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Investigating EFL Learners' Attitudes towards Literature Teaching Methods: Case of 2nd Year LMD Students at the University of Tlemcen

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Dedicated to my parents who have always been a source of inspiration and guidance for me throughout my Schooling.

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ABSTRACT

The present dissertation investigates the teaching of literature in the EFL context. It attempts, through empirical research, to elicit the students' attitudes towards literature and the different methods employed by teachers. The implemented descriptive research design incorporates both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The analysis of the findings of the study indicates that students hold mixed feelings towards literature, i.e. positive and negative. Yet, it should be noted that a considerable number of them hold a negative stance towards literary studies. The second finding of the study reveals the fact that despite the latest reforms in the Algerian system of education which aims to shift towards more learner centred pedagogy, literature teaching is still teacher-fronted. The study has also shown that a great number of the students have displayed their dissatisfaction with the way literature is being instructed. In an attempt to further reinforce positive and, hopefully, change negative attitudes towards literature and literary studies, a number of recommendations and suggestions have been put forward. These include the urgent need to more student-centred teaching philosophy that is basically task based oriented and that also calls for more cooperative learning. The suggestions, equally, make a place for technology in the literature classroom.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CL: Cooperative Learning
CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

CPC: Comité Pédagogique de Coordination
ECTS: European Credit Transfer System.
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
ELT: English Language Teaching
ESL: English as a Second Language
ESP: English for Specific Purposes
ICT: Information and Communication Technology
LMD: Licence, Master, Doctorate
L2: Second Language
TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

UABT: University Abou Bakr Belkaid Tlemcen

UK: United Kingdom

USA: United States of America

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GENEARL INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

By way of introduction, it is worth noting that literature has recently gained a significant place in the field of language pedagogy. In fact, in spite of the traditional arguments raised against the use of literature in the EFL context, many educationalists and researchers have recently acknowledged the outstanding role of literature as a source for linguistic development and cultural enrichment. Yet, the successful implementation of literature in the language classroom has always been a matter of skilled teaching that calls for the implementation of adequate methodologies.

Within this course of thought, the present research work is an attempt to investigate the process of teaching / learning literature in the EFL context. In its preliminary phase, it seeks to reveal the students' attitudes towards literature teaching methods and approaches since students' attitude is one of the main factors that determine their success or failure. At a second position, the study strives to bring about effective alternative methods that would cater for learners' needs through redressing the balance from teacher led-approach towards more student-centred teaching philosophy.

To this end, the main research question guiding the present study is: ***to what extent do EFL students appreciate and comprehend a literary text?***

In order to have a reliable answer to the problem statement, three peripheral questions are posed and structured as follows:

- What attitudes do EFL learners hold towards literature and literary studies?

- How literature is taught in the EFL context?

- What are learners' attitudes towards literature teaching methods?

On the basis of the afore-stated questions, the following hypotheses can be sprung:

-It is presupposed that EFL learners have mixed feelings towards literature and literary studies.

-It is assumed that literature teaching is quasi-teacher centred.

-It is hypothesised that a great number of EFL learners hold negative attitudes towards the methods being used in the literature classroom.

To validate the above mentioned hypotheses, an empirical research work has been undertaken at Tlemcen University, Department of Foreign Languages, involving a sampling of thirty-five (35) second year LMD students enrolled in the Section of English. The research methodology used in the dissertation addresses the

research instruments consisted of classroom observation, questionnaire and interview.

The whole layout of the present dissertation is structured into four chapters. The first one, entitled *Literature in the EFL Context,* defines literature and touches on the tenets of its teaching. It presents the different approaches recognized in using literature in the EFL classroom. The chapter also sheds light on the theories that literature teachers frequently apply in delivering literature courses. Equally, the chapter raises the major issues in the field, namely text selection, literacy competence and its invaluable place in literature learning / teaching and, finally, the notion of attitude and its weight in learning literature.

The second chapter is mainly a general description of the teaching /learning situation. Within it, the status of ELT at the tertiary level is dealt with. The newly introduced system (the LMD) is presented. Additionally, the chapter provides some statistical data related to both teachers and students at the English Department. More importantly, the chapter focuses on the teaching of literature at the second year LMD level. Thus, some important issues such as the curriculum, the syllabus and the course main objectives are highlighted.

