive aspects (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004). In order to quantify these aspects in this study, I developed self-administered questionnaires for participants to complete in class following their personal reading of and responding to a short literary text. As a research instrument, written questionnaires according to Dornyei (2010) "are easy to construct, extremely versatile, and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processable" (p. xiii). In light of these merits, the literary response questionnaires used in this study aimed at eliciting quantitative data with regards to whether L2 readers in response to a short story

would stimulate their perceived engagement i.e. behavioural, emotional and cognitive, and increase their appreciation of it if they were encouraged to construct intertextual associations and consider significant life implications and literary reading experiences.

Questionnaire items used to assess the aforementioned three types of perceived engagement were in fact borrowed from previous scholarship on learner engagement in academic classroom tasks. However, in order to make them suitable for the current research context some items were either modified or reworded as recommended by Dornyei (2010). To measure behavioural engagement, I constructed five items using Miserandino's (1996) task involvement questionnaire. In the present study, I chose this particular scale because it represents behavioural engagement or task involvement as a manifestation of students' self-reported actions including for example, persistence or effortful behaviour in the face of difficulty and concentrated attention during classroom activities as illustrated at the top of Table 2. Second, this scale has also been used as a reliable and valid tool to predict such educational outcomes as students' academic reading achievement in past L2 research (e.g. Reeve & Tseng, 2011).

Using Miserandino's (1996) rating scale of positively and negatively valenced academic emotions, participants' perception of their emotional engagement was assessed by means of five items reflecting presence of such emotional states as interest, enjoyment, fun, anger

and curiosity (see Table 2). Specifically, students in this study were asked to report the extent to which they felt certain emotions in response to different reading activities.

The extent to which learners would perceive themselves as cognitively engaged during reading activities was examined using seven items from Wolters' (2004) learning strategies questionnaire, originally developed by Pintrich et al. (1993). This Likert-styled adapted measure consisted of two subscales, one with items to assess the use of sophisticated elaboration-based learning strategies (items C1- to C3- in Table 2) such as connecting text to prior experience or familiar knowledge, and a second with items measuring metacognitive self-regulation strategies including, for example planning, monitoring and revisiting ones' work (items C4- to C7- in Table.

Questionnaire items intended to measure depth of appreciation were also employed in this study. In particular, items pertaining to perceived quality 'I think this story is an example of good literature', reported enjoyment 'I enjoyed reading this story', and willingness to recommend the text to a friend 'I would recommend this story to someone else to read' (Dixon et al., 1993) were used in order to gauge the readers' overall assessment of the literary text. In addition to that, original items produced by the researcher concerning appreciation of the short story and literature in general were also added to the appreciation measure, namely 'I want to read other literary texts

written by Shirley Jackson', 'I am interested in reading other literary texts on a similar theme', and 'I would like to read more literary texts written in English'.

In designing questionnaires' format, there were several further steps followed. First, I used statement-type items measured by a five point Likert scale with a series of options ranging from '1=Not at all' to '5=A lot' with 'Not so much, 'So-so' and 'A little' serving as the midpoint. In order to produce well-designed questionnaires, I utilized various highlighting options e.g. writing general instructions in bold character and specific instructions in italics. I also economized on space and used the margins in order to have 23 items printed on both sides of an A4 paper, thus creating the illusion of a shorter questionnaire. If a questionnaire is lengthy or monotonous, students might feel bored or tired and as a result would not respond accurately. In order to avoid the 'fatigue effect' which according to Dornyei (2010) is more likely to occur if a questionnaire is too dense or too long, I decided to put the response options for the first questionnaire next to the statement items. For the second questionnaire, however, I assigned each response option a certain number which was then repeated for the remaining items. Finally, in grouping questionnaire items a special effort was made to mix and distance items measuring the same target. In doing so, the objective was to create variety and most importantly to "prevent respondents from simply repeating previous answers" (Dornyei, 2010, p. 47) each time they were instructed to complete their questionnaires. I then selected

opening items measuring for instance, enjoyment or curiosity so that students get a feel of an exciting start.

