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Faculty of Arts

Post Graduate Studies

Department of English

The Response to Poetry Teaching

**A field-work Study on Second and Third Year Students in
the Department of English at Benghazi University**

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for an MA
Degree in English Language & Linguistics

By

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the obstacles facing students at Benghazi University in terms of the response to poetry teaching. The study has selected contributors who provide reasonable and well-argued cases. On one hand, the first two chapters are theoretical involving, an overview of the study, theories and research in poetry teaching and responding, and some previous studies taking poetry teaching and methodology as their main consideration. On the other hand, the third, and the fourth chapters are concerned with data collection, data analysis of the responses, conclusion and some recommendations and guidelines for the students as well as their instructors are summed up by the researcher in the fifth chapter. The study results built on real classrooms in which the teachers and the students are directly interacting, thus, the researcher uses questionnaire to obtain the results.

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CHAPTER I

1.1 Introduction

This study concerns itself with the response of students to poetry teaching. The learning process normally consists of two main parts which are action and reaction. The response falls within the realm of the second part of the learning process. The action is meant to be the teaching process in which the teacher is the main participant using his own abilities to communicate with the students, and using his character and the teaching methodology to motivate his students to learn. Reeves (1958), in his book *Teaching Poetry*, suggests four factors to be considered in any learning process: the pupil; the material to be taught; the methods adopted; and the personality of the teacher -- using the word 'personality' in its broader sense. The reaction is the complementary part of the learning process which is called the *response* in which the student is the main participant using his mental and psychological states inside the classroom, and his interest in learning. The interaction between the two processes will be analyzed and the main point of departure will be the complementary part of the learning process.

1. 2 What Does It Mean to *Respond to Literature*?

Many literary critics stress the idea that students' first responses to any literary work should be personal ones. And they view literary responses as a personal reaction towards texts in which students use their prior knowledge to engage with texts. For example, Cianciolo (1990) as cited in Thompson (1996: 24) recommends that teachers should encourage personal responses during the first sharing of a picture story book before introducing any other activities related to literature. These responses can take many forms as students discuss their reactions, write about their responses, create responses through art, or even create or select music that depicts their responses to the moods or content of literature.

Other critics define the process of responding from different perspectives. In Rosenblatt's point of view (1976) (cited in Thompson: 1996: 68) response is a natural part of the reading process. He adds that when students read a piece of literature they respond to it by using their prior knowledge to construct meaning. That is, their reaction with the text results in the construction of their own personal meaning. Another definition is added by Bakhtin (1991) (cited in Thompson, 1996: 68), who views speech responses as ways of thinking, acting, and being, and "seeing and interpreting particular aspects of the world". He regards speech as a response, and to him, both are related to each other, claiming

that in any dialogue there is a continued "give-and-take" interaction in which a speaker becomes a listener and vice versa. He argues that, "speech responses or dialogic are related to one another", that is, "every utterance must be regarded primarily as a response to preceding utterances of the given sphere" and "any understanding of live speech is inherently responsive.... Any understanding is imbued with response and necessarily elicits it in one form or another: the listener becomes the speaker" (cited in Thompson: 68).

Stanford (2003: 4) adds a contemporary definition to the list. She argues that response is a place to begin: "just as we often change our first impressions of a person or situation, readers often revise initial responses to a work of literature".

Some literary critics discuss meaning comprehension in relation to literature response; they emphasize two types of meaning: efferent and aesthetic; Rosenblatt (1985: 70) as cited in (Thompson: 87) distinguishes between the two types by stating that efferent reading focuses attention on "actions to be performed, information to be retained, conclusions to be drawn, solutions to be arrived at, analytic concepts to be applied, and compositions to be tested". And aesthetic reading "the reading that depends on visual, artistic, and imaginative abilities of the reader" (ibid.). An efficient literature teaching methodology should include both efferent

and aesthetic responses to literature. That is, the responses toward literature should be genuine but contain artistic and visual aspects.

Probst (1987) argues that students must learn not only to extract information from texts, but also to make their own inferences and derive unique meanings from the experience of reading. While reading poetry, for example, most readers seek experience not information, individual meaning not fact. Probst adds that when teachers direct students' reading, they "must be encouraged to attend not only to the text, but also to their own experience with it as well- the emotions, associations, memories, and thoughts that are evoked during the reading of the work" (cited in Thompson: 180).

Stanford (2003) makes a collection of students' samples talking about their attitudes towards literature in terms of their answers to the question: "Why do you read literature?" and she comments on their responses. In the following two samples, nearly all students gave a variation on one of these two themes:

We read literature to find the beauty of words of great writers. Literature teaches us the truth about our lives. -ELAYNE MERCIER

Literature is very important to read, because those writers have lasted through a lot of years, and so what they say must be important. Otherwise they would have been forgotten. We read literature because it is an important part of our education. Like history is one part and math is one part and literature is one part. -RICKMOUGAL (ibid: 2-4)

She summarizes other students' different opinions and finally finds that the great thing about responding to literature is that there are no

absolute answers. To her, responding is an open domain in which the student can use his/ her imagination, experience, interpretation, and comment freely. In her viewpoint, "a response is a beginning point. You read a work through, keeping your mind and spirit open, and then enjoy down what you thought and felt as you read it" (ibid:4). She adds that an initial student's response might include, for example, a question to interpret a word or a sentence in a given text, a comment about the theme of the work, describing his/her own feelings toward a specific line, connecting the given work to any similar work the student has read before or relating it to a previous experience in his/her own life.

From what has been mentioned, literature can be considered as a kind of art, usually written, that offers pleasure and illumination; it should be taught for its own sake and its impact will take place in its readers' souls. In the following pages, the obstructions and factors that may hinder the response toward literature will be considered in detail.

1. 3 What Does It Mean to Teach Poetry?

Teaching poetry is not an easy task for teachers at all teaching levels because, according to some viewpoints, it is considered as teachers' responsibility in terms of their ways of conveying of the poems' hidden meanings as well as their methodology and selecting their materials. Other opinions suggest many justifications for using poetry. Duff and

Maley (1990: 6) introduce various types of justifications for using poetical texts: "linguistic, methodological, and motivational".

First, they appreciate the role of literary texts in presenting an extended range of style, register and genre; secondly, they support the fact that literature is open to multiple interpretations which means that there is no identical reader's understanding or reaction to a given text; thirdly, they add that literature encourages the response by writing, because it makes students retrieve their experiences and write about them. Thus, for these characteristics they distinguish literature from other forms of language teaching contributions:

- a. In terms of the language, literary texts offer genuine samples of a very wide range of styles, register, and text-types at many levels of difficulty. For this reason alone they are worthy of consideration.
- b. The fact that literary texts are, by their very essence, open to multiple interpretation means that only rarely will two readers' understanding of or reaction to a given text be identical. This ready-made opinion gap between one individual's interpretation and another's can be bridged by genuine interaction.
- c. Literary texts are non-trivial in the sense that they deal with matters which concerned the writer enough to make him or her write about them. In this, they are unlike many other forms of language teaching inputs, which frequently trivialize experience in the service of pedagogy. This 'genuine feel' of literary texts is a powerful motivator, especially when allied to the fact that literary texts so often touch on themes to which learners can bring a personal response from their own experience. (Maley, *ibid*:7)

1. 4 Why Teach Literature?

Traditionally the curriculum has been divided into the teaching of language on the one hand, and the teaching of literature on the other. The teaching of poetry has conventionally fallen on the literature side of this divide. Literature is not regularly discussed as a coherent branch of the

curriculum in relation to language development in either mother tongue or foreign language teaching. However, classroom development cannot be proceeded and well-studied before key theoretical and practical issues are identified and debated. As a result of that, Brumfit and Carter (1986) conclude a definition in the use of literature in both foreign language and first language classrooms. First, they view literary text as authentic text, real language in context, to which students can respond directly. Secondly, they add a discussion of literary text or *content*, "which if appropriately selected, can be an important motivation for study and leads on naturally to examination of language". In other words, a good selection of literary text motivates students to respond naturally and properly and react easily with the text and students come to understand and appreciate the language of literature without any complexity. Also, they give a very important role for the reader that is "*an active* interactional role in working with and making sense of this language". (ibid: 15)

Brumfit and Carter (1986) come to appreciate the group work which they consider as objective response and the open-ended exploration response by the individual student. They state that "literature lessons make for genuine opportunities in group work and/or open-ended exploration by the individual student" (ibid:16). They, finally, come to appreciate the spiritual role of reading literature for its own sake and

discourage reading it for facts. Brumfit and Carter claim that not all works of literature are fiction, but the reader does not read literature for factual truth or information, and this fluidity of representation prohibits restriction to formulate language practice. (Ibid: 16)

1. 5 Statement of the Problem

A major problem facing teachers is how to motivate their students to respond properly to poetry, particularly in the foreign language classes at university level. The current study will explore the reasons behind the difficulties that hinder the good response toward poetry teaching. The research concerns itself with the issues of teaching methodology used and the reactions towards it at university level.

1. 6 Significance of the Study

This study examines the reasons that may hinder Libyan learners' responses toward the English literature. Since poetry is the high form of literature and it is the most interesting but complex part of it, the study is concerned with the response to poetry rather than any other genre of literature. It is hoped this study will contribute to help university students as well as their lecturers to identify the reasons behind the difficulties faced in responding to poetry and will provide convenient remedies in order to overcome such obstacles. In addition, it will give the teachers of English literature the opportunity to motivate their students to love

literature and increase their literary awareness and competence, especially in poetry.

1. 7 Aims of the Study

This study aims to:

- identify the different types of poetry teaching methodology in foreign/ second language classrooms.
- identify the difficulties which the instructors and the students face while teaching poetry and responding to poetry.
- give suggestions and recommendations for better poetry teaching and better response.

1. 8 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study can be summarized in the following points:

- The number of the students is limited to sixty; therefore, the analysis of data will be mainly based on their responses.
- The number of the literature instructors at Benghazi University is only two, so that the questionnaires will not provide the research with sufficient data.
- Furthermore, the research assumes a dynamic reality. Since the study will take place in one year, i.e., a limited period of time, changes may take place in future and this may affect the reliability of the study.

1. 9 Hypothesis

Based on some previous studies, the research sets the following hypotheses:

- Poor comprehension of poetry is due to poor literary competence.
- Poor responding to poetry is due to poor teaching methodology.
- Poor motivation of the students affects their responses.

1. 10 Methodology

To identify the types of difficulties facing university students in responding to English poetry, the study uses constructed questionnaires to examine the responses of both second and third year students toward poetry teaching. Another questionnaire examines the methodology and the difficulties of teaching English poetry through the response of the teachers at the university.

The students' questionnaire, on one hand, centers on three items gradually: 1- The tendency of reading poetry and the reaction toward it. 2- The difficulties of poetry reading and learning. 3- The teaching methodology. The instructors' questionnaire, on the other hand, concentrates on the teaching methodology they use, their reactions towards the syllabus, and the response they get after teaching poetry.

CHAPTER II

Theories and Discussions in Poetry Teaching and Poetry

Response

2. 1. Introduction

English poetry teaching has gone through many stages before. Nowadays poetry teaching has a vital role in second/ foreign language teaching. To learn a language well is to understand its cultural and historical components. Literature reflects these aspects to the readers to integrate the language and the students' understanding more closely.

