

**INCREASING STUDENTS' COMPREHENSION
AND MOTIVATION TO LEARN LITERATURE
THROUGH THE READER'S THEATRE**

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by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

RT	Reader's Theatre
CE	concrete experience
RO	reflective observations
AC	abstract conceptualization
AE	active experimentation

**MENINGKATKAN KEFAHAMAN DAN MOTIVASI PELAJAR
TERHADAP SASTERA BAHASA INGGERIS MELALUI
KAEDAH *READER'S THEATRE***

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini melaporkan pengajaran menggunakan *Reader's Theatre* (RT), satu kaedah yang mempunyai unsur-unsur prosodi dan teater untuk mengajar sastera Bahasa Inggeris. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk meninjau sejauh mana kefahaman pelajar terhadap teks sastera Bahasa Inggeris dan motivasi mereka terhadap pengajaran sastera Bahasa Inggeris dapat ditingkatkan melalui kaedah RT. Seramai dua puluh orang pelajar sebuah sekolah berasrama penuh di Malaysia telah belajar dan mementaskan teks sastera Bahasa Inggeris bagi Tingkatan Dua iaitu *Potato People* karya *Angela Wright* menggunakan kaedah RT. Kajian ini menggunakan teori *Experiential Learning* dan *Model Kolb* (1984). Bagi membandingkan peningkatan kefahaman dan motivasi pelajar terhadap subjek sastera Bahasa Inggeris, dapatan dipungut melalui instrument dan peringkat yang berbeza. Pelajar menjawab soalan-soalan *pre-test*, soal selidik dan temu bual sebelum melalui pembelajaran sastera Bahasa Inggeris menggunakan kaedah RT. Selepas belajar melalui kaedah RT, pelajar sekali lagi menjawab soalan-soalan *post-test*, soal selidik dan temubual bagi membandingkan sejauh mana peningkatan kefahaman dan motivasi mereka terhadap subjek ini. Dapatan daripada data kuantitatif yang diperolehi melalui *pre-post-test* dan soal selidik, disokong pula dengan data kualitatif

melalui temu bual telah menunjukkan peningkatan kefahaman dan motivasi yang signifikan terhadap teks dan pengajaran sastera Bahasa Inggeris. Dapatan juga menunjukkan yang penggunaan RT memberi banyak kebaikan lain seperti kebolehan kreativiti, menyelesaikan masalah, pembelajaran kolaboratif dan keyakinan terhadap pembelajaran sastera Bahasa Inggeris.

Keywords: Reader's Theatre, pembelajaran Sastera Bahasa Inggeris, kefahaman, motivasi, 'pembelajaran experiential'

INCREASING STUDENTS' COMPREHENSION AND MOTIVATION TO LEARN LITERATURE THROUGH THE READER'S THEATRE

ABSTRACT

This study reports the use of Reader's Theatre (RT), a classroom approach that has elements of prosody and theatre, to teach the literature in English component for lower secondary students. The aim of the study is to investigate how the approach can increase students' comprehension of the literary texts and also their motivation to learn literature. Twenty students from a premier school in Malaysia studied and staged Angela Wright's *Potato People*, a Form Two literature text, using RT. The procedures and design of the study are built around Kolb's (1984) *Model of Experiential Learning*. To compare the increase of comprehension and motivation, data on students' literature learning was collected through different instruments throughout several stages. Before the use of RT, students were administered a pre-test, a questionnaire and an interview to gauge their comprehension and motivation towards literature learning. After the use of RT, students were again administered a post-test, a questionnaire and an interview to compare the extent of their increase in comprehension and motivation. Quantitative data from pre-post tests and questionnaires, supported by qualitative data from interviews show significant increase in students' comprehension in the text used and their motivation in learning literature. The findings also revealed that the use of

RT led to other learning benefits like creativity, problem solving, collaborative learning and confidence in students in learning literature.

