

The Effect of Teaching Literature on EFL Students' Pragmatic Competence

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Abstract

A language learner can derive from the inclusion of literature in the educational curriculum for language learning. This study investigates the importance of literary discourse in developing the Jazeerah Schools in Amman Private Directorate of Education have been randomly sampled in the study. Students were then assigned into two groups, the control group and the experimental group. Both groups were administered an identical pre-test which showed a uniformity in the results with insignificant variation. A syllabus based on literary texts including all the genres of English literature was designed for the experimental group. For the control group, core language textbooks covering the same components were selected for instruction. Both groups were instructed for a full semester. By the end of the semester, they were given a post-test. To treat the raw scores statistically, T.test, One-Way ANOVA and Scheffe were used. The results of the study suggested that the literature syllabus sounded good for developing the learner's pragmatic competence (discourse function, speech function, speech acts, degrees of formality and politeness), in the sense that there was a significant difference in the performance of the two groups, in favor of the experimental group. The findings also drew the instructors, curriculum developers, and course designers' attention towards integrating more literature centered language activities in the process of language teaching. Finally, the study proposed some pedagogical implications related to literature-based syllabus to general design.

Key words: Literature, pragmatic competence, ninth grade, authenticity.

1. Introduction

Teachers and teacher trainer's main concern is not to teach about language, but to develop learners' abilities to make them capable of using the language for a variety of communicative purposes. There is a difference between teaching about the language and communicating in the language. One great problem in foreign languages is that many teachers believe that teaching about the language itself makes the learners capable of using the language for communication. In fact, there is often a great gap between having information and being able to use it spontaneously for communicative purposes (Kasper, 1997).

There is as has been noted earlier, a great gap between knowledge and the ability to use that knowledge in terms of communication and its manipulation. In order to bridge this gap and frame a relevant syllabus, its contents should be made to bear resemblance to the social pragmatic contexts (Eslami, 2005).

Research into pragmatic competence has repeatedly proven that even proficient speakers of English often lack necessary pragmatic competence. That is, they are not aware of the social, cultural, and discourse conventions that have to be followed in various situations. Research has also been conducted on the disparity between grammatical and pragmatic competence. However, relatively less attention has been paid to how classroom-based instruction can contribute to the foreign language learners' pragmatic development. This study presents the activities of a two-month program aimed at developing students' pragmatic competence through literature-based syllabus. Communicative language pedagogy and research into communicative competence have shown that language learning exceeds the limits of memorizing vocabulary items and grammar rules. More importantly, pragmatic competence, although sometimes in disguise, has been a part of the models describing communicative competence. Pragmatic competence is defined as the knowledge of social, cultural, and discourse conventions that have to be followed in various situations. Additionally, pragmatic competence is not a piece of additional knowledge to the learners' existing grammatical knowledge, but is an organic part of the learners' communicative competence (Kasper, 1997). Speakers who do not use pragmatically appropriate language run the risk of appearing uncooperative at the least, or more seriously, rude or insulting. This is particularly true of advanced learners whose high linguistic proficiency leads other speakers to expect concomitantly high pragmatic competence (Kasper, 2000).

1.1 The Usefulness of Literature as a Language Learning Tool:

Can pragmatic competence be taught? This question has inspired a number of research projects exploring the role of instruction in learners' pragmatic development. Kasper (1997) argues that while competence cannot be taught, students should be provided with opportunities to develop their pragmatic competence.

A number of studies have explored how English language textbooks present the pragmatic aspect of language.

Herein lies the role of literature in the foreign language classroom. Rather than being a fifth adjunct to the four skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), pragmatics can best find its expression through the medium of literature. As Carter (1996) notes, literature is a viable component of second language programs at the appropriate level, and one of its major functions is to serve as a medium to transmit the culture the people who speak the language in which it is written.

Moreover, literary texts are an untapped resource of authentic language that learners can avail themselves of. Exposure to literary works can help them to expand their language awareness and develop their language competence. Moreover, trying to interpret and account for the values, assumptions, and beliefs infusing the literary texts of the target culture is in defining and redefining those obtaining in the home culture (Saricoban, 2004). Of course, literature can extend to cover the use of film and television in the foreign language (FL) classroom for they have the capacity to present language and situations simultaneously, that is, language in fully contextualized situations. What is more, there are some difficulties regarding the methodology of teaching literature. (Carter, 1996) For example, cautions that a limited knowledge of linguistics could blindfold teachers and students to the fact literary texts are holistic artifacts which are stated within cultural traditions.

This awareness of the social context can be grasped in the world of literature which depicts society in a language as varied as it is authentic and natural (Saricoban, 2004). The syllabus should include verbal and non-verbal communication, short narratives, short drills, thus as follows (Corder, 2008):

- Helping teachers first to acquaint themselves with language use to develop their pragmatic competence and understand language as social phenomenon, and not as an exclusive branch of learning.
- transforming the classrooms as the stage in which there is real practice of communicative language,
- developing the learners' intellectual ability and expose them to a variety of linguistic and literary expressions and communicative functions of language, and
- Incorporating linguistic competence into pragmatic competence by putting language into use in different social situations.

With so much of discussion on the importance and usefulness of the literary texts or literature as effective language teaching tools, it is imperative to frame a language course that corresponds to the social contexts of the target language. There is a practical need to design a syllabus that suits the learners' needs and, at the same time, enable them to express themselves in social circumstances with interest.

1.2 Literature as an Authentic Material of Language

Authentic texts have been defined as "real-life, not written for pedagogic purposes" (Wallace, 1992 cited in Elliot, 1995).

The sources of authentic materials that can be used in the classroom are infinite, but the most common are newspapers, magazines, TV programs, movies, songs and other types of literature. Authentic materials should be the kind of material that students need and want to be able to read when traveling, studying abroad, or using the language in other contexts outside the classroom. Authentic materials enable learners to interact with the real language and content rather than the form. It is, therefore, worth taking into consideration that the aim should be to understand meaning and not form, especially when using literary or stylistic form.

According to the findings of many surveys carried out by learners enjoy dealing with authentic materials since they enable them to interact with the real language and its use. Moreover, they do not consider authentic situations or materials innately difficult. However, learners state that they need pedagogical support, especially in listening situations and when reading literary texts.

