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## The Gestalt Shift: The Role of the Narrator's Gender in Teaching Literary Texts

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### Abstract

This paper explored the role of the narrator's gender in teaching literary texts that Ahlam Mosteghanemi's makes use of gender in her literary work. This quantitative qualitative study includes only one novel "Memory in the Flesh" (2008) first published in 1985 as its main sample. This paper argues that the shift in the gender of the narrator in "Memory in the Flesh" employs the aesthetic elements of the narrative to stimulate the thinking skills of the language's learner in similar situations as assumed by the Gestalt shift concept. The Gestalt theory as the theoretical framework enhances EFL learners to analyse the real identities of the narrators in relation to gender. In doing so, the research constructs a theoretical framework out of two main standpoints: One of the male narrator and the other of the female narrator which are linked to the gender roles in the narration. These learning strategies are used in teaching literary texts for postgraduate students in EFL contexts. This research used two instruments: semi-structured interviews and textual analysis. This mixed method (quantitative – qualitative) study used only one novel "Memory in the Flesh" (2008) first published in 1985 as its main date. The findings of the study showed that the use of the Gestalt pattern in reading the literary text "Memory in Flesh" as a case, with concern to the role of the narrator's gender improves the thinking skills of the EFL learner and interpretation abilities. This research recommends that further future research be conducted to investigate gender aspect in relevant literary works.

**Keywords:** *Narrator, Gender, Identity, Literary Criticism, Learning Strategies, Cultural Awareness*

### Introduction

The narrator is the most significant feature in designing a novel since s/he determines the perspective of the readers and their experience. Thus, this requires the reader to recognize the

means used by the narrator in one hand (Chen et. al, 2016). In the other hand, the author implicitly directs the readers' perspectives towards a specific goal, particularly when gender is used to unlock the real identity of the main character in the novel. This is done to understand the point of view of the narrator who is the main character in the literary text (Sell, 2005). Therefore, assessing the narrator's gender role in a literary work is necessary for EFL students to improve their ability in identifying the author's ideas through using their cognitive skills in order to achieve a clear perception that associates with the meaning of the literary text.

This sheds light on the significance of the first narrator's point of view in terms of its effect on the perception and persuasion of the reader. The protagonist in *Memory in Flesh* (MIF, hereafter) is a 1st person narrator. This allows the author to implicitly gain the provision on her point of view. According to (Chen et. al 2016), there are two factors responsible for that. This includes identification and self-referencing, respectively. The former occurs when readers of a narrative adopt the perspective of a character in the literary text that is usually the protagonist. In this way the reader develops an emotional attachment and adopts the character's point of view. Meanwhile, the latter takes place when literary text reminds the readers with their own experience by personalizing the information of the text to increase the possibility of the readers' involvement and persuasion.

This proposes that the core of a literary text is confronting the critical thinking of the reader by means of differentiating between the denotative and the connotative meaning. This is to find the correlations between events as well identifying the tone of the text. The purpose of this is to uncover the hidden message between the lines through using crucial thinking skills such as problem solving, decision making, interpretation, logical reasoning (Tabačková, 2015). Also, literature is still one of the major means that promotes the critical and analytical ability. It is assumed that with large texts EFL learners make more inferencing and acquire more language besides to providing learners with cultural competence and awareness (Sell, 2005).

Thus, a novel or a poem with an authentic experience based on lifelike offers students a vast bulk of language and a means to learn how to communicate according to the culture at the presented situations (Muhammad, 2013). In this respect, Hismanoglu (2005) assumes that teaching a literary text develops the readers' knowledge in different ways such as stimulating imagination, coping with situations and problems the same as their experiences. Most importantly, this helps learners to master higher skills like knowledge, identify problems, formulate alternatives, and arrive at meaningful, thoughtful, effective decisions and solutions. This confirms that the benefit of teaching literary narrative is that it promotes many strategies that the brain uses to learn (Szurmak & Thuna, 2013).