2.5 Data analysis

Finding an appropriate method for analysing data collected during this study was a fundamental step to create a productive review of meaningful interpretations and conclusions. In this perspective, Hatch (2002) succinctly explained that data analysis "is a systematic search for meaning" (p. 148). In order to glean meaning from collected data, findings based primarily on students' written documents i.e. textual and reader-based journals as well as literary response questionnaires were analyzed. In doing so, I embedded quantitative and qualitative paradigms in order to develop a proper understanding of second language readers' thoughts and feelings in response to literature.

2.5.1 Results

In subsequent sections, quantitative and qualitative findings are analyzed and presented:

2.5.1.1 Quantitative phase results

In order to test the prediction that encouraging L2 readers to make intertextual associations would stimulate their engagement and elicit greater increases in appreciation of a short literary text, basic descriptive statistics were carried out. In particular, numeric responses to each item of the literary response questionnaires were calculated for means and standard deviations.

Following that, data for each multi-item scale (five items for behavioral engagement, seven items for cognitive engagement, five items for emotional engagement, and six items for depth of appreciation) were compiled and computed, thus resulting in a total mean score. The results of these analyses are presented and compared below in Table 3.

I begin by presenting results relating to participants' engagement. Quantitatively, the statistical evidences revealed a marginal increase in the readers' scores to questionnaire items measuring their perceived engagement and appreciation of literary text on first and second response. As illustrated in Table 3, the grand mean for cognitive engagement was at first 3.93 with a standard deviation of 1.15. However, further results offer initial evidence that students become more cognitively engaged when they are permitted to make intertextual linkages as they interpret and construct meaning of text ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 1.03$). The results above also indicate that behavioural and emotional components of learner engagement improved from first ($M = 2.88, 3.54$) to second reading ($M = 3.19, 3.75$). Similarly, participants also seem to have appreciated the literary text slightly more following their second response at 3.95 compared to their first at 3.89.

2.5.1.2 Qualitative phase findings

The qualitative component of this study included the collection of verbal data through learners' written entries i.e. text-based guiding questions and reader-oriented logs. Analysis of findings

obtained from participants' written protocols was initially undertaken based on whether ideas revealed through learners' narratives reflected their attempts to transact with text in constructing literary interpretation. In particular, analysis of written response consisted of marking data that demonstrated thoughtful personal references to one's own subjective points of view and interpretive processes or reasoning operations including for example questioning, hypothesizing, drawing conclusions, or making generalizations about meaning of text.

In addition to that, data were also assessed for the employment of evaluative language or stance markers expressed lexically to determine one's attitude i.e. personal feelings, value-judgments, and assessment of text (Biber & Zhang, 2018). The Appraisal framework developed by Martin and White (2005) within Systemic Functional Linguistics offers a useful analytical tool for examining the semantic resources of language used to negotiate attitude. Within this system, three sub-domains are identified as follows:

- Affect i.e. expression of positive and negative emotion.

- Judgement i.e. assessment or judgment of behaviour which can be admired or criticised, praised or condemned.

- Appreciation i.e. valuing or devaluing semiotic or natural phenomena in a given field (Oteiza, 2017).

In literary response, examining affect can demonstrate how readers would foreground their own conflicting emotional stances toward textual characters, or events in a story. Judgement involves evaluation of behaviour as social esteem or social sanction. Martin and White (2005, p. 52) explained, in general terms: "judgements of esteem have to do with 'normality' (how unusual someone is), 'capacity' (how capable they are) and 'tenacity' (how resolute they are); judgements of sanction have to do with 'veracity' (how truthful someone is) and 'propriety' (how ethical someone is)". In response to literature, the appraisal resources of judgment can be used for example, to make social or moral judgments of an author's behaviour, or a character he/she has created (Love, 2006). Finally, the semantic domain of appreciation was investigated to reveal how readers would appraise text or parts of it as a literary artifact, in terms of valuation (assessment of its social significance as a literary artifact), reaction (its personal impact and the degree of attention it captured in readers), and composition (evaluation of its detailed features). In other words, the appreciation sub-system "might be interpreted metafunctionally – with reaction oriented to interpersonal significance, composition to textual organization and valuation to ideational worth" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 57).