Keywords: Reader's Theatre, learning literature, comprehension, motivation, experiential learning

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 OVERVIEW

This chapter starts with the introduction of the study and a brief history of Literature Teaching and Learning in Malaysia since the 1960s. This introduction narrows its focus to the background of the study that is the Literature Component in English implemented in 2001. The researcher is examining the component as the basis for this study. Next, the researcher identifies the statement of the problem. Two major problems are addressed. Firstly, students have difficulties comprehending the literary texts that they have to study. Secondly, the problem of comprehension leads to another problem that is the lack of motivation in learning literature.

The researcher decides to use a method called the Reader's Theatre (RT) to increase students' comprehension and motivation in learning literature. The main objective of the study is to investigate how much would RT benefit both students and ESL teachers in the literature classroom. To discover this, the researcher frames two research questions. These questions cover the two major problem areas of literature learning under the component: students' comprehension of literature texts and students' motivation in literature learning. This chapter then continues with the

significance and limitations of the study, and finally, with a section on operational definitions of terms used in this study.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 A History of Literature Teaching and Learning in Malaysia

The chronological development of literature study in Malaysia is as interesting as the subject itself; subjected to many challenges (Noor Rezan, 2007, p. 65). Ever since Independence, the study of literature in Malaysian schools has always been given considerable priority through a continuum of reading programmes. Literature, mainly the works of Shakespeare, as part of the elective or optional subject, was examined in the Senior Cambridge Certificate or the Malaysian Certificate of Education and Higher Schools Certificate Examinations as early as in the 1960s. However, when the medium of instruction changed from English to Malay language in 1976, exposure to literature was reduced from part of the syllabus to become merely enrichment reading programmes.

For the young learners at primary level, there were The New Zealand Readers in the 1970s, The World Bank Reading Project in the 1980s, The *Nadi Ilmu Amalan Membaca* or NILAM Programme in the 1990s and the millenium's Children's Contemporary Literature Programme for English Language in Primary Schools. At secondary level, Malaysian young adult learners went through two phases of reading projects through the 1980s and 1990s. The English Language Reading Programme (ELRP) started in 1983 followed by the Class Reader

Programme (CRP) in 1993. Although students read the texts in class, none of these programmes was tested in any examinations (Subramaniam, 2003).

All the programmes mentioned claimed to inculcate the love of reading and instil the love for literature, but they did not have a strong impact. For instance, studies that focus on the CRP suggest weaknesses like lack of literature teaching knowledge among teachers and lack of student interest in learning the subject (Mukundan, 2000; Rosli & Ain Nadzimah; Seeny 2000; Sidhu, 1995).

In fact, these studies found that a lot of teachers faced problems while carrying out the CRP. Although the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) organized a three day In-Service Training (INSET) session in 1999, the training was not enough to equip teachers with knowledge of literature teaching (Arumugam & Naginder, 2004). In- house training on the implementation of CRP at school level was also neglected. Mukundan (2000) in his analysis of data from the National Report (1996) on The Class Reader Programme Implementation in Secondary Schools states that 47.8% of schools did not conduct in-house training on the CRP for teachers. As a result, most teachers lacked the necessary techniques to create literature learning interest in students. They resorted to traditional teacher-centred classroom approaches that led to boring classroom setting. A boring classroom setting could only lead to uninterested and unmotivated learners.

1.1.2 The Literature Component in English

After the CRP had been shelved, the literature component was incorporated into the English language syllabus in March 2000. Lauded by academics as a bold, innovative move (Noor Rezan, 2007; Subramaniam 2002, 2003, 2007; Vethamani, 2001, 2004, 2007), the move indicated the government's serious quest in its effort to instil literary appreciation in our young generation. It is initially introduced to Forms One and Four, followed by the Forms Two and Five. In 2003, the Form Three started with the component. The literature component is also tested in the two national standardized Malaysian public examinations, the Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) for Form Three students and the Sijil Penilaian Menengah (SPM) for Form Five students.