Literary texts include cultural uses of linguistics such as stylistics, pragmatics and semantics. This social communication reflects the usage of different language aspects in the literary texts. Moreover, in the study of language and culture, literary study can make a valuable contribution in tracing the development of the language in all its components and skills. What is more important is that non-native students need to be exposed to various literary texts in order to be able to consider the others' culture in their international communication. Therefore, the non-native learners' curriculum should include teaching literary texts or literature to facilitate such

international communication for the students. Furthermore, literature consists of some lexical items and expressions which cannot be found in the linguistic texts. Literary texts and literature texts contextualize and socialize language items and lead naturally to the use of actual words and expressions in real situations (Crizer, 2001 cited in Saricoban 2004).

It is an undeniable fact that the resources of language can be fully utilized by taking recourse to literature as an important aspect of language learning.

1.3 Literature and Pragmatics

Literary texts help students to be exposed to the conversations and the dialogues which are actually used in the outside world. These dialogues and conversations create a situation inside the classroom for using language which the learner might need outside in the society. Such dialogues may help in developing FL learners' the pragmatic competence since they collect a true picture of the authentic dialogues of everyday life communication (Crizer, 2001 cited in Cubuku 2001).

By the same token, Obediat (1997, p. 32 cited in Miccoli, 2003) states that literature helps students acquire a native-like competence in English, express their ideas in good English, learn the features of modern English, learn how the English linguistic system is used for communication, see how idiomatic expressions are used, speak clearly, precisely, and concisely, become more proficient in English, and become creative, critical, and analytical learners.

What is more, Custodio & Sutton (1998 cited in Kasper, 2000) demonstrate that literature can open horizons of possibility, allowing students to question interpret and explore. In sum, literature provides students with an incomparably rich source of authentic material over a wide range of registers. If students can gain access to this material by developing literary competence, then they can effectively internalize the language at a high level, especially for students with verbal/ linguistic intelligence, the language teacher's using literature in a foreign language class serves for creating a highly motivating, amusing, students and lively lesson.

More importantly, Literature is not only a tool for development of the written and oral skills in the target language, but also a window opening into the culture of the target language and building up students' pragmatic competence.

1.4 Drama and its Effect on the FL Learners' Pragmatic Competence

Using drama in a language classroom is a good resource for language teaching. It is through the use of drama that learners become familiar with grammatical structures in contexts and learn about how to use the language to express, control and inform. The use of drama raises the students' awareness towards the target language and culture. Learners should make use of drama to promote their comprehension of life experiences, reflect on particular circumstances, and make sense of their extralinguistic world in a deeper way (Saricoban, 2004).

Some other educational benefits of using drama in a foreign language classes can be listed as follows (Mengu, 2002, p. 1-40)

- Brining authenticity into the classroom.
- exposing the learners to the target culture as well as social problems a society may be undergoing,
- increasing creativity, originality, sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, emotional stability, cooperation, and examination of moral attitudes, developing communication skills and appreciation of literature, and
- helping learning improves their level of pragmatic competence with respect to their receptive and productive skills.

In other words, the use of drama seems to be an effective technique in today's communication-based, student-centered FL teaching. Since it is an authentic material, it helps students to promote their comprehension of the verbal/ nonverbal aspects of the target language they are trying to master. Particularly, teachers who wish to make language learning more colorful, motivating and interesting can make use of drama in their language classes.

1.5 Poetry and Its Effects on the FL Learners' Pragmatic Competence

Poetry can pave the way for the learning and teaching of basic language skills and competencies. Poetry offers a significant learning process. There are at least two learning benefits that can be derived from studying poetry.

Cubuku (2001) also explains the educational benefits of poetry as follows:

- Providing readers with a different viewpoint towards language use by going beyond language usages and rules of grammar, syntax and vocabulary, and
- Making students familiar with figures of speech (i.e. simile, metaphor, irony, personification, imagery, etc) due to their being a part of daily language use.
- Students become familiar with the suprasegmental aspects of the target language, such as stress, pitch, juncture, intonation by studying poetry.

In addition, through poetry, students can also study the semiotic elements in the target language. Semiotic elements constitute a cultural training as we (Hiller, 1983 cited in Cubuku & Sutiom, 2001).

Moreover, poetry employs language to evoke and exalt special qualities of life. Poetry is one of the most effective and powerful transmitters of culture. Poems comprise so many cultural elements—allusions, vocabulary, idioms, and tone that are not easy to translate into another language (Sage, 1987 cited in Custodio & Sutiom, 1998).

1.6 Short Stories and Their Effect on the FL Learners' Pragmatic Competence

Short fiction is a supreme for observing not only language but life itself. In short, characters act out all the real and symbolic acts people carry out in daily lives, and do so in a variety of registers and tones. The world of short fiction both mirrors and illuminates human lives (Sage, 1987 cited in Custodio & Sutiom, 1998). The inclusion of short fiction in the ESL/EFL curriculum offers the following educational benefits (Ariogul, 2011):

- Enlarging the advanced level readers' worldviews about different cultures and different groups of people.
- Motivating learning to read due to being an authentic material.
- facilitating teaching a foreign culture (i.e. serves as a valuable instrument in attaining cultural knowledge of the selected community, and
- Helping students to go beyond the surface meaning and dive into underlying meanings.

1.7 Novel and its Effect on the FL Learners' Pragmatic Competence

The use of a novel is a beneficial technique for mastering not only the linguistic system but also life in relation to the target language that leads to the learner's pragmatic competence. In novel, characters reflect what people really perform in daily lives. Novels not only portray, but also enlighten human lives (Miccoli, 2003).

Novel is a very effective way of building vocabulary and developing reading comprehension skill. It is through reading that students broaden their horizons, become familiar with other cultures, and hence develop their intercultural communicative competence and learn how to view the world from different perspectives (Ariogul, 2011).

1.8 Figurative Language and its Effect on the FL Learners' Pragmatic Competence

Literature, especially poetry, operates within the parameter of certain "literary" devices. Literary devices like metaphor, structural ambiguity, alliteration, semantic density, and some phonological patterns create an atmosphere of meanings through their subtle usages. When we examine our everyday language, we notice with an almost astonishing realization that these devices play a great role in shaping our everyday speech (Elami, 2005).

What is more, figurative language is a distinctive feature of literary language. It is also a very important aspect of everyday life communication. Formal and informal interactions may contain one or several figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, personification, irony, and others. These figures of speech occur in all situations such as the press, political speeches, religious sermons, and even tea receptions.

In addition, figurative language in foreign language teaching-learning context is best acquired through literary texts to be used in almost every aspect of language discourse. On the other hand, figurative language reached the extent to be used as a method of learning in classroom interaction in some teaching theories. Instructors use it as a means to communicate their ideas effectively (Collie, 1995).

