# Achievement Tests in a Rhetoric Subject for Fifth-Grade Literary Students and the Ways for Developing Them

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The ancients had taken great care of rhetoric subjects, because  they provided the writer with all the wonderful things. So in this era, many attempts  have been made to restore life to rhetoric, as well as to link it to literature. The students' weakness in this rhetoric subject is as a difficult issue that worries the student, teacher, principal, family and society. A long time ago, it was an old and now is a new issue that everyone  suffers  from,  despite  the  solutions  presented  by  the educational authorities, through which it tries to reduce this problem, which appears clearly in the results of students.  The current study is considered as a step for building achievement tests. The researcher's chose  a rhetoric subject in order to find suitable solutions to make the rhetorical  lesson  an  interesting   one  which  is  understood  by  the students; that  is not difficult for learners to reach  their goals and its mastery. Hence, the researcher chose this research to coexist with the reality of fifth-grade literary students as a teacher and a headmaster of many intermediate schools in Babylon Governorate.  The difficulties investigated for this lesson through this study were:  four schools were randomly  selected  and  distributed  to  secondary  and  preparatory schools for the Governate of Babylon centre,  the sample was  (171) students  randomly chosen, for achieving this, the researcher prepared an objective  achievement test in a rhetoric subject consisting of (10) items in the science of meanings, (10) items in the science of statement and (5) items in the science of Budaiya. Each of these items contains four choices, one of which is correct. After the correcting of these answers, (80) students had  a score less than (50%), which indicates the real weakness of students in the rhetoric subject. The researcher also adopted another tool,  the 'questionnaire,' where the teachers were presented and put their proposals to advance the study of rhetoric. The researcher  concluded   with  recommendations,  including  making rhetoric  a  basic  subject,  then  the  rhetorical  approach  includes  good

rhetorical applications, in addition to the necessity of teaching rhetoric in previous stages, adopting  modern and varied teaching methods as well as caring for numbers of teaching staff qualified scientifically and professionally.

**Key words:** *Rhetoric subject, achievement tests, questionnaire, advanced.*

## Introduction

The ongoing efforts and studies to maintain and care for the Arabic language overcome the difficulties in its teaching, and these difficulties are represented by a clear weakness in the branches of the Arabic language in general, and rhetoric in particular. The study of rhetoric, past and present, stems from the importance of this vital lesson in the language being the science that determines the laws governing literature and criticism, and rhetoric from its creator and its statement is an instrument that reflects literary activity and monitors various works and productions and is the only way to taste aesthetics from the Arabic saying literature and poetry on the one hand and understanding The Qur'an, on the other hand. Therefore, the aim of the Arab rhetoric of our time is first to reveal the beauty of the Arab saying, and this is a way to take us to the second goal, which is to reveal the miracles of the Holy Quran. The tests in general are an important mechanism to evaluate the performance of students, and the written tests from them help us to stand and indicate their levels through their educational achievements,  and see the joints of the force to praise them and overcome the weaknesses and negatives that may be included in the performance of all students.

### The Research Problem

The problem of tests, especially for the rhetoric lesson, is not born in the present time; since the beginning of the last century, educators have called for the necessity of addressing the weakness of students in rhetoric (Taha, 1989:11-12).  As a teaching subject, rhetoric  does not move in a satisfactory way, as the methods of teaching it are often characterised by the traditional nature of teaching lessons for the students, also presenting  the facts  without focusing on them could result in them  not remaining  in the mind; because the student did not make an effort to discover them,  as his attitude was negative (Al-Khawaldeh, 1993: 292). At a time when recent trends in education confirm the student's positive attitude in the teaching process,  they called for stirring his thinking and giving him the opportunity to prepare the material of the lesson so as to engage in a discussion of this subject that he prepared from the scheduled book. In addition to that, among the most prominent features of the era in which we live, this rapid progress, which included various fields of life, including the field of scientific research, especially the field of education, so recent trends have emerged which call for research and investigation of methods of tests to increase the effectiveness of the teaching process. This emerged in full conformity  with what was

confirmed by some studies "as we mentioned previously" that there is a clear focus when conducting testing in various materials on preserving, indoctrinating information and using more modern tests instead of absorbing the material by using traditional tests (Al-Hassan, 1987:11).