To follow up this study, the bulk of third chapter is concerned with the practical side of the work

that consists of data collection and analysis. To note, the research instruments opted for seek to attain the triangulation, i.e. classroom observation, questionnaire and interview.

The last chapter, ultimately, suggests and recommends the relevant frameworks for the sake of both improving literature teaching and moving towards a learner-centred literature classroom. Some major recommendations and suggestions are made along these lines, then, they include: the reconsideration of the texts on the syllabus, adopting a process oriented literature teaching methodology that is fundamentally task based, promoting cooperative learning through introducing literature circles, encouraging reader response and extensive reading and at last but not least, implementing technological devices in the literature classroom through the use of film adaptation of literary works.

Finally, this research work is an attempt to open new avenues and alternatives for enhancing the traditional teaching / learning of literature in general and fostering the learners' appreciation and comprehension of a literary text in particular. It is, as well, an attempt to expand an awareness of both teachers and students of the necessity to spell out the differing methods and approaches that can satisfy the literature teaching / learning process.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE IN THE EFL CONTEXT

Chapter One
Literature in the EFL Context

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1.13. Introduction:

Despite its indisputable merits in language learning and teaching, the introduction of literature in the EFL contexts constitutes, up to this day, the subject of hard talks among researchers and educationalists. To get insight into the main principles of literature teaching in the EFL context, the present chapter offers a brief literature review relevant to the use of literature in the language classroom.

1.14. Literature defined:

The concept of 'literature' is so vast that many scholars look at it differently. Within the field of foreign language teaching, for example, teachers, syllabus designers, educationists and even foreign language learners themselves view and perceive literature differently.

To start with, a range of different research disciplines, that are also of equal relevance to education, have 'literature' as their object of study. Linguistics, applied linguistics, phonology, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, ethnography, anthropology, civilization, and cultural studies are all concerned with the study of literature but each looks at it from a different angle. For example, linguistics encompasses a number of sub-fields, such as the study of language structure (grammar) and meaning (semantics). The study of grammar encompasses

morphology (formation and alteration of word) and syntax (the rules that determine the way words combine into phrases and sentences). Also a part of this field are phonology, the study of sound systems and abstract sound units, and phonetics, which is concerned with the actual properties of speech sounds (phones), non-speech sounds, and how they are produced and perceive, and this helps the reader to recognize the pattern of a poem through its syllabic division to make its rhythm and rhyming.

1.2.1. Literature:

It has been conceived that literature is a slippery and loose term; it is viewed differently and no single definition is conventionally decided. The Encyclopedic dictionary converges into the very simplest definition that literature comprises **"writings that are valued as works of art, especially fiction, drama and poetry"** (1994: 527). Some scholars regard these writings as the expression of the people's voice, and they are shown in different walks of life: happiness, sorrow, psychological state of mind, change in the society, and educational development. So, literature gives emotional as well as intellectual pleasure.

Commenting on the value of literature, Diyanni thinks that literature **"though transports us to the world, created by imagination, yet evokes our**

emotions of love, sorrow, joy, and pity, and thus enhances our appreciation and understanding of life" (2002:2). Additionally, literature gives pleasure, elevates and transforms experience, and functions as a continuing criticism of values. The aesthetic delight of literature serves to purify emotions and morals, and illumine the intellect; In other words, literature gives knowledge and understanding. Thus, it is considered as an important part of education. In this token, Kramsch and Kramsch (2000: 553) point out that "**literature has symbolic prestige, artistic and cultural meaning, entertainment and educational value**".

1.2. 2. Literariness:

According to the theories of Russian Formalism, literariness is the notion of both linguistic and formal properties that distinguish a literary text from non-literary text because the significant features of a literary text reside in its form.

Roman Jakobson (1919) defines the concept as "**the subject of literary science is not literature, but literariness, i.e. that which makes a given work a literary work**" (Cited in Cuddon, 1991: 498). Rather than seek abstract qualities like imagination as the basis of literariness, the formalists set out to define the observable 'devices' by which literary texts—especially poems— foreground their own language, in versification and rhyme.

1.15.   Literature in the EFL classroom: the controversy:

The use of literature in the EFL classroom has continuously been a controversy in the field of language pedagogy. In fact, until recently, the rationale for the implementation of literature in language teaching / learning has been subject of heated debate among educationalists and researchers. Two major conflicting views form the essence of the controversy. The former supports and endorses the use of literature. The latter, however, rejects and dismisses it as a source for language learning and teaching. It seems important to visit both views.

