

READER RESPONSE APPROACH TO TEACHING POETRY*

ŞİİR ÖĞRETİMİNDE OKUYUCU YANITI YAKLAŞIMI

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ABSTRACT: This study firstly aims to elaborate the basics of ‘reader response approach’ to poetry analysis. Through responsive poetry analysis, learners of the English language find the opportunity to practise the language and filter the poet’s ideas and feelings through their own world views and experiences. It is aimed to suggest a sample lesson plan joining these two worlds- the reader’s and the writer’s- via spoken and written language productions by the participants. In this research, a lesson plan based the reader response approach is compared with traditional poetry teaching by means of an application with four year ELT students studying at Hacettepe University. The qualitative data gathered from participants sheds light to the difference between these two applications. The findings suggest that the participants prefer reader response to traditional poetry teaching classes. With reader response, learners become active participants and develop positive attitude towards reading and analyzing poetry.

Keywords: Response approach, poetry analysis, poetry teaching

ÖZET: Bu çalışma, şiir analizi yaklaşımlarından biri olan ‘okuyucu yanıtı’nın temel özelliklerini açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır. Yanıtlamacı şiir analiziyle, İngilizce öğrenenler dili kullanma imkanını yakalarlar ve kendi dünya görüş ve deneyimleri aracılığı ile şairin duygu ve düşüncelerini sentezlerler. Okuyucu ve yazara ait olan bu iki dünyayı, derse katılanların sözlü ve yazılı dil kullanımlarıyla birleştiren bir ders planını önermek amaçlanmaktadır. Çalışmanın araştırma kısmında, Hacettepe Üniversitesinde okuyan dördüncü sınıf İDÖ öğrencileri ile yapılan bir uygulama aracılığı ile okuyucu yanıtı yaklaşımı ile geleneksel şiir öğretimi yaklaşımı karşılaştırılmıştır. Katılımcılardan toplanan niteliksel veri bu iki uygulama arasındaki farka ve öğrenciler üzerinde yarattığı sonuç ve etkilere ışık tutmaktadır. Sonuçlara göre, katılımcılar okuyucu yanıtını, geleneksel şiir derslerine tercih etmektedirler. Okuyucu yanıtı ile öğrenciler aktif katılımcılara dönüşmekte ve şiir okuma va analizine karşı olumlu duygular geliştirmektedirler.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Okuyucu yanıtı yaklaşımı, şiir analizi, şiir öğretimi.

1. INTRODUCTION

Prospective teachers are supposed to fulfill the requirement of shouldering a very heavy load of course credits for graduation. In all of these both elective and must courses, they are exposed to the jigsaw nature of teaching which is a combination of different but interrelated areas of language teaching pedagogy, namely language acquisition, materials evaluation and adaptation, teaching methods, literature, testing and translation. Among all these different courses, the most “distinguished” one, with both positive and negative connotations, is regarded as literature.

Literature is the inextricable component of language teaching as it bears the authentic language source in itself and it is one of the strongest means to present the culture in the classroom. Moreover, it opens the gateway to language art, creativity in language use and critical thinking skills. Thanks to literature, students are not only exposed to the authentic language, but also when the responsive manner of human beings taken into consideration, they reflect upon the language use, compare it with ordinary language productions and find an opportunity to manipulate the language and come up with their own language productions. Therefore, literature provides language learners to do something active with the language.

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Although literature is a great source for prospective teachers, when it comes to taking the mandatory course ‘Poetry: Analysis and Teaching’, a fourth year first semester course, the learners come to the first session with misconceived idea that understanding poetry is one of the most demanding and challenging tasks to be accomplished. Although poems can be used even in the very first stages of language teaching, reading poetry is usually regarded as a higher-order skill in teaching and learning. It is usually regarded that poetry is a “code”; a “code” wired up with personal emotions and flow of mind and language, and a reader has to be in the shoes of the poet to decode the message in a poem. The reader response approach (RRA) helps teachers overcome learners’ misconceptions about poetry and poetry analysis and adapt the course instruction to the contemporary developments in literature teaching.