Prescribed texts aim to “enhance students proficiency in English Language, contribute to personal development and character building and broaden students’ outlook through reading about other cultures and world views” (Curriculum Development Centre, 1999). The objectives are that, by the end of the programme, “students should be able to give personal response to texts; show an awareness of how language is used to achieve a particular purpose; reflect upon and draw valuable moral lessons from the issues and concerns of life as portrayed in the literary works and relate them to one’s life: and understand and appreciate other cultures” (Ministry of Education Document, 2000).

Students do not study all the texts prescribed. Form One students study three short stories and three poems. However, in the Paper 1 PMR English Language examination, they would be tested on either one of each in the form of multiple choice questions based on excerpts. Students are prescribed two novels in Form Two and another two in Form Three. However, in the Paper 2 PMR English Language, they only write a short paragraph based on only one novel. There is a slight difference for the SPM examination. Although students are prescribed with five short stories and six poems in Form Four and three novels in Form Five, they are tested only on two poems, two short stories and one novel. Poems and short stories are tested with open-ended questions while the novel is tested with a short essay. The literature component forms 20 % of the total scores for both examinations.

The Ministry of Education made some development in the Literature Component while this study was ongoing. For one thing, new texts have been prescribed (Surat Pekeliling Ikhtisas Bil 7/2009). The Ministry introduced various literature elements for Form One students such as poems, short stories and novel (graphic), drama. (Please refer to Appendix A for a full list of Form One to Form Three new literature texts). Another development is the implementation of School-Based Assessment in 2012 which replaces the PMR and SPM examinations. Under the new assessment, the literature component will be assessed based on a different assessment instrument. (Please refer to Appendix B for a sample of a band descriptor).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As in the case of the CRP, the evaluation of the success of the Literature Component in English at the beginning of its implementation did not attribute to encouraging responses from both Malaysian teachers and students (Blue, 2012; Saraceni 2003, Sidhu, 2003; Subramaniam et al 2003, Tan, 2001, Wong 2003; Zahrullaili 2002; Zailin 2004). These studies cited similar and familiar problems. One problem is the texts prescribed are deemed difficult to comprehend. Another problem is students' lack of motivation in literature lessons due to the way the lessons are carried out.

The poems, short stories and novels studied in Forms One, Two, Three, Four and Five are difficult, dealing with more complex literary meanings. For example, the earlier poems prescribed like "If", "Monsoon History", and "Si Tenggang's Homecoming" contain deeper nuances not easy for students to understand which could lead to lack of comprehension and motivation. This is a problem mentioned by Saraceni (2003); linguistic complexities of literary text (lexico-grammatical complexities, metaphorical expressions and old-fashioned expressions) is one obstacle for L2 learners that hinders understanding and lowers the motivation to read and learn (pg 19).

Short stories like *The Drover's Wife*, *The Sound Machine*, *Looking For A Rain God* and the novels *The Return* and *The Pearl*, are challenging and multifaceted. The particular texts mentioned above are set in foreign lands and cultures, the differences with local context leading to confusion instead of enlightening

students (Subramaniam et al 2003). Thus, many students are unable to make connections between realities in the text and realities of their lives. Zailin (2004) agrees as well with the problems of cross-cultural setting in literature texts. In her study, she discusses how problems grasping the portrayal of culturally unfamiliar settings hinder students' comprehension, resulting in declined motivation.

Blue (2012) observes that students read text through the socio-cultural perspective from which they emerge. Students interpret the texts they read through personal and cultural cues or experience acquired within a particular social context. Blue's (2012) study discovers that students have difficulties identifying with and understanding literary texts without familiar cultural cues. These difficulties lead to problems in their responses of literary texts and do affect academic progress. Therefore, it is essential that students are properly guided in acquiring the intended cross-cultural understanding as they study the texts, especially when most of the readings and poems are set in backgrounds unfamiliar to the average Malaysian students. Here, this is supported by another point Saraceni (2003) observes: linguistics and cultural differences may present obstacles for students, making them disheartened to read literature texts. This fact can cause detrimental effects on their motivation (p. 18).