1.3.1. The Pros Literature View:

The supporters of literature claim that the latter has a valid place in general language learning. They acknowledge its academic, intellectual, cultural, linguistic and motivational benefits. Mckay (1982:531) argues that:

> *Literature can be useful in developing linguistic knowledge both on a usage and use knowledge level…to the extent that the students enjoy reading literature, it may increase their motivation to interact*

> ***with a text and thus, ultimately increase their reading proficiency. It may also enhance students' understanding of a foreign culture and perhaps spur their own creation of imaginative work.***

Likewise, Elliot (1990) praises the role of literature in enhancing learners' knowledge of the language. She considers literature as the most efficient and yet the pleasant route towards the command of language, since it is in literature that the foreign language learner is most likely to meet words used in the widest range of contexts.Also,adds Eliot, in literature the learner will find words that enable him/her passionately convey emotions and attitudes. Literature, in this sense, can serve a rich source of authentic language over a wide range of registers.

In a very similar way, Goatly (2000) argues that literature can help advance all language skills because it draws on linguistic knowledge and is thus based on subtle vocabulary usage and complex syntax;

Literature, in short, envelops the richest variations of language.

In the same line of thought, lazar (1993: 19) insists on the integration of literature into EFL

teaching, displaying its power in educating the whole person; she posits:

> *Literature may have a wider educational function in the classroom in that it can help to stimulate the imagination of our students, to develop their critical abilities and to increase their emotional awareness. If we ask our students to respond personally to the texts we give them, they will become increasingly confident about expressing their own ideas and emotions in English.*

In short, literature, as an authentic sample of the target language, is an invaluable source to enhance the learner's linguistic abilities due to its various stylistic features. Exposing the language learner to literary works would increase his / her linguistic knowledge. Furthermore, literature, as an artifact, is a valuable source to gain insight into the target culture. Adler (1972) strongly endorses this idea. Yet, he puts heavy emphasis on the personal involvement that literature may generate in the reader. Personal involvement or empathy, to use Adler's term, is the reader's close contact with the author on one side and with the characters and the events of the story on the other side. It is in this sense, adds Adler, that the learner would be more

motivated to further improve his / her language awareness and cultural understanding.

1.3.2. The Cons Literature View:

Conversely, the opponents of literature in the language classroom such as (Rivers 1981) and Littlewood (1986), to name a few, doubt the benefit of implementing the literary component in the language classroom. To them, literature is an "uncertain business". Therefore, they devaluate its role as a source for language learning/teaching. Littlewood (1986:177) makes this point clear noting that "***there is at present a high degree of uncertainty about the role of literature in a foreign language course.***"

The main reasons for such an opposition are partially based on the fact that literature is imagination (Rivers 1981). Thus, it does not reveal the true picture of the target language community. Besides, literature may appear strange to foreign learners because it is highly culturally charged; hence, it would be difficult for them to grasp the conceptual notions that literature embodies (Savvidou, 2004). Also, from the linguistic standpoint, literary texts are believed to be unsuitable as a model for teaching / learning the language. They are loaded with unfamiliar vocabulary and complex syntax structure (MaKay1986), and this may pose immense hurdles for the foreign language learner in comprehending them. McKay (1986)

discusses another important disadvantage of using literature in the language classroom, as she notes that **"the study of literature will contribute nothing to helping our students meet their academic and/or occupational goals"** (McKay, 1986: 177).

By the same token, Hall (2005:52) dismisses the role of literature in language acquisition in the ELT context; he writes:

> *If language is logically to be at the centre of the language syllabus, literature syllabuses for language learners failed to engage with or at least to explicitly signal their relevance to language acquisition and language skills.*

Hall's claim is based on the fact that the language of literature is far from the everyday language that foreign language learners need for practical communicative ends. Literature, according to him, can do little to serve this need.

1.16.   Approaches to Teaching Literature:

A very brief survey of the historical development of the conventional approaches to teaching literature reveals that these approaches have evolved from the single focus on literature as a subject to exploiting it as a pedagogic source for other subject matters, not least language teaching. There are various

methodological approaches that teachers may adopt in teaching literary texts. Carter and Long (1991) suggest three approaches: (1) the cultural approach (2) the language based approach and (3) the personal growth approach. More recently, however, Savvidou (2004) has advocated an integrated approach to literature teaching.