Further, as an EFL teacher, it is essential to explore how the use of Gestalt shift affects the reader's perspective. The Gestalt psychology depends on the observation that we often experience things that are not a part of our simple sensations. Gestalt psychologists have followed the basic principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In other words, the whole has carried a different and greater meaning than its individual components (Chengqing &

Liyana, 2012). In connection, the current study aims at identifying and analyzing the role of the narrator's gender within the Gestalt pattern in teaching literary texts.

### **The Research Objectives**

This research is an attempt to achieve the following objectives.

- i. To explore the role of the narrator's gender in stimulating the critical thinking skills of EFL learners.
- ii. To investigate the Gestalt approach's help in changing the students' understanding of a literary text.
- iii. To analyse the way in which the narrator uses the aesthetics of a literary text to help EFL readers enhance their literary interpretation skills.

### **The Research Questions**

This study addresses the following research questions.

1. What is the role of the narrator's gender in stimulating the critical thinking skill of EFL learners?
2. Does the Gestalt approach help in changing the students' understanding of a literary text?
3. How does the narrator use the aesthetics of a literary text to help EFL readers enhance their literary interpretation skills?

### **Literature Review**

Research on literary issues at text level has developed rapidly over the past two decades. Investigations of gender and its relation to the Gestalt shift in improving the readers' critical thinking skill in literary text is one of the most specific areas that have gained prominence (Dorsch & Macpherson, 2018). The significance of such studies cannot be denied as literary knowledge can be a helpful insight to provide solutions to literary and language based-problems (Tabačková, 2015).

Newman et.al (2015) analysed gender differences in language use using standardized categories to analyze a database of over 14, 000 text files from 70 separate studies. The findings of the study showed that women used more words related to psychological and cognitive processes. Also, the results of the study indicated that men referred more to object properties and impersonal topics. Although these effects were largely consistent across different contexts, the pattern of variation suggests that gender differences are larger on tasks that place fewer constraints on language use.

Also, Van Lissa et.al (2016) investigated the effect of narrative perspective on readers' engagement with a first-person narrator. This experimental study comprised 76 Dutch high-school students. The findings were that the manipulation of narrative perspective did not affect empathy for the character but did affect trust. Also, the results revealed that older participants involved in greater perspective-taking with the character when they read the text from a first-person perspective. This is related to mature perspective-taking abilities that are still very much

under development in adolescence according to psychological development research. This is consistent with Kaufman and Libby's (2012) prediction that a first-person narrative is more conducive to experience-taking than third-person narratives.

Likewise, Varga (2017) investigated the correlation between the linguistic strategies used by the teacher and the pupil's opportunities to develop metacognitive. The empirical findings were from textual discussions of works of fiction in grades 6 and 7. The study showed that by use of a series of linguistic strategies, teachers can offer pupils support in order to identify and visualise the premises of their personal queries, observe and verbalise their processes of interpretation together with their emotional reactions, communicate their use of reading comprehension strategies, and recognize the text as an aesthetic construction and the interaction/transaction between the text and the reader.

Similarly, Bence (2017) explored the use of narratives as a teaching method in the young learners' EFL classrooms through using ways to incorporate into the lesson plans. As a result, detailed guidelines are offered to the EFL teachers who want to incorporate narratives as a teaching method into their young learners' classrooms. In addition, Attard (2018) examined the connection between literature and aesthetics. This qualitative research claimed that the connection between aesthetics and literature is possible if a genre is transformed into an experience which is mostly subjective. This generates aesthetic value which on the other hand, is more objective and universal. It focused mainly on whether the concept of aesthetics of literature really connects aesthetics to literature and, more precisely, on which criteria make literary works suitable for aesthetic evaluation.

Further, Hardman (2019) discussed the possibilities of interactive fiction to promote conceptual change in science through reviewing a bulk of literature around the use of narrative in science education. Eight developed recommendations were produced to the deployment of narrative within science education, with particular reference to interactive fiction and its potential in promoting conceptual change. They were tested through a small-scale study in which an interactive fiction book is written around Newton's laws, and then tested with 27,16- and 17-year-old chemistry students. The interactive fiction developed was based upon the well-established Force Concept Inventory. The findings showed that there was a significant positive effect size on the understanding of students who did not study advanced physics.

