



Effectiveness of Critical Thinking Skills for English Literature Study with Reader Response Theory: A Review of Literature

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ABSTRACT

Since Socrates' time, reasoning is considered valuable for the justification of speaker's belief along with Thomas Aquinas' testing of his thinking to answer his own thinking. Critical thinking has been part of discussion among the educators for its significance and application for last many decades. Many educators have conducted researches on the assessment of critical thinking within a domain or across the domain in order to test students' critical thinking skills and its effect on their learning. Similarly, critical thinking is highly valuable for the study of literature as it explicitly asked for learners' beliefs, perceptions, and judgments in order to remove the ambiguity of thought. Perfection of thought can be achieved with the use of critical thinking skills while training of mind needs interaction between literary text and the reader as literature has the capacity to achieve mental traits specified to critical thinking. Accordingly, this report presents a relationship between critical thinking skills and English literature study along with reader response theory techniques considering that without the use of critical thinking skills and reader response theory, study of literature is haphazard hence for the application of reader response theory, literary text is inevitable. In essence, I aim to highlight the effectiveness of critical thinking skills for the study of literature while emphasizing the significance of reader response theory which is also inevitable for the study of literature and for the use of critical thinking skills.

Keywords: Critical thinking, critical thinking skills, english literature, reader response theory, critical thinkers.

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1.0 Introduction

Advocates of critical thinking take critical thinking as a main component of students' learning and think that critical thinking must be part of education and students must be trained in critical thinking (Dewey,

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1933 & Scriven, 1985). The present scenario highly demands that learners must be critical in order to make rational decisions. Moreover, Russell's (1960) equation of thinking comprising attitude + knowledge + thinking skills (cited in Halpern, 2013) makes it pertinent to study students' response towards any text regarding their background knowledge with the use of critical thinking skills.

The significance of this report is to highlight the effectiveness of critical thinking from students' perspectives that how critical thinking is essential for students' learning. This report is an attempt to justify that the how the effective use of critical thinking skills enhances students' literature study with reader response theory techniques. This study helps in opening new vistas for the readers especially novice learners of literature that how different critical thinking skills would facilitate them for the study of literature along with reader response theory techniques. Particularly, the significance of this study unveils the reality that there exists a relationship between critical thinking, English literature with the application of reader response theory however ignoring this relationship; neither the objectives of critical thinking skills can be achieved nor literature study without the application of reader response theory can be utilized and learned.

1.1 Definitions of critical thinking and critical thinkers

Socrates (25,000 years ago) realized that most people need justification for the sound knowledge through reasoning. According to Socrates, people are dependable regarding their use of knowledge whenever they need to justify it. The Socratic Method is based on 'questioning' that is logic and reasoning for the justification of a contradiction in order to support speaker's beliefs and conclusion. His method of 'questioning' is taken as a well-known method to critical thinking. In addition, Plato, his disciple, followed his work and stated in his work, 'The Apology':

The death sentence handed down to him would guarantee that he would be known to history as a heroic figure, one who died for the "crime" of thinking for himself and for encouraging others to do likewise (Carroll, 2004).

In middle ages, Thomas Aquinas was famous for his systematic approach to critical thinking. He tested his thinking in order to ensure critical thinking by stating, considering, and answering which is crucial to his thinking (Carroll, 2004). In Renaissance period, there were several scholars who were well-known for defining critical thinking. For example, in late 16th century, Bacon asserted:

Critical thinking is a desire to seek, patience to doubt, fondness to meditate, slowness to assert, readiness to consider, carefulness to dispose and set in order; and hatred for every kind of imposture (cited in Carroll, 2004).

Descartes, belonged to 17th century, he in his book 'Rules for the Direction of the Mind', focused on need for a special mind is "disciplining of the mind" in order to guide thinking process (Paul et al., 1997). Likewise, Kirkegaard and Nietzsche from 18th century also claimed the importance of individual personality and subjectivity which highlights the value of critical thinking (Paul et al., 1997).

Many authors take critical thinking as, "self-correcting", "self-directed", and "goal-directed" (Bailin, Case, Coombs & Daniels, 1999; Limpon, 1988 & Paul, 1992). Likewise, some authors claimed that critical thinking relates to 'decision making' based on one's own assumptions while highlighting 'critical reflection'. According to Dewey (1933), critical thinking is, "active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds which support it and the further conclusions to which it tends". His definition encourages learners to use their previous knowledge and response it according to the matter which is before them.