Other studies also reveal that students' lack of enthusiasm and motivation in studying the literature texts come from the way teachers carry out the lessons. Sidhu (2003), Tan (2001), Zahrullaili (2002) and Marzilah & Sharifah Nadia (2010) discuss how students find the texts boring and classroom approaches – mostly workbook based activities - dull and monotonous. Sidhu (2003) in her study, outlines

students' lack of enthusiasm and motivation for both the literary texts and the literature lessons. Students want teachers to conduct attractive and arousing activities rather than just using photocopied worksheets. A student in her study expressed, "Teachers should be creative and have interesting indoor and outdoor activities during literature classes" (Sidhu, 2003, p. 104).

Nair, (2001) urges the need for teachers to consider seriously constructing the object of study in the classroom to make it meaningful. This is crucial for students to recognize the elements of imagination in the literary text as a dynamic social practice rather than a task that needs to be completed, or as London (2003) terms, a linguistic form that has to be mastered. Wong (2003) too, suggests going beyond the pragmatics of 'literature by doing' (focusing on drills, rules and modelling) to 'literature by reflection' which are imaginative and aesthetic.

Another study by Tan (2001) emphasizes the need for teachers to be creative and critical so that they can innovate, create and conduct stimulating literature lessons, which should, ideally, encourage creative and independent critical responses from students during those literature engagements in classrooms. Such rich corollary can also be transpired when students are reflecting on what was learnt because literature engages the mind and the emotions through its capacity to promote rich self reflection. (Jarvis, 1995). It seems then that opportunities for reflections while and after engaging students with literary readings, and/or activities must also be provided for productive and quality learning of literature. Clearly, learning literature should be an active engagement between the readings and the students where meanings are derived and students' interpretation and reactions were reified as

a result of this engagement. Therefore, teachers are players of meaningful roles in making sure such a learning experience are generated and provided for the students. As such, teacher should provide an effective teaching and the correct learning environment for students.

Carter & Long (1991) discuss text selection and dreary manner of teacher's presentation as the problems that failed to arouse students' comprehension and motivation. However, it is not an easy feat to make literature lessons a joyful experience for students especially for learners of foreign language. Teachers are constantly challenged to make lessons as exciting as possible while imparting the perceivably unexciting knowledge of literature to a group of uninspired and unmotivated students. While learning literature is said to be able to create creative encounters which develops sensory, visual, auditory, emotional and intellectual response (Gillespie & Conner 1975), this will not ensue if teachers are not serious in making better efforts to improve their classroom approaches.

1.2.1 The Use of Reader's Theatre (RT) in this Study

Venturing from this emphasis on students and creativity, the current study using Reader's Theatre (RT) as a method is designed and structured by the researcher with the aim of increasing language learners' comprehension and motivation to learn literature. It also aims to encourage students to make sense of their surrounding world that is heavily influenced by their own lived experiences where it is oriented towards motivation of learners as capable and knowledgeable individuals and not merely appreciating the literary beauty and values of the texts.

RT is prosodic reading that emphasizes on the voice, volume, oral intonation and rhythm to present meaning of a read text. It has been in existence as an instructional strategy for many years and is gaining popularity as an academic activity. Today, there are Reader's Theatre clubs, competitions and classes used as a form of play reading teaching approach in support of literature and reading (Beck, Farr & Strickland, 2008). As a form of play reading, it is a medium to bring drama and its characters before an audience, creating an imaginary stage. Readers can project their voices and facial expressions in dramatic reading where it will give life to literature text (Ommaney & Schanker 1972).

RT origins can be traced as a form of drama in ancient Greece, where roaming minstrels 'rhapsodes' would recite epic poems such as the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey*. Different rhapsodes would recite and exchange prosodic dialogues depicting the characters in the epic. (see Bahn 1932 cited in Coger & White, 1967: 10 cited in Drew & Pedersen, 2010). RT continued to be practiced as drama and readings in churches during medieval times. In the 1950s and 60s, RT was an accepted dramatic form both in the US and the UK, with professional productions including the Royal Shakespeare Company of London productions of *The Hollow Crown* and *The Rebel* (Coger & White, 1967: 10-14 cited in Drew and Pederson, 2010).