The language of literary texts, if well-taught, is a bridge which brings together the students and the foreign language that they intend to learn. When we read a piece of literary work we feel like living in the textual context. Therefore, it widens our thought about the culture, customs, and traditions of a class of people of a specific age. Thus literature is history, literature is language, literature is culture and literature is experience.

Accordingly, this chapter discusses the concept of poetry teaching in its broader sense including theories, approaches and methodology discovered to facilitate poetry to the learners in addition to pinpointing the impact of poetical texts on the students' responses.

The chapter begins by considering these theories and approaches extensively; later sections will examine some of the issues and problems they raise in more specific detail.

2. 2. Theories and Discussions in Poetry Teaching

Newton and Handley (1971: 28) define the teaching of poetry as that "The presentation of poetry is a wide term covering, in the first place, the reading, the re-reading and incidental reference in the classroom". They claim that, for many learners the quality of the teacher's presentation will determine the degree of acceptance and eventual love for poetry and the desire to read more. They add that many adults read poorly, consequently mutilating instead of enhancing the quality of the poet's thought, emotion or technical skill. To them, a poem has to make a prompt appeal to the ear in the classroom, and it must not be thrown away; here the teacher who has established a positive relationship with his/ her class should be able to communicate with them on a meaningful, stimulating perhaps humorous or even emotional (though not sentimental) level. Such communication is dependent on the teacher's use of his/ her own voice.

They recommend the students to practice poetry by reading aloud; "Practice in reading aloud there must be, but the first stage is through the silent contemplation of each poem, together with a consideration of what the poet is trying to say and how the poem sounds in one's mind". (Ibid:30)

Thompson (1996: 86) shares the same viewpoints with them, she argues that "to feel the poem with one's imagination and senses alert and receptive, is essential for most students and this, with some preparation of each poem to be read aloud, is all that is required".

Thus, the teacher must set out to master the art of promoting class discussion and encouraging it without dominating. The evaluation of poetry through group discussion is motivated task to encourage students to share their thoughts without hesitation.

2. 3. A Simple Pedagogical Principle for Literature Teaching

Brumfit in (Brumfit and Carter, 1986: 188) suggests the following argument to justify a simple principle for literature teaching:

1. The teaching of appropriate reading of literature cannot proceed primarily by linear means, for in so far it is a mature reading process; response to the text in all its aspects must develop simultaneously.
2. The fundamental ability of a good reader of literature is the ability to generalize from the given text either to other aspects of the literary tradition or to personal or social significances outside literature.
3. These two fields of references outside any particular text must be developed by any effective teaching theory, and techniques in literature teaching are only worthwhile in so far as they serve these two aims.
4. Students must be assisted to develop their latent abilities in both these directions, and this implies establishing criteria for grading their exposure to literature in terms of these.
5. The prime purpose of any specifically literary work in school is not to provide particular items of knowledge, but to use such knowledge as tokens in the process of generalization referred to in (2) above.

6. (a) The ability to perceive and explore relationships between literary texts and other literary texts will be developed by reading texts deliberately associated with each other for pedagogical purposes.
- (b) The ability to perceive and explore relationships between literary texts and ordinary life will be developed through increasing familiarity with various mimetic properties of literature.

2. 4. Reader-response Theory and ELT

Much of the current use of literature in English Language Teaching (ELT) involves ‘personal-response’ approach, which aims at obtaining learner production of discourse in the target language. The approach has played a major role in literature return to acceptability in ELT. Alan Hirvela (1991) (cited in Thompson 1996: 30) argues that the prevailing notion of personal-response limits the value of the responses. Also, she draws a distinction between reader-response and personal-response approaches, and demonstrates how the inclusion of reader-response theory in literature-based communicative language teaching will strengthen such instruction. Thompson also stresses the notion of reader response theory:

The effect of reader-response theorists on practice has been to encourage teachers to intervene less in the ways pupils respond to poems. The modern poetry classroom is more likely to see groups of pupils engaged in discussion in order to come to terms with texts for themselves, rather than being directed by the teacher. (p: 38)

In her own observation of classrooms Thompson suspects that some teachers have taken the non-intervention convention to an extreme, leaving pupils to struggle with poems without minimal guidance on

particular aspects of the text. She adds that the teacher should guide the pupils by giving them some keywords about the poem which will help them to understand and respond to the texts properly.

2. 5. Literature and Communicative Language Teaching

Before the 1980's literature was neglected in ELT. But when literature began to make a comeback in ELT after a long period of exile, this was particularly true in 1980's, some defenses began to appear. There was not that same sense of urgency about defending the use of literature, as it seems to have regained a modest place in the ELT mainstream. At present, then, the debate increasingly centers not so much on whether to use literature as on how best to use it. Much of the current focus of attention is on what Carter (in Brumfit and Carter: 1986) calls the 'personal-response' approach to literature. This is the approach that rules the use of literature within Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Teachers and materials designers faced the challenge of creating conditions for learning in which learners could use the target language in circumstances which approximated authentic communicative contexts. Their search for more communicatively-orientated materials and learning conditions led, almost inevitably, to literature. Also, Collie and Slater (1987: 5) explain this approach: "engaging imaginatively with literature enables learners to shift the focus of their attention beyond the more

mechanical aspects of the foreign language system". (Cited in Duff and Maley, 1990: 10)

The essence of the communicative personal approach is seen in this citation from Duff and Maley (1990: 11):

The primary aim of our approach is quite simply to use literary texts as a resource ... for stimulating language activities ... What we are interested in is engaging students interactively with the text, with fellow students, and with the teacher in the performance of tasks involving literary texts. In so doing, students are obliged to pay careful attention to the text itself and to generate language in the process of completing the task.

2. 5. 1. Selecting Texts

No doubt, the selection of the texts is a vital part in teaching poetry. And the syllabus designers must be aware of it, Lazar (2001: 48) gives this point the main priority. He suggests some factors for choosing texts that can be summarized in the following statement:

In choosing a literary text for use with your students, you should think about three main areas. These are: the type of course you are teaching, the type of students who are doing the course and certain factors connected with the text itself.

2. 5. 2. Type of Course

There are other criteria to help learners to cope with the given texts. Lazar (2001: 49) lists these criteria: 1. Level of students. 2. Students' reasons for learning English. 3. Kind of English required on the course: (e.g. English for academic purposes, English for purposes, English for Business, General English, etc.) 4. How

intensive is the course? (e. g. five hours a day for three months, four hours a week for a year, etc.)

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|----|
| 5. Is there a syllabus? | Yes | No |
| a. Is it flexible? | Yes | No |
| b. Is literature included? | Yes | No |

Can you include literary texts on this course? Why/ Why not?

What kinds of texts will be most suitable?

2. 5. 3. Type of Students

Lazar (2001: 49) adds some other criteria which are related to the student him/her self:

1. Age of students.
2. Interests/hobbies of students.
3. Cultural or ethnic background/nationality of students.
4. Students' previous experience of reading literary texts.

2. 5. 4. Criteria for Selecting Texts

Lazar (2001: 52) claims that when applying the above criteria of selecting texts to the whole class there is a difficulty that is individual. Students within a group may vary obviously in their maturity and interest. As a result of that, Lazar advises that "when selecting materials we have to pay attention to find texts that are suitable to the majority of students in the class".

2. 6. The Students' Cultural Background

According to Lazar (2001: 53), when considering this factor, one must think about the students' cultural background and their social and political expectations that may help or hinder their understanding of a text. "It would be difficult, for example, for most readers to make sense of Jane Austen's novel without having some knowledge of the class system and the values of the society they describe". Also he adds that "one must consider how much background must be provided for the students to have at least a basic understanding of the text".

2. 7. The Students' Linguistic Proficiency

Lazar (2001: 53) describes this of being an area of some complexity in which the students may have fluency but they might not be able to cope with the language of the text because it differs from the usual norms of language use. Lazar adds that literary language may include some archaisms, rhetorical devices and metaphors etc. which provides it with a very elevated style but, for some learners, it is very complex to be understood.

2. 8. The Students' Literary Background

If the students already have a level of literary competence (i.e. he/she is competent enough in the literature of his/ her mother tongue) as what Lazar (2001: 54) assumes, this will help them to make sense of a literary text even when their linguistic knowledge is limited. On the other

hand, students who have little literary competence, but are linguistically proficient, may find themselves understanding each single word in isolation without being able to make sense of the literary meanings behind the texts.

From another angle Brumfit (in Brumfit and Carter, 1986: 185) says that the meaning is always subject to negotiation, for it results from the relationship between reader(s) and writer. He adds that it is not possible to make an appropriate response through a misunderstanding of the codes being operated, that codes will not be solely linguistic, however the codes relate event with event and explore ideas, value systems and conventions, and relationships between any of these and the world outside literature itself. The competent reader will explore the hidden meanings behind the text. Brumfit supports his viewpoint with evidence from Culler (1975: 114), as cited in Brumfit and Carter (1986: 185)

... anyone wholly unacquainted with literature and unfamiliar with the conventions, by which fictions are read, would ... be quite baffled if presented with a poem. His knowledge of the language would enable him to understand phrases and sentences, but he would not know, quite literary, what to make of this strange concatenation of phrases. He would be unable to read it as literature... because he lacks the complex 'literary competence' which enables others to proceed. He has not internalised the 'grammar' of literature which would permit him to convert linguistic sequences into structures and meanings.

2. 9. Implications of Such a principal for Foreign-language Work

Work on foreign-language literatures must be consistent with the position outlined above, but students will be able to work at varying

levels of sophistication. According to their previous experience of literature, their understanding will not correlate with their linguistic skills.

Here is a group of criteria suggested by Brumfit and Carter (1986: 187-188), which relate to reading of any kind of text:

1. *Linguistic level.* This can, of course, be measured in lexical or syntactic terms. But it is essential to recognize that no descriptive linguistic model can measure significance in literary terms. Blake's poems, or Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, are examples of linguistically simple texts which pose considerable problems in literary terms.
2. *Cultural level.* Different works of literature will be close to the cultural and social expectations of different groups of learners. This may affect decisions in various ways. For example, nineteenth-century literary modes are culturally closer to the reading experience of relatively unsophisticated readers than are many contemporary works.
3. *Length.* It is a crucial pedagogical factor. Such criteria may be applied, with appropriate modification, to any reading materials, but there are three others which are significant in purely literary terms.
4. *Pedagogical role.* At appropriate levels works which are satisfactory on other grounds may be linked to others. For example, Golding's *Lord of the Flies* linked to Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* on which it is a deliberate comment, for example, or linked to other books on a similar theme.
5. *Genre representation.* If the course is truly concerned with developing reading capacities, it cannot be restricted to short stories and poems which can be studied in class. All normal types of literature need to be available.
6. *Classic status* (or 'face validity'). Some texts may be demanding and therefore motivating for students, even though they are not essential on other grounds. The desire to read Dickens or Shakespeare may enable students to overcome difficulties which would be significant in terms of the other criteria.