1.1 The Reader Response Approach

The reader response approach, as the name implies, focuses on the reader as an audience-oriented interpretation of a poetic text. As no two readers ever comprehend a poem in the same way, the approach revolves around the reader rather than the literary work itself. Although the approach became prominent in the 1970s, even the classical writers Plato and Aristotle were aware of and concerned about the reader’s reactions. Doreski and Doreski (1998, p. 83) state that the beginning of this way of analyzing poetry has been initiated by Richards’ *Practical Criticism* (1929), which presents and analyzes the given responses of some undergraduates to particular poems. In the 1930s Louise Rosenblatt further developed Richards’ earlier assumptions and stated that in order to produce meaning, the reader and the text should work together. By means of the practical criticism, the idea that -only the literary text should be the center of attention to reveal its internal and formal properties- was disputed and objected. The transactional theory contributed to the approach with the view that there is an interaction between the reader and the text. In order to define the real nature of reading a text, the idea that each reader produces a different response was emphasized (Rosenblatt 1988, p. 16).

The approach does not restrict the meaning of the text to its formal properties but it emphasizes the variety of explications related with the variety of readers coming across the text. As it is also pointed out by Frye (1980, p. 82) “the end of criticism and teaching ... is not an aesthetic but an ethical and participating end: for it, ultimately, works of literature are not things to be contemplated but powers to be absorbed”. The main aim is to provide the learners with the atmosphere enabling them to surface and reflect their own ideas about the poems they are presented. Kreuz and MacNealy (1996) point out the importance of reader-response as regarding it as a basis for an effective literary education which nurtures, improves and enhances the subjective responses. The reason for this kind of a purpose for literature reading is defined as that “the engagement with literature begins in the reader’s direct, imaginal and emotional response to a text” (p. 471). Thus, the classroom should be the setting where the reader’s response is respected and appreciated.

In the reader-response approach, meaning of a literary text is subject to change. If the possible number of the readers of the same text were reckoned, the possible ways of responses to the poem could be figured out. Each and every reader brings her/his own values, impressions, experiences and emotions to the text and to the interpretation of it. Meyer (1995, p. 534, 535) asserts that a piece of work in literature, from reader-response perspective, is an unfinished product and does not have stable formal features, because there cannot be only one possible way of reading a poem. For the reader-response approach, he proposes the idea that instead of discovering and comprehending the possible meaning in the text, the reader creates and improves new meanings. Thus, chasing after the ‘correct’ reading or interpretation should not be the aim. Besides, reading a text does not mean exploring what the author presumably intended to say while writing the poem; instead the reader’s experience with the piece should be appreciated mainly.

Giving the reader an active role in the reading process, providing prominence to the reader over the text with subjective criticism, and focusing on the reader of the text not the text itself are the points which are also supported by the ‘transactional theory’. Karolides (1992, p. 22) asserts that according to the central premise of the theory, the literary piece transacts between the reader and the text. Furthermore, he adds that the term transaction explains “... the special nature of the relationship between the reader and the text during the reading event: mutually acting on each other, affecting each other to evoke an experience, a meaning, for the particular reader of the text”. So, it can be stated that the text plays its own primary role in the production of a response in the reader as the initiator of the exploration process.

1.2. Some Major Principles of the Reader-Response Approach

The following are some of the most important tenets of reader response approach:

- The reader, consciously or unconsciously, determines the main aim of reading which is shaped according to some variables, such as reading conditions, personal needs or concerns.
- The respond given to a text is shaped according to the reader’s approach to the text. Depending upon the reader’s focus of attention or purpose, the reader adopts a stance which may be “efferent” or “aesthetic”. The efferent reading is focusing on what the words say while reading for information, just like reading a newspaper or a textbook. On the other hand, the aesthetic stance is related with the senses and feelings which are experienced by the reader during the phase of reading (Rosenblatt 1988, pp. 12, 13).
- The withdrawal of the teacher in a reader-response classroom is indispensable, since mainly questioning is used as a tool in classroom discussions.
- The major activity is to make the learners have as many connections as possible with their personal experiences in order to enable them make use of their own lives with an inductive approach.
- The main focus of attention is not on the right answers, as each reader approaches the text with his own background and experiences. Thus, exchanging ideas and exploring different interpretations of the text is the main goal in the classroom discussions (Karolides 1992, pp. 23-26).

The reader response analysis focuses on readers’ feelings and thoughts rather than the poet’s probable intentions. Hence, the readers are actively and personally make meaning out of the text. Furthermore, responding to a text is seen as a process, and even the steps of this process are valuable, since they point out the stages of interpretation the reader goes through in the process of reading.