Macmillan (2018) in his book "the Gestalt Shift in Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes Stories" analyzed the four novels and fifty-six stories written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, describing the adventures and discoveries of Sherlock Holmes. Michael J. Crowe suggested that nearly all the Holmes stories exhibit the pattern known as a Gestalt shift, in which suddenly Holmes's efforts reveal a new perspective on the case. Crowe argued that in similar to this way of applying the idea of a Gestalt shift to the history of science; it can be applied to some other areas of fiction.

In this research, the Gestalt shift is used to reveal the real identities of main characters in (MIF), very similar to what (Dorsch & Macpherson, 2018) suggest that being uncertain about the reality of what we see arises from unstable Gestalt shift to a different visual interpretation of the scene. Such appearances can be illusory and not part of normal perceptual experience. One of the

significance issues in Ahlam Mosteghanemi's *Memory in Flesh* is the accusation that a man wrote her novel (McLarney, 2011). The language and style used by the author was very persuasive in convincing the reader of the male voice of the protagonist. Yet, through using the Gestalt approach how can readers reveal the hidden identities of the main characters in MIF despite their explicit appearances?

In conclusion, the researchers agree with the above discussed studies that the role of the narrator's gender in teaching literary texts using the Gestalt shift has a significant effect on improving the EFL learners' thinking skills. In addition, any kind of investigation should always start with the the narrator's gender and focus on the Gestalt shift as they contain the basic blocks of literary text comprehension and understanding, particularly novels (Newman et.al, 2015; Van Lissa et.al, 2016; Bence. 2017; Macmillan, 2018 and Hardman, 2019). The researchers also observe that many research studies adopt the use of literary criticism framework in their investigations of the role of narrator's gender and Gestalt shift and their contribution to the comprehension and understanding of the literary text. Although, there are many studies that investigated the role of the narrators in the interpretation and comprehension of literary text, no studies have so far examined the role of the narrator's gender in teaching literary texts using the Gestalt shift, particularly in Ahlam Al Mosteghanemi's literary work (MIF). Consequently, this study is an attempt to investigate the role of the narrator's gender in teaching literary texts.

### **Research Methods**

To answer the main research questions, the relevant literature had to be studied and the necessary information had to be collected. Past research has been studied to obtain necessary narrator's gender in teaching literary texts when using the Gestalt shift framework. Also, the purpose of doing this was to prepare the teacher for steering the lessons and assist her/him to create a list of quality questions for the interview with the teachers. The bases of past research varied and were collected from different resources including books, articles and websites that comprise a lot of diverse viewpoints and information for new teachers. Then, the researchers developed the interview questions followed by writing the lesson plans in order to achieve the teaching targets and literature recommendations and feedback. Later, the researchers compared the lesson plans and teaching of the literary texts using the Gestalt Shift with the teachers' recommendation as based on the response of the participants on the interview items. Consequently, the conclusion about the role of narrator's gender in teaching a literary text and the effectiveness of using the Gestalt Shift in preparing the lesson plan for "Memory in Flesh" were made.

### **Participants**

The participants of the study comprised 4 experienced EFL and literature teachers from the University of Jordan. 2 of the participants were females and 2 were males who were encouraged to teach "Memory in the Flesh" as an elective course for a group of postgraduate students at the University of Jordan in their final year.

### **Narrative-Based Lesson Plan**

The researchers prepared narrative-based lessons plans and taught "Memory in the Flesh" (2008). Within this apparatus, literature worked as the source for creating the lesson plans. The first group of interviewees comprised 2 EFL female teachers. The second group of interviewees comprised 2 EFL male teachers. The novel used was Ahlam Mosteghanemi's (2008) "Memory in the Flesh" an elective postgraduate final year course. The aim of the lesson was to find out the role of narrator's gender in teaching literary texts and the effectiveness of using the Gestalt Shift. For the purpose of demonstrating good reading comprehension ability and building real cognitive skill atmosphere, the teachers exposed the learners to an advanced narrative level "Memory in the Flesh".

The researchers used a set of interview items with both groups of EFL teachers related to the Gestalt shift and narrator's gender role. The interview items consisted of 2 personal questions, requiring teachers to write their age and years of teaching English as a foreign language; and six questions related to the use of Gestalt shift, narrator's gender, teachers' feedback on their students' reading comprehension and recommendation for teachers of English literature at university stage.