According to Carey, Foltz and Allen (1983), "ultimately, it is not we who define thinking. It is thinking that defines us" (cited in Halpern, 2013). They propose that one's thinking which one uses in speech and writing sheds light on one's personality and subjectivity as well. It clearly indicates that thinking is an index of one's heart and brain. Halpern (2013) goes on to say:

Critical thinking is the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome. It is used to desire thinking that is purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed—the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inference, calculating likelihood and making decisions.

Halpern argued that critical thinking helps ones in using cognitive skills which is based on desired outcome. It can help a person in making decisions for specific tasks in order to solve problems. Furthermore, Ennis (1987) defines critical thinking in terms of , “reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do” while Norris (1985) defined critical thinking as, “deciding rationally what to or what not to believe”.

According to Hooks (2010), “ the heartbeat of critical thinking is the longing to know- to understand how life works”. He conveyed that thinking is an action; thoughts are just like a laboratory where one asks questions and finds answers in order to share with others. One can clearly get the idea that how critical thinking is important for a learner. Paul and Elder (2002) defined critical thinking as, ...being the disciplined art of ensuring that you use the best thinking you are capable of in any set of circumstances. The general goal of thinking is to figure out the lay of the land. We all have choices to make. We need the best information to make the best choices.

They believe that critical thinkers are best at making choices. This ability makes them thinker. They go on to say that nothing is complete and no one can find complete truth however perfection of thought and skills are the real possibilities in order to get high level of one’s thought. And if a person wants to become ‘critic’ of his own thoughts he has to make ‘learning about thinking’. Facione (1990) presented a consensus statement of various scholars from the Delphi Report and pointed out that critical thinking is both from cognitive and affective domain. An extract of report is as under:

We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based...

The report further elaborates critical thinkers are “well informed”, “open minded”, “flexible”, “fair minded in evaluation”, “honest in facing personal biases” and “diligent in seeking relevant information”. It clearly indicates that critical thinking is when a learner tries to analyze, interpret, evaluate, and infer the text or situation based on judgment. On the other hand, it is also indicated that critical thinkers are “persistent in seeking results which are as precise as the subject and the circumstances of inquiry permit” (Facione, 1990). All this should be based on reasonable criteria for making decisions.

It is noticed in the literature that critical thinking is all about rational judgment, problem solving tasks, evaluation, inference which makes a learner critical thinker. Similarly, McPeck (1981) classified critical thinking as, “the appropriate use of reflective skepticism”. He stated that a person needs to think critically in action. According to Paul and Elder (1999),

Critical thinkers are clear as to the purpose at hand and they question at issue. They question information, conclusion and point of view. They strive to clear, accurate, precise, and relevant. They seek to think beneath the surface, to be logical and fair.

To sum up above definition, it is clear that thinkers are thinkers who go beyond the given knowledge. Who are clear and relevant while making conclusion. Their only purpose is seeking and they prove it that they are in a seeking process which is their continuous process of self-assessment.

1.2 Importance of critical thinking in education

As far as its importance in higher education is concerned, MCEETYA (2008) described successful

learners are who, “able to think deeply and logically, and obtain and evaluate evidence in a disciplined way as the result of studying fundamental disciplines” and who, “are able to make sense of their world and think about how things have become the way they are” .

MCEETYA is in same vein with **Hooks (2010)**. Both defined critical thinkers who think deeply in order to make sense that how things, people and situation come in their way. **Cottrell (2005)** asserted:

At most English-speaking universities, students are expected to take a critical approach to what they hear, see and read, even when considering the theories of respected academics. Normally, any theory, perspective, data, area of research or approach to a discipline could be subjected to critical analysis.

She conveyed that learners must be critical towards various facts which will unique to critical analysis. According to **Ennis (1985)**, asking and answering questions for clarification are also relevant to critical thinking. In this context, institutes should produce learners who develop themselves and become critical thinkers. **Dewey (1933)** stated:

...it is ...the business of education...to cultivate deep-seated and effective habits of discriminating tested beliefs from mere assertions, guesses, and opinions; to develop a lively, sincere, and open-minded preference for conclusions that are properly grounded, and to ingrain into the individual's working habits methods of inquiry and reasoning appropriate to the various problems that present themselves. The formation of these habits is the Training of Mind.

