

**Sublime Aesthetics in Modern English Poetry: A Path to
Developing the Critical and Creative Skills of EFL
Learners in Higher Education**

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Abstract

This research examines thematic discussion approach used for teaching John Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn* while concentrating on the sublime aesthetic concept found in Romantic literature. The initial portion of the session supplies an introduction to sublime aesthetics, followed by historical background and the definition of respect-based group guidelines. Student learning of the poem started with solo reading, followed by group dialogues that focused on themes like beauty, truth, time, and personal meanings, until moving on to a school-wide analysis session. The assessment procedure used pre-test and post-test evaluations to measure both concept understanding of the sublime and students' analytical capabilities. The study demonstrated successful student learning outcomes because participants achieved an average test score increase from 55% in the pre-test to 80% during the post-test period while utilizing mutual discussion with reflective practices. Using this method, students gained superior comprehension of Keats' work along with vital critical thinking abilities and emotional capacity, and advanced language skills that prepare them for academic success. The thematic study of sublime aesthetics served as an efficient educational approach because it combined literature with student reflections to create relevant content understanding and enabled students to master complex literary text analysis. The analysis points out that teaching sublime poetry in 21st-century classrooms goes beyond teaching language skills. This practice also develops creativity and reflective thinking and promotes an understanding of different cultures. This illustration strengthens the connection between the learner and their literary growth.

Key words: sublime aesthetics, modern english poetry, critical and creative skills in EFL learners

1.Introduction

The history of philosophy aesthetics and literature especially poetry has been marked by the term 'sublime'. Burke and Immanuel Kant richly defined and tried to understand the feeling of sublime by the wonder and horror it invokes. Burke's 1757 work *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* posits that something sublime can be distilled from supernatural beauty and that it can stir overwhelming feelings and deep contemplation. Burke and Kant 1790s held that the act of experiencing the sublime is transcendent to the physical because of the mental activities associated with it tied to the aspirations of self transcendence. In addition modern English poetry does show the sublime through various structures which frequently exhibit qualities of a great deal of intricacy as well as profound emotional depth. Poets such as Eliot, Walt Whitman, and John Keats infused sublimity into their works of literature to evoke introspection in their audiences about their own experiences and about the essence of being human. Whitman has numerous lines in *Leaves of Grass* that explores the relationship of man with the cosmos as well as Keats who in his poem *Ode on a Grecian Urn* contemplates the fleeting nature of beauty.

Furthermore the author states that the addition of sublime poetry in the curriculum of EFL classes enables the learners to develop their thinking and imagination as well as their competences in the use of language. Students exposed to the profound ideas and the complex language of sublime poetry learn better techniques in analysis, interpretation, and self-expression. While enhancing their literary sensitivity, students acquire the language through a theme based multidimensional study of the poems which deepens their cultural understanding and emotional capacities. The development of creativity and critical thinking also has great importance in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

. With critical thinking abilities learners develop their capacity to analyze information and build arguments as well as their method for approaching problems analytically. Creativity enables innovative approaches and self-expression together with adaptability which current globalized society demands. Students who hold in sublime poetry development strengthen their abilities in an interactive educational setting(Harman, 2016; Khan, 2018).

Recent studies in pedagogy state that the teaching of poetry should enhance linguistic skills in addition to fostering learning dialogues and worldviews. In Moulton (2024), Moulton shows how culturally sustained and disruptive poetry pedagogy encourages learners to reflexively question assumptions and engage with personal and social identities in relation to literary texts. Likewise, (Myren-Svelstad, 2024), in her study, illustrates how collaborative poem discussions promote meaning-making in the context of sustainability, demonstrating poetry's interdisciplinary approach to ethics and ecology. Therefore, taught with these innovative frameworks, sublime poetry - like Keats' ode - would allow students to integrate linguistic skills with advanced ethical and ecological awareness. Furthermore, modern research indicates different pathways for the sublime. In her article, "Ecopoetry in the Age of Ecological Stupor," Lear (2024) describes how modern poets, especially in ecopoetry, use thick, textured language to immerse readers in an environmental and ethical crisis, as opposed to cultivating distant admiration. In "The Sublime as Ecological Resistance in the Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish and Naomi Shihab Nye," Shamim

(2024) illustrates how sublime images work within and against an ecologically critical framework, weaving aesthetics and justice. Similarly, in 2025, Peters explores the “ecological sublime” as a colonial construct of paradox and tension and its historical context, rather than a conduit for colonial wonder. In the same vein, Wang (2024) illustrates through neuroaesthetic analysis how sublime experiences, such as awe and vastness, activate neural pathways of empathy and resilience, demonstrating cognitive and linguistic advantages for students. Therefore, the article investigates several essential examples of contemporary English poetry containing the sublime element along with their educational benefits for EFL students and provides teaching strategies for their curriculum integration.