2. METHOD

In recent years, researchers started to try new instructional techniques to overcome teacher initiated and directed literature classes, and achieve students’ active involvement and production in classes (Açıkgöz, 2003; Arıkan, 2003a, 2003b, Tompkins, 2002). The lesson plan has been constructed with the basic principles of the Reader Response Approach (RRA). The approach has contributed a lot to the language classrooms around the world. This study aims to provide the prospective English teachers an itemized list of basic tenets and a procedural plan of RRA to set an example. The learners who have taken the course of poetry at Hacettepe University, Department of ELT were presented the features of the approach and experienced the lesson plan prepared in accordance with the principles of RRA. As RRA lets learners speak out their own interpretations and feelings evoked, learners do not feel intimidated with the pressure of –decoding- the poem with correct identifications. The plan has been applied in the class both to set an example for prospective teachers and let them compare this method with the traditional one.

Thirty-five undergraduate students taking the course of “Poetry: Analysis and Teaching” were given a semi-structured questionnaire to gather an opinion about their attitude towards poetry. Actually, the learners’ negative attitudes had been foreseen, and this idea, as the researcher’s bias, constructed the basis of the research, which was finding a solution to it. The questionnaire was designed as a preliminary stage to identify to what extent the future teachers had negativity towards reading and teaching poetry. It was the fifth week of instruction and learners were attending classes which were implemented via traditional method. The implementation method can be named as traditional since the participants were supposed to read poems and answer related questions posed by the teacher. In the sixth week of instruction, learners joined a session on RRA and experienced a lesson designed according to RRA. Right after the implementation, participants were asked to state their evaluations on these two methods and compare them in narrations written by them. In light of the data gathered from the participants’ contrastive statements on these two different applications, it was aimed to have insights to overcome the course-takers’ negative attitude towards reading and analyzing poetry.

2.1 An Application of the Reader Response Approach

The sample lesson plan based on the main principles of RRA is given in the following part of the study. In this application, learners not only discuss the main features of the poem but also discuss their own inner feelings in relation to the theme of the poem. The eclectic nature of the plan leads learners to have written and spoken productions via discussion and reading.

2.1.1. Objectives

With the help of this lesson, the students will be able to:

- Experience and then demonstrate an awareness of poetry by focusing on the text only
- Experience the value of reading and understanding a text in a personal way

2.1.2 Activities

While doing that, the students will:

- Brainstorm to relate the poem with their experiences.
- Summarize the poem with its characters, setting, and situation.
- Approach the poem with their personal ideas, backgrounds, and experiences.
- First have a group and then a class discussion about the theme of the poem.

2.1.3. Materials

- Poem titled *My Papa’s Waltz*,
- A projector,
- Visual materials such as photographs and pictures.

My Papa’s Waltz

The whiskey on your breath
 Could make a small boy dizzy;
 But I hung on like death:
 Such waltzing was not easy.

We romped until the pans
 Slid from the kitchen shelf;

My mother's countenance
Could not unfrown itself.

The hand that held my wrist
Was battered on one knuckle;
At every step you missed
My right ear scraped a buckle.

You beat time on my head
With a palm caked hard by dirt,
Then waltzed me off to bed
Still clinging to your shirt.

Theodore Roethke (1932, p. 45)

2.2. Classroom Application

2.2.1. Pre-reading: A week before, the teacher may ask the learners to bring photographs which were taken when they were children, and they may be displayed in the classroom before starting the first step and to take the learners back to their childhood and childhood memories.

To start with, the teacher asks learners to write a journal on the subject: "A good or a bad childhood memory with a father or a father figure." So, the figure can be the student's father, uncle, grandfather, even mother or another person's father (the reason for having two alternatives and adding the 'father figure' is that some learners might have lost their fathers when they were so young or before they were born). Before starting the activity, the teacher reminds the learners that the journals will not be read in the classroom. Hence, the learners do not feel intimidated while writing and may include even confessions about their own past lives.

2.2.2. While-reading: The teacher goes on with the "efferent reading" phase of the reader response approach and wants the learners to write a summary of the poem by identifying its characters, setting and situation. This stage aims to guide learners about the identification of the main features of the poem. However, learners do not share the details of their findings as learning different ideas on setting and situation might change participants' own views and concentrate on others'. So, the learners write a journal about their ideas on:

- whether the poem is on a happy or a sad childhood memory,
- what they felt while reading the poem,
- what kinds of differences or similarities they can find between the poem and their own lives, experiences or childhood memories.