More importantly, figurative language is crucial to foreign language teaching learning context for the role it plays in language and the space it covers in everyday life communication. In fact, the main goal of learning a foreign language nowadays is to enable the learner to communicate effectively and to understand communication. This is a result of the communicative movement or the communicative approach that focuses on the FL learner's pragmatic competence.

Brumfit (1985) argues that a new approach has tended to concentrate language teaching on the rules we need for using the language in social situations rather than the grammatical rules that we need to produce correct sentences. Accordingly, utilizing figurative language in foreign language learning context enables students to play with the language, so they begin to develop it for their own needs. Students need figurative knowledge to pass their messages accurately and effectively since communication is effective only to the extent that it is selective of meaning.

In addition, figurative language serves the speaker or the writer with varieties to select the intended meaning. Using figures of speech, the speaker can be ironic, sarcastic, and even serious. Obediat (1997) argues that on first examination, it might seem absurd to say one thing and mean another. But we all do it and with good reason. We do it because we can say what we want to say more vividly and forcefully by figures than we can by saying indirectly. And we can say more figurative statements than we can by literal statements. Figures of speech offer another way of adding extra dimensions to language.

Therefore, figures of speech are seen as effective and sharp intelligent devices of communication. Through them, people can call the earth "mother nature", one's country "home", and disliked person a "snake". These connotative meanings leave a strong psychological and mental impact on the hearer which makes them more accurate and unique. Moreover, they are different from a language community to another since they are part of culture.

What is more, figurative language permeates in everyday communication. It makes language effective and adds more meaning to what is said when a student comes to class late, the teacher would possibly ask a question like "why so early". The student can possibly answer "the bus came late and there was a traffic jam." The sequence looks illogical literally. The teacher's question is used ironically and not meant to be understood literally. The student's response is not ironical; it is literal and apologetic. The apologetic nature of the response answers the embedded criticism of the teacher's question. The use of figurative language does not only say what the speaker's message is, but it embeds attitudes, opinion, suggestions, and value judgments along with the message intended, therefore, it develops the FL learners' pragmatic competence. (Saricuban, 2004).

Therefore, Ariogul (2011) call for emphasizing figurative language instruction to extend student's demand of the target language. They state that when foreign student's competence is elevated above comprehending straight forward passages which are desired to reinforce grammatical concepts and increase vocabulary, their focus shifts on an entirely new level of the language. This new language is the figurative language.

Obviously, figures of speech must be an integral part of the target language instruction. They play an important role in language development and use because they are deeply rooted in the culture of that language. Students must learn how native speakers of language manipulate words in their everyday communication in order to express themselves effectively.

Indeed, research during the past decade emphasized more on the social aspects of language use. In psychology, sociology and language teaching theory, there have been developments which force us to consider the ways in which people use language, rather than the formal structure of the language.

Similarly, Miccoli (2003) believes that figures of speech must be taught and practiced for more effective communication. Without them, there would be a lack in the pragmatic competence of the FL learners. He states that:

You have been saying less than what you mean, or opposite of what you mean, or something other than what you mean. One first examination, it might seem absurd to say one thing and mean another. But we all do it and with good reason.

He also provides some reasons for the effectiveness of figurative language in every use; he believes that figurative language elevates the individuals' imaginative pleasure. The mind finds delight in shocks that result of hearing figurative statements. Thus, people name themselves, flowers and plants after creative and imaginative resemblances. Further, figures of speech have a power of making the abstract concrete.

Similarly, Elami (2005) believes that student's linguistic and cultural differences affect the understanding and interacting in figurative language. These factors have some impact on the use of figures of speech and lead to miscommunication in the target language. He implies that teachers need to take these differences into consideration and to select planned materials, various activities, and variable context in order to develop students' use of figurative language effectively for a better and creative communication. He concludes that teachers should encourage their students to use figures of speech to develop their pragmatic competence.

In addition, literature plays a role in understanding figurative language which in turn promotes more pragmatic competence. To him, literature is one of the factors that affect figurative language understanding, interpretation and usage.

To conclude, textbooks writers should take this element into consideration when deciding the content of the foreign language textbooks.

1.9 Songs and their Effect on the EL Learners' Pragmatic Competence

Teachers should use music as part of their classroom because they contain authentic material. More importantly, some songs are excellent examples of colloquial English that is the language of informal conversation of course, the majority language of ESL students will encounter to develop their pragmatic competence. (Ariogul, 2011).

1.10 Background of the Study and Statement of the Problem

The researcher's long experience of teaching English as a foreign language has showed that many students are at most linguistically competent, but they cannot convert their linguistic knowledge into actual practice. The reason behind this problem might be due to the fact that EFL students are rarely exposed to authentic English contexts in their FL classes despite the fact that language use is more important than language usage.

More importantly, the problem of this study stems from the assumption that FL learners face difficulties in understanding the figurative language, since there is a lack of literary passages, sayings, proverbs, metaphorical and idiomatic expressions in our FL syllabi.

Therefore, the researcher will follow teaching through literature as an instrument to measure the effect of teaching literature on the student's pragmatic competence.

Throughout this study, the researcher aims at investigating the effect of teaching literature on the ninth grade student's pragmatic competence.

This study is significant as it examines whether the use of literary texts has and affect Jordanian ninth grade students' pragmatic competence. This and similar researches are needed since many students are known to be weak in using English as it is actually used by its people. The significance of this study also stems from the fact that it may help FL teachers in finding new procedures that can create better users of the language through learning the pragmatic aspects of English in authentic literary contexts.

This study is also of great value because many researchers have proved that learning literature creates many positive attitudes in learning and acquisition of English as a foreign or second language. This paper tries to touch the effect of the inclusion of literature or literary texts in EFL curriculum at all the stages of language learning in general and the basic stage in particular on these learners pragmatic competence.

The employment of such literary components such as narratives, short stories, one-person acts, fables, songs, poem, and movies may help learners to use different forms of the language by making them more pragmatically competent.

1.11 Questions of the Study

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. Are there any statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups pragmatic competence due to the method of teaching (authentic literary texts vs. regular texts)?
2. Which pragmatic aspects of language do learners develop more as a result of teaching authentic literary texts? These aspects include (discourse function, speech acts, speech function, degrees of formality, and politeness)

1.12 Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the preceding research questions, the following hypotheses are formulated:

Ho1: There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups' pragmatic competence due to the method of teaching (authentic literary texts vs. regular texts) at the ($p \leq 0.05$) level.

Ho2: There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of experimental group's mastery of each pragmatic aspect of language at the ($p \leq 0.05$) level. These aspects include (discourse function, speech acts, speech functions, degrees of formality, and politeness).