Training of mind is only possible when learners are taught in a way that their minds become fresh and enriched with continuous process of thinking. In other words, in educational institutes critical thinking skills must be taught and gauged so that learners could be able to use their opinions, ideas and thoughts.

Lipman (1988) stated that critical thinking facilitates good judgment. **Facione, Sanchez, and Facione (1995)** reported a consensus of critical thinkers on critical thinking that in institute teachers must teach learners and must produce such type of learners who want to use their cognitive skills. **Nickerson (1988)** further explained this problem by asserting that it is all about teaching of critical thinking that how students are taught critical thinking.

Critical thinking involves using criteria for evaluating one's thoughts (**Case, 2005 & Lipman, 1988**). These criteria depend on the domain of interest (**Lipman, 1988**). Further, these criteria are ‘perfection of thought’ which communicates to students the “quality of thought” regarding “clarity, accuracy, precision, specificity, relevance, consistency, logic, depth, completeness, significance, fairness, and adequacy” (**Paul, 1992**).

1.3 Importance of background knowledge: Domain specificity

Advocates of domain specificity **Ennis (1989)**, **Willingham (2007)**, and **Bailin (2002)** argued that general instructions in critical thinking are successful because critical thinking requires domain specific knowledge; it would be easier to learn in order to think critically within a given domain while domain specific knowledge is important for critical thinking skills, respectively. Likewise, **McPeck (1990)** also asserts that most useful critical thinking skills are domain specific.

Opposite to this, **Halpern (2001)** after reviewing general instruction with the implementation of critical thinking claimed that general instructions in critical thinking has valuable potential while **Limpon (1988)** stated that critical thinking facilitates good judgment either in across or within the domain whereas **Von (2005)** claimed that critical thinking is general in nature. However, **Facione (1990)** has conducted the California Critical Thinking Skills Test for general assessment of critical thinking skill and found that the use of critical thinking is domain specific similarly **Paul (1992)** notes that to learn with critical

thinking skills within one's discipline requires appropriate standards and values in that discipline.

According to Ennis (1989), for critical thinking, background knowledge is essential and it can be taught within a specific domain. Many researchers claimed that for critical thinking background knowledge is very important and essential if students use their critical thinking skills (Case, 2005, Kennedy et al., 1991 & Willingham, 2007) and McPeck (1990) said students need 'something' to think critically about that thing. Facione (1990) is in the same context and asserted:

Although the identification and analysis of critical thinking skills transcend, in significant ways, specific subjects or disciplines, learning and applying these skills in many contexts requires domain-specific knowledge.

It indicates that learners must be aware of their specific context and situation in order to use their existing and previous knowledge. For doing so, students must be provided with sufficient opportunities to use critical thinking skills in a specific domain. Willingham (2007) argued that students can better think within a given domain rather than in generic sense.

Willingham (2007) argued that students may exhibit critical thinking in one context but fail to use in another context. He means that students are unable to transfer critical thinking out of a specific domain. Furthermore, Bailin et al., (1999) stated that domain specific knowledge is inevitable for critical thinking because evaluation, explanation and evidence vary from situation to situation. Similarly, Ennis (1989) argued that general instruction in critical thinking is to be considered successful because these are domain specific. Willingham (2007) also favored domain specific knowledge. To sum up domain specificity with Bailin (2002),

It makes no sense to refer to a process of interpreting which remains constant regardless of subject matter. Rather, what is involved in and even meant by interpreting varies with the context, and this difference is connected with the different kinds of knowledge and understanding necessary for successful completion of a particular task.

Interpreting advocates of domain specificity, one can say that domain specificity aims to complete specific tasks that require critical bent of mind this is why various educators supported domain specificity for the use of critical thinking skills.

1.4 Critical thinking and metacognition

Metacognition refers to thinking about thinking. According to Cross and Paris (1988), metacognition is "the knowledge and control children have over their own thinking and learning activities" and "the monitoring and control of thought" (Martinez, 2006) and "awareness of one's own thinking, awareness of the content of one's conceptions, an active monitoring of one's cognitive processes, an attempt to regulate one's cognitive processes in relationship to further learning" (Hennessey, 1999). Similarly, metacognition includes meta- strategic knowing e.g. thinking which operates on procedural knowledge.