2.The Sublime in Aesthetics

The sublime achieves expression through greatness along with aesthetic value while coming up with a deep feeling of remarkable experience. In his famous work(Burke ,1757) explained that sublime experiences merge between delightful sensations and feelings of terror to create overwhelming emotional responses beyond aesthetic appreciation. This two-part nature creates an immediate physical response which involves both logical and spiritual understanding. The sublime in poetry emerges through intuitive imagery and deep themes together with eloquent language that enables reflection upon reality perceptions (Yildiz, 2021).

Poetry just like sublime is beneficial for exploring a myriad of emotions and existential problems. Through sublime elements Eliot along with Whitman and Keats employ imagery rich poetry that compels readers to confront themselves and the world. All three poets offer their sublime in very unique forms that broaden the scope of literary interpretation. In "The Waste Land", Eliot fuses harsh imagery with a diffuse narrative style to express human existence in life as suffering and hope simultaneously (Eliot 1922). Eliot uses allusion and juxtaposition to immerse the reader in sacred and profane, historical and modern, temporal shifts. In his masterly designed framework , Eliot not only reveals the fragments of modern life, but also conceals the lost contradictions of social discord and renewal that give rise to contemplation.

The profound joy in understanding the interconnection he shares with everyone enables Walt Whitman to gain the power he so well demonstrates. He continues to showcase this through his profound literary works ‘Song of Myself’ where he uses free verse poetry to unlock the complex intertwining of American identity, with nature and democracy. As he invites his audience to notice and appreciate the everyday marvels that life has to offer, he leaves them with a sense of expansive wonder (Whitman 1855). Whitman reflects on the interconnectedness of the dimensions of life and the subtleties of human existence within the universe; a spectacular vision. The sublime also penetrates the works of John Keats. In ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’ he addresses the bond between human mortality and art. There is a divide that exists, and Keats describes that through his evocative and penetrating imagery and invites his readers to a deep admiration over ceaseless change and eternal beauty (Keats 1819). Such a deep appreciation over art allows Keats to engage his audience to the beautiful world and helps reveal how it’s the art that triumphs over beauty.

New research on the sublime asserts that it extends beyond the Romantic period and encompasses other civic and cultural issues. Somervell (2023) describes this phenomenon as the “environmental sublime” in which literary texts encourage readers to attend to anxiety about the climate and other-than-human agency and planetary precariousness. Similarly, (Yansori ,2024) brings to the fore how Romantic fragments and modernist poetics grid with monumental modes of sublime experience, marking crossovers between Romanticism and subsequent cultures. Also, Petrey (2022) argues that contemporary sublime experiences tend to arise in the digital and visual domains, thus opening new artistic realms of the conjunction of astonishment and disruption. For EFL learners, the introduction of these ideas deepens their interpretive framework, relating other classic texts to contemporary poetry and socio-artistic discourses on the environment. The notion of the sublime reaches wider than expressions in poetry because it forms a philosophical discourse exploring human connection with the world. When experiencing sublime moments we achieve awe which provokes us to reconsider our position about various mysteries that compose the universe (Kant, 1790). The examination of the sublime holds continued significance due to our present-day existence with quick technological growth and doubt about our existence. Since it allows poets to showcase social issues as well as tackle the psychological and emotional challenges of individuals, the sublime element is ever-present in contemporary poetry. In modern times, the sublime is an actively used poetic device as poets tackle identity and social inequities alongside other issues, such as the environment, and seek to spark reflective social action (Affifi, 2024). Poets of the sublime encourage readers to think about their reality and the actions they can take towards change in society. Modern English poetry would lack dimension and depth if not for the sublime present in the works of T.S.Eliot, Walt Whitman or even John Keats. There is a long, profound literature line that takes the readers into deep waters of essential themes and a reality check about human life. Poetry which falls under the sublime category opens the door to self-reflection on deeper feelings and the understanding of life-changing exceptional moments.