Learners come up with a deeper level analysis of the same poem. It is presupposed that depending on their own childhood memories, they interpret the story in the poem positively or negatively with regard to how they perceive the intention of the father figure in the same poem.

Later, the students form two groups according to what they think about the theme of the poem: a sad or a happy childhood memory. They share their ideas on what they felt while reading the poem and what made them feel the poem is about a good or a bad childhood memory. As participants share their ideas in groups, they discover more about the poem. Group work provides students share and have more views which are parallel with what they feel about the poem.

After sharing their ideas and feelings in groups, the whole class shares the ideas about their findings on the poem. Two groups with different views propose their suggestions and responses related with the

theme, and have the opportunity of learning about the opposite idea. While doing this, they support their notions with their own feelings and personal experiences.

2.2.3. Post-reading: After the application of the demo-lesson, the learners are asked whether their childhood memories (they noted down at the beginning of the lesson) affected them while interpreting the poem or not. There might be some parallel points with the childhood memories and the way of interpreting the poem. If they do not recognize any similarities, the poem can also be reviewed by taking the memories into consideration and highlighting the differences.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Students' Opinions on Poetry before the Application

The data on the participants' attitude was gathered via a questionnaire that was consisted of six questions. These items and answers given are as follows:

Question 1: Do you like poetry?

Yes	A little	No
29 %	39 %	32 %

The results of this question show that 32% of the students state that they do not like poetry and only 29% of them answer positively for this item.

Question 2: Do you think that you do not like poetry because it is hard to understand? (answered by those who chose option "a little" and "no" for the first question)

Yes	Perhaps	No
23 %	59 %	18 %

When 'yes' and 'perhaps' answers are added, it makes 82%, which state that love of poetry might be improved if the students think that they can understand poetry.

Question 3: Do you think that poetry analysis and teaching should be learned by means of a course in ELT departments?

Yes	Perhaps	No
32 %	32 %	35 %

The respondents with the idea that poetry analysis and teaching does not have to taught in ELT departments is 35%, which is quite high when the total number of students taking the course is considered.

Question 4: Do you think that 'ELT 454 Poetry Analysis and Teaching' is a necessary course in ELT departments?

Yes	No	No idea
32 %	39 %	29 %

For this question, the frustrating result is that when 'no' and 'no idea' results are added up, it makes up almost twice as much than the percentage of 'yes' answer.

Question 5: Do you plan to use poetry in your teaching career?

Yes	Perhaps	No
45 %	19 %	36 %

With this result, it reveals that a great number of course participants are taking the course as it is compulsory, not because they are planning to benefit from poetry in their teaching.

Question 6: Do you think that you would use poetry in teaching, if you loved poetry more? (answered by those who chose option “perhaps” and “no” for the fifth question)

Yes	Perhaps	No
56 %	38 %	6 %

The result of this question indicates that love of poetry would most probably enable future teachers develop positive thoughts and attitudes towards using poetry in teaching.

3.2 Students’ Opinions on Poetry after the Application

Right after a session to introduce the future teachers to the basic principles of RRA, they experienced the demo-lesson. Later, the participants were asked to reflect their evaluations on poetry analysis via traditional and reader response approach. They were supposed to note down their reflections in the form of written feedback. In the analysis of data, two different sets of notions emerged. One set was on traditional and another one on RRA. The participants’ reflections were itemized and organized in a lexical map of thoughts. Analysis of this lexical map revealed two main themes. The first theme was the attitude and change in the attitude. While reflecting ideas on the traditional class, learners used negative expressions such as “hate,” “do not like,” “never prefer,” “boring” and “meaningless.” But a change in the attitude was so striking when learners evaluated the RRA class. This time, the vocabulary chosen in expressions was replaced with those implying positive meanings, like “enjoying,” “exciting,” “creative,” “supportive,” “different ideas are respected,” “never had this much fun before.” The second theme in the data was the participants’ reflections on their previous educational experiences and related future plans. In the word map of students’ reflections, the data was itemized as follows:

Poetry classes with traditional method:

- boring
- word by word analysis
- like reading comprehension
- forcing students to read
- focus on the poet only
- there is only one correct answer
- never help me understand the poem

Nevertheless, reader response is appreciated through expressions such as:

- definitely prefer as a student
- would teach with RRA
- increases participation
- learners have fun
- teaches different language skills
- students express ideas freely.