We conclude from the above that there is a clear weakness in the preparation and familiarity with tests, so the current research problem lies in the weakness of preparing exams and tests for rhetoric subjects in the light of what was identified by previous studies.

### *The Importance of Research and the Need for it*

Language plays a great role in the life of the nations because it is as a container of thoughts and feelings which is not just a means of expressions only, there is no nation of the ways of renaissance and progress will be established but in its language (Al-Waeli, 2004: 17-18), while Arabic history has the greatest literature. We do not find a people that reaped the benefit of its literature as it did for the Arabian people, because of its wonderful rhetorical images.

So if we want to talk about this sea which is full of words and meanings, we may not be able to cover all aspects of this great language, then we can limit our speech to two axes, the first one, we will transmit from ancient and modern Arab scholars, the second axis is what was conveyed to us from Western scholars and orientalists to have clear evidence of this "rich heritage" (Zayer, and Samaa, 2016: 136).

The question here is do I mean the rhetoric of the Arab mind, which was manifested in prose of Ibn al-Mukana and Al-Jahith? Or the rhetoric of the Greek mind, which differs in the words of the fundamentalists, the dialectics, the regionalists which were fixed in the rules of al-Sakaki? Or is it rhetoric of meaning or pronunciation? Is it rhetoric of thought or style? The answer is that the rhetoric that I mean and defend is the rhetoric with which the Qur'an challenged the princes of saying, it is a rhetoric that does not separate between mind and taste or between thought and word (Al-Zayat, 2011: 45). In other words, the use of the word in the meaning of the subject has a truth, and its use in the appropriate for it (metaphor), or in the inappropriate (mistake). This is a matter of accord (Al-Shatib, 1983: 113), so the writer and author must follow it, to discover the Arabic language secrets, to arrange and classify his ideas, thus the rhetoric means how to invest knowledge in language and literature, as all literary arts cannot be called literature unless they are based on rhetorical grounds, rhetoric did not arise except by standing on the beauty, imagination and good workmanship (Al-Alwani, 2001: 289).

Our scientific institutions have deviated from what is necessary and attached great importance to the teaching of rhetoric in a dry theoretical manner, which had separated the science of rhetoric and the results that were expected from it (Badawi, 19: 1984). Teaching rhetoric is marred by many shortcomings and droughts in its teaching stages, from the early stages to universities as they are highest institutions (Al-Saifi, 1995: 11), in this direction previous research and studies asserted that there is a decrease in the level of achievement in rhetoric and rigidity in its lessons, as well as the methods of teaching it (Al-Nashef, 1973: 60). The studies which have been conducted in this field have differed in the diagnosis of the reasons which led to those weaknesses, it may be in the curriculum or in its way of writing, which is unable to to grow the taste of the students (Alwani, 2001: 3).

The curriculum book, if it's well written,  will be an educational tool that stimulates thinking, performance and creativity, as because it is a reliable source of its health, from which knowledge is easily  obtained,   it helps to develop students' mental abilities such as understanding, meditation, budget, criticism and taste (Al-Khafaji, 2004: 197). Among the other reasons that lead to the learner's weakness in the rhetoric lesson is the unsuccessful teaching method. With regard to the importance of the teaching method, we can find that recent studies have emphasised it and put it as the cornerstone of the educational process, through the method of teaching, we can read the goals of the curriculum in order to set the goals pursued by educational institutions (Al-Hashimi, 1991: 3).

From this, the researcher believes that the curriculum, method and teacher may be  important reasons behind the phenomenon of poor student performance in rhetoric subjects. In order to identify these reasons, the researcher decided to rely on an achievement test presented to fifth-grade literary students to reveal their achievements,  the teachers were also provided with a questionnaire in order to identify the most important obstacles that prevent the advancements in understanding this subject by the students.  The reason for choosing the fifth-grade literary students is because they are studying rhetorical topics that are assigned to them in their curriculum. In light of this, this research came to shed light on building an an achievement test in rhetoric for fifth-grade literary students.