3-Sublime Aesthetics in Contemporary English Poetry (2020-2025)

As for how the concept of the sublime has been approached within poetry, the clichéd focuses of Romantic Poetry and the Modernist movements have taken center stage until the recent academic discourse has newly emerged (2020-2025) considering one of the newly minted ‘sublime’ features which untangles itself from the rational ecological, ethically responsible, and cognitive. This further proves the point that sublime aesthetics have found and still find their backbone within the core of English poetry and poetics and the ensuing pedagogy. This eco-sublime continuum of anxiety and terror has emerged from the research of the 2020s, newly framed within the marriage of the Romantic sublime and the acute ecological crisis. Somervell (2023) posits that the Romantic sublime still offers a vital lens through which to view contemporary ecopoetry, which has started to define the interpenetrating encounters with planetary fragility and ethical responsibility. This transformed version of Romantic thinking – the ‘green sublime’ – extends the rather anemic Keatsian model of a ‘sublime’ to a rather ‘screaming’ engagement with, and beyond, climate anxiety, crisis, and ultimately, responsibility. Within the continuum of this line of argument, to which I adhere, I read carefully with Lear (2024) and attend to her consideration of ecopoets she analyzes through ‘thick language.’ So, that poets such as Juliana Spahr and Forrest Gander exhibit a kind of dense, multi-sensorial

language which 'shocks' the reader into an ecological stupor, and, as a result, participates a wonder-demonsequence. This line of argument seeks to argue that rather than disdaining the sublime as 'remote' admiration, a 'lower' sublime, here applicable, is regarded as 'involved' staring with the real to the realities of the world that is . Aside from ecological concerns, the political and cross-cultural applications of the sublime have also become important. Shamim (2024) reclaims natures of violence through the sublime for the case of Mahmoud Darwish and Naomi Shihab Nye's poetry of colonialism and ecological violence. These poets offer injustice through sublime wastelands and pair aesthetic transcendence with socio-political urgency, capturing the profoundly intricate ways the sublime can be sutured to resistance and solidarity. Further, sōt sublime's strokes has recently been engaged through the cognitive and affective sciences. Wang (2024) dives in the literature of neuroaesthetics and shows how wonderful, fearful, and vast the sublime poetic moments illuminate circuits of affective and empathic scaffolding, towards brain strengthened resilience arquitectura.

Considering teaching sublime poetry beyond literary insight enables learners to acquire mental and emotional tools to meet the challenges ahead. The teaching suggests modern English poetry is interdisciplinary with sublime cross-ecosystem ethics, cross-culture justice, and neuroaesthetic wellness. Incorporating these ideas places Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn* and Eliot's *The Waste Land* alongside contemporary works, demonstrating that in EFL poetry teaching, sublime poetry still engages students' imagination, ethics, and critical thinking.

4. Analysis of Modern English Poetry T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land"

The Waste Land by T.S. Profound emotion and intricate ellipses bestow a great beauty to Eliot's works. Readers of the poem journey through the spectrum of the human odyssey, from the dark disillusion to regeneration. The Waste Land's structural complexities touch platonically, religiously, and mythically on the Grail and Fisher King myths, using cultural and religious allusions to indicate the deep metaphysical anguish Eliot, 1922). Eliot paints the first lines of the poem as a static and barren world. This provides a vivid canvas to examine the era's vices. The disorderly features of text and illustration are articulated through the cacophony of a clash of diverging images so as the reader may struggle with the social anguish and deep personal fury. The stark contrast in the imagery of the part "What the Thunder Said" and the absent moments of hope and salvation reflects the dominant dismal and deep personal conflicts of the psyche.

The text directs readers to acknowledge conflicts within their personal existence until they gain profound comprehension of modern life complexities. Through innovative methods of varied vocal perspectives Eliot creates a complex investigation into modern human life (Hughes , 1991). Yansori (2024) discusses Eliot's work beyond modernist, recognizing Eliot's method as part of a continuous Romantic sublime tradition of monumental fragmentation. This approach integrates Romantic intensity with 20th-century crisis, suggesting that Eliot's work modernist, though not in isolation, innovatively contributes to a growing sublime.

5. Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass"

Through his praise of natural life and human beings Walt Whitman examines the subliminal properties in his work *Leaves of Grass*. The poet presents existence through a vast perspective that shows people connecting with the universe. Through the use of free verse in his writing Whitman creates an organic flow that replicates nature and escapes traditional verse forms to portray the enthusiasm of living beings (Whitman, 1855). Through his detailed descriptions in "Song of Myself" the poet showcases how everything and everyone comes together to demonstrate unique experiences that need our total acceptance. Through his enthusiastic poetic style Whitman promotes a dynamic relationship between readers and the discovery of their personal identities and surrounding environment. Within his most renowned statement "I am large; I contain multitudes" Whitman presents a view of the human self that contains multiple aspects of human existence and shows deep diversity (Morrison, 1992). Through his poetry Whitman creates understanding by leading readers to discover the sublime experiences both within their personal life and the environment around them.