1.13 Limitations of the Study

1. The sample of the study is ninth grade students studying at al-Jazeera Private School in Amman Directorate of Private Education.
2. The content is a group of literary texts from ninth grade students' supplementary reading book.
3. The study is meant to measure the effect of studying literary texts on the FL learner's pragmatic competence.
4. The competence which is meant to be measured is the pragmatic competence.

1.14 Variable of the Study

A. Independent variables: the content of the FL syllabi, using authentic literary materials or using concrete reading texts on different topics and many discourse functions of English language.

B. Dependent variables: Students' pragmatic competence in general, and their performance in the pragmatic aspects of English.

1.15 Tools of the Study

1. Literary texts from ninth grade students' supplementary textbook taught at Al-Jazeera Private Schools in Amman.
2. A test that measures the effect of teaching literary texts on the ninth grade students' pragmatic competence at Al-Jazeera Private School in the Directorate of Private Education in Amman 2010-2011.

2. Review of Related Literature

Throughout this experimental study, the researcher tackled the related literature regarding literary texts and their effect on the pragmatic competence. It is obvious that literature is seen as a very integral source of pragmatic enrichment. It is believed that such knowledge positively affects students' linguistic success in the target language, and can be used as an instrument in the process of communication. The researcher presents a review of relevant literature. It consists of theoretical and practical studies on the effect of authentic literature on FL learners' pragmatic competence.

Cordr (1968) views literature as a rich source of pragmatics. He argues that literature is an important element that affects students' competence and performance as well. He sees literature as the product of a particular culture, and it functions as a model of that culture.

In addition, Widdowson (1983, Cited in Zughoul, 1986) remarks that one of the aims of teaching literature for cultural purposes is to provide students with ways of looking at the world which characterizes the culture of language speaking peoples. Accordingly, the task and the responsibility of the EFL teacher is to explain the cultural aspects which are found in the reading and literary texts. Thus, EFL learners with the help and guidance of the teacher can familiarize themselves with the social and cultural aspects of meanings and situations.

Similarly, Hill (1986) believes that literature widens students' scope of thinking. Through literature, students gain different experiences, knowledge and logical thinking which generates trained students of the target language. She argues that the study of literature begins in delight and ends in wisdom. Literary texts are seen as authentic material. This means that most works of literature are not fashioned for the specific purpose of teaching language, but language is the medium of literary works. Literature after all is a language use at best.

Taylor (1987) emphasizes the role of literature in training students to practice language skills and to broaden their insight about the target language. He states that a foreign student develops a better feeling for the language and reinforces his/her command of it, and therefore, improves his/her overall linguistic proficiency.

Kardash & Wright (1987) examined the effect of drama on elementary school children's achievement in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The findings revealed that creative drama activities had a moderately positive effect on children's performance across these areas, especially in speaking.

Like others, Collie & Slater (1990) believe that literature is a mirror reflecting life as it shows samples of situations, and how characters deal with these situations according to their culture using language as it is used. They argue, the "world" of a novel, a play, or a short story is a created one, yet it offers a full vivid context in

which characters from many social backgrounds can be depicted. A reader can discover their thoughts, feelings, customs, and possessions, what they say, believe in, fear how they speak and behave behind closed doors.

In addition, Bolton (1992) states that using drama in the classroom encourages students to organize and activate the English language in a developed way. It is important to consider vocabulary, word order, tense, correct grammar, and pronunciation because the communication and writing approximate reality, the language is brought to real life.

On the other hand, Waray (1992) discusses eight different keys that turn a speaking class into a real learning experience. Among these keys was the fun factor in which if a class lacks, it will lack strength. Drama is one of the many ways that creates a fun atmosphere in the classroom. O'Neill (1981) believes that there are different exercises used in drama that may prove to be useful in promoting the student's confidence in their ability to make verbal contribution, and developing their skills in language use.

More importantly, Gasparoo & Falletta (1994) examine the effects of using drama in the learning process. The results show that the use of drama enables the students to explore the linguistic and conceptual aspects of the speech.

By the same spoken, Ronnqvist & Sell (1994) have positive attitude towards the role of literature in foreign language classes. They assert that foreign language students benefit from literature most by relating linguistic expressions to social and pragmatic context. Literary texts offer non-native students better insights and understanding of pragmatic dimensions of the language. They call for carefully selected materials for learning to broaden their understanding of the target culture to guide their motivation towards learning the target language.

Similarly, Lazar (1996) asserts that usefulness of literature as a source of pragmatics and culture understanding. She sees that literary works provide students with access to other ways of living since, literature is "an imitation of life", and it is a "mirror-like documentation" where students can learn a lot about the target language. She asserts that literary texts create a context for how a particular member of a society might feel or behave in the situation dramatized in the text. They alert the reader to some of the social, political, and historical events that form the background to these feelings or behavior.

In addition, Obedait (1997) strongly emphasize the effect of literature in learning the target language. They state that literature has taken a master role in language teaching and learning. Language and culture knowledge cannot be separated. In fact language is used as the main medium through which culture is expressed. Since literature reflects the way people live, act, feel, and think, it gives a better understanding of the way and style of the target language. By reading literature, students of a foreign language enhance their linguistic competence as well as their pragmatic competence and that reflects on their performance. They found that drama positively affects the student's performance.

Like others, Abu-Helu (1997) investigates the effect of drama on speaking proficiency in English language. She reports that the students' speaking proficiency and using of different language functions has improved significantly in favor of students who used drama.

Similarly, Kasper (1997) suggests employing literary texts in the process of learning a foreign language. Through her experience of teaching Russian students American English, she prepared for an approach of "learning language via literature". In her approach, she invites students to participate in "Series of noisy, argumentative, and exciting discussions." She describes a literature classroom as a warm noisy and exiting environment, which is the most suitable one for students to acquire and practice language skills.

Miccoli (2003) claims that language becomes alive through drama in an oral skill developments class. Drama helps students to improve their feelings, motivations, meanings and talking in general. Drama was an example of transformative learning since it revealed a change in learner's perspective and behavior.

Moreover, Al-Omoosh (2006) investigates the effect of educational drama on developing speech accuracy and functionality among 93 Jordanian students.

In addition, Maples (2007) examines using drama to help her students to develop vocabulary, confidence and content knowledge in the middle school classroom.