Shepard's use of RT to interest students in reading shows that RT has unique characteristics that can be a success in the literature classroom. Through RT students become motivated when they listen to their voices, take responsibilities and put in a great deal of efforts and work towards a goal. The fact that it is a minimalist theatre

is also an advantage. These aspects of RT are important because they provide students with the chance to experience the learning engagement fully and selflessly with full concentration and focus. In the context of using RT as the current study, the students have to be actively and rigorously involved in learning, with the teacher who facilitates the students' to realize their full potentials and help them to become what or who they want to be by learning and appreciating literature.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this research is to see if RT can be used as an effective pedagogical tool to increase students' comprehension of the literary text, and to increase learners' motivation in literature learning. This study is important in the way that any significant findings hopefully would provide help for teachers to use creative classroom approaches to enrich students' literary experience.

The objectives of this study are:

1. to investigate if RT as a teaching-learning method can improve students' comprehension of the literature text.
2. to find out if RT as a teaching-learning tool can motivate students' in literature learning.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the objectives, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. Does the use of RT increase students' comprehension of the literature text?
2. Does the use of RT increase students' motivation to learn literature?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDIES

A number of western researchers have documented the benefits of RT to augment literature learning (see Norris & McCammon 1960; Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer 1995; Finley 1998; Konzal & Diaz 1999) and generally find that the RT contributes significantly to literature learning. In one study, Annarella (1999) observed that there is multi-level learning going on with RT where the students read, shed light on and experience what the author is saying. Through role play and enacting the characters, they eventually become the characters they were enacting, the portrayal leading them to a deeper level of understanding of the characters in different settings and situations. Subsequently, the students grow more independent of their learning, responsible for creating their interpretation of the readings.

However, what the researcher is interested in is the significance of RT in the Asian contexts and settings where students are second/foreign English language learners. RT or approaches similar in characteristics to RT have been used by teachers in Malaysian schools to teach language but from the literature review (see Chapter 2), there are very few reported studies on the use of RT for literature

learning in the Asian context. How then would the findings show the students' views of RT and to what extent would it influence and characterize their learning especially in terms of comprehending the texts they read and motivating them towards literature learning?

This study attempts to have these questions answered and concurrently enrich the current literature on the use and benefits of RT to learning literature, and fill the vacuum of research of the use of RT in the Asian context and for second/foreign language learners. Since the problems highlighted here are also in existence elsewhere (see Diavane 2003; Saraceni 2003, Timucin 2003) evidence from this study may greatly assist Malaysian ESL teachers, as well as ESL teachers elsewhere in developing and trying out creative, innovative ideas in ascertaining successful literature learning and appreciation.

This study is also significant in terms of the MOE's mission to aim for a world-class education system that will realize the individual's full potential and fulfill the aspirations of the Malaysian nation. As such, teachers have a role to improve the effectiveness of the delivery system. MOE's aim is also consistent with the hopes expressed in the Declaration and Recommendations of the 45th session of the International Conference on Education in Geneva, 1996 where *teachers are considered as important contributors to the renewal of education through their ideas, methods and practice* (p. 35). Thus, it is important for teachers to continue their pursuit of lifelong learning through new and innovative research in education.

Another group that might benefit from this study are the committees responsible for formulating and implementing policy guidelines into plans, programmes, projects and activities. In the National Report (2004), the English Literature Programme is part of the Extensive Reading and Contemporary Literature, which is one of the initiatives in English Language and Foreign Language Teaching and Learning. Therefore, the findings of this study might be an eye-opening solution as the basis for the committee's prescriptive policy. Our education system today is slanting more and more towards the constructivist views that place emphasis on performing physical activities like problem-based learning, resource-based learning, systems-based approach or experiential/personal relevance approach. Without a doubt, findings from this study may hold meaningful implications on curriculum design that support the ideas of students' choice and activity in learning.