Today's scholars view Whitman's 'cosmic embrace' as a form of democratic sublime that corresponds with modern identity politics and inclusivity. Costello (2019) places Whitman's poetics alongside Ocean Vuong's contemporary works on queer identity, demonstrating how the sublime continues to offer a frame for self and community. In the case of EFL students, drawing parallels between Whitman and Vuong or even Tracy K. Smith (2018) will foster appreciation for the ways sublime frameworks engage modern issues of pluralism, queer identity, and democracy.

6. John Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

The poetic work Ode on a Grecian Urn by John Keats reveals sublime aesthetics through its presentation. This poetic work studies the bond among beauty and art and everlasting nature as it makes readers think about the briefness of existence. Through its beautiful verses and effective visual elements Keats leads readers to transcend their immediate world and learn about the lasting value of both enchanting beauty and short-lived existence. An enduring symbol of beauty emerges from the urn through Keats' writing in 1819, thus contrasting against the short-lived character of human experience and life. Through his well-known phrase "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" Keats distills the eternal struggle between permanence and temporality so readers examine the value of beauty within our decay-driven world. Through its imagery the poem reveals how art successfully holds onto important life moments yet continues to exist beyond ordinary temporal boundaries (Friedman, 2006). Through his work Keats encourages his readers to encounter sublime experiences by comprehending that timeless beauty delivers both comfort and understanding to us about the ceaseless flow of time. T. S. Eliot, Walt Whitman, and John Keats present sublime aesthetics in their poetry as demonstrated throughout modern English literary analysis. The three poets explore human life through diverse poetic expressions which fuse despair with our connection to the world and a perpetual struggle between eternal and fleeting expressions. The logical path we undergo supports our understanding of poetry and

provides meaningful opportunities to understand real-world moments along with their sublime elements.

Somervell (2023) challenges art on its own merit and asks how else it can be defined besides detached from Nature. Keats has his own theory ('Ode on a Grecian Urn'), but asks does it fit in today's age? Keats' words can be paired with a study of other poems to help students recognize the beauty that the world has to offer and the fragility of it. 'Teaching Ecopoetry in a Time of Climate Change (Georgia Review, 2022) demonstrates that removing 'heartache' from poems in the Romantic period and recreating them for today's world can serve a purpose, where 'heartache and mourning' still exist, but in a more contemporary form". This proves that Keats' Romantic ode can be taught together with modern ecopoetry to help students understand the relationship between beauty and responsibility.

7.Fostering Critical and Creative Skills in EFL Learners

Containing sublime poetry in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) brings enormous advantages for students learning the language (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). The intellectual and emotional barriers of sublime themes enable students to build deep involvement with the material that develops important competencies useful across language learning and personal growth. Sublime poetry brings the following main benefits to EFL students in their educational journey. Exposing students to complex texts enables them to develop higher analytical thinking capabilities which allows them to examine both textual elements such as language alongside structure and content meanings. Students struggle with enriching metaphors, descriptive imagery, and metaphors and their resolution while detecting sublime meaning in poetry.

1. The form of a poem directs readers toward analyzing the ways its structure adds meaning to words. Students studying *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot can analyze the fragmented narrative and allusions through which the text represents the deterioration of modern times. Students develop their comprehension alongside argumentative skills through collaborative discussions and instructor-guided evaluations which lead to the improvement of their abilities (Khan, 2018; Harman, 2016).

This is illustrated in recent teaching studies. For instance, Myren-Svelstad (2024) shows how engaging in poem analysis with students in a dialogue deepens their learning, especially when discussion focuses on ambiguity, emotion and uncertainty. When teachers put students in collaborative circles to grapple with challenging texts, they deepen their critical thinking as well as develop relational- and ecologically extended thinking.

2. Enhance Creativity: Students' creativity increases through sublime poetry exposure because they learn to share their personal readings and reactions. Students who analyze John Keats' Ode on a Grecian Urn should compose odes or reflective essays about beauty and impermanence in personal life through an assignment following their literary exploration. Students expand their creative abilities when doing imaginative tasks because these assignments require experimenting with language and structure and the use of imagery to develop linguistic skills. Students build ownership of their educational content through creation that helps them risk taking within language use which remains essential to language acquisition (Braider, 2010).

An example is showing how poetry can be used as a teaching tool to stimulate creativity and imagination in a number of different fields. Illingworth (2024) demonstrates this in his work concerning "rhyme and reason" where he expands on the idea of poetic imagination and how it stretches beyond the boundaries of the Literature classroom to include, for instance, the other teaching subjects of Science and Social Studies, thus, aiding learners in enhancing their expressive skills. This is in line with how composing poems in English, whether lyrical, reflective, or ecocritical, can enhance creative and cognitive engagement in EFL learners.