2. 10. Methods of Poetry Teaching

It has been said by many poets that poetry would teach itself. But in practice this does not happen. To the majority of students poetry must be taught, and how it is taught will make all the difference to their attitude towards it. Also this is true for all classroom subjects but with poetry there are principles in devising methods for teaching it. These are two:

“liveliness and variety”. James Reeves (1958: 12) explains the two former principles widely. Liveliness in poetry lesson is an active experience and this experience has largely become a mental one. Reeves defines the two concepts as the following; liveliest lessons are likely to be those in which several poems of different moods are read, each in a different way "how many should be read in one lesson will depend on the length of the poems chosen, their difficulty, and the attitude of the class". On the other hand, the poems chosen to be read in any lesson should be varied, either by a contrast with one another or by a difference in treatment. To Reeves, variety should be achieved by the choice of method that every good teacher of poetry discovers for himself. It is what makes the teaching of poetry one of the most interesting, or one of the most difficult of tasks.

Reeves (1958: 13) also pinpoints some guidelines which are important for the teacher of poetry: Once he has decided to read a poem, Reeves suggests that the teacher has to study it by himself, at leisure and determine what is its nature, its intention, and its unique character: "If the teacher reads the poem and thoroughly understands it- if he truly *knows* it -the poem itself will suggest the right way of teaching it". Reeves adds that the preparation of material is of the utmost importance. "Any teacher who goes into class unprepared knows that his class time will be boring and uninteresting". Reeves also reiterates that:

No experienced teacher can always be sure that the teaching of any poem will succeed every time. For example, a poem which has been well with, say, a first-year class for a number of years, fails to interest another class of the same age, for no apparent reason... Poetry teaching is a continuous process of trial and error, and anything approaching sureness of touch comes only after many failures (ibid: 15)

2.11. Theories and Discussions in Poetry Response

Poetry is rarely read for its own sake. The intrinsic worth of a poem that is used as a stimulus or illustration is inevitably missed. Thompson (1996: 23) describes that in the following way:

The 'stimulus and response' model of teaching poetry that lies behind the usual 'read-talk-write-your-own' format has become inflexible. It also fails to take into account the special nature of poetry, which can provoke quite unexpected reactions. For example, one of the many possible responses after hearing a poem read aloud is silence.

This unexpected type of response needs not be lack of interest nor a failure of understanding, even though that understanding may be only hesitant and intuitive. This is particularly true in the approach of Walter de la Mare, in his interesting introduction to his anthology *Come Hithe* (1953: xxxiii), which reminds us that one of the pleasures of reading is that "you may make any picture out of the words that you can or will; and a poem may have as many different meanings as there are different minds to read it" as cited in Thompson (1996: 23).

2.12. Responding to What You Read

Judith Stanford (2003) states that the great thing about responding to literature is that there are no absolute answers. To her, a response is a beginning point as one reads a work through, keeping his mind and spirit

open, and then jots down what he thought and felt as he reads it. Stanford discusses the following points as they might be included in one's initial response:

1. A question (about the meaning of a word or sentence, the choice of a word, the reason a particular character appears in the work, the reason the author chose to begin or end as he or she did)
 2. A comment on what you think the work is about and why you are interested or not interested in that idea.
 3. An observation about particular description, or line, or sentence to which you had a strong reaction (you liked it; you disliked it; it made you angry, happy, sad, puzzled, uncomfortable)
 4. A connection between this work and something else you have read, experienced, or observed in your own life.
- (Stanford, 2003: 4)

Thus, according to Stanford a response is a place to begin. Just as we often change our impressions of a person or situation, readers often change initial responses to a work of literature.

Of course, a work of literature exists on a printed page, but it gains life and meaning only when individual readers bring their knowledge, beliefs, feelings, and values to the reading experience. Stanford claims:

No reader could honestly expect to like or to enjoy everything he reads. But the good reader should be able to respond to every work that he reads. Having a genuine response and being willing to explore that response is the key to opening new possibilities in whatever you read, in or out of class, both now and in the future (Stanford, 2003: 5).

In an exercise to get the response to poetry; Judith Stanford gave Robert Frost's (1915) (as cited in Stanford, 2003: 6) "The Road Not Taken" to sample students asking them to write down their responses without hesitation.

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

Stanford collected responses of the students of different ages and she analyzed their reactions toward the same poem as follows:

2. 12. 1. Sample Student Responses to “The Road Not Taken”

This person is standing in the woods and it's probably Fall, because the leaves are yellow. This is a nice time to take a walk, and it's a question which way he wants to go, because he would like to see all of the woods. He can go on only one path today. But I can't figure out why he says in lines 14 and 15 that he couldn't come back. Why does he doubt he'll come back, if he wants to see what's to see what's on the other path? ---Janice Angstrom, age 18

This is not a poem about Frost just taking some walk in the woods. It's about him making a choice to be a poet. Then in the last stanza he is glad he made that choice, and he has made all the difference in his life. ---Gilbert Brown, age 21

I see this as a poem about choices, the poet might be thinking about one choice, but I think it could mean many different possible decisions. I don't think the choice seems too big at first, because I notice lines 9 and 10 say that the paths really had been traveled almost the same amount. To me, this is like a lot of life decisions. They may seem small at the time, but as Frost says, one way leads on to another, and you can't go back and relive your life. ---Anita Juarez, age 35

In the poem, the poet is sorry he made a certain choice in his life. He calls the poem “The Road Not taken,” so he is looking at the choice he didn't make and thinking about it for some reason. Maybe wondering what life would be like if he took that other road. And that is why he sighs in the last stanza. He is regretting what he lost out on. I can understand this because I do this, too. I look back and see some choices I made—like dropping out of school and going into the army —and I can see what I missed. ---David Furman, age 28 (ibid: 3)

Stanford compared the students' responses to each other and she found that:

It is noticeable that two of the student writers had reactions that were nearly opposite. Gilbert Brown thinks that the speaker in the poem is glad he made a certain choice, whereas David Furman thinks that the speaker regrets the choice. Suppose those two students compared their responses to Frost's poem. Considering the difference in their reactions, they might reread the poem. David Furman has already offered some evidence to back up what he

says: he notes that the title focuses on the path that was not followed, and he reads the sigh as sad. But Gilbert Brown might well ask whether a sigh is always sad. A sigh might show pleasure, contentment, relief, or any number of other emotions. How can these two commentators resolve their differences? The answer is that they don't have to find a single resolution. Both readings of this poem are possible. By rereading the poem many times readers often discover multiple possibilities. Of course, there is always the chance the returning to the work will cause a reader to rethink an initial reaction. For instance, how would Gilbert Brown support his idea that the poem is about Frost's decision to be a poet? Nothing in the poem directly backs up this reading; on the contrary, lines 9 and 10 suggest that the choice involves two rather similar alternatives. (ibid: 6-7)

Reeves (1958: 17) deals with the matter from another angle. In the first place, he argues that poetry can be applied on different age-groups in the secondary school and here no radically different methods are called for, only an increased range of material. Secondly, he adds that, there is a difference between girls and boys in the degree of response to poetry in the secondary school. Thirdly, the response, not only to poetry, to all school materials is related to the intelligence. In the section of the previous studies of this research the survey of Reeves will be explained extensively.

Thus, to Reeves, the response is a variable part of the learning process which can be varied according to the age, sex, and sometimes the level of intelligence of the students.

2.13. The Concept of Difficulty

What is apparent from Steiner's (1978) exploration of the concept of difficulty (cited in Thompson, 1996: 40), that we usually use the word 'difficult' in the context which is contains some barriers that make the

process of transferring information less transparent and deny access to the author's intended meaning. The removal of the barriers brings the necessary clarity. Implicit in this view is a set of assumptions about the determinacy and stability of meaning. An alternative view would see the problem of difficulty residing in the reader's inability to participate in the creation of meaning. The assumption of active readers of Dias and Hayhoe (1988: 86) is that:

They will ask questions and explore what a poem might be in the process of generating as an overall but provisional 'meaning'; that they will engage in 'intelligent guessing'; that they will cope with and even enjoy the problematic nature of the text, and be prepared to engage in sharing them and sometimes, furthering them through discussion and scholarship, in order to engage more fully with the poem. (Thompson, 1996: 14)

It is also important to highlight the term 'difficulty' in relation to poetry that usually places the focus on content rather than form; to Thompson; "it is an inability to determine what the poet/the author is 'trying to say' which often leads to the judgment that a particular text is 'difficult'". The presupposition of difficulty arises from these assumptions of Buchbinder (1991: 1) as cited in Thompson (1996: 45):

first, that language of poetry is itself difficult, and, second, that there is concealed somewhere in this difficult language a 'message' that is invisible to the naked eye"

According to Duff and Maley (1990), the notion of 'difficulty' comprises a number of different aspects in regard to literary texts:

2. 13. 1. Linguistic difficulty

"This may refer to syntactic complexity, lexical density, or discursal organization"(p: 7). In other words, Duff and Maley explain this type of difficulty according to the linguistic syntax, lexemes, the organization of discourses.

2. 13. 2. Difficulty arising from text length

"For some, longer texts will appear more difficult; for others, shorter texts present more difficulties simply because they do not offer the extended contextual support and repetition which longer texts do" (ibid). This difficulty, to them, is related to length of texts since some students do not prefer reading for a long time.

2.13. 3. Cultural difficulty

This is notoriously difficult to define, though much has been said on it in recent years. To the extent that it is clearly impossible for the 'outsider' to share fully the range of references of an 'insider', cultural factors do offer difficulties. But to claim that nothing can, therefore, be got from a text by an outsider is patent nonsense.

"Lecturers (not students) in India used often to observe that Wordsworth's 'Daffodils' could not be appreciated by Indian students because they had no direct experience of this exotic bloom. Taken to its logical conclusion, this view could effectively produce British readers from reading Commonwealth writing in English or indeed any works in translation. While problems clearly may arise, it seems to us that better approach is to use these opportunities for exploration, rather than refusing to undertake the journey"(ibid: 8). So, cultural difficulty is meant to be a gap between two cultures and the role of literature here, is to fill this gap.

2. 13. 4. Difficulties of range of reference

"These are related to cultural difficulties. They are best exemplified by works such as 'The Waste Land' which cannot be fully appreciated without the notes. But all literary works make reference to things outside themselves and are thus liable to misinterpretation, or to variable interpretation, this is one of the things which makes them interesting!"(ibid: 8). Literary words usually carry references that can be the source of the difficulty to the student, Since he/ she cannot interpret those references.

2. 13. 5. Conceptual difficulty

"This refers to the difficulty of the ideas the text conveys, even when couched in simple, limpid language. William Blake's poetry provides good examples of deceptively 'simple' writing" (ibid: 8). Some literary texts

express ideas or concept that cannot be easily understood even if the language of the text is simple.

2. 13. 6 Acceptance difficulties

"This has to do with the almost instinctive negative reaction we experience towards certain types of text or certain authors ('I can't stand detective stories'). So 'difficulty' is not at all a unidimensional problem. Given that some or all of the above factors may render the text more or less acceptable for use in language learning activities" (ibid:8). This difficulty related to the student's personal reaction against some types of texts whether the reaction is positive or negative.

2. 14. Making sense of poetry

Duff and Maley (1990: 12) try to make poetry less difficult by considering this difficulty a relative matter. In the first place, they say, "we need to accept that 'difficulty' as a subjective and relative matter. In other words, we cannot say that poetry is not acceptable for all second/foreign language learners; however it is a relative matter". They add that, different readers may find the same text more or less difficult.

They claim, If a text is 'too difficult' it should not be chosen. "It would be unwise to choose texts which we know our students will not be able to cope with". There is such a wide variety of poetical texts available that teachers can relatively manage in order to fit the students' different levels of comprehension.