From the issues reviewed above, it is clearly emphasized that literature provides foreign language learners with lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and cultural knowledge of the target language. Literature is everyday language used at best. Through literature, these elements of the language are presented in very motivating contexts. Thus, this kind of learning leads to a successful development of the target language, whether it is literal and simple level or figurative and sophisticated level. Moreover, literature is liked both for the feeling of enjoyment and the experience gained. Therefore, students' development of acquiring knowledge of the language and practicing various skills motivate their feeling of enrichment. Literary works are exciting for students, because in them, they see relevance to their own lives. A piece of art teaches delights, motivates, and encourages students to make meaning out of language.

All the above views emphasize the fact that literature broadens FL learner's awareness of pragmatic knowledge and makes them utilize this knowledge to understand the target language specifically. When the learner reads poetry, for example, this helps him create a suitable atmosphere to practice language skills in an "active and creative way", which leads to a better competence.

All the studies mentioned above showed that teaching literature plays a major role in language learning. The present study is similar to the mentioned studies in the general aim, which is the effect of literature on learning English language. However, this study is an attempt to investigate the effect of literary texts on EFL learners' pragmatic competence in general, and on the pragmatic aspects of language in particular. All studies were conducted on students at various places. This study was conducted on learners at scholastic level to examine literary texts and their effect on students' pragmatic competence.

3. Methods and Procedures of the Study

3.1 Participants

Forty male students were selected for the study. They were all nine grade students who studied English for ten years at private schools. They were divided into two target group of students. Group A is considered as a control group, while Group B is considered as an experimental group.

3.2 Materials

This study utilized two different syllabi for teaching English language. Group A was exposed to a language syllabus that contained passages and exercises on language skills with little or no exposure to literary discourse. Group B, on the other hand, was exposed to an experimental syllabus that included the different literary genres found in the supplementary book *Introduction to Literature* that includes excerpts from novels, short stories, songs, drama, and poetry. This syllabus was chosen purposefully to develop the learners' pragmatic competence.

3.3 Procedures of the Study

The main adopted procedures to carry out the aims and verify the hypothesis of the study are as follows:

1. Identifying the pragmatic aspects of language to be studied, including prosodic aspects, figurative language, discourse functions, metaphorical and idiomatic expressions, saying, non-verbal aspects, and authentic dialogues on different topics.
2. Designing a scale for research on these aspects of language, ranging from 0 to 1000.
3. Constructing the instrument of the study and examining its validity and reliability.
4. Scores were distributed logically among the pragmatic aspects of language.
5. A pretest was administered to find the actual level of both groups before being exposed to the new experience of teaching.
6. Then, the control group was taught traditionally by using Way Ahead textbook, while the experimental group was taught literary texts. Two months later, a post test was administered to find out if any change occurred concerning the learners' pragmatic competence and in favor of which group.
7. Both the pre-test and the post-test were in a form of oral interviews designed by five native speakers of English.
8. The native interviewers wrote clear and detailed reports about each student's performance in the pragmatic aspects of language. Their reports were accompanied with scores that range from 0 to 100. The total score of all pragmatic aspects of language was out of hundred.
9. To get rid of subjectivity, every examiner in the team of interviewers was responsible for evaluating one pragmatic aspect of language.

Then, the total score was calculated to be out of hundred for every student.

3.4 Statistical Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze data and to evaluate any possible difference or any statistically differences between scores for the pre/post-test between the two groups in order to answer and accomplish the questions and objectives of the study. Mean scores, standard deviations, and significance levels were conducted. A T-test, One Way ANOVA and Scheffe tests were used to find the differences that may arise as a result of the applied treatments in the study which included (literary texts and regular texts). One-Way ANOVA and Scheffe tests were used to find the pragmatic aspects of language that the learners developed more as a result of teaching literary texts.

3.5 Validation of the Tool

What is important before using any tool of investigation is to make sure that it meets all the requirements of a good test. It should be valid, reliable, and with an acceptable degree of difficulty. Therefore, the test which is

used to investigate the effect of literature on the FL students' pragmatic competence should meet all the above mentioned criteria.

To make sure that the test meets all the above-mentioned criteria, the following steps have been followed:

3.5.1 Face Validity

In order to ensure face validity of the test, it was given to three specialists who are well-known for their long experience in the field of teaching EFL.

They gave some suggestions on the items concerning the distribution of scores among the pragmatic aspects of language. The researcher has revised and adopted the scale of research in pragmatics that ranges from 0 to 100 according to the suggestions of the referees.

3.6 Reliability of the Test

A reliable test implies giving the same or almost the same results consistently on different occasions when given under the same conditions. One of the methods that can be used to find out test reliability is the test-retest method (Strom, 1969). Thus, to establish the test reliability, the test-retest technique was used. A random sample of students was selected from another ninth grade section at the same school. Two weeks later, they were reinterviewed by the team of examiners. By using Pearson's formula, the pilot administrations of the test have shown that, the correlation coefficient between student's ranks on both evaluation occasions were calculated and found to be (93%). According to Pearson's formula the reliability coefficient of a test would be acceptable if it is not less than 0.50. Thus, the test can be described as being highly reliable.

3.6 Instruments of the Study

During the first semester of the scholastic year (2011-2012), the researcher put a scale or a criterion for research on the pragmatic aspects of English. It ranged from 0-100. It was applied on ninth grade students. Scores were distributed logically among the pragmatic aspects of language; 30 marks for discourse functions, 30 to figurative language, 10 for the prosodic aspects of English, 10 for metaphorical and idiomatic expressions, 10 for authentic dialogues on different topics, and 10 for the non-verbal aspects of language. The assessment of students' overall pragmatic competence was made according to the scale used by the researcher.

Interviews of students in both groups were made at the beginning of the course. These interviews were done by five native speakers of English who are specialized in English language. Every student was evaluated independently according to the scale of judgment. The total score was out of hundred.

The examiners wrote fully detailed reports about the actual level of every student's pragmatic competence in both groups before starting the experiment. These reports were accompanied with scores because scores are more objective and reliable than words.

The team of examiners consisted of five experts: one of these experts was responsible for evaluating students' intonation, stress, rhyme, and pronunciation in general, while the second was in duty of evaluating student's performance on the functions of language. The third was responsible for evaluating student's use of the non-verbal aspects of language, whereas the fifth examiner was in charge of evaluating students' use and understanding of figurative language. The fifth examiner was responsible for evaluating students' ability to engage in automatic dialogues on different topics. After interviewing every student, scores were given by the team of examiners. Then, the total score was calculated to be out of hundred for every student in both groups.

In order to find out if there are statistically significant differences between the two groups before treatment, T-test analysis of variance was used. The results are reported in table 3.

The result of this analysis indicated that there were no statistically differences in the pre-test scores between the experimental and control groups in their pragmatic competence. Therefore, this indicates that the experimental and the control groups were almost equivalent before treatment.