3. Encourage Emotional Engagement: When students experience emotions through sublime poetry, they develop personal connections to the material as well as emotional engagement. Through his work *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman enables readers to appreciate how individuals can experience both themselves and life's splendour, which helps students understand their own lives better. The connection of emotions plays an essential role in maintaining language memory levels as well as student drive. The connection between personal experiences and academic content leads to enhanced memorisation of vocabulary and grammatical structures together with phrases tied to emotional reactions (Zull, 2002). Students can express their poetic feelings better through reflective journaling and group sharing events which help develop their language connection with the poetry and its themes.

Continuing with Sgro (2021), in his research shows medical students how poetry encourages the growth of professional identity, empathy, and reflective practice. He implies that in EFL teaching, poetry positively influences the emotional dimension of learning and promotes resilience, identity, and ethical stance. This is also true for students in Iraq and elsewhere. Engaging with the practice of writing reflective responses to sublime poetry helps integrate learning with growth.

4. Cultivate Interdisciplinary Understanding: Researchers should develop multidisciplinary expertise because sublime poetry themes draw connections between philosophy and art and the historical context. Analyzing Buddhist English poems by Rainer Maria Rilke or Gerard Manley Hopkins enables students to unpack artistic language manifestations as well as study the cultural meanings embedded in the literary text. An interdisciplinary technique in education enhances their academic journey and demonstrates to students how language studies link to everyday situations (Affifi, 2024). 'Active poetry addressing different layers of realities transcends the mere cultivation of a personal 'sustainability mindset' as argued by Molderez and Ceulemans ,(2021).'

5. Promote Collaborative Learning: Educational programs that integrate sublime poetry will develop collaborative learning opportunities for EFL students. Students can evaluate poems alongside each other while exchanging interpretations which generates a scholarly environment. The combination of peer reviews and poetry circles enables students to develop their communication abilities by sharing and adding to each other's thoughts which results in expanded mental viewpoints. The structured collaboration makes students better at expressing their ideas while encountering different perspectives which builds both language ability and relationship respect according to Littlewood (2004) and Kagan (1994) .

Myren-Svelstad (2024) reflects on how collaborative dialogue on poetry can model development processes in education. During group work, students cultivate interpretative skills, democratic appreciation of differing views, and civic virtue which Whitman sought in his poetry. This reaffirms poetry circles as central to pedagogy in contemporary EFL contexts. In this regard, the discipline of English as a foreign language gains in value when sublime poetry is included as a central feature since the students learn to balance critical and creative thinking. Students who interact with sublime subject matter are able to elevate their levels of analysis, creativity, and emotional engagement which enriches the language acquisition processes. This appreciation of various fields of study is grown differently especially when students are interested in working together to master their emotional and linguistic command of English. Teaching students sublime poems enhances linguistic capabilities and becomes the gateway to deeper contemplation of their lived experiences.

8.Results

This educational course, based on "Sublime Aesthetics in Modern English Poetry" at an Iraq Language Institute, instructs students in critical thinking skills and creative writing through

analysis of John Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. The setting of thematic discussions among 50 students at an Iraq Language Institute created a dynamic learning space to examine Keats' complex work themes. Sublime aesthetics served as an introductory topic before the learners studied the poem in particular. Students spend time for personal reflection regarding marking down the poem sections which created emotional impact. The participants divided into small discussion groups to analyze three different elements of the poem, including the definition of beauty, art-truth dynamics and the conflict between the timeless and temporary side. Students gained access to a collaborative exchange through which they participated actively and exchanged many different understandings and interpersonal connections to the literary text. The whole class gathering following individual discussions produced an enhanced discussion that increased students' awareness of the themes embedded in the poem. Students showed analytical thinking about Keats' analysis of beauty close to the time as they expressed their own ideas and questions strongly. To complete their session, the students did some reflective writing which helped them, on a deeper level, understand their personal connections to the content. In the course of the discussions, focused on different themes, Keats' sublime aesthetics emerged. They focused on preparing students to think critically, as well as fostering their creativity, personal insight, and other qualities which will aid them in their future studies and beyond. This experience emphasized poetry's evolutionary power, since it enables individuals to examine abstract human realities and emotions, articulating them in the form of this art. Thus, this research is focused on the sublime aesthetics in Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn." The aim of the discussion is twofold – to develop students' creativity and critical thinking in the context of details and important themes of the text, especially the interrelation of beauty, truth, and art.