Duff and Maley (1990: 28) offer teachers a fair variety of different levels of demand. They claim that there is one way of gradually building up the degree of demand on students could be:

- Level 1 'Easy' text + low level task
- Level 2 'Easy' text + higher level task

Level 3 'Difficult' text + low level task
Level 4 'Difficult' text + higher level task

For many teachers the main constituent 'difficulty' is the issue of vocabulary load in literary texts. If, notwithstanding the points suggested above by (Duff and Maley, 1990) there remain problems with individual words which continue to block understanding or the performance of the students' tasks, the teacher has presented the same the range of inferential techniques as for non-literary texts.

From another angle, Steiner (1978) as cited in (Thompson, 1996: 34) makes another classification of four types of difficulty which, as he claims, are: 'contingent' or lexical- the term that he uses to mean the difficulty caused by the presence of obscure or archaic words, syntactical, contextual or historical difficulties. One of the decisions which the teacher has to make pertains to the appropriate lexical, syntactical, contextual or historical details which need to be supplied in order to provide enough clarity for the reader to be able to make an authentic response.

Linda Thompson (1996: 37) criticizes the traditional approaches to poetry teaching of being based on inductive question-and-answer sessions and teacher explanation would have no problem with this. And the eventual destination would be accepted reading of the text. On other hand, she advocates Richards' useful insights which are based on the

notion that "reading a poem is a process of coming to know the text object" (Richards, 1929) as cited in (Thompson, 1996: 38).

Thompson (1996: 39) goes on to say that Steiner calls his order of difficulty 'modal'. Here, clarity is not simply gained by looking words up or having the obscurities explained, because the problem derives from a failure of fully 'grasp' what the poem is about at a deeper feeling and aesthetic level. She concludes that the way particular texts are introduced is an important factor in determining the way pupils respond.

For the same reason poems are often introduced within a theme, a technique which, while helping to contextualize the poem, runs the risk of circumscribing its meaning and reducing attention to the poem as a poem.

2. 15. Suggestions for Reading Poetry

Judith Stanford (2003: 63- 64) suggests the following ways for poetry reading:

1. When you first approach a poem, try reading it aloud. Stay alert to the ways the words sound as you pronounce them. You may notice rhyme or alliteration, although not every poem uses these sound devices.
2. Be aware of *enjambment*: the carrying over of meaning and sound from one line to the next with no pause between lines.

At this point one may well wonder why poets bother to write lines rather than standard sentences or paragraphs. The answer is well given by Stanford (2003: 64) as that: "those poets often use enjambed lines because they want the reader to pause (but only for an instant) so that the next words (those that begin the next line) will be particularly noticed".

Enjambment, then, lets the poet emphasize a phrase or idea or sometimes surprise the reader with the thought on the next line. Stanford (2003: 65) also advises poetry learners the following:

Look at enjambed lines with aroused curiosity and read them with a sense of discovery. Try to discover why the poet chose to end the line at this particular point rather than at another. Once you understand how enjambment works, you will be able to read poetry aloud smoothly and with enjoyment. Try, also to keep it in mind as you read poetry silently. Learn to “hear” with your mind so that every experience with poetry, whether actually voiced or not, combines sound and meaning.

2. 16. Literature Review

Poetry is one of the few subject areas of the curriculum that deals with intangibles. When it is read expressively by a teacher and is successfully getting through its listeners, it works in ways that cannot really be assessed or quantified. Poetry plays an important role in teaching English as a second or a foreign language for its impact on touching and evoking the feeling of its audience. Thompson (1996: 26) appreciates the role of poetry language by claiming that “poetry needs to be at the heart of work in English because of the quality of language that it offers to us”. She adds that, in her own view, “when poetry is taught for its own sake, so that its special linguistic and formal qualities can be paid due attention”. (ibid: 26)

Foreign learners often face some obstacles regarding their acceptance and understanding of literary texts but our concentration here is on poetry as being the most negotiated area of literature. Many studies

have been made in different countries all over the world some of which will be discussed in the following section.

2.17. Previous Studies

El-Naili (2006) in her thesis mentioned some studies concerning this matter one of them the study of Li (1998) in China, who thinks that even though teaching English literature as a means of accessing to linguistic and literary competence has been blooming in China for more than a century and a lot of success has been achieved, there are also some problems that should not be ignored. The first problem that Li points out is related to teachers and the lack of qualified ones. He says that literature courses in most universities are taught by foreign teachers, less than 30% of the foreign teachers have majored and studied English literature in their MAs or PhDs while more than 70% of them have never formally studied literature as a subject, their only qualifications are that they are in fact native speakers of the language and that they can read and write. They may have some linguistic competence, but their literary competence is sometimes less than the knowledge that the Chinese students have and who have been exposed to literature more than their foreign teachers. Li thinks that teachers are not to blame; they were not employed to their best advantage. The problem lies in the universities for not being able to find qualified teachers for their students, and excluding competent Chinese

teachers from teaching English literature because their linguistic knowledge cannot be compared to that of any native speaker. (25)

In '*Cultural knowledge and Reading*' by M. S. Steffensen and C. Joag-Dev (cited in Alderson and Urquhart, 1984: 53) a study conducted at the University of Wisconsin which examines the way in which even highly proficient readers of English process texts when reading. Subjects from India and the United states were asked to recall two parallel texts describing Indian and American weddings. The information they recalled was then analyzed for the amount recalled and the types of errors made in order to ascertain whether cultural background made a difference.

From the above, it was concluded that reading comprehension is a function of cultural background knowledge. Alderson and Urguhart (1984: 54) describe what they call "schemata". They say "if readers possess the schemata assumed by the writer, they easily understand what is said in the text and also make the necessary inferences about what is implicit, rather than stated". By schemata was meant "the abstract cognitive structures which incorporate generalized knowledge about objects and events".

For example, the schemata concerning a wedding might include knowledge about the roles of bride and groom and other family members, what clothing is traditionally worn, who is invited, where the wedding is held, what rituals form part of the ceremony and so on. Obviously, these schemata will differ cross-culturally. (Ibid: 55)

From Long's (1984) notion to develop a feeling for language among elementary-level students of English as a foreign language in the contexts in which he works in Thailand there is clearly a cline to the more sophisticated second or first-language learning contexts supposed by Nash, Carter, and Short and Candlin. (Cited in Stanford, 2003: 68)

This is not to say the basic issues of response, language awareness, and sequencing of learning tasks are not common to all the contexts. In Arab world, Marwan Obiedat (1996) as cited in (El-Naili, 2006: 22-23) conducted a study examining the English department curriculums of Arab universities including the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, KSA, Tunisia, Egypt and many other countries. He discovered, surprisingly, that the number of courses in language and linguistics are more than those in literature of the universities curriculums. Obiedat (1996) concludes that English departments of the universities of the Arab world are actually heavily dominated by the language and linguistic components rather than anything else. And he adds that the Arab universities show a lack of interest in the history of English literature and culture. Therefore, ignoring the history and culture of the language is an obstacle for foreign learners attempting to learn the core of a language.

Literature has much more to offer than language would normally do. Literature should not be taught for linguistic purposes only, for students have a lot to gain from the excellent quality it offers, but

regarding it as a subject of linguistic analysis is unfair judgment. Obiedat (1996) goes on to support that “it is true that literature uses language as its medium, but this does not mean that the structure of literature is identical with structure of language. The literary structure does not and cannot coincide with that of language” (ibid:24). In other words, literary language components differ at some level from that of linguistic components.

Another survey was conducted on secondary school students to justify if the age, sex and intelligence effect the students’ reactions toward poetry. Reeves (1958: 51) examined the results of the study and he concludes that the students of eleven to twelve can be treated as older juniors and there are no radically different methods to be used but only an increased range of material must be taken into consideration. Thus, in this respect he argues that “students respond readily to the right poems taught in the right way”.

Reeves (1958) also examined the difference between girls’ and boys’ reactions toward poetry. He finds that boys have a negative attitude that poetry is aesthetic particular matter for girls. Boys at this age are aware of the gulf between themselves and girls, and hence between themselves and poetry, because they regard poetry as in itself something for girls. And most teachers will agree that this gulf hampers the teaching of poetry, especially in single-sex schools.

Reeves (1958: 52) finds another difficulty which makes the teaching of poetry in secondary schools difficult is the range of intelligence ability likely to occur in one class. In some schools the educational system is graded according to intelligence. After experiencing poetry on such schools, Reeves finds that it is unimportant, for poetry teaching, to differentiate between types of schools and types pupil. He adds that intelligence, as measured by such things as intelligence tests, mathematical ability, and even skill in verbal expression, is only one factor, and not necessarily the most important one, in the appreciation of poetry. As a result of his study, Reeves assumes that the "teacher must make his own individual adjustments according to his estimate of his pupils' poetic age". (Ibid: 53).

Cultural background is another difficulty discussed by El-Naili (2006: 23) in her research. She concludes that "The English curriculum of the Arab universities shows a lack of interest in English literature and culture, therefore, pushing it into the 'background'" as Obiedat (1996) describes it: "Ignoring the history and culture of the language we study, will be an obstacle for students attempting to learn the core of the language", and what Obiedat supports here is that literature, not language/linguistics, is what is needed to balance the educational and cultural needs". El-Naili finally goes on to say that some Libyan students refuse to learn western beliefs which, they think, are not suitable to the Islamic

culture. She argues that they cannot accept something forbidden in their religion.

Thus, the excuse of Libyan students' lack of responding to the English literature is that they have many obstacles which hinder their acceptance of western culture. They cannot easily accept something new, far removed from their fathers' beliefs, customs and traditions. As a result of the above, the reasons behind some students' lack of literary response are related to religious, cultural, political and social issues. Thus, teachers and syllabus designers should be aware of what kind of texts their students need to learn choosing the most acceptable to the students.

Also El-Naili finds that the sophistication of literary texts, especially poems, which our students are rarely exposed to, has been considered as one of the obstacles. Another difficulty which can be added is that literature is not applied in the outside world such as science and engineering for that it can be considered as a neglected area of learning a foreign language.

Another study was conducted, by Hanan Y. Abdul Jabbar (2000) (cited in El-Naili, 2006: 25) on fourth year students at the English department in Makkah's Girls College for Education, in order to find out the real reasons behind her students' weak performance in English despite the numerous courses they have been taking in literature. Students complain that the language of some of the literary works is so far beyond

their language ability which is associated to the habitual use of the dictionary. This led them to use or even refer to simplified and translated version of the prescribed literary works, which unfortunately made them lose confidence of their language ability due to the very little interaction with the texts.

The study results show that the method that has been used so far in teaching English literature plays a great role in the weakness of students' performance. Therefore, methods of teaching English literature have to be changed in order to gain fruitful and better results. Though we know that most EFL/ESL students are not competent enough and that we push students to study literature as if they knew how to. The study suggests the necessity of revising the methods of teaching English literature to our students in ways that suit the desirable purposes. Norton (1997: 105) concludes: "to develop their language competence and increase their literary awareness as well ... through engaging students in many activities which involve them in interaction with their teachers and each other, elicit responses from the individual student and encourage them to have more interaction with the text".