### **Procedure**

The research began by gathering the background knowledge from varied sources. Reading through scholars' findings (Newman et al, 2015; Varita, 2017; Attard, 2018 etc.) made it clear that teachers' interests, teaching and learning targets or the lesson goals, the complexity of the text and the tasks, the context of the novel/literary text and other beneficial elements like critical thinking and cognitive skills had to be taken into account when choosing a narrative for postgraduate students.

Useful tips, like taking into consideration the relationship of the narrative voice to the characters, and the use of language and the subject-matter. Changing perspective, deliberately by ignoring some lines and details so that it allows readers to come into finer focus. The attributes of the sex psychology will influence the form and style of the work. So, do such sorts of attributes essentially feminine or masculine help the reader to appreciate the reading text?

The one claiming that narrator's gender using a Gestalt Shift presenting a narrative (novel) him/herself is very beneficial to both EFL teachers and learners than the story being presented by a machine (Ballenger, 2019), that using any other form of language and literature teaching strategies, facial expressions and different voices largely improves the experience of postgraduate students. Bobzein (2017) states that they learn best when they are first hand involved in the process of learning, or that words are often not enough for them to fully comprehend the literary texts lesson, made preparing narrative and gender based lessons much easier and more productive.

### **The Interview**

After gathering the information, the structure of the interview questions began. When they were accomplished, each EFL teacher was interviewed independently; their responses were verified and recorded. Notes were then examined, compared and conclusions were made.

### **Implementing the Narrative-Based Lessons in the Classroom Setting**

The lesson plan with the 2 female EFL teachers begins a warm-up activity where participants were encouraged to follow the guidelines and perform it out. Thus, the structure "Gestalt Shift" was introduced in the literary text. Students were asked to read with concern for gender, the beauty of language, and with the relevance of the text to various aspects of their experience. The next activity required some reading cognitive and critical thinking practice and retelling of the novel using the Gestalt shift. Basically, different fields and sciences nowadays are inevitably intertwined in a way that makes it difficult to study one subject without relating it to another. This is to understand more in-depth the bottoms and ups of any subject. Thus, the interdisciplinary approach is used to broaden the perspectives of teachers in the classroom (Nungsari et. al, 2017). Novels are lifelike that integrate many incidents and events in order to develop the whole picture. Students manipulate many critical thinking skills and study other related fields to analyze and understand themes and symbols of a novel like Psychology, Culture, and Linguistics.

### **Discussion**

In assessing whether "MIF" has a Gestalt shift structure, it is imperative to provide an in-depth detailed analysis of Al Mosteghanemi's (2008) work. This section discusses the analysis of the research.

### **The Role of the Narrator's Gender in Stimulating the Critical Thinking Skills of EFL Learners Using the Gestalt Shift**

In this paper, the researchers claim the role of Gestalt Shift and narrator's gender and their significance in stimulating the critical thinking skills of English as foreign language learners when reading a literary text or a novel. They propose that the presence of a Gestalt shift may influence the development of learners' critical thinking skill positively side by side with the identity or gender of the narrator. For instance, Gestalt Shift may broaden the critical thinking skill of EFL learners by enhancing their level of involvement in the interpretation of the literary text, particularly when the narrator is female gender using a masculine identity.

In addition, the researchers believe that the notion of the Gestalt Shift and narrator's gender can assist in discussing the nature of the critical thinking skill that EFL learners use to understand or comprehend the literary text or novel. In this regard, the researcher believes that the connection between the narrator's gender and Gestalt shift is very clear in Ahlam Al Mosteghanemi's work "Memory in Flesh" but the researchers are not attempting to prove that rather than exploring it. That is, the Gestalt Shift is realized when Ahlam as the narrator states;

*"I have always envied those artists who can switch effortlessly from painting to writing, simply as if they are moving from one compartment of the mind to, or shifting to a new woman without seeing the previous one off. But I am not like that. I am a one-woman man. Here is the pen then, at once a tool of vibes and jibes. Here is a tool that does not know how to lie, how to veil the truth, and is unable to gloss over a gaping wound". (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 2).*

The writer unconsciously on the tongue of her male first narrator tells the way the protagonist switches his role from painting to writing, while the female narrator "Ahlam" is already the female writer in her story. Why a man in his fifty, as already the protagonist himself wondered, would shift into writing?