In addition, Flavell (1979) takes critical thinking as a 'construct' of metacognition. He explains, "critical appraisal of message source, quality of appeal, and probable consequences needed to cope with these inputs sensibly" can lead to "wise and thoughtful life decisions". On the other hand, some scholars such as Facione (1990) and Schraw et al., (2006) claimed that metacognition is all about self-regulation which defines "our ability to understand and control our learning environments". Particularly, self-regulation has many further key points and 'motivation' is one of them.

1.5 Critical thinking and motivation

Motivation is taken as a supporting condition for critical thinking and unmotivated students do not possess critical thinking. According to Tuner (1995), difficult and unchallenging tasks motivate students as compared to easy tasks. It is evident in the literature that if teacher motivates students then it helps

students in using critical thinking skills. Generally, motivation requires skills and to think critically is, “the consistent internal motivation to engage problems and make decisions by using critical thinking” (Facione, 1990).

1.6 Critical thinking and creativity

Many researchers have made a connection between critical thinking and creativity (Bailin 2002; Ennis 1985; Paul & Elder 2006 & Thayer-Bacon, 2000). Critical thinking and creativity are aspect of ‘good’ purposeful thinking (Paul & Elder, 2006). They explained that thinking requires abilities to generate products which is a part of creativity along with which requires the learners to be critical about the quality of that product. They stressed, “Critical thinking without creativity reduces to mere skepticism and negativity, and creativity without critical thought reduces to mere novelty”. Both believe in that critical thinking and creativity must be considered during instructions.

2.0 What is literature?

It has different meaning to different authors. Whilta (2009) defined English literature, “as a discipline of mind, as a teacher of moral values, and as conduct of national cultural”. He defined literature for aesthetic pleasure and as a facilitator where one may portray his/her culture. In addition, following are fewer definitions of literature from different authors’ perspectives and defined literature (as cited in Lazar, 1993).

- Literature is a sort of disciplined technique for arousing certain emotion (Iris Murdoch, *The Listener*, 197).
- Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree (Ezra Pound. *How to read*, Part I).
- Literature is the question minus the answer (Roland Barthes, *New York Times*, 1978).
- Literature, fiction, poetry, whatever, makes justice in the world. That’s why it is almost always on the side of the underdog (Grace Paley, *Ms*, 1974).

Interpreting above, it can be said that literature has different meaning and it varies from person to person. According to Farrell (2004),

The literary text appears a one more site, no more privileged than others, where cultural codes linked with issues of power reveals themselves; or it is a site where languages seems an impersonal machinery generating meaning on its own, in a matter that confounds the human writer’s attempt to speak about the world or to express intentional states.

He aims to say that literature always deals with cultural issues where language plays its role in order to generate meanings. Thus, with the help of language, the author speaks about him/herself and portrays the society however English literature plays an essential role in human life in order to fulfill human needs for social and ethical purposes (Chambers & Gregory, 2006).

2.1 Importance of the study of literature

Burner (1998) said we must consider the value of literature as it helps a reader in finding a way and a mode of discourse. He takes literature for the purpose of discourse. It’s all about reading a text from reader and writer’s views while focusing on its explicit and implicit meaning along with seeing the entire world from different perspectives according to writer’s perception which will take out the whole scenario of life (cited in Whilta, 2009).

Dryden (1668) is in same vein and claimed in his “*Essays of Dramatic Poesie*” that literature should be read for questioning to authority, for critical evaluation of a text and for one’s own assumptions. Both considered literature as a mean of discourse where one critically analyzes the text based on his own questions and assumptions. He goes on to say that every genre of literature is, “a just and lively

imitation of human nature for the delight and instruction of mankind”.

According to [Moody \(1981\)](#), the role of literature is to give enjoyment and amusement for those who study it. Similarly, [El-Helou \(2010\)](#) asserts that literature captures learners’ attention towards various cultures which are not like their own cultures. Particularly, literature should be appreciated for its power to stimulate the emotions as it expresses the core of humanity.