CHAPTER III

Data Collection and Analysis

3. 1. Introduction

Any research is a systematic process of inquiry consisting of three essential elements or components: (1) a question, problem, or hypothesis, (2) data, (3) analysis and interpretation of data (Nunan, 1992: 3). The current chapter concerns data collection and data analysis. Since the present study examines the students' response toward poetry teaching it has used two forms of questionnaires; one distributed among second and third year students; and the other among the instructors. The students' sample has been chosen randomly from both of the classes. The second type represents the two instructors of literature at Benghazi University. The questionnaire for the students contains 19 items starting with questions which examine the literary competence of the students whether in English or in Arabic, next with questions about the difficulties they face when studying poetry, the teaching methodology, the response of the participants inside the class, and ends with questions to get their opinions and comments about the poetry texts they are exposed to. The same type of questions that were distributed among second year students were distributed among third year, so as to discover whether differences in response due to the literary background between the two classes. The

second form of the questionnaire was for the instructors. It consists of 15 questions concentrating on the methodology used and the response they get from the students during their experience of teaching poetry.

3. 2. The Questionnaire for the Students

The questions of the questionnaire were constructed and framed according to many types of difficulties that were discussed in the literature review. The main aim of these questions is to find out if the students in the department face the same difficulties that other foreign students have already faced, also to distinguish the most complicated type of difficulty that the majority face. In addition, the questions aim to elicit from the students' answers anything that indicates other types of difficulties that were not mentioned before and might concern only Libyan students.

Since the questionnaire consists of nineteen questions, the researcher has divided it into four sections, each with its subject. The first three questions are introductory in order to introduce the questions to the students. The second set of questions is concerned with the difficulties that face the students when reading poetry. The third section is related to the responding to poetry. The final section is personal, since they examine their opinions about the response poetry.

Question 1 is related to habit of reading poetry; is it always, sometimes, rarely or never?

Question 2 asks about the way of studying poetry that the students prefer. If they study it by translating the words, memorizing the teachers' notes, feeling the sense of the text or they by combining the three ways. Question 3 asks about the most favorite place to for reading poetry. Questions 4 and 8 highlight the difficulties of reading and studying poetry.

Questions 5 and 6 are open, since there are no choices to be picked up. They ask about the most favorite Arabic and English poet to them with some details about their poems. While question 7 is concerned with the English poems that the students know by heart and their titles.

Questions 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 are all centered on the study activities to check how much effort the student makes to learn literature in class and even after class with his/ her class mates. Question 16 is concerned with the student's influence by a poem that he/she has read and he/ she cannot forget.

While the students' opinions about poetry are important in this research, questions 17 and 18 are centered on that. Question 17 asks about their viewpoints in learning the figurative language to enjoy studying English poetry. Question 18 asks about the role of poetry in shaping manners. Question 19 examines the student ability to find the figures of speech of an extract taken from Robert Frost's "Stopping by Wood in a Snowy Evening".

3. 3. The Questionnaire for the Instructors

The Instructors' questionnaire is constructed in the same way as the students' questionnaire. It, however, contains 15 questions and most of the questions are constructed according to the difficulties mentioned in the previous studies.

Question 1, 2 and 3 are centered on the methodology that the instructors use in teaching poetry and the methods of selecting texts. Question 4 is about the difficulties that the instructors face throughout their experience of poetry teaching. Question 5 asks about the students' favorite kind of verse to learn whether it is classical or modern one.

Questions 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 are concerned with the activities that the instructors use for his/her lessons preparation, whether inside or outside the classroom. Questions 11, 12 and 13 ask the instructors to give their opinions about the issues that may/ may not hinder the students' response, as what mentioned in the previous studies, which are; age, gender and the language level of the students.

Question 14 asks the instructors if they are happy with the syllabus that they teach. Finally, question 15 asks them if the literary syllabus that they teach differs from that was taught when they were students.

3.4. Data Analysis of the Students' Questionnaires

The first questionnaire was distributed among second and third year students (a sample of sixty students), thirty copies are distributed among second year students and the other half is distributed among third year students. The researcher clarified every single question to the students with the help of their literature instructor starting with multiple-choice questions to informational questions.

1. How often do you read poetry?

a. Always = 1

b. Sometimes = 2

c. Rarely = 3

d. Never = 4

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	1	2	3.33	6.67
2	11	16	36.67	53.33
3	10	10	33.33	33.33
4	8	2	26.67	6.67
Missing items	0	0	0.00	0.00
Total	30	30	%100	%100

The results show that eighteen second-year students choose 'rarely' and 'never' with a combined percentage of %60 which means that most of them do not prefer reading poetry. Ten students of each group rarely read

poetry and eight of the second year students never read it at all, while only one student always reads poetry. Generally, the table indicates that the majority of second year students do not frequently read poetry. The percentage of third year students is a little bit better since the largest percentage of %53.33 is given to 'sometimes' denoting that they read poetry from time to time. Only two students frequently read poetry and two of them do not read poetry at all.

2. How do you study English poetry?

a. By translating the words =1

b. Memorizing the teacher's notes =2

c. Feeling the sense of the text =3

d. All of the above =4

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	4	2	13.33	6.67
2	2	6	6.67	20.00
3	17	6	56.67	20.00
4	6	16	20.00	53.33
Missing items	1	0	3.33	0.00
Total	30	30	%100	%100

The percentage shows that the majority of second year students prefer to feel the sense of the text to understand it. Thus the table shows that about fifty-seven percent of the students prefer to study poetry by

feeling the general meaning, while only %13.33 of the students prefer studying poetry by translating the difficult words. Furthermore, %20.00 of the students use more than one technique to study poetry that is, a combination of the three items mentioned above. Only two students depend on the memorization of the notes said by their teacher in the lectures. One student left the question unanswered. To third year students, the combination of all methods is the best way for studying poetry since %53.33 of them choose the last choice. And the same percentage of %20.00 is given to the second and the third choices. Meaning, six of the third year students prefer memorizing the teacher's notes and the same number of them try to feel the sense of the texts.

3. Where do you prefer reading poetry?

a. At home = 1

b. In the library = 2

c. In the class = 3

d. At other places = 4

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	13	19	43.33	63.33
2	3	2	10.00	6.67
3	2	7	6.67	23.33
4	12	2	40.00	6.67
Missing items	0	0	0.00	0.00
Total	30	30	% 100	% 100

Home is the most comfortable place that any one likes to take rest, read, write, and relax at, therefore; we find that %43.3 is the percentage of second year students who like to read poetry at home rather than anywhere else. Also the majority of third year students tend to read poetry at home. %40.00 is another percentage which tells that, large number of the second year students read poetry at other places like the sea and parks, etc. The results of third-year students, on one hand, shows that the percentage of %23.3 is given to "reading poetry in class" on the other hand only two second year students enjoy reading poetry inside the class. Only three of second year students and two of third year students like to sit in the library for reading poetry. Generally, the responses seem to be a little bit similar for both samples.

4. What is the main difficulty you have in understanding the poetic text?

a. Figures of speech =1

b. Grammar =2

c. Vocabulary =3

d. Background =4

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	6	7	20.00	23.33
2	1	1	3.33	3.33
3	20	20	66.67	66.67
4	2	2	6.67	6.67
Missing items	1	0	3.33	0.00
Total	30	30	% 100	% 100

Any reader of poetry usually finds some difficulties when reading poetry, including the professional one. Some of these difficulties are related to the complexity of figurative language being used in poetry, others are related to the deviant grammatical rules of poetry, and still others are related to the poetic diction. Another source of difficulties is the background (whether it is cultural, social, religious, or literary) which generally hinders poetry reading. The students' responses (both classes) show that (%66.67) of the total number do not understand poetry because of the difficulty of its vocabulary. Thus, the majority of second year students and third year students agree on the difficulty of vocabulary as the most difficult issue which hinders their understanding of poetry.

Furthermore, this difficulty is usually related to the literary background of the students. In other words students may be simply able to understand the surface meanings of the vocabulary of poetry but they do not understand the deeper meanings of the words unless they have the literary competence. In fact 20.00% of second year students and 23.33% of third year students find difficulty in understating the figurative language. The results of (1) and (3) together, since they related to each other, show that 26 students of the second year and 27 students of third year with the percentages %86.67 and %90.00 respectively find poetry difficult because of the figures of speech and vocabulary together. While very modest percentages (%3.33 and %6.67) are given to the difficulties of grammar and background showing that the students do not consider them hindrances. Only one second year student did not answer the question.

5. Who is your favorite Arabic poet?

Name a poem or two you have read of this poet

Valid answer= 1

Invalid answer= 2

No answer= missing

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year

1	15	20	50.0	66.67
2	5	6	16.67	20.00
Missing items	10	4	33.33	13.33
Total	30	30	%100	%100

Comparing the percentages of second and third year students, the results show that %50.00 and %66.67 of them respectively have a good level of the literary background in their mother tongue. They supported their answers with evidences assuring their competence in Arabic literature. On the other hand, five and six students of both classes mistakenly gave names of Arab novelists like *Najeeb Mahfouz*. But a large number of them prefer to read modern Arabic poetry of *Nizar Qabbani*⁽¹⁾, the same with second year students' answers which show their tendency to read modern poetry. In addition, they gave the titles of some works by *Qabbani* such as *Diwan Alkalimat*, *Habibat wa Almatar* and *Ahmad Shawqi*⁽²⁾ (the Egyptian well-known poet who was called *the prince of poets*).

(1) Nizar Tawfiq Qabbani (21 March 1923 – 30 April 1998) was a Syrian diplomat, poet and publisher. His poetic style combines simplicity and elegance in exploring themes of love, eroticism, feminism, religion, and Arab nationalism. He is one of the most revered contemporary poets in the Arab world. (www.wikipedia.org)

(2) Ahmad Shawqi (1868- 1932) was one of the finest Arabic Language poets and dramatists who pioneered the modern Egyptian literary movement, most notably introducing the genre of poetic epics to the Arabic. (www.wikipedia.org)

Ten students of second year and four students of third year did not answer this question. Generally speaking, the Arabic literary background of the students of both classes is good.

6. Who is your favorite English poet?

Name a poem or two you have read of this poet

Valid answer =1

Invalid answer =2

No answer =missing

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	20	26	66.67	86.67
2	4	2	13.33	6.67
Missing items	6	2	20.00	6.67
Total	30	30	% 100	% 100

Comparing the responses of questions (6) and (5), it is clear that students know English poets more than Arab poets. Despite the fact that the literary competence in the mother tongue helps the students to learn the literature of the target language, but this does not always have an impact on the learning of literature. Students can learn English literature even if they have weak background of the literature of their own language. The table shows that sixty-six percent of second year students and eighty-six percent of third year students have good background in

English poetry and they mentioned the most famous English poets such as *William Shakespeare, Robert Frost* and *William Wordsworth*. In spite of the fact that they have not yet learnt some of them in class, they are familiar with some of their works like, *Hamlet, Midsummer Night's Dream, Sonnets, Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* and *Ode on Immortality*. This indicates that the students are able to cope with English literature in some way or another. While about %13.33 and %6.67 of second and third year students respectively misunderstood the question and gave some names of English novelists and mentioned their novels which means that they, at least, have good literary background. Also, six students of sophomores and two of juniors left the question unanswered.