One more significance of this study is to show how RT as a classroom approach that focuses on strategies of interactions, active learning and transferable skills can help students realize their potentialities. Through a student-centred classroom approach like RT, students become spontaneous and motivated in learning that leads to better self-acceptance and self-esteem. Student-centred approaches are the lacking factor in a traditional learning environment where students are passive, apathetic and bored which can finally lead to their demotivation in learning literature.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF STUDIES

1. This study focuses on a class of 20 Form Two students of a Mara Junior Science College (MRSM) North of the Peninsular Malaysia. Due to the relatively small sample size used, the information obtained cannot be generalized to represent all the students of Mara Junior Science Colleges throughout Malaysia. Neither can it be used to assume that learners of other schools in this country have similar perceptions or characteristics which are Mathematics nor Science inclined. Nevertheless the summary and implication might be beneficial to be adopted in other similar contexts.
2. In terms of literature learning, this study is limited to only one novel which is *Potato People* by Angela Wright prescribed by Bahagian Pendidikan (Latihan) Menengah Mara for Form Two students of all Mara Junior Science College. Therefore, the findings is quite restrictive and cannot be used to represent other two novels. In the PMR examination, students have a choice to answer question on any novel as all are listed in the question. (English Language PMR Question Paper 2). However, the implication from this study might contribute to produce a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of how students respond to literature learning.
3. The literature texts discussed in this study have been changed by The Ministry of Education while this study was ongoing. The implementation of School-Based Assessment in 2012 has also replaced the PMR and SPM examinations. Therefore it is hoped that the implication from this study can

be applied to better equip ESL teachers for quality literature teaching regardless of the texts or assessments used on students.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following are terms and definition used in this study:

1.7.1 Reader's Theatre (RT)

Reader's Theatre (RT) is a theatrical presentation that uses the method of reading from texts to dramatize their contents, also known as prosody. The key players are formed by readers who read the texts and actors who acted the scenes out with dialogues to enhance narration with actions. In RT, dramatization or prosody of reader's recitals in terms of intonation, stress and emotion calls for a close engagement with the text. These are the elements which made RT different from drama or theatre which emphasized more on actions supported by memorization of scripts.

RT as entertainment depends solely on readers who dramatize the text. It needs no costume, elaborate props or scenes. All these are imaginary, conjured by the narration, players may wear simple head gears to depict the characters they are portraying, as in the pun 'wearing a hat' to get into certain moods or personas. This is why RT would be perfect in the literature classrooms; there is minimum preparation for a stage, costumes or props. In the limited weekly lesson duration, students only need to read, transform texts into scripts; rehearse to dramatize

presentation and then present. In this way students focus on close engagement with text that benefits learning instead of wasting time preparing on staging.

In this study, RT is the setting in which students established their roles as literature learners. The researcher applies Kolb's Theory of Experiential Learning to the teaching of literature through RT. Kolb's theory provides a framework for RT's 'learning by doing' principles. The core of Kolb's four-stage model (see Chapter 2, Figure 2.3, p.56) shows how experience is translated through reflection into concepts, which in turn are used as guides for active experimentations and new experiences. Kolb refers to these four stages as concrete experience (CE), reflective observations (RO), abstract conceptualization (AC) and active experimentation (AE). They follow each other in a cycle and each stage effectively influences the other. Students should go through the cycle several times, systematically going through the process again and again in a spiral of cycle to keep on experiencing, experimenting, understanding concepts, and reflecting on what they learn.

Students go through all the four stages of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle while learning literature through RT: abstract conceptualization is when writing their scripts, active experimentation is when rehearsing, concrete experience is when presenting and reflective observations is when debriefing their presentation. After going through the RT experience, the students' response of the literature text and lessons in terms of their comprehension and motivation were analysed qualitative and quantitatively.