1.16.1. **The Cultural Approach:**

Considered the most traditional approach to literature teaching, the cultural model tends to be a teacher-centered approach where the teacher provides the students, by means of lecturing, with the social, political and historical background of the texts. This model also places paramount emphasis on the history of literary movements, the different genres, biographical facts about authors and various synopses. Within it, the literary text is viewed as a product and used as a means to learn about the target culture. Carter and long (1991: 2) examine both the tenets and the functions of this approach; they write:

> *Teaching literature within a cultural model enables the students to understand and appreciate cultures and ideologies different from their own and space and to come to perceive traditions of thought, feeling and artistic form of within*

***heritage literature of such cultures
endows.***

Stated differently, the implementation of the
cultural approach in literature teaching seeks to
raise the students' cultural awareness and promote
their appreciation of other universal thoughts
different from their own. This model, hence,
considers literature as a valuable means of bridging
cultures and developing a sense of understanding and
tolerance towards the otherness.

The cultural model is very similar to Lazar's
(1993) model-"literature as content"; an approach
that is considered very adequate for teaching
literature at tertiary levels, where students are
supposed to have developed a certain amount of
language proficiency, and, thus, are able to handle
literature as "content". Lazar (1993) also
maintains that the crux of such approach is to
penetrate the major literary historical movements,
the historical aspects of literature, the different
literary genres, authors' biographies and their
relevance to comprehending texts. Put simply, this
approach, in Lazar's view, focuses on literature as
"such". This does not mean, however, that it is
entirely inappropriate for language learning, for
some of its elements can, significantly, be useful
in language learning: through reading texts and

literary criticism, students are likely to boost their language proficiency.

1.16.2. **The Language-Based Approach:**

It is a student centered approach that basically focuses on the study of the language of the literary text. The latter is used to exemplify certain types of linguistic patterns, such as literal and figurative language. Although this model exposes the students to the bits of language and the various creative uses of language, it aims to **"*help students find ways into the text in a methodological way"*.** *(Carter and Long, 1991:2).*This is another way of saying that it seeks to inculcate in the students the quality of exploring and examining the literary language, and, therefore, enhance their literary competence. Another prompt for using this approach is to promote the students' language skills. Teachers may use the text to devise a variety of vocabulary and grammar activities. The students, then, will have the opportunity to enrich and develop their language input. This approach also makes frequent use of stylistic analysis of the text to assist the students in meaning construction, and, hence, reading literature more competently.

However, despite its popularity, the language based approach is played down by many researchers such as McKay (1982) who argues that this approach neglects the reader's response to the text as it may

be too mechanistic and, therefore, may demotivate the pleasure of reading literature.

1.16.3. **The Personal Growth Approach:**

It is an approach that stresses the need to engage the students with literature. This idea is overtly expressed by Carter and Long (1991:3) when they posit that the personal growth approach enables the students to **"achieve an engagement with the reading of literary text…and helping them to grow as individuals"**. In other terms, the approach in question focuses on maximizing the students' personal pleasure in reading literature. When reading a literary text, the students are actively involved with its content. This active interaction will result in creating a more memorable, yet absorbing literary experience. Furthermore, this approach views literature as beneficial for encouraging the students to draw on their own personal experiences, feelings and emotions. Students, therefore, are no longer passive recipients of readymade interpretations. Instead, they become active participants both intellectually and emotionally as they are continuously prompted to let out their opinions and thoughts. Yet, this model stresses the pedagogical responsibility of the teacher in the choice of the texts not solely for their stylistic features, but also to consider whether these texts meet students' interest.

1.16.4. **The Integrated Approach:**

The approaches discussed above are somewhat ideal types because, in practice, there is a greater overlap between them. This has led Savvidou (2004) to advocate an approach that integrates the three models. In its essence, an integrated approach stresses the fact that literature in an EFL classroom should make the learning experience much more enjoyable and stimulating instead of being an instruction that focuses only on the mere acquisition of the linguistic components of the text. This approach, therefore, seeks to enhance the students' personal development; it enriches their cultural backgrounds and develops their language skills as well.

By the same token, Duff and Maley (2004) have emphasized upon an integrated approach to literature teaching. Their main arguments for adopting such an approach might be summarised as follows:

(1)- Linguistic reasons: as learners will be exposed to a variety of authentic texts and, therefore, they come to meet different registers of the English language.