4. The Experiment

The two groups were administered a pretest. These groups were selected for instruction for a complete semester. After the end of the semester, these groups were given the same test to see if any change has occurred. If it occurred, to what extent and in what dimension.

4.1 Findings Related to the First Questions

The results of the tests given out to the two groups show the outcomes of this research project. They also establish the basic assumption on which the entire paper is prepared. The results of the control group are displayed in Table 1 and that of the experimental group are demonstrated in Table 2.

The tables show the results which measured the pragmatic competence of each group. The result demonstrates that the groups are almost homogenous in their basic language skills. The mean for Table 1 is 60.44 and for table 2 is 61.47. There is a difference of only 1.3 between both the groups, which is quite normal and credible in any selected group. The Standard Error is also quite the same. There is a slight difference in standard Deviation which again displays the same natural human variance.

The duration of the study was for a complete semester in which the control group was given instructions in language through a strictly language oriented syllabus with no literary discourse. The experimental group was taught language through exposure to literary texts belonging to different genres of English literature.

At the end of the semester, when the instructions were complete, the two groups were given out the post T-test. The results of the control group are shown in Table 4 and that of the Experimental group in Table 5. The following are the results of the two groups:

Table 5 shows that the pragmatic competence of the experimental group have improved much because of the new experience of teaching, where the average score in the pre-test equals 61.47 whereas the mean was 72.24 in the post-test.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the performance of the experimental group on the post-test.

Table 4 and table 5 show the findings of the post-test administered to the control group and the experimental group. The experimental group achieved a significantly greater gain in language than the control group.

Accordingly, there is a big difference between the means of the experimental group 72.24 and the Control group 63.12. The graphs also show the change in the difference between the means of both groups in the pretest and the post test. This shift in means from the pretest is an obvious indicator to the fact that literary discourse has helped the experimental group students to move up their pragmatic competence ability in a dramatic way.

Accordingly, the hypothesis of the study which reads " There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups' pragmatic competence due to the method of teaching (authentic literary texts vs. regular texts) at the ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) level is rejected.

5. Discussion

After investigating the effect of learning literary texts on the pragmatic competence of the participants, the results of the study have showed that there is much progress, in the sense that the experimental group outperformed the control group in pragmatic competence. Therefore, the hypothesis of the study which reads "learning literary texts have great effect on the pragmatic competence of the EFL learners" is confirmed.

The result of the study showed the main scores of the experimental group on the pragmatic aspects of language in post-test were much higher than their main scores of the pragmatic aspects of language on the pre-test.

Moreover, the results of the study showed that there was also a large gap between the mean score of all subjects in every pragmatic aspect of language in the post test if compared with the pre-test.

Additionally, the results of the study showed that there was much difference between the mean score of all members in the experimental group on the pre-test if compared with that of the post-test.

Finally, the researcher found out that there was much improvement in the experimental group's pragmatic competence in the post-test that was administered after a four month experiment of being taught literary texts. In this setting, EFL learners acquired the pragmatic aspects of language efficiently and properly. Accordingly, the first hypothesis of the study which reads, " There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups' pragmatic competence due to the method of teaching (authentic literary texts vs. regular texts) at the ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) level" is rejected.

The results of the study also revealed that fourteen out of seventeen subjects have improved their overall pragmatic competence, while there was a little change in the other remaining three students who showed a little progress. This is difficult to explain, but as educators know, a class is composed of a variety of students, some with excellent study habits and others without good study habits, and some students simply are not interested.

The number of students of low performance was low. It was (3) out of seventeen. Approximately (10%) of the students showed no changes and (90%) improved their pragmatic competence. The highest progress was in students' performance of the discourse function and speech acts. However, the lowest progress was in the degree of formality and politeness.

The team of examiners noted also that hesitation and stress have to some extent affected students' performance.

4.2 Findings Related to the Second Questions

After interpreting and analyzing the row scores, and with the help of statistics (One Way ANOVA and Scheffe), the researcher found out:

- 1- There were significant differences in the experimental group students' performance of the discourse function as one of main pragmatic aspects of language due to teaching authentic literary texts.
- 2- There were significant differences in the experimental group students' performance of the speech acts which is macro-linguistically regarded as one of main pragmatic aspects of language due to teaching authentic literary texts.
- 3- There were significant differences in the experimental group students' performance of the degrees of formality due to teaching authentic literary texts.
- 4- There were significant differences in the experimental group students' performance of politeness as one of main pragmatic aspects of language due to teaching authentic literary texts.

According to these results, it was clear in table 7 that the scores of the experimental group students' competence on the pragmatic aspects of language has improved after exposure to the authentic literary materials over four months. In addition, students' achievement in discourse function, speech function, speech acts were better than other pragmatic aspects of language such as the degree of formality and politeness.

Accordingly, the second hypothesis of the study which reads "There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of experimental group's mastery of each pragmatic aspect of language at the ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) level. These aspects include (discourse function, speech acts, speech functions, degrees of formality, boarders of the self, and politeness) is rejected.

6. Conclusion

According to the native experts' analysis of interviews of seventeen non-native speakers of English in the experimental group, the researcher found out that there was much progress in their pragmatic competence in terms of perception and production of English when they were exposed to authentic literary texts and dialogues taken from the everyday life of the English language community.

The statistical analysis of the Post-Test results proved that the experimental group scored higher scores due to the usefulness of literary texts they studied during the whole semester. This result indicates that the standard of the experimental group has risen in the pragmatic aspects of the language. In other words, this result demonstrates that there are important gains to be achieved in including literature in the curriculum of the non-native learners of English. Both literature and language for teaching invoice the development of feeling for language or responses to the literary texts. Reading and interpreting literary texts help the learners to retain in memory useful quotations and phrases which they can use in their everyday speech. Moreover, the literary texts integrate linguistic competence with pragmatic competence by putting language into use in different social situations.

It shall not, therefore, be out of place to emphasize that a strong concentrated effort has to be made for the inclusion of literary texts in EFL curriculum at all stages, whether primary, intermediate or secondary.

Literature or literary text can bridge, to a large extent, the acute realization of the cultural difference that brings into our understanding of normal and natural human difference. Literature opens the windows to intercultural awareness while at the same time nurturing empathy, a tolerance for diversity, and the fostering of intelligence. Poetry would go a long way providing language learners with the expansion of their experience of larger human reality which turn can shape his language and provide more meaning and richness to it.