*"Writing for the first time after the age of fifty is something as once both sensual and insane, a reversion to adolescence. Something exciting but also dumb, resembling a love affair between a man in decline and a new pen." (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 12).*

This shift reveals the real identity of the narrator who is already the voice of the female writer, who kills the painter deliberately to retrieve back her real identity and speaks out her thoughts. This is clarified in the writer's style of getting rid of any unwanted luggage or persons as stated on the tongue of "Ahlam": *"I had to put some order in my life and get rid of some old furniture". (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 8).*

Reading between the lines, again she states it: *"the only reasons we write novels is to kill off heroes and do away with people whose existence become a burden" (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 8).*

As indicated in the quotation, it seems acceptable to propose that the competent use of a Gestalt shift in harmony with the narrator's gender can be taken as a significant element that is particularly useful in enhancing the critical thinking skills of the learners and broaden their cognitive abilities in a way that will affect their understanding of the literary text. For example, Ahlam features Khaled a man of war with his amputated arm to reinforce manhood /gender of the narrator.

*"One is ashamed of the empty sleeve hidden timidly in the pocket of a jacket, as though trying to conceal a private memory hidden and apologize for the past of those who have not past" (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 43).*

This shows that the occurrence of the Gestalt shift in the literary text can very often be productive and stimulating as it brings the best of EFL learners and encourages them to think deeply so that they can comprehend the text. Side by side with the identity of the narrator's gender, the use of the Gestalt shift results in through reading of the literary text and to a subtle analysis of the reader / learner's reaction to keep up with the progress of the events in the story. Furthermore, the use of the Gestalt shift in correspondence with the narrator's gender does not enforce categories that might misrepresent the reading text in the story. This certainly indicates that the use of the Gestalt shift is appropriate for literary work but not possibly for other types of genre.

An interesting case is that of Ahlam Al Mosteghanemi's "Memory in Flesh" (2008), which was written by a woman but in a man's voice. MIF is one of the most famous novels of Al Mosteghanemi's that has the form of Gestalt shift. The novel linguistically has many words that



were used on the tongue of the narrator like illusion, untrue, liar, mask, suspicions, etc. which implies the amount of wording that the writer used to delude the readers and reshape realities in contrary to what is true.

In *Memory in Flesh*; the protagonist is a man, a painter, who lost his arm fighting for Algerian freedom. He wrote a book in response to what his former lover has published. The woman in the novel has the same name of the writer "Ahlam" who is also a writer and meets "Khaled" who was her father's comrade in the Algerian revolution and old enough to be her father.

Khaled and Ahlam met in Paris where originally the writer herself had been raised up and lived in. There started a love story that turned upside down the hero's life. When Ahlam left Khaled, he realized that the woman he thought he knew was totally a different woman as he states: "*You have chosen another path and wear another face, one I no longer recognize, a face that looks out at us from magazines or from adverts in shop window, draped to sell something. It could be toothpaste or anti-wrinkle cream. Or maybe you wore that mask to promote merchandise in the form of a book you called*" (*Mosteghanemi, MIF, 8*).

The word 'memory' in the novel carries many embodiments starting with the protagonist's memory of his amputated arm, his memory of his hometown Constantine, or his mother. The way how is this novel written and the allusions used, make it difficult for school students to keep up with, thus is it appropriate for a college students' level. As viewed, the main character in *Memory in Flesh* undergoes what called a Gestalt shift, in which the main character "Khaled" experiences throughout the story unstable condition to keep up with a male behavior as the writer skillfully attempted to persuade the readers with his masculinity.

*"I went on putting all effort I could into proving my heroism to him as if I wanted him to witness my manliness or death". (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 19).*

Again, all puzzles and wonders the protagonist had in relation to the gestalt pattern that the writer's used most of the time.