7. How many poems do you know by heart?

a. One =1

b. Two =2

c. Many =3

d. None =4

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	5	5	16.67	16.67
2	2	2	6.67	6.67
3	1	7	3.33	23.33
4	20	15	66.67	50.00
Missing items	2	1	6.67	3.33
Total	30	30	% 100	% 100

This question is the most problematic one to the students because they do not exactly know how many poems they know by heart or maybe it is difficult to remember if they know any English poems by heart. Surprisingly, the percentages of %66.67 and %50.00 show that the majority of second year and third year students do not know any English poems by heart. There are only 10 students of both classes who know only one English poem by heart. However, a very limited number that cannot be neglected shows that only four students (two from each class) know only two poems by heart. While only one second year student and seven third-year students know many English poems and they added some details about them, and three students (two from second year and one from third year) left the question unanswered.

8. What kind of difficulties may you find while reading poetry?

a. Cultural difficulties =1

b. Social difficulties =2

c. Literary difficulties =3

d. Linguistic difficulties =4

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	9	7	30.00	23.34
2	2	1	6.67	3.33
3	8	12	26.67	40.00
4	8	10	26.67	33.33
Missing items	3	0	10.00	00.00
Total	30	30	% 100	% 100

Unlike question 4, this question looks deeply at the sorts of difficulties that hinder the reading and the understanding of poetry. The percentages (%30.00 and %23.00) indicate that they really have cultural problems while reading any poetical text. The percentage shows that %40.00 of third-year students are not able to cope with poetry because of its literary difficulty, that is, its figures of speech, archaisms, and metaphors etc. The same percentages of %26.67 are given to each of the literary and linguistic difficulties by second year students, indicating that they have problems while reading poetry because of their modest linguistic and literary competence. Furthermore, very low percentages (%6.67 and %3.33) are given to the social difficulty meaning that the students are capable of overcoming this kind of difficulty easily while only three of the second year students left the question unanswered. As a

result of what has been mentioned above, the students consider the literary and the cultural difficulties as the main troubles which hinder the process of reading poetry.

9. How do you respond to your teacher's question?

a. By thinking about it and giving the answer =1

b. By responding simultaneously without thinking =2

c. Pretending that you have not heard the question =3

d. Other =4

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	28	25	93.33	83.34
2	1	3	3.33	10.00
3	0	1	0.00	3.33
4	1	1	3.33	3.33
Missing items	0	0	0.00	0.00
Total	30	30	%100	%100

Using the language of literature in discussions inside the classroom helps to integrate the learning of language and literature syllabus more closely. By doing so, students make meaningful interpretations or informed evaluations of a given text, and also increase their general awareness and understanding of English. Furthermore, opening the discussion to the students is a motivational method of teaching poetry. The responses show that most of the students, i.e., %93.33 of second-year

students and %83.00 of third year students usually think well before giving the answer and this is the ideal strategy to give the appropriate answer in any discussion. The table also shows that four students of both classes usually respond simultaneously without taking time to think. While only %3.33 of third-year students try to pretend that they have not heard the question at all. Also, %3.33 of each class use some other methods to answer the questions. Some tend to write down their responses and others tend to answer the questions in a form of discussion with the teacher.

10. Do you prepare some notes and questions for poetry lectures at home?

a. Yes =1

b. No =2

c. Sometimes =3

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	3	4	10.00	13.33
2	15	8	50.00	26.67
3	12	18	40.00	60.00
Missing items	0	0	0.00	0.00
Total	30	30	%100	%100

Preparing notes before lectures is important for the students in order to understand whatever is vague, not only for poetry but also for any other subject. But the question is, do our students usually use this technique before any poetry lecture? The table gives the answer. The responses show that they do not always prepare notes and questions for the lectures of poetry. The percentages (%40.00 and %60.00) show that they sometimes prepare some notes and questions to be discussed by the teacher during poetry lectures, though, only 10.0% and %13.33 of the students prepare questions and notes to be discussed inside the class. The general results of both classes show that the majority of the students are indolent and inactive and this can be considered as one of the main reasons which may hinder the response to poetry teaching.

11. Do you take notes during poetry lectures?

a. Yes =1

b. No =2

c. Sometimes =3

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	23	26	76.67	86.67
2	3	1	10.00	3.33
3	4	3	13.33	10.00
Missing items	0	0	0.00	0.00
Total	30	30	%100	%100

This question is related to the previous one in terms of the students' preparation for lectures. However, the latter concerns taking notes from teachers' explanation during poetry lectures. The percentages of 76.6% and %86.67 show that the majority of the students take notes during lectures. On the other hand, only %10.00 of second year and %3.33 of third year students do not write down the notes provided by the teacher during poetry lectures. Generally speaking, the students usually depend on their teachers' notes and explanations in the lectures.

12. Do you use the internet to clarify the facts provided by teacher in his/her notes?

a. Yes =1

b. No =2

c. Sometimes =3

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	3	7	10.00	23.33
2	18	14	60.00	46.67
3	9	9	30.00	30.00
Missing items	0	0	0.00	0.00
Total	30	30	%100	%100

Students usually use the internet to develop the information about any topic. But with regard to poetry, the table shows that %60.00 and

%46.67 of each class do not often use the internet and prefer to depend on their teacher/instructor to get information about some given texts. While only %10.00 and %23.33 of them, really use internet websites in order to understand facts provided by their teacher/instructor. Furthermore, %30.00 of both classes sometimes prefer to depend on some websites which concern poetry like: www.perfectpoetry.com; www.englishpoetryonline.com; and www.writerdigest.com

13. Do you make comparisons between your culture and the culture of the text?

a. Yes =1

b. No =2

c. Sometimes =3

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	9	12	30.00	40.00
2	9	7	30.00	23.34
3	9	10	30.00	33.33
Missing items	3	1	10.00	3.33
Total	30	30	%100	%100

It is noticeable that the three choices of the question above have got the same numbers of responses from second year students. According to second year students, the responses are equally divided into three thirds;

the first third shows that they usually make comparisons between their culture and the culture of the text. The second third shows that they do not make such comparisons at all. The last third shows that they sometimes compare their own culture with the culture of a given text. According to juniors, the responses are a little bit different since %40.00 of them compare their culture with the text's, %33.33 of them sometimes make such comparison, and %23.34 of them do not compare between the two cultures at all. Only four students of both classes (three from second year and one from third year) left the question unanswered.

14. Have you ever expressed your poetical creation in your native language?

a. Yes=1

b. No =2

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	3	24	10.00	80.00
2	26	6	86.67	20.00
Missing items	1	0	3.33	0.00
Total	30	30	%100	%100

Some students are able to express their own feelings in a poetical form whether in their own language or in whatever language they know. The table shows that %80.00 of third year students have expressed their

poetical creation in their mother tongue language. While a very large number of second year students are not able to express their thoughts in a form of poetry. Only one second year student did not answer the question.

15. Can you recite a poem in front of your colleagues?

a. Yes =1

b. No =2

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	19	18	63.33	60.00
2	9	12	30.00	40.00
Missing items	2	0	6.67	0.00
Total	30	30	%100	%100

This question is related to the personality of the learners, the matter which may increase or decrease the learning progression. Therefore %63.33 of second year students and %60.00 of third-year students have the courage to stand and recite a poem in front of their colleagues. However %70.00 of both classes (%30.00 from second year and %40.00 from third year) cannot read poems aloud inside the class. While two second year students left the question unanswered.

16. Have you ever been influenced by a poem and you cannot forget it?

a. Yes =1

b. No =2

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	7	18	23.33	60.00
2	20	12	66.67	40.00
Missing items	3	0	10.00	0.00
Total	30	30	% 100	% 100

We usually read a lot in our lives but there is something we have read before which has stuck in our memories and we can never forget. Poetry also affects us emotionally, therefore, a very large number of third year students (%60.00) show that they have been influenced by a poem and they cannot forget it. While the majority of second year students (%66.67) chose (no), meaning that they have not been exposed to read something effective in their lives. Three students did not answer the question.

17. Do you find that it is important to learn figurative language to enjoy studying English language?

a. Yes =1

b. No =2

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	25	19	83.33	63.33
2	3	8	10.00	26.67
Missing items	2	3	6.67	10.00
Total	30	30	%100	%100

Learning language for language's sake is sometimes boring but when learning language by using figures of speech it will be more fruitful. Thus, from the points of view of the majority we can infer that they consider figurative language to be important to enjoy studying English language. The percentages of (%83.33 and %63.33) show that most of the students enjoy learning English through the figurative language of poetry. The imaginative world and the figurative use of the poetical language make the learning of English more interesting than learning English through grammar drills. Whereas, %10.00 and %26.67 of the students do not prefer learning English through the figurative language of poetry

18. Do you think that poetry plays a role in shaping manners?

a. Yes =1

b. No =2

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	19	19	63.33	63.33
2	6	8	20.00	26.67
Missing items	5	3	16.67	10.00
Total	30	30	%100	%100

Since the question concerns the role of poetry in shaping human manners therefore most of the students (%63.33) of each class agree that poetry can change human manners whether positively or negatively. On the other hand, 20.00% of second year and %26.67 of third year students show that poetry has no role in forming manners. While eight students (five of second year and three of third year students) left the question unanswered.

19. Please try to find the figures of speech from this extract

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go, before I sleep

And miles to go, before I sleep⁽¹⁾

(1) "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is generally regarded as Frost's masterpiece. The poem was included in Frost's collection *New Hampshire* (1923) for which he won the first of his four Pulitzer Prizes. (www.wikipedia.org)

a. Correct answer =1

b. Incorrect answer =2

c. No answer = missing system

Symbol	Frequency		Percentage	
	Second year	Third year	Second year	Third year
1	8	20	26.67	66.67
2	15	5	50.00	16.67
Missing items	7	5	23.33	16.67
Total	30	30	%100	%100

This question evaluates the students' literary competence and their understanding of any poetical text and it examines their immediate grasp of the figures of speech of poetry. The poet, in this poem, uses some figures of speech since he compares life to "woods" that are lovely but sometimes "dark and deep". The poet does not know what will happen if he restrains himself for life because no one can suspect his destiny even if his life was beautiful. In the last two final lines, the poet has a lot of responsibilities he has got to finish before he dies.

It is clear that second year students generally try to get the hidden meaning of this extract, therefore, the table shows that %26.67 of them at least tried to give some explanations of the poem. On the other hand, %66.67 of third year students gave explanations of the figures of speech that can be logically acceptable.

For example one student said "I think 'Woods', in this poem, means life that seems lovely but sometimes it is dark and deep."Dark" means gloomy and obscure and "deep" means it is unpredictable and full of secrets. The poet does not know what will happen if he leaves his desires in order to keep himself in control. In the last two repeated lines, the poet is committed to do something that must be done before his death". Another student answered "the poet feels his life is almost finished so he tries to do something that must be done before his death". Anyhow this denotes that the students are able to understand and explain the figures of speech of the extract. However, %50.00 of second year students are not able to identify the figures of speech of the extract because they did not study the figures of speech yet ,although, some of them (%26.67) identified them. In addition, %23.33 and %16.67 are the percentages of unanswered items.

3.5. Data Analysis of the Instructors' Questionnaires

As has been mentioned before, there were only two members of the teaching staff who teach English literature in the department of English at the University. Therefore, only two questionnaires are presented to be analyzed. The questionnaires will be symbolized by the letter Q with numbers, (Q1 and Q2), presenting the question first and then providing detailed analysis of the responses.

