

Students' Attitudes toward the Implementation of Imaginative Re-creation in Responding to Literary Works in Learning English in EFL Context

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Abstract. Teachers usually use literary texts in their English classes. They use such materials to teach reading comprehension but rarely combine them with writing. It is a big challenge for teachers to integrate reading and writing activities in the English classroom. Such action is demanding on the one hand, but it is challenging on the other hand. It is appealing because the teachers will burden much checking the students' reading comprehension and their response writing. It is challenging for teachers and students since it integrates reading and writing. This research was done in the context of English as a foreign language, where one hundred and twenty students of the "Literary Appreciation" course at the English Department of a private university in Semarang in 2020. In this research, we examined the students' attitudes toward applying imaginative re-creation in teaching English using short stories. Having done reading comprehension activities, the students wrote texts based on the short story they were assigned to read. The activity is called imaginative re-creation. At the end of the semester, a hundred and twenty students were involved in this research. Only forty-five students responded to the questionnaires. The questionnaires provided ten questions concerning the attitude toward applying imaginative re-creation. The results showed that the index is 3.7 indicating a strong attitude toward applying imaginative re-creation. From the findings, it can be concluded that most students had strong attitudes toward using literary text in English teaching, even though teachers should be aware of the problem that might arise during the implementation of the task

Keywords: students' attitude in learning English; Imaginative re-creation; literary appreciation.

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INTRODUCTION

Literary texts have been widely used all around the globe. However, scholars have contradicting ideas about the effective use of literature in English classes. Some scholars support this idea vehemently due to its benefits. Due to the advantages, English teachers should bring literary texts into English learning classrooms to give an actual language model. Many studies have been conducted on this topic. Studies conducted by Hirvela & Boyle (1988), Afdian & Wahyuni (2020), Dwaik et al. (2015), Karakaya & Kahraman (2013), and Ahmad & Mccoll Millar (2020) found that literary texts in various genres are motivating and can improve students' English proficiency. Hirvela (1996) points out that teachers should know how to integrate literary texts into English learning to get the best outcomes.

Furthermore, Brumfit & Carter, cited by Latheef (2012), state that language study can be integrated with literary study. However, Lazar, cited by Latheef (2012), reminds teachers to choose the appropriate texts and apply suitable approaches and techniques in their teaching. The inappropriate text and unsuitable teaching

techniques can be demotivational for students.

Most research about the literary text used in English teaching investigates the students reading comprehension. Considering that literary text is exciting and motivational for students in reading activities, it is possible to apply it in writing activities. Further research must be done by combining reading comprehension and writing creative responses. Few studies have been done on this topic. Due to this gap, this study intends to investigate the application of imaginative re-creation in English learning. Imaginative re-creation is the writing of text based on a given literary text.

Purnamawati (2018), an English teacher in Semarang Central Java, claims that her students mainly avoid reading compared to the other three language skills, such as speaking, listening, and writing. Her students are passive in discussing a reading text when she applies the reading comprehension technique. Instead, she has to work hard to guide her students to understand the reading text. The students soon get bored because they feel the activities are monotonous and not motivating. This condition causes the students' low average scores for the reading section.

Furthermore, she believes that students can be

more interested in reading if she applies imaginative re-creation in teaching English. Imaginative recreation can give exciting experiences for the students in reading and writing their responses in various "new" texts based on the assigned reading texts. She provides examples of imaginative re-creation activities, such as completing a story end, telling a story from a different angle, writing a letter to one of the characters, and so on. She concludes that imaginative re-creation is encouraging for students.

The use of literary text in EFL/ ESL is getting more popular, and the reader-response approach is becoming more influential in EFL literature classes. Carlisle (2000) points out further that the reader-response approach possibly complements the modern trend in ELT due to its dynamic and communicative nature. He conducted research for his inquiry on the way to apply the process using a reading log.

This study intends to investigate how readers respond to a given short story. Scholars, i.e., Norman Holland, Stanley Fish, Wolfgang Iser, Hans-Robert Jauss, and Roland Barthes initiated reader-response theory (French, 1987; Davis & Womack, 2002; Nunan, 2007; Lumen Learning, n.d.). Such an approach emphasizes how readers create meaning after they experience (read) a text. This approach focuses on the active role of readers in creating meaning rather than a passive agent who just intense it. This theory supports the idea that a text has no meaning until a reader experiences –reads– it.