*"There was no need for any more pretenses. Each of us had chosen our destiny". (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 27).*

*"So, about whom I wonder, are you talking? Which one of us were you writing about, which one of us did you love, which one of us are you going to kill? To whom you were faithful, you who used to swap one love for another, one memory for another, and one impossible situation for another? " (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 27).*

The gestalt shift is being used in most of the novel parts starting with the real identity of the first narrator who narrates with a male's voice and turns to be the female writer's voice. Also, "Ahlam" who turns to have another name "Hayat" in an early implication to another personality that she had, a different woman whom "Khaled" thought he knew; when she abandoned him and decided to marry a man, ironically, from the same corrupted military background whose father used to fight. Even when he described 'Si Tahir' Ahlam's father, the narrator reveals how he was surprised to know part of Si Tahir' real personality when he says:

*"Symbols always know how to surround themselves with that invisible barrier that separates the ordinary and the exceptional, the possible and impossible in everything" (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 19)*

These lines conclude the use of Gestalt shift and role of the narrators' gender in teaching literary texts. In fact, it is sometimes proposed that Al Mosteghanemi while writing she used a male voice, which she viewed as a success to establish an advanced level of text comprehension by the readers. Al Mosteghanemi also employed the Gestalt shift in some of her other writings. Of course, the content of Al Mosteghanemi's Gestalt shift was unique and influential. Furthermore, the shift she did in her Trilogy beginning with "Memory in Flesh" narrated with a male voice "Khaled", followed then by her second novel "Chaos of the Senses" narrated by a female voice "Ahlam" is another evidence that the writer herself enjoys playing "the Gestalt shift" with her main characters. An investigation to compare the Gestalt pattern used between the two novels is recommended for further studies, especially that "Chaos of the Senses" is considered fiction within fiction.

### **The Gestalt Approach's Contribution in Changing the Students' Understanding of Literary Text**

Although, the researchers have attempted very hard to find previous studies that investigated the contribution of Gestalt shift in changing the learners' understanding of literary text particularly in Al Mosteghanemi's work, but they have not found any. This motivated the researchers to explore "Memory in Flesh" and find examples on such shift. This encouraged the researchers to think that they may be onto something. These are the only relevant instances that the researchers have located and meaningfully stated in Al Mosteghanemi's work. The narrator explicitly compares Ahlam to his country: "*You were Constantine's mulberry tree, every season in black. You were the city's love, its clothes, its joys, its misery, and its lovers.*" (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 5). However, being aware of the gestalt pattern used, the learner cannot miss out the right figure that resembles 'Constantine' in the novel. The narrator keeps pointing to Ahlam all through the novel, though he has been all the time the one who resembles the country when he says: "*Is it me who is entering old age, or is the entire country now entering an era of an entire decline?*" (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 11).

The number of times the narrator compares Ahlam to 'Constantine' and even to his mother, is a technique that the narrator used to affect the readers' mind and convince them with the untrue claims. The one who represents Algeria is the man who spent his youth defending his country "Khaled Bin Tobal". Even when he decided to leave it, he decided not to go back again in order to keep the same memory of his country.

The significance of the gestalt shift in learning is that it teaches the EFL learner two lessons: First, not to swallow and follow. The repetition of words used on this regard is meant to manipulate with the reader's way of thinking. Language can be also decisive, therefore, the second lesson that can be learnt is to analyze the connection between events and symbols and view the picture as whole not in parts.

Based on this, the researchers found out that the narrator's gender and views at one point in her novel have shown great effect on the literary text comprehension. This is viewed in terms of distinguishing the real meaning of the events which is partly revealed and partly concealed, but so disguised by non-relevant information that learners or text's readers may not perceive until the investigator discloses it to reader/ EFL learner. Taking into consideration that the female writer who was the first Arab women to write a novel in a patriarchal society as McLarney (2002:24) states:

"Mustaghanmi literally hides behind his voice, pushing it to the forefront while she remains on the edges of the narrative a silent or perhaps a silenced participant".