(2)- Methodological reasons: since through literary discourse, the reader comes to know about the use of

schemas in addition to reading strategies in both intensive and extensive reading.

(3)- Motivational reasons: owing to the interest literature is likely to evoke in the reader.

According to Duff and Maley (2004),the integration of linguistic as well as the literary components helps develop the learner's understanding of his own as well as other cultures. Additionally, it offers him/her the opportunity for personal expression, and, equally, increases his/her knowledge about the lexical and the grammatical structures of the English language.

1.17. Theories of Teaching Literature:

In her book *Teaching Literature,* Showalter (2003) asserts that in order to achieve an effective literature teaching, teachers should, first and foremost, decide on what they want their students to learn. The next step according to Showalter is to consider the approach that might efficiently promote the students' understanding of and engagement with literature. She advocates three main theories of literature teaching; these respectively are: (1) subject -centered theory (2) teacher -centered theory and (3) student -centered theories.

Yet, Showalter recognizes the fact that in practice, these theories might overlap for the sake of maximizing active learning; she posits that"**in practice, all of us[literature instructors] combine**

variations of these theories, and apply them intuitively in relation to the circumstances of the course". (Showalter, 2003:27). Showalter terms the use of the combination of the above stated theories as "the eclectic theory".

1.17.1. **Subject Centred Theory:**

Subject centered theory or else "the banking model of education" (Friere, 1996: 53) is basically transmissive as it lends itself to transmitting and transferring knowledge of the material to be taught from the instructor to the learner. Put differently, the crux of this theory is what to be taught. Thus, teachers adapting this model, according to Showalter (2003: 28) **"are expected to be knowledgeable about their fields".** This is another way of saying that teachers should demonstrate mastery of the bits about the content of the course.

Although, to some degree, all courses are content and subject -centered and, undoubtedly, teachers are supposed to be fully equipped with knowledge, Showalter (2003) warns us that some courses are more content centered than others, and carry the implication of being determined and, sometimes, imposed by the teacher whether from political or intellectual convictions.

1.17.2. **Teacher Centred Theory:**

This theory considers teaching as being performative. Therefore, it mainly focuses on what

teachers are required to do or to be so as to facilitate learning. This theory, then, is a matter of performance which is, as asserted by Showalter, (2003: 32) **"inescapable in teaching".** The teacher, being the centre of this teaching philosophy, has to show his / her outstanding abilities in terms of speaking, acting and other related intellectual abilities.

Performance teaching, hence, is a teacher - centered model that necessitates careful preparation demonstrating confidence in putting things together. In this very specific context Showalter (Ibid) writes that **"some teachers have the confidence and charisma to use the classroom as the venue for a one –man or one woman show".**

Admittedly, performance, especially in a literature course, seems crucial as it may turn the classroom into a dramatic setting. However, it must be carefully planned and acted out in order not to overshadow the students' activities, which must, after all, be the target of the teaching process. The danger, then, of applying this theory is that emphasis automatically moves on **"what the teacher does"** (Showalter, op.cit: 33). This, in turn, would result in the teacher's potential monopolization of the course and its activities.

Teacher-centered teaching is usually associated with traditional teaching methods where the teacher is the epicenter of the learning process and the master of classroom activities: s/he teaches, talks, and explains all the way. In short, in a teacher-centered classroom, the teacher is a "custodian of knowledge". Owing to this, students' participation is at minimum, yet might be allowed only when s/he regards it as appropriate.

In literature classes, in different corners of the world, teacher centeredness is a serious concern for many educationalists. According to Parkinson and Thomas (2000) teacher-centeredness is an important issue to be addressed. They affirm that it mainly stems from "**the likely imbalance of knowledge and likely imbalance of power between teacher and learner"**. (Parkinson and Thomas, 2000:12). In other terms, teachers are, often, more familiar with the text and the environment in which it was written than their students are.