The effects of poetry engagement has been studied far beyond the four walls of the poetry classroom. Myren-Svelstad (2024) for example showed students participating in poetry-centered sustained dialogues advanced cross-disciplinary literacy and sustainability competencies which mirrors the outcomes of reflective writing described in this chapter. Similarly, Moulton (2024) claims culturally sustaining poetry pedagogy enables learners to live life to their fullest potential and engage in life beyond the classroom and therefore achieves strong reflexive and creative growth. Such parallels further validate the Iraq Language Institute findings in the context of the emerging global movement integrating poetry into teaching for the development of critical and creative thinking skills. In addition, the findings support Illingworth's (2024) view that poetry serves as a "pedagogical bridge". In this case, engaging in cross-disciplinary activities alongside poetry fosters language learning as well as the development of affective and social competencies. The increase in the percentage of passes in the post-test from 55% to 80% suggests not only a deeper learning of Keats but more so the application of thematic discourse teaching strategies as described by the.

. It also substantiates the poetry-centered pedagogy affirmation that "students, in overcoming such academic hurdles, are able to acquire skills more valuable than what Sgro (2021) refers to, in other contexts of learning, as 'poetic reflection in the professional world' and the associated identity and emotional resilience."

This part of the course titled 'Sublime Aesthetics in Modern English Poetry' conducted in an Iraqi Language Institute has shown that students were able to demonstrate analytical and creative skills with the use of Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. The integration of these thematic discussions

increased the average student test score from 55% to 80%, indicative of a significant enhancement in the students' ability to interpret sublime aesthetics.

More recent scholarship (2020-2025) strengthens these results by demonstrating that sublime poetry transcends the boundaries of language instruction to include ethical and ecological dimensions. Somervell (2023) describes the ways in which the environmental sublime prompts reflection on vulnerability, and Lear (2024) describes the ways in which eco-centrally languaged discourse immerses students and prompts critical discourse. These insights resonate with the reflective writings of Iraqi students, especially their contemplation of Keats' themes of beauty and transience which corresponds with common concerns about sustainability. Further, neuroaesthetic studies suggest that sublime experiences may boost resilience and support novel learning. For instance, Wang (2024) explains the ways in which sublime experiences activate neural circuits linked with emotion regulation and empathy. The case is similar to commenting on the reflective journaling of Iraqi learners who claimed to be both insulted and invigorated by the images of Keats. In the same spirit, Shamim (2024) underscores the function of the sublime as an acts of resistance and as a means of justice among poets of various cultures, thus broadening the teaching of such a style a, poem, from purely aesthetic to include an ethical dimension. R. F. is s. In the case of the superb achievements of the learners at the Iraqi Language Institute, teaching sublime prose poetry is a case where learners performance and the level of instructional material mastery on the emotionally and ecologically sophisticated levels is achieved.

9. Discussion

Students learned the key elements of sublime aesthetics in this part of the session, which took Romantic literature as the basis for describing profound emotional experiences. As part of the lesson, the researcher sketched the history of the sublime movement starting from the rationalism of the Enlightenment period, emphasizing the elements of nature, emotion, and power. Then the researcher moved into an in-depth analysis of John Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn* which showcased subliminal themes through its detailed study of beauty alongside immortal concepts and artistic interpretation. During the discussion the teacher established rules which required students to value different viewpoints and actively listen to one another while giving helpful feedback. The instructor established this framework to build an environment that ensured students felt welcomed to participate in discussions of their ideas and thoughts.

Further, students received the *Ode on a Grecian Urn* after the introduction while reading individually. Students spent this reading period extremely interacting with the text through which they marked down meaningful phrases and strong emotional triggers. When reading the poem students analyzed their first thoughts along with emotional responses after encountering both the poem's intricate themes and vivid descriptions. Students learned from independent reflection before group work which provided them with concrete parts of the poem for detailed peer discussions.

In regard to the assignment, the students formed small groups of five, each of which was allocated different topics for discussion. These students explored the definition of beauty within the poem through linguistic representations of different dimensions of beauty. Discussion group 1 examined the statement by Keats "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" and discussed its implications for art and the for truth. A third discussion group explored the themes of time, along with

permanence and transience, to elucidate the urn's relation to the pause of eternal and natural human mortality. The last members of the discussion group reflected on the poem by contemplating which of its themes seemed most relevant to their life and personal experience. Subgroups were encouraged to formulate key ideas and questions for the whole class, as they were completing the assignment in a collaborative learning setting.

The students finalized the session by submitting reflective writings exercises focussing on specific parts of the poem or insights which came up during the discussion and were 100-150 words long. Poetry reflection allows students to express and share emotions while deepening their connections to the material. They were tasked with discussing the relationship between their learning insights regarding English as a Foreign Language, or EFL, and the literary session conducted. The focus of the last part of the session was on the exquisite qualities of the poem, and how it helped the students understand the concepts of beauty and art. The teacher was keen to tell students that learning poetry will enhance their language learning by developing their critical and creative skills. Each student was given as a final task the writing of a poem or an essay on sublime themes which might be contemporary or personal.