## *The Research Objectives*

The current research aims to answer the following two questions: How to build an achievement test in rhetoric for fifth-grade literary students? And Q2: How to develop a rhetoric lesson for fifth-grade literary students from the teachers' point of view?

*Research Limits*

The current research is limited to: literary fifth-grade students in middle and high schools in the Babil governorate that represent the research sample. The research is also limited to rhetorical exercises that are included in the rhetoric book scheduled for the above grades, knowing that the research was conducted for the academic year 2018-2019.

*Terms Determination*

Since the research aims to build an achievement test in the course of a rhetoric subject for fifth-grade literary students, the researcher sees the need to define the following terms:

*The Tests*

**A- It was defined by Odaa as:** (an organised method for determining the degree to which an individual possesses a specific trait of the individual's answers to a sample of stimuli that represents the trait) ( Odaa, 1985: 37).

**B-** Al-Bawi defined it as: (represents an organised, objective way to measure a sample of an individual's skills or abilities or a group of individuals in a specific time and place) (Al-Bawi, 1989: 33).

**C-** From the foregoing, the researcher believes that the test is a tool used to discover the extent to which students (the research sample) achieve the goal required in answering the test provided to them, as well as their focus on the amount of information that can be saved and remembered.

*Rhetoric (Terminology): Defined to Each as:*

**A-(Al-Jahiz - 255 AH) by saying:** The speech does not deserve a name of rhetoric until its meaning precedes its pronunciation, and its pronunciation, like its meaning, therefore, it will not be pronounced upon your hearing, which is more important to your heart (Al-Jahez, 1974: 115).

**(Ahmed) Saying:** it is a science that renews the laws that govern literature and that a writer should follow in organising his ideas, choosing and writing his words in a specific format (Ahmad, 1984: 289).

**As for the Procedural Definition of Rhetoric:** it is the rules and methods included in the book of rhetoric and application as it is to be taught to students (research sample), the fifth

literary grade, in middle schools in the governorate Babylon for the academic year (2018-2019).

- **The Fifth Literary Grade**: It is the second grade of the preparatory school classes that follow intermediate school in Iraq, the duration of the study is three years, and this study consolidates what has been discovered of students' abilities and inclinations (Republic of Iraq / Ministry of Education, 1981: 4).

**Previous Studies**
*Abid Aoun's Study (1998)*

This study was conducted in Baghdad and aimed to build a guide for teaching a rhetoric subject in the light of the mistakes of the Arabic language departments in colleges of education in Iraq in the subjects prescribed for the fifth literary grade. In order to achieve this goal,  an achievement test in rhetoric was prepared containing (25) items that included rhetoric sciences of (al-Ma'ani , al-Badie , al-Bayan).

 As for the sample, the researcher has chosen in his method four colleges of education, with (400) male and female students representing a sample for basic research, the test was randomly  distributed among (13) colleges of education  in the north, middle and south of the country, after the researcher verified the validity and the consistency of the test, he applied it to the students of the colleges covered in the research, examined the students' responses and diagnosed their rhetorical errors.

Their rhetorical errors were of varying proportions in all the subjects covered by the test, which reached to (25) subjects, which were limited between the lowest percentage (46.25%) in the topic of single analogy and the highest percentage (80.75%) in the subject of metaphoric inhibition (Abid Aoun, 1998: 2-194).

*Al-Adli Study (2002)*

This study was conducted at Al-Qadisiyah University and aimed to (assess the level of achievement of students of Arabic language departments /the College of Education/ in Iraqi universities in a rhetoric subject), the study community consisted of students of the third grades in Arabic language departments in colleges of education in the universities, the teachers who studied rhetoric in those departments with the rhetorical topics included in the rhetorical book which was approved for teaching in the first and second stages of university study, and to achieve the goal of the research, the researcher prepared an achievement test in a rhetoric subject.