1.17.3. **Student Centred Theory:**

The impact of recent research on learning styles has resulted into a shift towards more student-centered theories. In literature teaching, this truth is expressed by Thorpe Miller who notes that:

> **In the literature classroom the emphasis is shifting gradually but inexorably away from the traditional exposure to great works, with the teacher**

presenting back-ground information and modeling a literary analysis that students will learn to emulate ,towards an active, collaborative learning that takes place as the student confronts the text directly. (Thorpe Miller, 1999:57)

Student-centered theory or else active learning theory puts emphasis on the student rather than the instructor. It focuses on the way students learn alongside the organization of the classroom for the sake of maximizing active learning. This is another way of saying that teaching literature within this theory is "two-way transaction"(Showalter,2003). Students are not merely exposed to canonical works; the teacher does not present background information and models of literary analysis that students are to learn. Instead, a dialogic relationship between the students and the text is built, that is the students confront the text directly, working actively and collaboratively. Yet, to make the learning process more effective and more productive, the instructor has to transform the lecture and the discussion into large and small group teaching. In brief, the teacher has to act as a facilitator engaging students with the literary text. S/he should help them how to better their learning. Students, therefore, are seen as being able to assume a more active and participatory role vis-à-vis teacher -centered methods.

1.17.4. **Eclectic Theory:**

According to Showalter (2003:37) "**the most widespread theory of teaching literature is having no theory at all, and trying to make use of whatever will do the job**". She claims that due to a number of variables that affect the learning/teaching process, and which go ,most of the time, beyond literary theory, it is quiet hard to explain minutely what happens during the course. In fact, what happens cannot be easily explained by a finite number of methods.

In such circumstances, literature instructors need to be pragmatic "**using whatever seems to work and not getting in the way of the book or the students.**" (Woodring, 1990:182).

Summing up, some theories suggest how the content of the course should be organized, while others give the teacher an idea of how to run the course. These two factors, in literature teaching, are interconnected since the students' success generally depends on the syllabus on one side and the teacher and the method s/he applies on the other side.

1.6. Literary Competence:

Teaching literature in an EFL context should not be restricted to developing the students' linguistic competence, but should equally help them acquire literary competence. Yet, it seems wiser to wonder what literary competence is. The notion in question is first suggested by Culler (1975:13) to refer to knowledge of the **"grammar of literature".** According to him, the mastery of the grammar of literature is equated with the knowledge of some conventions that enable the reader to capture the explicit as well as the implicit meaning of the literary discourse. Culler (1975:6) elucidates this idea as he notes that **"the semiological approach suggests, rather, that the poem be taught of as an utterance that has meaning only with respect to a system of conventions which the reader has assimilated".** This is another way of saying that the teaching of literature should go beyond the merely linguistic ends to reach the coverage of those norms of the literary reading that, in turn, help the students handle literature competently by converting the words on the page into literary meanings. A competent reader is the one who knows how literature should be read and understood. Coenen (1992) examines the characteristics of a competent reader; he writes:

A reader who is literary competent is able to communicate with and about literature. The content of this communication may be varied, but at least shows that the reader is able to construct coherence. This might regard coherence within a text to enhance comprehension and interpretation, describing similarities and differences between texts. *(Cited in Witte and Rijlaarsdson 2006:5)*

Novice readers of literature, on the other hand, might be confused by the metaphorical or symbolic use of language in reading poetry in particular. This confusion would not probably occur, according to Lazar(2000), if the reader has had the necessary exposure to the different patterns of the literary language; she affirms that:

Effective readers of a literary text possess the literary competence in that they have an implicit understanding of, and familiarity with certain conventions which allow them to take the words on page of a play or other literary work and convert them into literary meaning.

(Lazar 2000:12)

Down-to-earth, literary competence is the mastery of the roles and norms of the literary

discourse. It includes a set of conventions that operate for different genres. Reading a poem, for example, necessitates the reader's knowledge of rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, images, meter and so forth; where as in reading a short story or a novel, the reader's focus shifts to identifying the plot, the characters, the theme, the point of view and other text- stylistic literary governing forces.

1.6.1. Enhancing EFL Students' Literary Competence:

Enhancing the students' literary competence seems to be a shared responsibility between the students themselves and the literature teacher as well. The students' role lies in their self accountability towards their learning. As a matter of fact, many researchers such as Brumfit and Carter (1986) claim that those who are constantly engaged in extensive reading have the very potential to develop their literary competence as they will be aware of and accustomed to the literary style, devices and other related techniques. Teachers' role, on the other hand, is to help the students acquire the necessary skills to cope with a literary text. Among these skills that are reasonable to be worked on, especially at an early contact with literature, include the ability to recognize and decode figures of speech, learn about narrative and different poetic devices, distinguishing genres and so on. To ensure the efficient manipulation of the aforementioned

devices and techniques, Lazar (2000) insists on devising tasks and activities, not only defining or lecturing about them, to use Lazar's words.