In short, analysis of attitudinal stance in students' response journals was conducted through detailed exploration of simple evaluative word use including for instance evaluative main verbs (e.g. hate, love, want, etc), adjectives (e.g. intelligent,

happy, likable, etc), nouns (e.g. fun, etc), or attitudinal stance adverbials (e.g. poorly, skillfully, sadly, hopefully, etc). Following that, I counted total frequencies in raw numbers of inscribed appraisal resources previously coded into one of three categories i.e. affective, ethical and critical stance as well as students' reasoning operations and personal perspectives made in order to quantitatively track, compare and analytically interpret their occurrence in different text-response contexts as demonstrated below in Table 4.

As presented in Table 4, a significant finding in this study is that participants upon second response constructed meaning of literary text through frequent referencing to their own subjective opinions, evident in the use of the personal pronoun 'I'. Personal statement responses are mainly an expression of a reader's concerns, interests, aspirations, and emotions to the world of a literary work (Akers, 2009). Notably, responding from a personal perspective stood out when learners were prompted to incorporate intertextual links during their active transactions with text. Similarly, the results also indicate that learners made thoughtful comments and reactions i.e. reasoning operations far more frequently in reading task two as exemplified below:

Amanda: To be honest, I assumed that the new comer Mrs. MacLane would have an impact on her friend and society as well, yet I stumbled with the bitter truth that change would not be that easy if people were not open to it (Drawing a conclusion).

Kate: The reaction of characters toward Mr. Jones and his son due to simply having dark skin, leads readers to notice the clear injustice in the morals of society at that time. I think people of that society did not act in such a way only toward black people but also toward people who sympathize with them as is the case of Mrs. Maclane in the story (Making universal generalizations).

Finally, as can be seen in Table 4. attitudinal stance markers are particularly noteworthy in individual reading prompts inviting L2 learners to make intertextual connections i.e. reading task two. Data shows that the readers' response to *Flower Garden* contained a large amount of evaluative language resources reflecting emotional, moral and critical stance. The following text samples illustrate the dense use of these features in two participants' reader-oriented entries. Lexical items that indicate attitudinal stance are italicized and coded as affect, appreciation, or judgement.

Zara: My first reaction towards the text is that the Writer Shirley Jackson challenged us with a real story about racism; I *didn't like* (Judgement) how people treated others in a very disrespectful way. Something also that made me *sad* (Affect) is the mysterious friendship between Mrs. Winning and Mrs. MacLane. I found the story very *interesting* and I *loved* it (Appreciation) because of the moral and the good principle that teaches us, I *loved* (Judgement) also the way that the writer has written the story especially the language and the use of words. And the

thing that *attracted* (Affect) me the most is how *brave* (Judgement) was Mrs. MacLane; she claimed her voice without being *afraid* (Judgement) unlike Mrs. Winning. I *liked* (Judgement) how she respected all the people and treated them the same way.

Molly: At first, I was *surprised* (Affect) at how people were treating Mrs. MacLane. I couldn't figure out the cause of their change and cruelty. Why would a person befriend you and then abruptly turn against you? It was only when I started analysing the text that I could finally understand the reasons why everyone in Vermont started acting differently. Readers cannot blame Mrs. Winning. She was raised in a close-minded society, and she had to follow and respect its rules and norm. Jackson wanted to raise awareness through creating such a story, to indicate the fact that although the blacks were given their freedom, they were still segregated and ignored, and that although Americans pretended to live in peace and unity, prejudice, discrimination and hypocrisy were yet the center of their behaviours and attitudes. I *loved* the story, and I *respect* (Appreciation) the moral behind it. This short story was written in such a *magnificent* and *impressive* (Appreciation) way and I encourage everyone to read it. I learnt so much from it and so much about racism in America. I feel so *sad* but also so *proud* (Affect) of those who prefer to voice their thoughts and beliefs even if it will cost them everything and even if it means everyone else will turn against them.