In line with the reader-response theory, the researchers asked the respondents to write texts of imaginative recreations. Imaginative recreation is the creative process of re-creating a (part of) literary text in such a way that it helps learners to expand their understanding and appreciation of a particular text and express their response to it. Imaginative re-creation covers a wide range of activities. For example, students can retell the story from a different viewpoint. They can attribute different character traits. They may use different settings or even produce different genres of literature. Other activities include writing a letter to a particular character and writing a diary based on a character's experience. The imaginative re-creation was initiated by Stratta et al. (1973) in England and was further developed by Peter Adams, Wayne Sawyer, and Ken Watson –Australian educators (Manuel & Carter, 2009).

Considering the above review and previous

studies using literary text (i.e., short stories) by researchers in various parts of the globe, this research fills the gap of using short stories to encourage the students' responses of imaginative re-creation. This paper focuses on using a short story in the reading class to produce the students' responses to the text they have read.

This research objective is to know the readers' attitudes toward applying imaginative re-creation to respond to literary texts.

METHODS

The research is a quantitative single case study. It is quantitative because the study investigated the respondents' attitudes. The data were collected using questionnaires after the course was accomplished. The questionnaires were composed using the Lickert scale consisting of the choices from "strongly disagree" up to "strongly agree" with intervals from 1 to 5.

Forty-five respondents responded to the questionnaires (attached at the end of this document). The respondents were 3rd-semester English Department students taking a Literary Appreciation course at a private university in Semarang. The data were then analyzed by using descriptive statistics.

A formula for finding mean/ index was applied in counting students' responses to the statements (Kostoulas, 2013):

Figure 1: Index/ Mean Formula

$$I = \frac{(S_1 \times f_1) + (S_2 \times f_2) + (S_3 \times f_3) + (S_4 \times f_4) + (S_5 \times f_5)}{N}$$

Where: *I* : Index (obtained from the mean of the spread numbers)

S_n : Scale point

N : Number of respondents

The index intervals were classified then into five categories to draw conclusions, i.e.,

Very weak : 0 – less than 1.8

Weak : 1.8 – less than 2.6

Average : 2.6 – less than 3.4

Strong : 3.4 – less than 4.2

Very strong : 4.2 – 5

Several steps were taken in this research as the following:

1. Choosing short stories suitable for the student's level.
2. Assigning students to read
3. Discussing the assigned short stories
4. Assigning the students to respond to the short stories by composing imaginative re-creation.
5. Responding to the questionnaires to get data

about students' attitudes toward the application of imaginative recreation

6. Analyzing the data

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ten statements (indicators) were applied in the questionnaires to obtain the forty-five respondents' perception of the imaginative recreation implementation. The participants' responses were then recapitulated to get the reactions to each statement item. The indexes were then calculated using the formula presented in Figure 1. Each scale score was multiplied by the number of responses to the scale. Then, all the results were summed up and divided by the number of respondents. The categories were

classified into five, i.e., very weak, weak, average, strong, and very strong. These categories were determined based on the five intervals of the categories. The intervals were counted from the highest score minus the minimum score and divided by the number of categories. The result is 0.8. This figure was used to calculate the interval from the lowest scale to the largest scale. The results were 0 to less than 1.8 (very weak), 1.8 to less than 2.6 (weak), 2.6 to less than 3.4 (average), 3.4 to less than 4.2 (strong), and 4.2 to 5 (strong). These categories were used to conclude the participants' attitudes toward the imaginative re-creation implementation

The results obtained from the survey questionnaires are presented below.

Table: Data recapitulation of Question option answers

No	Indicator	Scale					Index/ Mean	Conclusion	Num of Respondents
		1	2	3	4	5			
1	X1	21	13	2	6	3	2.0	Weak	45
2	X2	0	0	8	18	19	4.2	Very Strong	45
3	X3	0	4	9	17	15	4.0	Strong	45
4	X4	0	0	3	17	25	4.5	Very Strong	45
5	X5	1	15	17	7	5	3.0	Average	45
6	X6	0	2	15	16	12	3.8	Strong	45
7	X7	0	3	14	16	12	3.8	Strong	45
8	X8	0	4	8	20	13	3.9	Strong	45
9	X9	1	4	9	16	15	3.9	Strong	45
10	X10	2	2	10	19	12	3.8	Strong	45
General conclusion							3.7	Strong	

Notes:

Answer options:

- 1 : Strongly disagree
- 2 : Disagree
- 3 : Neutral/ Average
- 4 : Agree
- 5 : Strongly disagree

Statements:

1. It is the first time I have been introduced to an "Imaginative Re-creation Task."
2. This task is challenging for me.
3. After writing imaginative re-creation text, I realize my creative writing potential.
4. This task can develop my creativity.
5. This task is difficult for me.
6. I can enjoy writing imaginative re-creation.
7. I provide much time to write the imaginative re-creation task.
8. I have many ideas to develop in writing imaginative re-creation tasks.
9. I relate the culture or the person's life around me in writing the imaginative re-creation task.