2.2 Role of literature

According to [Langer \(1997\)](#), with the reading of literary “we move through the text” which develops our understanding and the reader starts to ‘rethink’. [Ng \(2004\)](#) stated that literature deepens learners’ sensitivity while heightening their critical ability. [Gillespie \(1994\)](#) says that literature “stimulates the imagination, to offer different perspectives and wider world that the adolescents can wonder at leisure and experience in safety”. Likewise, literature creates, stimulates, and develops our imaginations. Once imaginations are created then it provides another aspect of learning to the learners and then learners, “see learning as an exciting opportunity for open-ended response and critical thinking” ([Strickland & Strickland, 1993](#)).

Furthermore, [Khuankaew \(2010\)](#) claimed that literature enhances critical thinking skills while [Langer \(1997\)](#) appreciates literature and says that literature helps learners “to take part in their learning”. According to [Gajdusek \(1988\)](#), literature enables learners to produce integral meanings by doing so they can make sense of things. Likewise, [Spack \(1985\)](#) stated that literary texts enhance students’ language learning therefore this makes learners to respond to literary text critically. Thus, the role of literature is to create imaginations in a learner, makes him critical, and enables him in critical ability.

2.3 Study of literature and learners’ language competence

[Goodman \(1984\)](#) stated that language should be learned and used as a whole system of communication. He defines that a learner should use language for the mean of communication. Learnt knowledge overtly gives a way to express knowledge in any situation. [Weaver \(1994\)](#) stated that learning can be positively promoted when learners transacts with authentic texts and engage in authentic literacy and authentic learning experiences.

This can be summarized in [Freeman and Freeman’s \(1994\)](#) wording that, “learning is the active construction of knowledge by learners”. Once learners get knowledge they construct and reconstruct it on their own. In a language classroom, learners actively construct meaning for them, transact with people and books and negotiate meaning in social context and social collaboration ([Weaver, 1994](#)). [Freeman and Freeman](#) and [Weaver](#) both are in same direction that learning and knowledge are interlinked and result in reconstruction of meaning as literature plays a vital role in learners’ language competence.

[Mackay \(1982\)](#) asserted that literature increases learners’ motivation to interact with a text this interaction results in reading comprehension and reading comprehension helps in generating new meaning from a text. [Sage \(1987\)](#) stated that in literature, “the sources of the language are most fully and skillfully used”. One can say that literature generates colorful language which learners may use in variety of situations.

Furthermore, literature provides authentic material, real world, and natural language. When learners interact with text then text increases their interpretative abilities. According to [Lazar \(1993\)](#), texts are multiple in meaning and encourage interaction and learners can effectively prepare to share feelings and opinions. Supporting [Lazar’s \(1993\)](#) statement, [Langer \(1997\)](#) elaborates, “because it taps what they know and who they are, literature is a particularly inviting context for learning both a second language and literacy”. [Langer](#) asserted that literature plays dual role. One is when learners learn

second language and second is they learn literary text. She goes on to say that literature opens "horizon of possibility" that invites learners to question, interpret, connect and explore that is what she calls it "heart of thinking".

2.4 Literature study with critical thinking skills

The report by The Institute of Academic Excellence (1997) presented the relationship of critical thinking for the study of literature. The report highlights:

Literature-based reading has an important effect on the development of critical thinking. A reader must recognize patterns within text, fit details into these patterns, then relate them to other texts and remembered experiences (*Critical Thinking and Literature-based Reading*, 1997).

There are several reasons which define that a relationship exists between critical thinking and literature study. Firstly, the study of literature demands mental process in order to recall and retrieve the information so that readers could be able to reflect on the given text based on their experiences. In various experts' words, this process is done by, "explaining, analyzing, synthesizing, interpreting, evaluating, problem-solving, inferring, logical reasoning, and applying" (Facione 2007; Halpern, 1998 & Lazere, 1987) as Dias and Hayhoe (1988) claimed, "it is precisely the role of the reader in the act of reading that has not been sufficiently and properly addressed".

Hall (2005) asserts that literature reading is different to other reading books this is why it develops critical thinking skills while Langer (1997) said that literature students go beyond the given knowledge while reading literary text and this makes them to create factual future development. Consequently, it results in critical judgment of the text. Hall (2005) further asserted that the reading and learning of literary text is like a bottom up process where students become thoughtful and critical thinkers. According to Long and Pederson (1992), stressed is given to critical thinking skills worldwide through the study of literature. Specifically, in Turkey, literature has been implemented for the development of critical thinking skills (Irfaner, 2002).