It is promising to entail the elements of a Gestalt before the learner and still omit the pattern; and that is what makes a successful cognitive process in changing the readers' understanding and comprehension of the literary text in a greater manner. This may be viewed in Al Mosteghanemi's work who loudly states that: "*My discovery suddenly scares me as if with it I am finding new features in my own face*". (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 11).

This reveals that the fact the use of disguise by Al Mosteghanemi in such a pattern (Gestalt shift) is entirely responsible for meaning-making and achieving texts' comprehension. This is evidence that might agree with the researcher's claim and analysis.

The Narrator's Use of the Aesthetics of a Literary Text to Help EFL Readers Enhance their Literary Interpretation Skills. The narrator uses the aesthetics to a certain extent in the text and images to help EFL readers interpret the text actively. Aanstoo (2003:43) postulates that:

"Many educators argue that an image-rich curriculum can reach more students and teach them more quickly than traditional text-based verbal and written instructions ever could". Having provided this vigorous reader preference to the EFL reader and a literary text, an image may stimulate the reader's interest, activate background and prior knowledge to encourage EFL learners to read and interpret a literary text and when she/ he is provided with an access to an image that balances the literary text, her / his comprehension and understanding of the text may be strengthened."

To conclude, an image that is attached to the literary text may possibly be used to refresh, revisit and revise the text that was experienced. Such is the supremacy of images as Al Mustaghanmi (2008) evidences in most of the "MIF" pertaining to the use of aesthetics of a literary text to help EFL readers enhance their literary interpretation skills. The title of the novel "Memory in Flesh" imbedded several interpretations: Is it the memory of a body like the amputated arm, or Ahlam's body, or it is neither one? The writer employed the aesthetic components in the literary text to paint the memory inside the novel, at the same time to influence the memory of the reader in return.

"The story of my life with you and the memory of pain" (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 8). "*I see an old tape of my memory in the way television shows old silent movies*" (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 2).

"Is a paper a dustbin for the memory?" (Mosteghanemi, MIF,2). "Words are all that is needed to go from silence to speech, from memory to oblivion, but.... I leave the sugar at one side and sip my bitter coffee" (Mosteghanemi, MIF,2).

In addition, teachers shoulder the responsibility of restructuring with confidence and knowledge, the techniques that are most appropriate for better recall and retention of knowledge. They possess the preference of embracing the spirit of the literary interpretation and transferring and using it to the reading of the literary text.

## Results

In the case of "Memory in Flesh" the true realities of characters are assumed to be hidden in purpose by the female writer due to many social, political, and psychological reasons that can be inferred by the learner through analyzing the differences of the gender language in the novel, taking into consideration the writer's background as a female. For instance, the language of pain for a female differs from the language of a male. A man, socially, is stronger and is not expected to reveal his pain. Though a woman can endure pain, she expresses her pain overtly (Jaworska and Ryan, 2018). Initially, the interview with the first EFL teachers about the lesson plan of the literary text "MIF" began with a discussion of the appearance/reality distinction. This involved Khalid's appearance (the protagonist) and "inferred judgment" as both parts of perception. There are differences between the language of a male and a female (GU, 2013). A female shows uncertainty and indecision; therefore, they raise their intonation to show this. When "Khlaed" the protagonist narrated his love story and evoked the agony of his love saying: "*Before I thought we could write about life when we had recovered from our wounds ;when we are able to touch our sores with a pen not revive the pain, when we could revive back from nostalgia, madness, and a sense of grievance*" (Mosteghanemi, MIF, 1).

"Khaled" the male narrator evoked a restless soul agony with a male voice describing that his pen is unable to hide the truth or deny his pain. According to the former psychological findings, a man is able to hide or at least would not mention his pain, since he considers revealing pain is part of being weak and vulnerable, that is to the contrary of the strong image of what he is supposed to be. Therefore, students need to start questioning whether that is a voice of a man or a woman. The first EFL teacher (female) stated that: "*Our Arab EFL students have insufficient knowledge about concluding the voice of the narrator in a literary text in terms of his/her gender. This causes a problem for them to understand the text clearly. They find it difficult to meet the reading comprehension requirements because of the disguised voice of the narrator in the story. Most often, the prior and background knowledge of the literary text such as the narrator's gender and use of Gestalt shift prevent them from understanding and comprehending the text explicitly when attempting to read*".