10. I relate other literary works I have read and write the idea in imaginative re-creation text.

The table shows the data recapitulations of 45 survey questionnaire responses. All the responses were scored and analyzed. There were ten statements/ indicators (labelled X1 to X10) that the respondents had to respond to the options from extremely disagree to extremely agree with scores 1 to 5, indicating the scales of attitudes beginning from "Strongly disagree," "Disagree," "Neutral," "Agree," and "Strongly agree." Then, the frequency of all scales was calculated to find the mean/ index by the index formula shown in Figure 1. Each indicator was indexed to conclude, i.e., "Very weak," "Weak," "Average," "Strong," and "Very Strong" with the intervals shown above. The conclusions of indicators spread from "Weak," "Average," "Strong," and "Very strong," and none indicated "Very Weak." There was only one indicator (X1) with a "Weak" index, while only one indicator, X5, showed "Average." Six indicators, i.e., X1, X3, X6, X7, X8, X9, and X10,

were "Strong," while "Very Strong" attitudes were indicated in two indicators, i.e., X2 and X4. Finally, the general conclusion was a "Strong" attitude with a 3.9 index. So it can be concluded that the respondents had a strong/ positive attitude toward implementing Imaginative Re-creation in the classroom. The explanations of the indicators are presented below.

Indicator/ Statement 1. It is the first time I have been introduced to an "Imaginative Re-creation Task."

The response of disagreement to the first statement of 80% (N=36) of those who strongly disagreed and disagreed and neutral was higher than that of 20% agreement (extremely agree and agree). These figures meant that 80% of respondents had a negative/ weak attitude while 20% had a negative/ weak one. This statement showed their experience/ exposure to imaginative re-creation. The responses to this statement must be invertedly scored, meaning that if they extremely agreed to it, the score was one and vice versa. In the responses to the statement, "It is the first time I have been introduced to an Imaginative Re-creation Task," 80% of the respondents agreed that it was the first time they had been exposed to an imaginative re-creation task to respond to a literary text. In other words, most of them were unfamiliar with imaginative re-creation. Since the index/ mean of this indicator was 2.0, it was classified as "Weak." It can be concluded that they have a lower/ negative attitude toward using imaginative re-creation.

Indicator/ Statement 2. This task is challenging for me.

In responding to the second statement, most of the respondents (82%) agreed that imaginative re-creation was challenging for them. Meanwhile, the rest of the 18 percent disagreed. It can be said that most respondents considered that imaginative re-creation is a challenging task to respond to literary works. With an index of 4.2 points, it can be concluded that they have a positive attitude toward imaginative re-creation.

Indicator/ Statement 3. After writing imaginative re-creation text, I realize my creative writing potential.

The third statement scores indicated that 71% (N=32) of the respondent agreed and extremely agreed with the statement that imaginative re-creation was a trigger for them to realize their potential in writing imaginative writing of literary texts. The score was relatively higher compared to the negative attitude score of 29% (N=13), so with the index of 4.0 (classified as "Strong"), they

could realize their potential for writing creative texts by responding to literary texts.

Indicator/ Statement 4. This task can develop my creativity.

In response to the fourth statement, most respondents (N=42, 93%) who agreed and strongly agreed had a positive attitude compared to a negative attitude of 7% (N=3) to respond to the statement/ indicator. In other words, they realized that the imaginative re-creation task could develop their creativity in creating creative texts. An index of 4.5 indicated a very strong/ positive attitude to imaginative re-creation.

Indicator/ Statement 5. This task is difficult for me.

The percentage of respondents with a positive attitude was 27% (N=12), while a negative attitude had 73% (N=33). This figure showed that they felt the imaginative re-creation task was difficult. In other words, the majority of the respondents considered that this imaginative re-creation task was difficult. Even though the index showed 3.0 ("Average"), opinions seemed to be divided concerning the difficulty of the imaginative re-creation task. It can be considered that a negative attitude was dominant.

Indicator/ Statement 6. I can enjoy writing imaginative re-creation.