Research by Khatib and Shakouri (2012) focused on the relationship of literature with critical thinking by discussing different authors' consents. Literature reading is an essential feature of critical thinking (Chang & Tung, 2009). They go on to say that because of literature reading a learner's mental process starts such as "recalling, retrieving and reflecting on the experiences" while the language of literary works provides learners several "real world scenarios" and learners construct meaning for life and for self because literature mirrors one's life.

Furthermore, the findings of Hosseini et al., (2012) showed that a positive relationship exists between critical thinking skills and reading comprehension. They found that cognitive and affective strategies along with critical thinking skills appeared predictors of the reading comprehension. Opposite to this, Fahim and Nilforooshan (2014) conducted a study on 'The Relationship between Critical Thinking and Foreign Language Anxiety' on the students of English translation and English literature. The findings revealed that teachers must do their best to minimize foreign language anxiety in order to enhance learners' critical thinking abilities.

Particularly, the relationship between literature and critical thinking is matter of significance and critical thinking cannot be taught until cultivated through activities in actual classroom discourse because critical thinking is dependent on a person's "disposition" (Paul, 1983). Disposition to critical thinking requires "willingness", "motivation", "inclination" and "intention" and these require reflection (Facione, Sanchez, Facione, & Gainen, 1995). Finally, according to Chang and Tung(2009), "the setting and the language and the subject matter of a literary work provide readers with a variety of real-world scenarios to construct meanings of self and life incrementally" while "literature...is the single academic discipline that can come closest to encompassing the full range of mental traits currently considered to comprise critical thinking" (Lazere, 1987).

3. Reader response theory

Reader response is core of understanding a literary text. The advocates of reader response theory claim that a text cannot be read with objectivity. It is evident that reader response is essential in understanding meaning of a text specified to reader's individual response (Church, 1997&Rosenblatt, 1978, 1994).

In Rosenblatt's (1938, 1995) words, "There is no such thing as a generic reader or a generic literary work; there are only the potential millions of individual readers of the potential millions of individual literary works" because, "text remains merely ink spots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols". Rosenblatt (1978, 1994) says that a text has different meaning to different readers and different readers dissect a text from their perceptions. According to her, reading involves, "transaction' among reader, text, author, social and cultural context" while the work, "exists in the live circuit set up between reader and text because reading event is "a situation, an event at a particular time and place".

According to her, transaction has a recursive value which involves "the to-and-fro, spiraling, nonlinear, continuously reciprocal influence of reader and text in the making of meaning" (1938, 1995). She emphasizes reader and said this is a reader who "infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the pattern of verbal symbols". She neatly defines the strong relationship between a reader and text. This is reader who brings another meaning to text and gives shape to text. She asserted that the reader, "draws on past experience of life and language to elicit meaning from the printed word" and "reorganizes past experience to attain new understanding". In addition, "past experience with life and language serves as the raw materials out of which to shape the new experience symbolized on the page".

By saying this, she focused on teacher's role that in classroom teacher becomes "a matter of improving the individual's capacity to evoke meaning from the text by leading him to reflect self-critically on this process" while the teacher's task is to "foster fruitful interactions or, more precisely, transactions-between individual readers and individual literary works". Specifically, "the uniqueness of transaction between reader and text is linked to the fact that both elements in this relationship have social origins and social effects" while in aesthetic reading a reader's attention "is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (1938, 1995). Similarly, Holland and Leona (1977) say:

All of us, as we read, use the literary work to symbolize and finally to replicate ourselves. We work out through the text our own characteristic patterns of desire and adaptation. We interact with the work; making it part of our own psychic economy and making ourselves part of the literary work as we interpret it.

They further assert that when a reader reads literature he/she meets to personal needs like "the need to impose oneself on the world; or the need to find certainties; or the need to be able to read; or the need to be read; or the need for human acceptance and understanding of all one's pivots and flourishes". Holland (1975) further says that when textual facts satisfied readers' ego defenses that is DEFT (defense, expectation, fantasy, transformation) then in result the texts free the reader in order to re-experiences of the literary fantasies as Dias and Hayhoe (1998) claimed , "it is precisely the role of the reader in the act of reading that has not been sufficiently and properly addressed".