She adds, "*EFL students at local universities especially such as those in Jordan lack the reading comprehension habits of literary text such as those of Al Mosteghanemi's work which is an elective feminist literature course at our department. EFL do not have the skill and ability to comprehend such texts due to the role of gender and shift pattern and are not excited to do so.*

*These students lack the awareness of the importance of Gestalt shift and should be aware and trained about this element and other related activities on the effect of Gestalt shift and narrator's gender role in making-meaning when reading a literary text".*

At the beginning of the second lesson when the second EFL teacher was interviewed, he was encouraged to talk about teaching reading comprehension experience of literary text (Memory in the Flesh) and their cognitive skill. The opening discussion also revealed their familiarity/unfamiliarity with the novel. The second EFL teacher stated (female) that: *"In Jordan, even if EFL syllabus and curriculum at university stage are modern, EFL teachers tend to be too conservative and traditional. Sometimes, some of them resist the idea of using new methods and like to use traditional method of doing things with classroom practices, particularly when teaching reading comprehension in literary texts"*.

The third EFL teacher (Male) demonstrated that: *"I try to overcome the inability of my EFL students to comprehend a literary text such as that of "Memory in Flesh" by making them familiar with the text itself. This is because most our EFL students fail to understand the literary text due to their unfamiliarity with such literature. So, making EFL students familiar with new concepts such as the Gestalt shift or pattern helps them enhance their writing skills"*.

The fourth EFL teacher (Male) stated that: *"the use of aesthetics in Al Mosteghanemi's work and change in her voice or gender as a narrator affected EFL students' reading comprehension of "MIF. This is felt in their level of understanding to some parts of the text that contain mental image which was higher than those that they do not have. Also, the voice of male gender in some parts of the text helped male students understand the text faster compared to those parts where female voice is used and the other way around"*.

To conclude, the results prove that the use of the Gestalt pattern in reading the literary text "Memory in Flesh" as a case, with concern to the role of the narrator gender improves the thinking skills of the EFL learner and interpretation abilities. In this respect, the ignorance of the significance and involvement of images in text interpretation will not only be to the hindrance of teachers but, more essentially, to the difficulty of the EFL learner. If the opportunity is to assist and not to obstruct learning, learners and teachers should define and develop aesthetics in communication competence through using what have been learned by them in literary text's interpretation skills and strategies. The same kind of interpretation skills and mnemonic procedures that conveyed intense response and recall in comprehending a literary text can be adapted and adopted to produce similar advantages with respect to facts entailed in the reading of a literary text for the EFL learners.

The findings of the qualitative interview with the 4EFL teachers show that there is a need for developing and enhancing their students' reading comprehension quality in literary texts such as "Memory in Flesh". Also, they emphasised that EFL reading comprehension teachers, learners, curriculum designers and planners be aware of the importance of new teaching methods. They recommend that English Language and Literature students should be taught and trained on how to use and apply new methods of teaching reading comprehension and understanding of literary text such as Gestalt theory/ pattern and these can be incorporated into EFL teaching materials.

The researchers hope that this exploratory research will motivate further future investigations into how best can use of aesthetics of a literary text help EFL readers enhance their literary interpretation skills and competence through the application of aesthetics in reading a text. Moreover, the findings of this research show that the role of the narrator's gender in teaching literary texts helps EFL teachers prepare their lesson plans when teaching literary texts and develop students' reading comprehension. This is revealed in the narrator's gender and use of Gestalt shift in "Memory in Flesh".

The findings of this study show that the Gestalt pattern and narrator's gender are very significant in making-meaning and achieving text comprehension when dealing with literary texts such as those of Al Mosteghanemi's work, particularly MIF. This plays a crucial role in the overall meaning of the reading text. In other words, Gestalt shift and narrator's gender provide a summary for the reader and make a reading text interpretable. Also, there are other pedagogical factors that help EFL learners comprehend and understand literary texts such as MIF in which the researcher is aware of them. This implies the likelihood to apply the gestalt shift in other literature genre as it has been investigated in detective stories and romance.

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