Table 1. Schedule for administering data collection tools.

Research procedure	*Activity*	*Data collected*
A 60-minute casual meeting prior to commencing the study	• Rapport building i.e. talking to students, classroom teacher and other university personnel • Instructions were given, and assignments distributed (literary text/text-based guiding questions)	Participants' informed consent forms and project information sheets
Phase one: first week	• Reading and responding individually to the literary text at home **Session one:** up to 30 mins • Students completed their literary response questionnaires in class • Further instructions were given, and assignments distributed (reader-oriented logs to respond to at home)	Text-based guiding questions (Qualitative) Literary response questionnaires (Quantitative)
Phase two: second week	• Participants responded individually to their reader-oriented logs at home **Session two:** up to 30 mins • Students completed literary response questionnaires in class	Reader-oriented logs (Qualitative) Literary response questionnaires (Quantitative)

Table 2. Questionnaire items to assess perceived engagement

Type of engagement	Questionnaire items
Behavioural engagement	**B.1** I had a hard time keeping my mind concentrated on analyzing the text. **B.2** When I had trouble with a problem, I usually got it right in the end. **B.3** When I ran into a difficult question, I tried even harder. **B.4** When I came to a problem that I could not solve right away, I just gave up. **B.5** When I was unable to think of an answer to a particular question, after a minute it came to me.
Cognitive engagement	**C.1** I tried to relate what I was reading to what I already knew. **C.2** I tried to connect what I was reading with my own experiences. **C.3** I tried to make all the different ideas fit together and make sense of the text. **C.4** Before starting the activity, I tried to figure out the best way to do it. **C.5** When I was responding to my reading log, I stopped once in a while and went over what I have been doing. **C.6** I tried to keep track of how much I understood the text, not just if I was getting the right answers. **C.7** I regularly asked myself questions to clarify my ideas and deepen my interpretation.
Emotional engagement	**E.1** When I was responding to my reading log, I felt interested. **E.2** I enjoyed learning new things. **E.3** I thought it was fun to do this activity. **E.4** I felt curious about what I was learning. **E.5** When I came across a difficult question, I felt anxious.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of participants' scores on perceived engagement and depth of appreciation measures per literary response questionnaire

	LRQ1		*LRQ2*	
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**
Behavioural engagement	2.88	1.19	3.19	0.94
Emotional engagement	3.54	1.22	3.75	1.13
Cognitive engagement	3.93	1.15	4.29	1.03
Depth of appreciation	3.89	1.07	3.95	1.13

Table 4. Frequencies of interpretive responses across different reading activities

	Reading task one	*Reading task two*
Personal statements	28	404
Reasoning operations	73	104
Attitudinal stance	39	366

3. CONCLUSION

Evidence emerging from analyses of data in this study suggests that in order to create the possibility of their growth as engaged readers, it is crucial that second language learners are stimulated to elaborate on their prior knowledge, and to connect their own experiences with what they read, or are experiencing. As they attempted to construct meaningful interpretations in response to the short story, participants demonstrated high levels of engagement. In particular, the process of connecting and assembling meanings from different extra-textual sources of knowledge and information enabled the cognitive and metacognitive components of perceived engagement to occur more prominently. Likewise, their appreciation of literary text also developed. The study also sought to analyse the appraisal resources as well as the personal and analytical statements that readers made as they interpreted the short story. Simple quantification of the distribution of students' written responses provided a useful starting point for further exploration of how L2 readers determined their affective, judgmental, and ethical stances toward events, text features, author, and principal characters.

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