The relationship between a reader and text is further defined by Rosenblatt (1978) in terms of *transactional relationship* where readers react to the text in different ways with personal interpretation for example a poem is "an active process lived through during the relationship between a reader and a text" and "should not be confused with an object in the sense of an entity existing apart from author or reader". Furthermore, she said, "a poem is what the reader lives through under the guidance of the

text and experiences as relevant to the text". This process is called by her the "essentially social yet always individually internalized".

A similar theory (Reception theory) was proposed by Jauss (1982) in which he mentioned that the relationship between the reader and the text has two aspects. One is aesthetic and second is historical. Jauss said that text is not type of monologue in fact it has different impact on different readers. He further asserted that text is type of dialogic character which encounters with the reader. Thus, he calls literary history as a "process of reception and production" where "the realization of literary texts on the part of the receptive reader, the reflective critic, and the author in his continuing productivity". While talking about aesthetic aspect, Jauss claimed that aesthetic aspect can only be determined when it is judged by the way in which it affects the "horizon of expectation".

Similarly, Iser, (1974) claimed that there are two poles in a literary text, "the artistic refers to the text created by the author, and "the aesthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader" while the text must be understood as "a reaction to the thought systems which it has chosen and incorporated in its own repertoire (Iser, 1978) because the immanent structure of the text and the acts of comprehension thereby triggered off in the reader" (Iser, 1978).

The study of Pass (1992) found, "the reader-response orientation is a literary theory which suggests that the meaning of any literary work is the result of the interaction between the text and the reader". In every aspect, a reader has to tackle with the text. In essence, reader response theories take out the emotional, aesthetic and intellectual feelings of the readers during the cognitive reading process.

4.0 Conclusion

It is evident in the literature that critical thinking skills have considerable importance in students' learning. Majority of the educationists have valued critical thinking skills in higher education whereas the main core of critical thinking skills is to make learners critical thinkers. Likewise, the study of literature is incomplete without the use of critical thinking skills as learners have to analyze, infer, and evaluate the text similarly reader response theory typically involves the prior knowledge, reflection and use of critical thinking skills in order to response to a text as Wright (1995 cited in Shi, 2013) stated, "a variety of positions held together only by their concern with what goes on in the mind of the reader when he or she picks up and peruses a book" while in Iser's (2000 cited in Shi, 2013) words:

...the function of literature is by no means entirely covered by its interaction with its readers and with its referential realities. Moreover, if a literary text does something to its readers, it simultaneously tells us something about them. Thus, literature turns into a divining rod, locating our dispositions, desires, and inclinations and eventually our overall makeup.

To improve students' critical thinking skills, according to Case (2005), teachers play a major role in order to understand text by 'problematizing' the subject which is under study. Likewise, Dewey (1933) stated that if in routine classroom challenging tasks, issues are not 'problematic' students won't be able to think critically while Facoine (2000) argued that the use of critical thinking is, "judging in a reflective way what to do or what to believe". It is also evident in few authors' statements that for the use of critical thinking domain specific knowledge is important as Facoine (1990) asserted that in very field of knowledge the use of critical thinking requires domain specific knowledge.

This report showed a relationship between critical thinking and English literature study with reader response theory. It justifies that learners of English literature need specific knowledge (i.e. domain specific knowledge) in order to use their critical thinking skills in discourse. Advocates of critical thinking proved that critical thinkers are those who are individual and subjective in their thinking while focusing on 'perfection of thought' for the 'evaluation of one's thought'. However, without motivation and creativity, critical thinking cannot be used and effective for any type of learning.

The combination of critical thinking, English literature study with reader response theory is also valuable in terms of evoking emotions in learners as Kenndey et al., (1991) asserted that with the reading of general textbooks students do not expose to the use of critical thinking skills as these books do not offer “big ideas, analysis and challenging questions”. Similarly, Facoine (2010) claimed that critical thinking helps learners in understanding variety of expressions, situation, data, events, judgments and beliefs while Paul (1990) argued that literary texts help learners in using their own critical faculties. This can be done with the use of reader response techniques suggested by various educators. By all means, Bacon (16th century) already claimed that “critical thinking is a desire to seek, (*literary text*) patience to doubt, (*for fair judgment*) fondness to meditate (*longing to know*), slowness to assert (*evaluation of thought*)..... and readiness to consider... (*reader response*)...”. Thus, the significance and effectiveness of critical skills for English literature study with reader response theory can be justified in Bacon’s claim by supporting all other definitions.

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