The responses to the sixth statement indicated a positive attitude since the upper score has 62% (N=28), consisting of agreed and extremely agreed to responses, compared to the lower score of 38% (N=17). It can be stated that they dominantly agreed with the statement, "I can enjoy writing imaginative re-creation." The index of 3.8 indicated that even though the respondent said the imaginative re-creation task was difficult (X5), they still could enjoy it. It showed a strong/ positive attitude with an index of 3.8.

Indicator/ Statement 7. I provide much time to write the imaginative re-creation task.

In line with the previous sixth statement, the seventh statement also had similar scores. The respondents had high positive attitude scores, with 62% (N=28) agreeing and mostly agreeing. Most respondents prepared much time to create the imaginative re-creation task, indicating a positive attitude toward implementing imaginative re-creation. The index was 3.8, classified as a strong/ positive attitude toward imaginative re-creation.

Indicator/ Statement 8. I have many ideas to develop in writing imaginative re-creation tasks.

The responses to the eighth statement also showed a positive attitude. The percentage of

respondents who agreed and extremely agreed was 73% (N=33). It is higher than that of disagreement (N=12, 27%). The high rate of respondents who admit they had many ideas to develop for their creative writing showed a positive attitude. In other words, most students had many ideas to develop their creative, imaginative writing. The index of 3.9 indicated a strong/ positive attitude.

Indicator/ Statement 9. I relate the culture or the person's life around me in writing the imaginative re-creation task.

The number of respondents who agreed and extremely agreed with the ninth statement was 31 or 69%. The percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement was higher than those who disagreed (N=14, 31%). Most respondents related the culture within the story to their real-life while writing their imaginative re-creation task. The index of 3.9 indicated a strong/ positive attitude toward imaginative re-creation because of their ability to connect the culture in the text to their real life. It can be concluded that they had a positive attitude in responding to this statement.

Indicator/ Statement 10. I relate other literary works I have read and write the idea in imaginative re-creation text.

The percentage of respondents who agree with the statement is relatively high, at 69% (N=31), while those who disagree have 31% (N=14). These figures were relatively similar to the ninth statement. These figures indicated they could relate to other literary works to develop the idea in imaginative re-creation text. In other words, the index of 3.8 showed a strong/ positive attitude toward using imaginative re-creation in English class.

Based on the above discussion, most students had positive attitudes among the ten statements/ indicators used in determining the students' attitudes toward imaginative re-creation. In other words, they had a positive attitude toward using imaginative re-creation in responding to a literary text. However, these findings must be carefully handled because there were still two statement items that potentially caused negative attitudes, i.e., X1 and X5. These findings are considered the novelty of this research.

From the above discussion, it can be elaborated the following. Firstly, most respondents admitted that they had not previously been exposed to the imaginative re-creation task. That is why they were not familiar with imaginative re-creation. Secondly, Most of them still perceived that imaginative re-creation was

difficult. Thirdly, they considered imaginative re-creation as a challenging task. Fourth, they realized their creative writing potential and believed that imaginative re-creation task could develop their writing skills. However, even though they thought imaginative re-creation was harrowing, they could enjoy the task and provided much time to do it. They also admitted that they had many ideas to develop their creative writing. Finally, they could relate the culture within the text to their own lives.

To sum up, with the overall index of 3.7, classified as strong, students' attitudes toward imaginative re-creation were strong/ positive even though there were still indicators of negative attitudes. Some hands of positive attitudes were their ability to see the advantages of literature, such as the benefits, value, human life reflection, and alternative reading. They also showed their interest in imaginative re-creation—meanwhile, the negative attitude concerned with the familiarity and the difficulty of the task.

This research benefits English teachers for using imaginative re-creation tasks after reading literary text or integrating reading and writing. This research findings give a positive signal to the researchers as the students responded positively. However, teachers must consider several things, such as familiarizing the imaginative re-creation task in ELT and adjusting the task because the task beyond their ability can damage their learning motivation.

CONCLUSION

This study has proven that students have positive/ strong attitudes toward using the imaginative re-creation of a literary text in English learning. This evidence indicated that the participants had strong attitude in the nine indicators/ statements. They believed that the imaginative re-creation to respond to literary texts can benefit them in creating new imaginative texts. They can explore life around them while writing that can inspire them. Besides, teachers must pay serious attention to the potentially harmful sides that can decrease learning achievements, i.e. in the fifth indicator with the average attitude. The average attitude is considered low.

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