Two students questioned the situation that the teacher did not give the correct answer and gave equal importance to every student’s answer. One of them suggested that the teacher could provide the correct answer before ending the class.

When the participants completed writing their reflections, they were asked to note down the answer of the following question:

- Which approach to poetry do you prefer, traditional or reader response approach? The result indicates that 93% of the students prefer RRA to traditional approach.

4. DISCUSSION

In light of the in-class application and collected data, it can be stated that RRA helps readers articulate their feelings and findings in relation to their own backgrounds. RRA enables readers to get over the pervasive misconception that reader is supposed to find out the poet's real intention at the moment of writing it, which is impossible even for the poet himself! Once readers start to speculate about the theme by means of their experiences, the poem becomes a means instead of an end to talk more and share more. English teachers have really hard times to increase student-talking-time; however, when learners start producing in the foreign language (written and/or oral production) they enjoy the process and poetry lessons change form –find the correct answer sessions- to –speak about yourself via poetry-. Besides, since a literary text is not a mere piece of writing for giving information, the readers' psychological and experiential involvement in the text is inevitable.

On the other hand, although large group discussions are regarded as the key to high participation, as Christenbury (1992, p.33) states only few learners may lead the discussion and also their interpretations might be misleading. In order to solve a problem like this, as suggested in the lesson plan presented in the paper, a small group discussion might precede whole class discussions. Therefore, participants have a small scale analysis firstly to base a bigger and deeper analysis with the whole class.

Sometimes readers might misinterpret the text and incorrect interpretations misguide the class. That is why RRA might be disputed with the claim that the literary analysis is deflected by drawing attention to student response only. However, an RRA teacher can easily find solutions and create strategies to direct whole class discussions. All through the process, the teacher acts as a facilitator and a guide by monitoring the whole course of analysis. Besides, an eclectic approach might be adapted and learners can be introduced to different ideas through different approaches to literary criticism. Thus, different interpretations via different approaches or critics can also be included in the poetry classes, and this can be an opportunity for the participants to compare different ideas with their own.

It might be argued that RRA requires too much instructional time to have an efficient class and it is more time saving to inform participants about the text and then to conduct a question and answer session to find out the "real meaning." Nevertheless, the end product, which is the personal engagement, self-discovery, high-participation and a meaningful task deserve more time than an ordinary reading session.

5. CONCLUSION

Only one interpretation of a poem is never enough. The more poetry is explored, the more diverse interpretations will emerge. Reader response criticism to poetry provides space and permission for the readers to have as many speculations about a poem as possible. Once readers are given freedom to discover, the personal styles will reveal in the form of different view points to the same text. Hemphill (1999) relates these differences to the readers' different experiences in life and finds contrasts between working-class and middle-class adolescents' styles of responding to poetry. When learners feel that the poetry class is not a hunt for the 'correct' but a self discovery and construction of meaning, they can develop an approach. In this personal construction, they can benefit from the contribution from their own backgrounds and elevate themselves to a better understanding of how poetry works. In poetry teaching, RRA can be applied in many different forms. The basic principles of the approach, especially the aesthetic reading component, can be applied in many different ways. This diversity in application adds color to classroom interaction and learning activities. Tompkins (2002) suggests teachers that students construct a portfolio of readings via RRA to let learners observe themselves improve poetry appreciation in the course of compiling different

poems to their taste. Instead of working around the efferent reading stage and limiting poetry reading to surface level understanding, learners discover their own taste and appreciation via aesthetic reading. Aesthetic reading stage might vary from portfolio development to poetry writing. RRA diversifies application phase and involvement of learners is targeted. Once learners are activated and their level of participation and contribution is increased, the main aim of RRA will be accomplished.