The assignment allowed students to use sublime principles in creative works which strengthened both their literary skills and their poetry appreciation (Harman, 2016). All these findings still correlate with Moulton (2024) who shows how fostering elaborate but flexible boundaries within literary exchange promotes self-text connection. In Iraqi classrooms, the practice of reflective writing is similar to what Myren-Svelstad (2024) describes as dialogic meaning-making photocopied through the group work collaboration as self-sustaining deeper ethical reasoning along with the development of competencies pertaining to sustainability.

In this context, these studies strengthen the assertion that working with sublime poetry pays off on the linguistic level and on the level of reflexivity and responsibility. To conclude, the significance of the dialogic and emotive aspects of poetry further reinforces its interdisciplinary potential. Illingworth (2024) demonstrates how poetry acts as a cross-curricular teaching aid promoting creative and critical thinking across a variety of subject areas beyond literature. Sgro (2021) also emphasizes how poetry nurtures empathy and resilience at the level of professional education. In the context of EFL, these observations indicate that poetry of the highest standard functions not only as a literary work, but also as a comprehensive teaching tool aimed at the integrated development of language skills, cultural awareness, emotional intelligence and global citizenship.

A class session started with an outline of sublime aesthetics before allowing students to interact with Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. The students proved in both group work and reflection that they attached strong interpretive and emotive bonds to the poem. The findings support the effectiveness of sublime aesthetics as a form of pedagogy in EFL contexts. This view is supported in the literature. Somervell (2023) and Lear (2024) contend, for instance, that sublime poetics leak into the domain of ecology, where poetry steeped in awe and terror invites reflection on environmental precariousness. It is as if to say sublime poetry, in the hands of Iraqi learners, is not solely Keats but a conduit to the intersections of poetic wonder and twenty-first century climate issues. Shamim (2024) is concerned with the creative application of sublime natural imagery as a form of cultural resistance and ethical critique exemplified in the poetry of Darwish and Nye. This links students' reflections on beauty and mortality with global silence breakers

who confront injustice and ecological devastation. Poetry, then, becomes to them a work of art that engages with the most important issues of the time.

Finally, Wang (2024) describes sublime and poetic awe as possessing measurable neurocognitive benefits and neuroaesthetic elements. This relates to the Iraq study, in which students' reflective writing demonstrated strong analysis, as well as higher empathy and resilience. Thus, Keats' urn is not only an artwork; it is also a tool for students' cognitive-emotional growth. To summarize, recent research suggests that exposure to sublime poetry enables EFL learners to master important language skills in the context of current issues concerning ecology, justice, and emotional well-being. Defies the Iraq classroom outcomes within the context of a world-wide effort to reframe sublime aesthetics for transformative, cross-disciplinary 21st century education.

10.Results

At first, the thematic approach effectiveness was assessed through assessments before and after the session that measured the students' knowledge of sublimity in aesthetics and their literary interpretation abilities and their engagement levels with poetry. This important assessment took place before the class period and claimed that students had a basic understanding of Romantic literature concepts together with interpretive abilities scoring 55% on average. Students underwent testing a second time immediately after the session to evaluate newly achieved information. Students' test scores were expected to show substantial improvement after the session so that their average scored between 80 and 100 points indicating better understanding and analytical skills.

Table 1 Students' Average Scores: Pre-Test vs. Post-Test

Test Type	Average Score (%)
Pre-Test	55
Post-Test	80

Moreover, students needs a better understanding of sublime aesthetics in modern poetry after this session through their interaction with their peers during group discussions. Each of the students engaged personally with the material in which they learned emotional and focused thinking in an individualistic framework which fostered language and collaborative skills. The thematic discussion technique applied with the students reading the works of John Keats enabled the acquisition of two critical skills which enhanced text analysis and emotional articulation needed basis for proficient performance in postgraduate studies. Statistical data from the laboratory regarding the increase in scores boosted within the framework of the described methodology the

validity of the methodology as an educational strategy geared for the development of student learning.

11. Conclusion

Modern English poetry that contains sublime elements offers an EFL learner an opportunity to enhance their skills in critical and creative thinking. Learners who engage with sublime poetry expand their English language skills along with their personal and intellectual growth. Through sublime poetry, educators afford the learners an opportunity to acquire higher levels of language learning and to ponder the fundamental reflections of humanity which construct enduring literary knowledge. A literary lesson featuring John Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn* served as a tool for the development of EFL learners' analytical and creative skills at the Iraq Language Institute. The learners engaged within a structured instructional sequence which commenced with the awareness of sublime elements then progressed to individual reading followed by small-group discussions and culminating with an all-class participation on text and thematic elements. The students were able to shift their average score of 55% obtained from the pre-test assessment on the Fundamental concepts of Romantic Literature to 80% in the post-test assessment.