This study included two communities: the student community and the teaching community, so the basic sample of students reached (469) male and female students who were randomly chosen from the students' original total of (2345) male and female, while the sample of the teaching staff reached (30) teachers out of a total of (37) teachers, after excluding the (7) individuals in the reconnaissance sample. The research applied the achievement test to the sample. It also distributed a questionnaire to the teaching staff sample, which included the areas contained in a questionnaire, the study concluded that the rhetorical subject does not achieve the purpose of its teaching, this is reflected by the weakness of students in it to memorise dry terms and vague rules automatically without understanding the meanings, which led to a low level of achievement in this subject (Al-Adli, 2002: 1-120).

### Al-Khafaji's Study (2004)

This study was conducted at the University of Babylon, this study aimed to investigate (the effect of Quranic verses - presentation examples - in the achievements of fifth-grade literary students in a rhetoric subject), the researcher adopted the experimental approach in his research, the researcher had chosen secondary and preparatory schools for boys in the Babylon Governorate Centre in which there is more than one division or section for the fifth literary grade.

The study resulted in: The method of examples of displaying Quranic verses is more effective than the traditional method, that the Holy Qur'an and its rhetorical and artistic images may motivate the student to repeat reading and memorising them, leading to their embedding with them. The study yielded the following results: Adoption of the method of displaying examples with Quranic verses in teaching rhetoric for fifth-grade literary students, in addition to the confirmation of supervisors to urge teachers of Arabic language to use the method of displaying examples with Quranic verses while teaching rhetoric (Khafaji, 2004: 37-68).

**Research Procedures**

*Research Methodology*: The researcher chose the descriptive approach, because it fits with the nature of his research, as describing the existing problem as it helps to take the necessary steps to remedy it, through analysing and interpreting the current situation (Al-Hashel, 1987: 22).

*The Original Community of the Research*
*The Community of the Research and Its Sample*

The original community is represented in the current research with fifth-grade literary students in secondary and preparatory schools in the General Directorate of Education, Babil

Governorate, the Governorate Centre  for the academic year (2018-2019), for males only, who have completed the study of the materials of the curriculum of the book (Rhetoric and Application), who number  (1626) students distributed over the schools of the Governorate Centre which were from (22) schools as  shown in Table (1):

**Table 1:** The research community of students who are studying the rhetoric subject, and the number of schools with a sample of the research.

| Governorate, | number of students for the fifth literary grade | number of boys schools in the governorate centre | number of schools of the sample | The total of the research sample for the students |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Babylon governorate centre | 1626 | 22 | schools4 | 171 |

After determining the original student community,  a sample of (171) students was chosen from the fifth-grade literary students of the governorate, at a percentage of (10.51%) from the original community to form the research sample. Table (1) illustrates this, they are the students of preparatory schools for boys in Al-Fayhaa school (70) students, al-Thoraa preparatory school, preparatory school of al-Emam Ali (peace upon him) (33) students, so the total will be (171) students.

***The Two Tools of the Research***: in his current study the researcher relied on the  following two tools of research:
1-Achievement test to  discover the students' levels in the rhetoric subject for the fifth literary grade in the governate of Babylon centre.

***Achievement Test for Rhetoric Subject***

Before the researcher started preparing the achievement test, he visited a number of secondary and preparatory schools in the light of facilitating the mission, where he was familiarised with the vocabulary of the rhetoric approach in them, the restriction of the rhetorical topics taught in the literary fifth grades, as (al-Bayan – al-Badie – Elm al-Ma'ani). In this light, the researcher prepared an achievement test, that includes the materials of the rhetorical book to be taught in this class. The type of test is multiple choice, due to the advantages of this type of test, as they are characterised by accuracy and speed in the answer, comprehensiveness and reducing the effect of guessing (El-Shatib, 1983: 67).

## The Description of the Test

The test of the rhetoric subject included three fields, each of which included a science of rhetoric (al-Bayan – al-Badie – Elm al-Ma'ani). The test consisted of (25) items, each of which included four options, one of which is the correct answer. The test instructions were prepared on the first paper to examine the test with an illustrative form of the answer. Twenty-five item s were identified by (10) items for the science of meanings (al-Ma'ani), (10) items for (al-Bayan) and (5) items for the science of Badie Appendix (5).