1. Which approach of literature teaching do you often use?

- a. Cultural approach*⁽¹⁾
- b. Language-based approach*⁽²⁾
- c. Personal growth approach*⁽³⁾
- d. A combination of the three*
- e. Other, please mention*

The analysis of the responses to item 1

Q1. A combination of the three

Q2. A combination of the three

Instructors usually combine the three methods eclectically. Also, they are very selective in their choice of texts. That is, choosing the most appropriate material which helps the students to cope with English language culturally, linguistically, and literarily. Furthermore, the combination of the three methods is a logical notion for teaching literature as being a practical approach. Thus, the instructors tend to be impartial to any of the three methods.

(1) The approach which aims to present fewer cultural problems than others using texts that are culturally accessible, absorbing, and relevant to the students' own society. It suggests some strategies for overcoming cultural problems. (2) Detailed analysis of the language of the literary text that helps to make meaningful interpretations or informed evaluations of it. The approach by which the students are encouraged to draw on their knowledge of familiar grammatical, lexical or discoursal categories to make aesthetic judgments of the text. (3) It involves learner as whole person, and so is potentially highly motivating. It helps students to become more actively involved both intellectually and emotionally in learning English. Lazar (2001).

2. How do you select a text?

- a. According to the type of course you are teaching*
- b. According to the type of students who are taking the course*
- c. According to the text itself*
- d. According to your students' choice*
- e. Other, please mention*

The analysis of the responses to item 2

Q1. According to the type of students who are taking the course

Q2. According to the type of students who are taking the course

Both instructors agree on selecting the literary text according to the learners who are taking the course. That is, their age, gender and level of comprehension decide what kind of text to be taught. Their responses denote that the other criteria for selecting texts being mentioned above are not utilized in their teaching methodology.

3. What kind of difficulties did you face throughout your experience of poetry teaching?

- a. Cultural background*
- b. Students' literary competence*
- c. Linguistic proficiency*
- d. All of the above*
- e. Other, please mention*

The analysis of the responses to item 3

Q1. Students' literary competence

Q2. Students' literary competence

Both instructors consider that the students' insufficient literary competence is the main difficulty facing them throughout their experience of poetry teaching. That signifies that their students are not literary competent enough to cope with some foreign poetical texts. Q2 instructor adds: "My students do not read poetry in their own language, so how can they possibly read it in English". Accordingly, the incompetence in Arabic literature hinders the understanding of English literary texts. The instructors may be able to overcome any of the other difficulties such as the linguistic or the cultural by some techniques used in their methodology; however, they consider the students' literary competence the main obstacle that hampers the response to English poetry teaching.

4. Which kind of verse do you prefer to teach?

a. Classical

b. Modern

c. Both of them

The analysis of the responses to item 4

Q1. Both of them

Q2. Modern

Classical poetry is not sometimes favored by students for its highly sophisticated language structure. Yet, teachers also may find it a little bit difficult to teach. Therefore, the response of Q1 denotes that he has no problem with teaching both kinds of verse, while the second response shows preferring modern poetry teaching only.

5. What type of verse do your students prefer to learn?

a. Classical

b. Modern

c. Both of them

The analysis of the responses to item 5

Q1. Modern

Q2. Modern

The responses show that students generally tend to learn modern poetry rather than classical one, since the latter to them is more complex than the former. One instructor says: "I myself sometimes find a complexity in understanding the exact meaning of a classical poem so how can the students get it easily".

6. Do you usually prepare the lessons before lectures?

a. Yes

b. No

The analysis of the responses to item 6

Q1. Yes

Q2. Yes

Preparing lessons is an essential part of teaching profession. Thus, the responses show that the instructors of poetry usually prepare outlines and notes for lectures. This shows that the instructors are enthusiastic energetic, active and well-prepared to present the lessons.

7. Do you read poems aloud to your students?

a. Yes

b. No

Analysis of responses to item 7

Q1. Yes

Q2. Yes

Reading poems aloud is a vital part of poetry teaching methodology. It is one of the most important activities that help learners to engage closely with the text. While listening to the instructor carefully, learners usually recognize how to pronounce the words that may be considered an obstacle which hinders their response to poetry. Thus, the instructors' responses tell that both of them read poems aloud in their lectures.

8. Do you often ask your students to read poems?

a. Yes

b. No

Analysis of responses to item 8

Q1. No

Q2. No

The instructors admit that they do not often ask the students to read poems. The instructors believe that reading a text at home before lectures by the students is more fruitful than class reading.

9. When do you usually ask your students questions in the class?

a. At the beginning of the lecture

b. In the middle of the lecture

c. At the end of the lecture

d. I do not ask them at all

Analysis of responses to item 9

Q1. At the end of the lecture

Q2. At the beginning of the lecture

The good teacher must ask questions in the class in order to make sure that his/her students have understood the text. There are three kinds of questions that can be asked during lectures; pre-reading questions, while-reading questions and post-reading questions. Questions like, "What do you think this poem is about?", "Can you infer the general meaning of the poem?", "Read the first stanza and decide in which line there is a metaphor?" etc. This type of questions can be asked at the beginning of the lectures before reading the poem. While-reading questions are

comprehensive ones, asking about the meaning of certain words or phrases in the poem. However, questions like, "What lesson can you learn from this extract?", "Give your own brief interpretation of the poem?", etc, are usually asked in the last part of the lectures. The responses of both (Q1 and Q2) indicate that the instructors usually use this technique but at different times during the lecture. Q1 says that he usually asks questions at the end of the lecture to get the students' feedback about the given text after reading and explaining it widely to them. However, Q2 prefers asking questions at the beginning of the lecture as a means to get students' responses about a given text before reading the poem.

10. Do you often engage your students in discussing the issues of the text?

a. Yes

b. No

Analysis of responses to item10

Q1. Yes

Q2. Yes

For a fuller comprehension of what a poem is about, a fuller discussion must be provided. When the teacher makes a discussion based on the theme or subject of the poem, the students will be able to describe the values and world-view which are either implicitly or explicitly expressed in the poem. This sort of engagement inside the class improves

the students' ability to speak English. Thus, the responses show that both of the instructors use this method with their students.

11. Do you think that the age of your students may affect their response?

a. Yes

b. No

Explain why in each case

Analysis of responses to item 11

Q1. Yes

Q2. Yes

The current study is specially targeted at a particular age, which is about twenty-one to twenty-two year old students. Thus, Q1 says that the majority of his students are teenagers and a little bit shy. In addition, they find it difficult to express what they want to say. Furthermore, Q2 claims that mature students have been already exposed to a sort of longer experience than young students.

12. Does the gender of the students matter in their response?

a. Yes

b. No

Explain why in each case

Analysis of responses to item 12

Q1. Yes

Q2. Yes

Both instructors agree that the gender of the students matters in the response. Q1 explains that girls have outnumbered boys recently and some girls speak freely and enrich the discussion. The other opinion of Q2 says that girls are more emotional than boys therefore they enjoy poetry reading. Thus, both instructors' points of view indicate that poetry has an emotional impact mostly on girls more than on boys according to their different nature of creation.

13. Do you think that the language level of your students is too elementary to cope with the texts?

a. Yes

b. No

Analysis of responses to item 13

Q1. No

Q2. No

The responses show that the students' linguistic level is good enough to cope with the language of poetry. The instructors believe that the problem that hinders the students' responses is cultural and literary but it is related to their language level. They consider the language level of their students is good.

14. Are you happy with the syllabus that you teach?

a. Yes

b. No

Analysis of responses to item 14

Q1. Yes

Q2. Yes

Both instructors of poetry respond with "Yes", denoting that the syllabus being taught is satisfactory to them. They consider the syllabus they teach to be systematic and well constructed. In their viewpoint the problem facing students is not related to the literary program of study, it is related to the student himself/ herself: problems of motivation, the ability to learn, and the literary competence in the mother tongue literature, and the syllabus being taught.

15. Do you find that literature taught in the department is not different from what was taught when you were a student?

a. Yes

b. No

Analysis of responses to item 15

Q1. Yes

Q2. Yes

The responses show that nothing has changed in the literature syllabus for several years till now. May be the instructors' answers were

based on a misunderstanding of the question. The literature syllabus has really changed at Benghazi University for the last decade.

General comments added by the instructors

Q1 Concludes that enjoying, understanding and appreciating literature written in a language other than one's own language is rather difficult.

Q2 believes that students do not have enough literary competence to cope properly with literary texts in English.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4. 1 Findings and Conclusion

The data analysis has highlighted some issues and difficulties related to the students' responses toward poetry teaching. It is clear from the previous chapter that despite the fact that second year and third year students are two different classes in terms of age, the material being taught to them, and education level, they almost had similar opinions and they almost gave similar percentages of responses toward the same items in the questionnaire. The first difficulty that has been obviously noticed is the understanding of the vocabulary of the literary works, especially of poetry. This is shown in the percentages of the fourth question which asked about the main difficulty that the students have in understanding a poetic text. The language structure of poetry is complicated and its vocabulary is usually difficult to understand. That is probably the reason why a large number of students fail to grasp the general meanings of poems. The two subsequent questions examined the students' literary background whether in their mother-tongue or in English, the results showed that about %58.3 of second and third year students have good knowledge in Arabic poetry and about %88 of them have good background in English poetry.

It has been noticed from the tables that most of the students prefer to read poetry at home rather than anywhere else. Also, the main difficulty in understanding English poetry is vocabulary. The language structure of poetry is distinctive for being deviant from the normal rules of language and its vocabulary is usually difficult and hard to understand. That is probably the reason why a large number of the students picked *vocabulary* as their main impediment.

The researcher examined the students' knowledge of Arabic and English poetry through the questions about their favorite poet in both languages. It has been found that the students prefer modern poetry. But very little number of them prefer classical English poetry.

Another difficulty that may hinder the response to poetry teaching is the cultural one, since, the students' responses from both groups denote that the difference between eastern and western cultures reduce their chance to learn English poetry. Therefore, the benefit of literature here is to fill the gap between cultures all over the world. An additional difficulty which the instructors have found during their teaching experience is the students' literary competence. Since they claim that the students are not competent enough to cope with the literary text, especially with poetry, because it is regarded as the most difficult subject to teach and to learn.

As for the methods of teaching poetry and learning, it has been found that the students are following the strategy of receiving the

question, thinking about it and then giving the appropriate answer and this is the perfect way to respond to the teacher's question in whatever subject. Also, another strategy which improves the good response and has been examined in the questionnaire, is preparing notes for poetry lectures at home. Unfortunately, the students do not prepare questions and notes for poetry lectures, which is probably the reason why a large number of them fail to grasp the general meanings of the poems being taught. And it will be hard for the teacher to read, explain and discuss every single word of a poem in the limited time of the lecture. Nevertheless, the students tend to write down the notes and the explanation provided by their instructor. After what has been mentioned before, the researcher has reached the conclusion that most of the students study poetry only for passing the examinations, not for the benefits of it. The student is not the one to be blamed for this, he/she is a victim of the education system, and unless our education system and strategy changed; our students' attitude is not going to change. And this is not the same case with all subject.