It is imperative on the part of the language teacher to provide learners with interesting short stories from the finest treasures of English literature to induce in them a desire to make reading as a habit and develop text reading strategies. Foreign language learners benefit from reading target-language literature because it gives practice in the pragmatic contextualization of linguistic expression

There is no doubt, a close relationship between educational goals and literary texts that are selected for study. The educationists, therefore, should make an appropriate selecting from literature to meet the learners' needs, level, ability, and interests at all stages. For example, for the primary pupils, simple verses, saying, one-act plays and games would be fun for them. Generally, young learners acquire a useful contextualized language and keep by heart simple wisdoms, songs, and short stories.

Young learners are usually motivated and willing to know a foreign language, so these literary texts may help them to acquire the language as a means of communication. This selected literature would make them native-like

speakers because grammar is acquired implicitly, therefore, the stage is very important for making teaching English as use and function-focus effectiveness of teaching language lies in its spontaneous and impressive use by the learners.

There is no denying the fact, in the light of the observations made in this paper and the suggestions advanced therein, that literature plays a vital and stimulating role in the developing the EFL learners' pragmatic competence. We can, therefore, safely conclude that literature or literary texts can play a vital role in developing the EFL learners' pragmatic competence and help them to use language for communication in the real world.

7. Recommendations

1. Foreign language teachers of English are recommended to teach language aspects, specially the pragmatic aspects of language weather at scholastic level or at university level.
2. FL teachers should have in-service training programs on how to make FL students pragmatically competent.
3. EFL teachers focus on meaningful communication by emphasizing authenticity and avoiding artificiality.

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Table 1: The Performance of the Control Group in the Pragmatic Aspects of Language Before the Experiment

Student's Number	Discourse functions out of 30%	Speech functions out of 30%	Politeness out of 10%	Speech acts out of 10%	Boards of the self out of 10%	Degrees of formality out of 10%	Total out of 100
1	16	18	5	3	6	4	52
2	18	20	6	5	7	6	62
3	22	20	6	4	7	6	65
4	18	14	4	3	5	5	50
5	18	18	5	4	6	4	59
6	24	20	6	6	6	5	65
7	23	20	6	5	5	6	65
8	20	7	6	6	8	8	66
9	27	28	8	9	8	6	78
10	18	22	6	5	7	7	65
11	18	20	5	4	5	6	58
12	15	11	3	2	4	3	38
13	22	13	5	4	6	5	55
14	18	16	4	3	5	4	49
15	20	18	5	3	5	4	63
16	18	18	4	3	6	4	69
17	17	15	3	4	6	5	69
Means	19.41	18.29	5.18	4.29	6	5.18	60.47

Table 2: The Performance of the Experimental Group in the Pragmatic Aspects of Language Before the Experiment

Student's Number	Discourse functions out of 30%	Speech functions out of 30%	Politeness out of 10%	Speech acts out of 10%	Boards of the self out of 10%	Degrees of formality out of 10%	Total out of 100
1	18	17	6	4	5	4	59
2	20	19	8	6	7	5	64
3	18	18	6	5	6	4	59
4	21	21	7	6	6	5	66
5	18	17	5	4	5	3	57
6	18	18	5	5	5	4	59
7	23	22	8	6	6	4	68
8	20	19	8	6	7	5	63
9	15	14	5	4	5	3	96
10	20	18	5	4	5	3	55
11	24	22	8	6	7	5	71
12	18	18	4	3	4	4	50
13	17	19	5	5	6	6	56
14	20	21	6	6	6	5	69
15	18	16	5	4	5	4	51
16	16	14	4	4	6	5	49
17	20	15	5	5	7	6	53
Means	19.06	18.12	5.88	4.88	5.76	4.41	61.47

Table 3 : Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Two Groups on the Pre-test.

Pretest	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.
	Control	17	60.47	5.96			
	Experimental	17	61.74	6.07			

Table 4: The Performance of the Control Group in the Pragmatic Aspects of Language After Three Months of Being Taught Traditionally.

Student's Number	Discourse functions out of 30%	Speech functions out of 30%	Politeness out of 10%	Speech acts out of 10%	Boards of the self out of 10%	Degrees of formality out of 10%	Total out of 100
1	18	20	5	3	7	4	58
2	20	22	7	4	7	6	66
3	22	22	5	5	7	5	66
4	19	16	6	4	6	6	57
5	19	20	6	5	6	4	60
6	26	22	6	6	5	5	69
7	25	23	5	5	5	6	69
8	20	22	7	7	8	7	71
9	29	31	8	7	8	8	90
10	20	24	7	5	6	8	69
11	20	22	5	3	5	6	61
12	18	21	4	3	4	3	52
13	24	17	3	3	7	5	59
14	20	18	5	4	5	5	57
15	23	20	5	2	6	4	60
16	20	18	6	4	6	4	58
17	15	15	3	5	7	6	51
Means	21.6	20.76	5.47	4.41	6.18	5.41	63.12

Table 5: The Performance of the Experimental Group in the Pragmatic Aspects of Language After Being Taught Through Literary Texts

Student's Number	Discourse functions out of 30%	Speech functions out of 30%	Politeness out of 10%	Speech acts out of 10%	Boards of the self out of 10%	Degrees of formality out of 10%	Total out of 100
1	22	23	6	6	7	4	69
2	25	25	6	8	8	5	77
3	23	25	6	8	7	3	72
4	25	26	7	7	8	5	77
5	18	23	5	5	7	4	62
6	21	23	5	6	8	5	67
7	25	26	6	6	8	5	76
8	24	24	6	8	8	5	75
9	21	20	5	6	6	3	61
10	26	23	5	4	6	3	67
11	28	26	7	8	8	4	81
12	23	23	5	8	6	4	79
13	25	23	5	7	6	7	73
14	26	26	6	7	6	6	79
15	25	28	5	7	6	5	79
16	20	21	6	5	7	5	63
17	26	21	6	7	8	6	74
Means	22.71	23.88	5.71	6.65	7.06	4.65	72.24

Table 6: The Distribution of the Experimental Group's Performance in the Post-Test

Pretest	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.
	Control	17	63.12	17.86			
Experimental	17	72.24	6.30				

Table 7: The Experimental Group Students' Results in Each Pragmatic Aspect of Language on the Post-Test.