## The Validity of the Test

The test is valid when it measures what it means by measuring it or designed for it (Al-Ajili, 2001: 72), as  Guilford sees: (The test is considered true when it measures what it is supposed to measure), to ensure the validity of the test, the researcher used the apparent truths and truthfulness of the content, the agreement was obtained in (80%) of the opinions of the arbitrators. Based on the above, the number of items in their final form has become (25) items, and appendix items (5), with this procedure, the researcher has verified the validity of the test.

## The Stability of the Test

In order to rely on it as a tool for the current research, its stability must be confirmed , that is, it gives the same results when it is repeatedly applied to the individuals themselves, and under the same conditions (Al-Assaf, 2003: 236).

The extraction of the stability factor is a fundamental condition for obtaining objectivity, so the researcher in the extraction of the stability factor of the instrument, noted the agreement between the two commentators and other observers. The method of observers agreement in calculating the stability is one of the most important ways  of common methods  used, due to its ease. The researcher trained the Professor  in methods of teaching Arabic at the College of Education / University of Babylon, on how to correct for the test, after the researcher and the other corrector finished the students' tests, the researcher used the "Pearson" Correlation to extract the coefficient of stability among degrees.

## Test Application

The test was applied to the members of the study sample in the fifth literary grade in their schools on Monday 2/1/2018 and for a period of three days the researcher himself supervised the application of the test  with the assistance of Arabic language teachers in the schools covered by the research.  The number of answers  approved  was (171) .

*Questionnaire for Teachers' Opinions to Develop the Rhetoric Lesson*

The researcher presented another tool that he adopted in his research, which is (the questionnaire). It was presented to the preparatory school teachers in Babylon governate. The question was asked : What are the important ways to develop the rhetoric lesson?

*Statistical Means*

The researcher relied on statistical means obtained from (SSPS).

**Results' Presentation and Interpretation**
*Presentation of Test Results*

After applying the test to students of the fifth literary grade, which took three days, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Sunday, 2, 3, and 4/2018, the researcher followed the following procedures: after the researcher distributed the iterations to categories, then he collected the degrees of each of these categories and turned them into levels, then he extracted each of the levels on one hand by their percentage, and finally extracted the arithmetic mean for all students' degrees, as shown in Table (3) .

**Table 3:** The level of students according to the degree system in force in secondary and middle schools

| The number of the students | 49 and lower Fail | 50-59 weak | 60-69 Median | 70-80 Good | 80-89 Very good | 90-100 Perfect |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 171 | repetition | repetition | repetition | repetition | repetition | repetition |
| | 88 | 42 | 20 | 10 | 7 | 4 |

It appears in Table (4) that (88) students have received a failing grade if their grades are lesser than (50), that their categories consist of (30-34), category (35-39), (40-44) and (45-49), the percentage of that (07.36%), and (42) students obtained degrees, their grades were limited between (50-59), their percentage was (24.56%), (20) students obtained grades limited between (60-69) and their percentage was (11.69), (10) students obtained grades that were limited between (70-79) and their percentage was (5.84%). And (7) students obtained degrees confined between (80-89), as their percentage was (3.50%), and (4) students obtained grades that were limited to (90- 100), and their percentage was (2.33%). The current result is clear from where the percentages achieved in the performance of the exam were, that this percentage requires review and reflection on this article, also it refers to the reasons that led to the apparent decline.

The above results indicate a low level of literary fifth-year classes - this study agreed with studies by (Abid Aoun, 1998) and (Al-Adly, 2002).