Another question asked that examines the student's skill of creative writing. The researcher found that there is a wide difference of the results of second year and third year since the former tend not to express their poetical composition on paper while the latter have used this talent before and supported their answers with some details of poems written by them. On a further question examining the student's ability to recite poems in

front of their peers the researcher obtained data that they have the courage which enables them to stand in front of the class and recite a poem except for some students who are shy and prefer to read poetry silently.

Obviously, the matter of the poetical effect varies between the two classes. Second year students showed the attitude that they have never been influenced by a poem which they studied and never forgot, while third year students being mature have experienced that before and supported their responses with details of some poems. But they share the same opinion of the acceptability of using the figurative language to enjoy studying English language.

In addition, the same opinion is given to the role of poetry in shaping human manners. Both groups agree that poetry has an important impact on the human manners whether positive or negative. Finally, the last question examines the students' ability to interpret, paraphrase, and analyze the figures of speech of the given extract of Frost's poem *Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening*. Since the question is open for the students to answer, the response cannot be judged whether it is right or wrong because it is left to the students' own interpretations and it varies from one to another. The results show that most of third year students gave the accurate meaning of the poem while second year students had hardly got the meaning. The reasons behind this could be that third year students had been taught this poem in the current academic year (i.e. the poem is

included in the third year syllabus) while second year students did not have the chance to study it.

Generally speaking, enjoying poetry is a personal matter which varies from one student to another according to one's innate ability which can be improved by learning the skills that help enhance this ability. Undoubtedly, the teaching methodology used to teach poetry has great impact on the students' reactions toward it.

4. 2 Recommendations

4. 2. 1 Recommendations for the Students

Having discussed, analyzed and interpreted the data, the researcher is going to summarize some methods for teaching poetry and some activities to be followed by the students in order to response to poetry teaching in a better way as suggested by Moon (2001: 87-88) and Leggo (1997: 69). They are the following:

1. Read much poetry without stopping to investigate meaning.
2. Student should be trained from the childhood to appreciate the beauty of poetry.
3. Student should read poetry slowly, carefully, and attentively.
4. Not all poems are difficult and some can be understood and enjoyed on first reading. But good poems yield more if read twice and the best poems still yield dividends even after a hundred readings.

5. Reading poems aloud is another way to understand them. For this reason practice the art of lending poetry your voice.
6. Before trying to read a poem aloud to other people, understand its meaning as much as possible. If you know what the poet says and the poet's attitude toward it, you will be able to find an appropriate tone of voice and to give each part of the poem a proper emphasis.
7. Use your dictionary to get the denotation meaning of key words and if you do not get the connotation even after that you may ask the teacher or go to search on the internet in order to overcome vocabulary difficulty.

4. 2. 2 Recommendations and Guidelines for the Instructors of Poetry

James Reeves (1958: 80), Jorm (1983), Lennard (1996), and Norton (1997) present some valuable methods and guidelines for poetry teachers. Their recommendations can be summarized in the following tips:-

1. As has been seen, the key problem was lack of interest to read poetry. So, the students must be motivated enough to read poetry. We have to develop the love of poetry in our students' hearts by highlighting the beautiful aspects of it. Thus, the syllabus and the teacher together can improve this kind of love.
2. The poems chosen to be read or studied in any lesson should be varied either by a contrast with one another or by a difference in treatment. But above all, variety should be presented.

3. The most important task for the teacher of poetry, once he has decided to read a particular poem, is to study it by himself/herself at leisure, and determine its nature, its intention and its unique character. If he reads the poem and understands it, if he truly knows it, the poem itself will suggest the right way of teaching it.
4. Preparation of material is of utmost importance. Any teacher who has gone into class unprepared feels that his lesson turns to be nothing.
5. It is advisable to read poems silently at first, but as a method of teaching poetry, the value of silent reading should not be overlooked. This may be done just as a preparation for poetry reading.
6. The class should not have their books open while a poem is being read to them. The attention is divided between voice and print, and full concentration upon the poem cannot be achieved. Eyes and ears should be focused on the reader alone.
7. The teacher should produce an atmosphere of physical relaxation in order to get the desired response.
8. The practice of reading round the class by a random choice between the students seems to be fairer than limiting the performers to the best few. It gives a chance even to the weakest. Generally, every member of a class should have some training in reading.

9. Give the students a chance to analyze the poems by paraphrasing them and explaining the themes according to each one's viewpoint, either in writing or by talking.

10. Questions should be carefully prepared. The kind of random questioning which sometimes follows the reading of a poem should be provided by the teacher, and it does not much matter whether the questions are answered orally in front of the class or as a written exercise.

11. In general, poetry should be taught as an active and pleasure experience, not as a text in black-and-white on a page of a book.

At the end, the researcher submits that it is only a modest attempt at exploring the university students' response to poetry. In spite of the scanty data that were available, all efforts have been put into analyzing them as objectively as possible, which has, in turn, developed a deeper insight of the investigator in research methodology in general and poetry reading/teaching in particular. It is hoped that the poetry instructors and poetry students will benefit from this outcome.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX (I)

APPENDIX (II)

A questionnaire for the students in the department

1. How often do you read poetry?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

2. How do you study English poetry?

- a. By translating the words
- b. Memorizing the teacher's notes
- c. Feeling the sense of the text
- d. All of the above

3. Where do you prefer reading poetry?

- a. At home
- b. In the library
- c. In the class
- d. At other places

4. What is the main difficulty you have in understanding the poetic text?

- a. Figures of Speech
- b. Grammar
- c. Vocabulary
- d. Background

5. Who is your favorite Arabic poet?

.....
.....

Name a book or two you have read for this writer

.....
.....

6. Who is your favorite English poet?

.....
.....
Name a book or two you have read for this writer
.....
.....

7. How many English poems do you know by heart?

- a. One
- b. Two
- c. Many
- d. None

Please give the title of at-least one

.....

8. What kind of difficulties may you find when reading English poetry?

- a. Cultural difficulties
- b. Social difficulties
- c. Literary difficulties
- d. Linguistic difficulties

If there are any other difficulties, please mention them

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9. How do you respond to your teacher's question?

- a. By thinking about it and giving the answer
- b. By responding simultaneously without thinking
- c. Pretending that you have not heard the question
- d. Other, please specify.....

10. Do you prepare some notes and questions for poetry lectures at home?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Sometimes

11. Do you take notes during poetry lectures?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Sometimes

12. Do you use Internet to clarify the facts provided by teacher in his/her notes?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Sometimes

If you know the names of some websites for the same purpose, please mention them

.....

13. Do you make comparisons between your culture and the culture of the text?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Sometimes

14. Have you expressed your poetical creation in your native language?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, please mention the title

.....

15. Can you recite a poem in front of your colleagues?

- a. Yes

b. No

In no, explain why

.....
.....

16. Have you ever influenced by a poem and you cannot forget it?

a. Yes

b. No

If yes, please give some details of it

.....
.....
.....
.....

17. Do you find that it is important to learn Figurative language to enjoy studying English language?

a. Yes

b. No

18. Do you think that poetry plays a role in shaping manners?

a. Yes

b. No

Explain why in each case

.....
.....

19. Please try to find the figure of speech from this extract

The Woods are lovely and dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go, before I sleep...
And miles to go, before I sleep...

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- Any general comments concerning your response to English poetry, please add

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A Questionnaire for the instructors of literature in the department

1. Which approach of literature teaching do you often use?

- a) Cultural approach
- b) Language-based approach
- c) Personal growth approach
- d) A combination of the three
- e) Other, please mention

2. How do you select a text?

- a) According to the type of course you are teaching
- b) According to the type of students who are taking the course
- c) According to the text itself
- d) According to your students' choice
- e) Other, please mention

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3. What kind of difficulties did you face throughout your experience of poetry teaching?

- a) Cultural background
- b) Students' literary competence
- c) Linguistic proficiency
- d) All of the above

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4. Which kind of verse do you prefer to teach?

- a) Classical
- b) Modern
- c) Both of them

5. What type of verse do your students prefer to learn?

- a) Classical
- b) Modern
- c) Both of them

6. Do you usually prepare the lessons before lectures?

- a) Yes
- b) No

7. Do you read poems aloud to your students?

- a) Yes
- b) No

8. Do you often ask your students to read poems?

- a) Yes
- b) No

9. When do you usually ask your students questions in the class?

- a) At the beginning of the lecture
- b) In the middle of the lecture
- c) At the end of the lecture
- e) I do not ask them at all

10. Do you often engage your students in discussing the issues of the text?

- a) Yes
- b) No

11. Do you think that the age of your students may affect their response?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Explain why in each case

.....
.....
.....
.....

12. Does the gender of the students matter in their response?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Explain why in each case

.....
.....
.....
.....

الاستجابة لتدريس الشعر

دراسة تطبيقية على طلبة السنتين الثانية والثالثة بقسم اللغة الانجليزية

جامعة بنغازي

لاشك أن قراءة النصوص الشعرية واستيعابها والاستجابة لها ليس مهمة سهلة لطلبة الجامعات فقط بل أيضاً للقراء الماهرين. و وفقاً لبعض الأبحاث والدراسات السابقة لوحظ أن طلاب اللغة الانجليزية يواجهون بعض المشاكل والصعوبات في استيعاب المواد الأدبية مثل عدم قدرتهم على فهم محتوى النصوص الشعرية واستخلاص المعنى العام منها وعدم فهم مدلول الكلمات غير المرتبطة بثقافتهم. بالإضافة إلى ذلك, نجد أن العديد من الطلاب يفضلون تعلم اللغة الانجليزية عن طريق استخدام المحادثة والنحو وعلم اللغة. لهذا أصبح من الضروري البحث عن ما يكمن وراء ذلك, و إيجاد الحل الأمثل و الأكثر تطبيقاً بالنسبة لطلبة جامعاتنا.

و يتضمن هذا البحث دراسة شاملة لاستجابة طلبة الجامعة لتدريس الأدب وخاصة تدريس الشعر, واستكشاف التفاوت في الاستجابة لتدريس الشعر الانجليزي بينهم وكشف ما إذا كانت طرق التدريس تعد إحدى الأسباب الكامنة وراء ذلك, أو أن اختيار المادة الأدبية لا يتناسب مع الثقافة العربية أو أن المشكلة هي فقدان الحافز التعليمي لدى الطالب نفسه. كل هذه الأسباب وغيرها تم دراستها وتحليلها خلال هذا البحث لغرض تحسين العملية التعليمية.

ولتحقيق ما يهدف إليه هذا البحث تم اختيار عينة عشوائية مكونة من ستين طالباً من طلاب السنتين الثانية والثالثة (قسم اللغة الانجليزية, جامعة بنغازي) وتم توزيع استبيان مكون من تسعة عشر سؤالاً, تتمحور تلك الأسئلة حول مدى قابلية واستيعاب الطلاب للنصوص الشعرية والصعوبات التي يواجهونها في استيعابها. أيضاً تم توزيع استبيان بين الأساتذة الذين لديهم الخبرة في تدريس الشعر لاستكشاف المشاكل التي يواجهونها مع الطلبة و الطرق التي

يستخدمونها في تدريس الأدب ومدى ملائمة النصوص الشعرية التي يدرسونها للثقافة الليبية
ومدى اختلاف مستوى الاستجابة الأدبية بين الطلاب. وبعون الله تعالى تم تحليل نتائج الدراسة
وتزويد البحث بالنصائح والتعليمات اللازمة للحصول على الاستجابة الأدبية المرجوة.