Aspects of language	Mean	Std.Deviation	F	DF	Sig.(p)
Discourse function 30%	22.71	14.86	1.56	30	0.000
Speech function 30%	23.88	11.63	3.58	30	0.001
Speech acts 10%	6.65	13.06	1.04	30	0.000
Degrees of formality 10%	4.65	18.21	6.50	30	0.002
Politeness 10%	5.71	15.33	1.59	30	0.001
Boarders of the self- 10%	7.06	14.16	5.13	30	0.002
Mean score out of 100%	72.24	19.07	3.95	30	0.000

Figure (1)
The Distribution of The Control Group's Performance on The Pretest

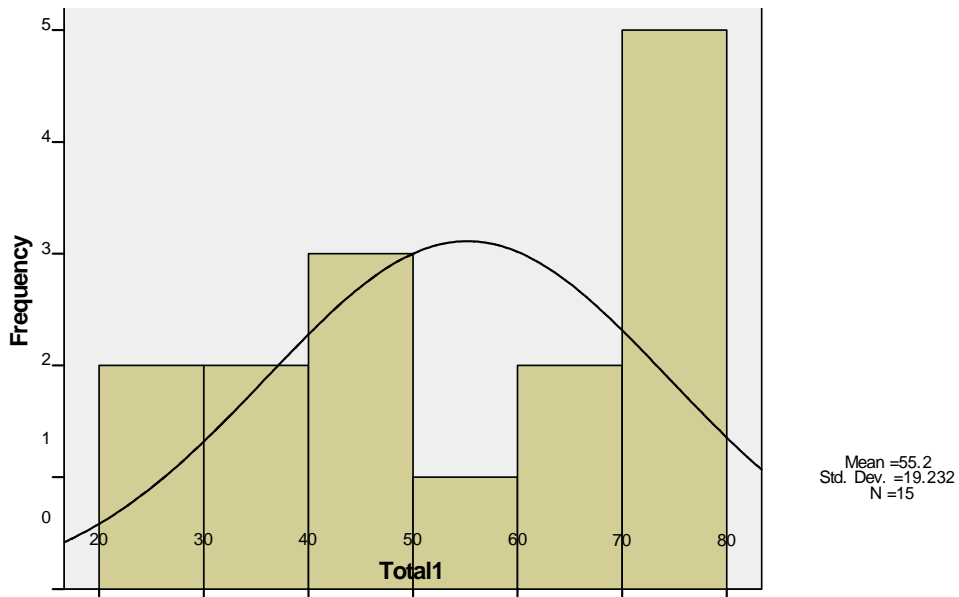
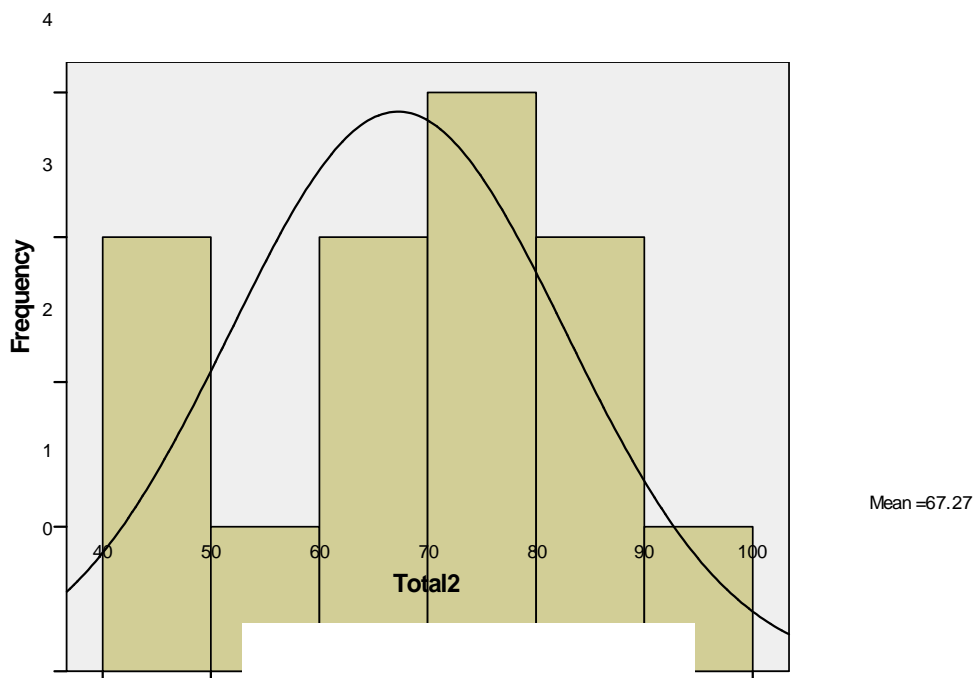



Figure (2)
The distribution of the experimental group's performance in the post test



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Autobiography

Ahmad M. Bataineh was an associate professor of applied linguistics. He worked at Taibah University (Department of Languages and Translation). He has worked at Al-albait University as a full time teacher. He also worked in the English dept. faculty of Arts at Al-Isra University in addition to being chairman of the English section at Languages Centre at the same Uni. He worked as a member of English curricula at the Ministry of Education from 1999-2002. He is (A member of the National Team of Curricula).

He worked as a part time teacher in the English Dep., faculty of Arts at The University of Jordan. He worked as a member of a committee for promoting teachers working at the Ministry of Education in Jordan. He evaluated more than 80 English language books taught at Jordanian private schools, and prepared reports for the Council of Education for approving or disapproving the teaching of these books. He was a member in the Jordanian National Team for preparing new English curricula and text books for grades from 1-12. He participated in editing and revising English language text books taught in Jordan. He has a number of research papers in English language and literature, methods of teaching Eng, as well as designing its curricula. He worked on the preparation of English learning plan and its adaptation by the Institute of English language in (*Oregon*) USA to Americanize teaching English in Jordan. He gave seminars on foreign language teaching and testing at Al-Isra-University. He gave seminars on machine translation, Muslim-Christian dialogues, human rights and peace.

He Teaches MA and PhD courses at his university and at Amman Arab University. He has supervised on PhD students at different universities. He worked as a head of the Conferences Department at AL-al Bayt University. He is working now as a head of Quality Assurance Department.

He has multi – experiences in curricula , teaching English as global language , teaching English as foreign language, methodology, conferences, quality assurance, Muslim-Christian dialogues, human rights and peace. He has new orientations towards having change in foreign language classes, because he strongly believes that language is an ear and a tongue.

He believes in teaching language with its culture, because language can be regarded as a body and its culture is a soul.

Acknowledgement

My full indebtedness is for my students who were very cooperative and helpful throughout this study. I Especially thank Dr. Saffa Habbeeb for this guidance in the statistical part of the study. I gratefully acknowledge my deep indebtedness to my wife for her support and encouragement that was at most behind the whole of my success. Special thanks to the team of examiners for their unexhausted efforts.