1.7.2 Comprehension

Comprehension is the mind's capacity to perceive and understand; the ability to understand concepts; the power to know. In this study comprehension is measured through how the readers respond to the text read. Lehman & Scharer (1995) in Lehman (2007) defined two categories of young readers' responses that indicate comprehension:

- i) Reader-based responses which relate to personal feelings, values and preferences, and how they connect the responses to personal experience or other readings (pg 145).
- ii) Text-based responses that focused on interpretation of literary elements of the text and how the author craft the writing (pg 145).

Their study showed how readers respond first in reader-based ways and later made text-based responses. Lehman (2007) mentioned Smith's (1996) discussion on the interaction that happens when readers ask questions while engaging with a text and comprehending (making meaning) when those questions are answered. These literary responses which are proof of their comprehension, should be the central concern in fostering and evaluating their development of literacy (p. 26).

This study uses Barrett's Taxonomy of Reading Comprehension (Clymer, 1968) which is appropriate to measure reader's comprehension of the literature text after learning through RT. With this Taxonomy the researcher seeks to investigate whether at the end of the RT experience students are able to answer questions of the

lower levels like literal, reorganization and inferential comprehension questions which mainly deal with surface understanding of text. Discussing this Taxonomy in his study, Vethamani (2007) believes that students need to use all their cognitive dimension to achieve the psychological and aesthetic impact of the text. Therefore, the more important question is whether RT can also enable students to reach the higher levels of thinking order: evaluation and also appreciation of the text.

The Barrett's Taxonomy is used to formulate questions in the pre-post tests, questionnaires and interviews before and after RT with the aim of facilitating students' comprehension of the literature text they learnt especially the emotional response to the content or feeling and identification of the characters and their plight in the story. The response in answering the questions will indicate the occurring of the different comprehension process as students learn literature through RT. Comprehension is also measured through items and questions in the three research methods, i.e. pre-posttests, questionnaires and interviews and they are based on the categories and sub-categories of Barrett's Taxonomy in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1

Categories and Subcategories of Responses in Barrett's Taxonomy of Reading Comprehension (Clymer, 1968)

Level	Categories and Subcategories of Responses
1.0 Literal Comprehension 1.1 Recognition	1.1.1 Recognition of Main Ideas 1.1.2 Recognition of Details 1.1.3 Recognition of a Sequence 1.1.4 Recognition of Comparisons 1.1.5 Recognition of Cause and Effect Relationship 1.1.6 Recognition of Character Traits
1.0 Literal Comprehension 1.2 Recall	1.2.1 Recall of Main Ideas 1.2.2 Recall of Details 1.2.3 Recall of a Sequence 1.2.4 Recall of Comparisons 1.2.5 Recall of Cause and Effect Relationship 1.2.6 Recall of Character Traits
2.0 Reorganization	2.1 Classifying 2.2 Outlining 2.3 Summarizing 2.4 Synthesizing
3.0 Inferential Comprehension	3.1 Inferring Supporting Details 3.2 Inferring Main Idea 3.3 Inferring Sequence 3.4 Inferring Comparisons 3.5 Inferring Cause and Effect Relationships 3.6 Inferring of Character Traits 3.7 Predicting Outcomes 3.8 Interpreting Figurative Language
4.0 Evaluation	4.1 Judgments of Reality and Fantasy 4.2 Judgments of Fact and Opinion 4.3 Judgments of Adequacy and Validity 4.4 Judgments of Appropriateness 4.5 Judgements of Worth, Desirability and Acceptability
5.0 Appreciation	5.1 Emotional Response to the Content 5.2 Identification with Characters or Incidents 5.3 Reactions to the Author's Use of Language 5.4 Imagery

1.7.3 Motivation

Travers (1970) defines motivation as “ an aroused state of the individual, characterized by the students initially attending to the teacher and learning activities and then working at assignments and activities until they are completed” (p 210). Pintrich & Schunk (1996) agrees by saying that motivation is a mental process where the interest in a goal directed activity is started and sustained.

To be more specific, Ellis’ study (1999) outlines two types of motivation: ‘Resultative Motivation’ and ‘Intrinsic Motivation’. ‘Intrinsic Motivation’ is the arousal and maintenance of curiosity that ebb and flow. This state is most probably influenced by learners’ interest and personal involvement in learning a particular activity.