**Table 4:** Distribution of students into classes, then distributing them to levels, percentages, and their overall average.

| Num | Category | Num. teachers each catego | Total of grad In          e category | The level | Percentage | Average |
|-----|----------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------|---------|
| 1 | 34 -30 | 20 | 638 | Fail | %39٬47 | %44٬78 |
| 2 | 39 -35 | 22 | 813 | | | |
| 3 | 44 -40 | 20 | 833 | | | |
| 4 | 49 -45 | 26 | 1190 | | | |
| 5 | 54 -50 | 22 | 1132 | Weak | %35٬80 | |
| 6 | 59 -55 | 20 | 1128 | | | |
| 7 | 64-60 | 12 | 763 | Median | %64٬7 | |
| 8 | 69 -65 | 8 | 531 | | | |
| 9 | 74-70 | 6 | 431 | Good | %73٬7 | |
| 10 | 79 -75 | 4 | 306 | | | |
| 11 | 84 -80 | 4 | 325 | Very good | %83٬24 | |
| 12 | 89 -85 | 3 | 259 | | | |
| 13 | 94 -90 | 3 | 276 | Perfect | %92.75 | |
| 14 | 99-95 | 1 | 95 | | | |

## *Teachers' Suggestions Regarding Ways to Develop Rhetoric Teaching*

For the purpose of achieving the second goal of the research, the researcher presented the open questionnaire to the teachers, with an open question, the goal behind which is to identify their proposals to develop the teaching of a rhetoric subject in the fifth literary grade, after collecting the teachers'answers about the open question and knowing their suggestions, the researcher classified these suggestions according to the fields, rhetorical book and teachers which are as follows:

## *The Rhetorical Book*

The first is the inclusion of the rhetorical book, the rhetorical applications at the end of each rhetorical topic, in addition, emphasising the teaching of a rhetoric subject in previous stages, also increasing the hours of classes for a rhetoric subject to ensure the study of the entire curriculum, the need to move away from the briefness in explaining the rhetorical book when it is written.

***The Field of Teachers:*** The suggestion for adopting a variety of teaching methods came in the first place according to what the educational situation requires, secondly, attention came in preparing the Arabic language teachers scientifically and professionally in a way that achieves a high rate of raising their competencies in teaching rhetorical topics, also with no limitations to the decided book for the teachers, but including what the book did not clarify with new information that gives the lessons vital information, as well as the use of modern methods of teaching, taking into account the individual differences between students.

## Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions
### *Conclusions: The Researcher Can Conclude The Following*

1- The study showed, through the test which was provided to the students, as well as the study of the questionnaire, that there is a decrease in the level of fifth-grade literary students in the examined rhetoric subject.
2- The reason behind the weakness in this material is due to the lack of adopting various teaching methods according to what the educational situation requires, also limiting it to the book which was decided by the teachers, the reduction in the main topics and the lack of many topics and exercises, in addition to the lack of teaching quotas for rhetoric subjects.

### *Recommendations*

In the light of what the teachers suggested to overcome the obstacles to obtaining a rhetoric subject in a way that raises the level of students in it, the researcher recommends the following:

- The goals of rhetoric should be clear to students and teachers.
-Make rhetoric an essential and important subject.
-Include the rhetorical book and rhetorical applications at the end of each rhetorical topic.
-Teach the rhetoric subject in the previous stages of the fifth literary stage.
-Increase the number of lectures that are devoted to teaching a rhetoric subject.
 -Away from brevity in explaining the systematic book when writing it.
- Using a variety of teaching methods according to what the educational situation requires, while using the element of suspense and excitement when teaching.
 -Attention to preparing the Arabic language teachers professionally and scientifically to raise their competence in teaching rhetorical subjects.
-Not confining instruction to the book, and linking the rhetorical topics to the daily reality of students.
-The use of modern methods of teaching, according to the individual differences among students.

**The suggestions**

*In Light of the Results of this Study, the Researcher Suggests the Following:*

- Conducting a study similar to the current study, building a test to find out the level of achievement of fifth-year literary students in rhetoric subjects and comparing them with the current study.
- A comparative study between students' achievements in rhetoric subjects and their achievements in other branches of the Arabic language.
- Conducting a study similar to the current study on other branches of the Arabic language.

*The Margins*

1- The sample of the research was chosen randomly, as the names of the schools were put in a bag and the schools covered by the research called the research sample were chosen.
2- The professors are  Ph.D Hamzah Al-Sultani, and Ph.D Raghad Al-Jubouri, their exact specialisation (methods of teaching Arabic language) in the Arabic Language Department of / College of Education for Humanities / University of Babylon.

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