An increasing number of students learn English in the eight-year-primary and four-year-high-school education in Turkey. Prospective teachers are in the need of learning new ways of language implementation to adapt their teaching to the increasing demands of the education system. Teachers around the world have come to benefit from RRA over the last 25 years. In this study, our future teachers are introduced an itemized list of basic features of RRA and an application accordingly. The list illustrates the approach in an itemized way and emphasizes the phases of efferent and aesthetic reading. As the approach targets active student involvement, the main tenets include the withdrawal of the classroom teacher and classroom applications to enable the participants' richer personal connections with the text. Each and every reader's interpretation is valued as student production mirrors her/his own 'schema' (prior knowledge, personal experience) and contribute to the multi-dimensional interpretation of the same text. In addition, the suggested lesson plan offers an example of application which can guide future teachers in their classroom applications. The plan starts with personal involvement and activation of schemata. The student-initiated planning is followed by the two important reading stages which are efferent and aesthetic. During the efferent phase, learners are guided to have grounded reflections on the text and its context. The aesthetic stage provides learners to see the text through their own schema and they feel the appreciation and value they get owing to their own personal responses. The suggested lesson plan with RRA encourages participant contribution and incorporation and also provides students to check whether RRA has affected their own interpretations. The sequencing of the plan directs participants to the starting point of the lesson and students compare their childhood memories and the interpretations to see whether memories effect interpretation. The lesson plan within the scope of this study is not the one and only way of application. It is aimed to suggest an application in line with RRA and set an example to various in-class implementations which aim participant readers whose responses are valued and appreciated.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT (Uzun İngilizce Özet)

The purpose of this study is to suggest a lesson plan that can help teachers overcome learners' misconceptions about poetry and poetry analysis and adapt the course instruction to the contemporary developments in literature teaching. In recent years, researchers started to try new instructional techniques to overcome teacher initiated and directed literature classes, and achieve students' active involvement and production in classes (Açıkgöz, 2003; Arıkan, 2003a, 2003b, Tompkins, 2002). The lesson plan has been constructed with the basic principles of the Reader Response Approach (RRA). The approach has contributed a lot to the language classrooms around the world. This study aims to provide the prospective English teachers an itemized list of basic tenets and a procedural plan of RRA to set an example. The learners who have taken the course of poetry at Hacettepe University, Department of ELT were presented the features of the approach and experienced the lesson plan prepared in accordance with the principles of RRA. As RRA lets learners speak out their own interpretations and feelings evoked, learners do not feel intimidated with the pressure of –decoding- the poem with correct identifications. The plan has been applied in the class both to set an example for prospective teachers and let them compare this method with the traditional one.

To gather data on students' attitude towards poetry, thirty-five undergraduate students taking the course of "Poetry: Analysis and Teaching" were given a semi-structured questionnaire. Actually, the learners' negative attitudes had been foreseen, and this idea, as the researcher's bias, constructed the basis of the research, which was finding a solution to it. The questionnaire was designed as a preliminary stage to identify to what extent the future teachers had negativity towards reading and teaching poetry. It was the fifth week of instruction and learners were attending classes which were implemented via traditional method. The implementation method can be named as traditional since the participants were supposed to read poems and answer related questions asked by the teacher. In the sixth week of instruction, learners joined a session on RRA and experienced a lesson designed according to RRA. Right after the implementation, participants were asked to state their evaluations on these two methods and compare them in narrations written by them. In light of the data gathered from the participants' contrastive statements on these two different applications, it was aimed to have insights to overcome the course-takers' negative attitude towards reading and analyzing poetry.

For the analysis of the data, the participants' reflections were itemized and organized in a lexical map of thoughts. Analysis of this lexical map revealed two main themes. The first theme was the attitude and change in the attitude. While reflecting ideas on the traditional class, learners used negative expressions such as "hate," "do not like," "never prefer," "boring" and "meaningless." But a change in the attitude was so striking when learners evaluated the RRA class. This time, the vocabulary chosen in expressions was replaced with those implying positive meanings, like "enjoying," "exciting," "creative," "supportive," "different ideas are respected," "never had this much fun before." The second theme in the data was the participants' reflections on their previous educational experiences and related future plans. In the word map of students' reflections, the data was itemized as follows:

Poetry classes with traditional method:

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Nevertheless, reader response is appreciated through expressions such as:

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In light of the in-class application and collected data, it can be stated that RRA helps readers articulate their feelings and findings in relation to their own backgrounds. RRA enables readers to get over the pervasive misconception that reader is supposed to find out the poet's real intention at the moment of writing it, which is impossible even for the poet himself! Once readers start to speculate about the theme by means of their experiences, the poem becomes a means instead of an end to talk more and share more. English teachers have really hard times to increase student-talking-time; however, when learners start producing in the foreign language (written and/or oral production) they enjoy the process and poetry lessons change form –find the correct answer sessions- to –speak about yourself via poetry-. Besides, since a literary text is not a mere piece of writing for giving information, the readers' psychological and experiential involvement in the text is inevitable.