‘Resultative Motivation’ on the other hand, results from a learning success. This success might or might not provide them with better motivation. Atkinson’s and Raynor’s (1974) Achievement Motivation Theory (cited in Dornyei 1998) adopts an expectancy value framework. The expectancy to succeed is in given task and the value the individual attaches to succeed in the task. The greater the value, the higher is the degree of the motivation. Lastly, to Gardner (2001), motivation is the driving force behind the process of learning.

In this study, motivation is measured by the students’ involvement in learning literature through RT. It will be measured by the students’ curiosity which is aroused as they are started the RT production by transforming the text and become

playwrights when they produce their own RT scripts. Maintenance of curiosity was sustained when they are given roles as “readers” and “players”. As they started rehearsal of RT presentations, they would be propelled by the intrinsic motivation, as mentioned by Ellis (1999) as learners’ interest and personal involvement in learning a particular activity is maintained. As they finally performed, achieved goal, peer evaluate each other and found their learning successful, the intrinsic motivation should change to become Resultative Motivation (Ellis, 1999). To be more specific, motivation is measured through 6 questions in the questionnaires and a few items in the interviews after RT where students are asked whether learning literature after RT motivates them.

1.7.4 Literature

In this study, literature refers to the literature component in English introduced by The Ministry of Education in 2000. The component was incorporated into the curriculum for English from Form One to Form Five with the aim not only to improve students’ proficiency in the language but also to enable them to acquire knowledge along the process. It is implemented in phases and tested in the national standardized Malaysian public examinations, Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) and Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM).

The texts selected comprise short stories, novels, drama and poems of Malaysian, British, Australia and African works aim to “enhance students proficiency in English Language through the study of prescribed texts, contribute to personal development and character building and broaden students’ outlook through

reading about other cultures and world views” (Curriculum Development Centre, 1999). The objectives are that by the end of the programme “students should be able to give personal response to texts; show an awareness of how language is used to achieve a particular purpose; reflect upon and draw valuable moral lessons from the issues and concerns of life as portrayed in the literary works and relate them to one’s life; and understand and appreciate other cultures” (Ministry of Education, Malaysia, 2000).

1.7.5 Students

In this study, students refer to a group of Form Two students aged 14 years old from a Mara Junior Science College (MRSM) in the Northern Peninsular of Malaysia. They learn the literature component in English which is also assessed in the PMR examination. They are considered good learners of English based on their final semester examination in Form One, in which they obtained scores ranging from 70 to 80%. However, their literature test result showed an average score of 60 % based on 2 literature quizzes and 2 literature questions in the PMR format tests when they were in Form One the previous year. The score which was a ‘B’ is considered as a reflection of their lack of comprehension and motivation in literature learning.

1.8 CONCLUSION

Approaching a literature lesson is not something to be taken lightly by ESL teachers. Teachers are the professionals long since acknowledged as an important aspect of all educational reform's recent demands. The successes of the reforms are mostly the responsibility of the teachers (Arnold, 2001). This observation is further supported by Webb (1992, p. 110) who said that the teacher's role in a literature class is as one who activates the creative impulses and give direction towards its many possible identities.

Rogers (2006) emphasized the need to nurture an imaginative, creative and critical literature classroom for students to learn the most from. She advocates Rosenblatt's (1938) *critical engagement* theory that literary teaching should be explored by the teacher as a guide in a classroom where students are allowed to exercise their skills to critically read and think to achieve interpretation and aesthetics.

Rogers (2006) supports her arguments by citing how several other theorists – educational drama (O'Neill, 1995; Rogers and O'Neill, 1993; Wolf, Edmiston & Enciso, 1997), semiotics (Jewitt & Kress, 2003) and multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996) have expanded classroom approaches to engaging with literature. They have encouraged students not only to express their responses in talk and writing but also through movement, drama, art, and most recently, even through multimedia such as digital filmmaking. Rogers stressed that these approaches allow students to