Research outcomes substantiate the use of collaborative learning with poems for the purpose of constructing comprehensive literary evaluation skills and appreciating literature emotionally. Student participants related personally to the themes of beauty and truth and the transience of human life during the session, which provoked both intellectual engagement and emotional response to the material. The students deepened their learning with the reflective writing task, where prompted to relate the poem to their life experiences, and articulate self-expression, and new knowledge. The session provided deep learning concerning marvelous artistic principles while equipping students with practical language skills for later academic use. This educational experience proves why adding literature to an EFL curriculum matters because students learn complex ways of understanding humanity while mastering their language skills.

For Moulton, this teaching of poetry as a cultural artifact such as poetry reflexively illustrates equity and student agency, which directly relates to the outcomes of group discussions and reflective writing of the Iraqi classroom. Equally, in Myren-Svelstad illustrates with the help of poetic dialogue that collaborative poetry assists in the learning of sustainability. This implies that sublime poetry has the capacity to assist students in the articulation of complex issues in sustainability, ethics and literature'. Furthermore, scholars of today claim that, even modernized, the Romantic sublime has not lost any of its relevance. Somervell (2023) notes that the "environmental sublime" reconceptualizes notions of reverence and beauty at a time when ecology is vulnerable. By linking modern ecopoets like Ocean Vuong (Costello, 2019) and Tracy K. Smith (2018) to Keats' ode, teachers can connect timeless Romantic ideals to 21st-century issues of identity, diversity, and climate justice. Such a model shows that literature does not merely exist in the past, but is a discourse that responds to culture.

Most recently, Illingworth (2024) and Sgro (2021) have rightly noted that poetry exists outside the confines of literature, as it straddles the interdisciplinary realms of creation, feeling, and even therapy. For EFL learners, the wonderful experience of poetry appreciation involves higher order thinking skills in linguistics together with the nurturing of a personal voice, analytic

skills, cross-cultural sensitivity, and empathy, all of which are vital in academic and professional settings. Hence, the embodiment of sublime aesthetics in EFL materials offers a holistic model that embodies the spirit of the times, integrating language instruction with ethics, culture, and ecology.

The use of sublime elements in EFL poetry, translated to Modern English, still holds great value. Noting the studies of Iraq Language Institute, students engaged with thematic elements of Keats' Ode on a Grecian Urn, where students were able to reflect on not only the poetry, but also sharpened the critical thinking skills, leading to a test score increase of 55% to 80%. This suggests that sublime aesthetics still have the greatest effect in teaching. Scholarship conducted between 2020 and 2025 continues to reiterate this point and pushes the boundaries of sublime aesthetics. The Illinois Institute of Technology's Somervell with the 2023 report and the environmental sublime argues where poetry becomes a site of ecologic awareness and responsibility. The Lear 2024 study emphasizes contemporary ecopoetry and argues that the dense language of the ecopoetry plunges students into a state of ecological stupor, where wonder and moral contemplation are unified. This resonates with the Iraqi students' reflections on beauty and transience, indicating that sublime poetry taught in the classroom can provide a point of departure for more extensive discourse on environmental sustainability. In the same vein, Resh Shamim (2024) shows how the sublime disconnects the theme of poetic justice and resistance as practiced by Darwish and Nye. When EFL learners approach sublime imagery within this cross-cultural context, they associate personal thoughts with global concerns about justice, identity, and the systemic exploitation of the ecology, thus poetry's relevance to global issues of the twenty-first century becomes beyond clear.

In the same breath, Wang (2024) appears to underscore the neuroaesthetic connection, whereby sublime moments intertwine with emotion regulation, empathy, and cognitive flexibility. This understanding bolsters the reflective writings of the Iraqi students which, as a whole, demonstrate a rise in emotional understanding and confidence at the intellectual level. Therefore, the sublimed aesthetic dimension to the language and learning subserves the development of global citizenship skills. In short, the findings from the Iraq classroom aligns with international research regarding the sublime not restricted to an aesthetic appreciation. In the 21st century classroom, sublime poetry undergoes a metamorphosis to become an instrument of change where acquisition of a new language is integrated with an all embracing eco-consciousness, culture of activism, emotional literacy, and interdisciplinary development. Using Romantic poems like Keates' Ode on a Grecian Urn alongside contemporary ecopoetry and neuroaesthetics, educators and students construct a bridge connecting the past and the present and thus nurturing articulate, reflective, and ethically responsible global citizens.

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