1.7. Literary Text Selection:

Ideally, literature teaching aims at evoking in the students a strong desire to discover the significance and the values literature provides. To this end, the students' response to literature relies heavily upon what teachers usually require them to read. Therefore, the appropriateness and the suitability of the materials to be implemented seems a pivotal factor in engaging students with literature. McKay (1982: 531) strongly adheres to this point contending that ***"the key to success in using literature in the ESL class seems to me to rest in the literary works that are selected".*** Undoubtedly, in an EFL context, text selection is of paramount importance and should have its fair share in planning a literature curriculum. This is also the view of McRae (1997:4) who reckons that ***"careful text selection is fundamental to the successful use of any kind of representational materials".*** This implies that literature teachers ought to be diligent in choosing the right materials so as to enable the students to confidently approach literature.

1.7.1. Criteria for Text Selection:

Admittedly, literary text selection is and yet should be a delicate process, in which a number of factors pertaining to both the text and the reader come to the stage. This would deliberately lead us to launch into the major criteria for opting for particular texts and discarding others.

Generally speaking, literature instructors should take into consideration the actual level of the students and their main motives for learning English. Similarly, students' age, emotional and intellectual maturity and their interests are factors of equal weight. Collie and Slater (1994:6) raise this point claiming that text selection basically depends on **"*each particular group of students, their needs, their interests, cultural background and language level*"**.

In a rather detailed examination of the key criteria for text selection, Lazar (1993) emphasizes three main factors, some of which are mentioned above. These include (1) the students' cultural background, (2) their linguistic proficiency and (3) their literary background. According to Lazar, the students' cultural background has the potential to either enhance or hamper their understanding of a literary text. This implies that the teacher has to opt for texts that are culturally familiar to the students. Familiarity with the subject matter of the text, theme, or references close to the students' own culture may considerably help activate their existing

prior knowledge, which, in turn, would boost their comprehension. Matching the student with the text, according to Lazar, cannot be achieved when the choice of the text falls on those narratives that are very remote in time and place, as they may perplex the reader. Additionally, students' cultural unfamiliarity with the text may result in a total dependence of the students on the teacher's interpretation. Consequently, students often have to study literature by listening to the teachers' own translations and / or other ready- made literary judgments.

Teachers should also select texts with regard to their students' linguistic abilities. Texts that are linguistically inaccessible will pose hurdles for the students to grasp meaning (Lazar1993). By the same token, McKay (1982:531) warns us that **_a text which is difficult on either a linguistic or cultural level will have few benefits_**. It is, therefore, essential for teachers to consider the difficulty of the vocabulary and syntax of the text selected. In short, they should look for works that match the level they are teaching.

Lazar (1993) also discusses the correlation that exists between the students' literary background and their linguistic proficiency. Put differently, there is a certain relationship between the students' literary competence and their language proficiency. If the students are bookish, constantly engaged in

extensive reading in the target language, they may have developed a certain amount of literary competence, which helps them understand the meaning of the text at both levels: linguistic and literary.

1.8. Attitude in English Learning and Teaching:

Undoubtedly, learners' attitude towards the target language, its literature and the learning context in which they are involved seems to be a key factor that may determine their success or failure, especially in an EFL context. It seems wiser, then, to, first, define this influencing variable. Gardner (*1985: 9)* defines attitude as ***"an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinion about the referent".*** Attitude, hence, involves beliefs, emotional reactions, fears, convictions and behavioral tendencies towards a subject matter. Put another way, attitude is reinforced by beliefs and often arouses strong feelings that, in turn, would lead to a particular type of behaviour.

1.8.1. Studies on Attitude:

Many studies have been carried out on attitude in the field of learning and teaching (Davis et al 1992, Candlin & Mercer, 2001). Yet, Gardner and Lambert (1972) are considered the path breakers of the first systematic and extensive studies about learners' attitude towards English language learning and teaching from the perspective of social

psychology (Brown, 2000). Their distinct social psychological approach has given a new impetus to investigating and describing attitude and motivation to language learning. Following their research, many studies were conducted in this area. For instance, Morgan (1993:63) notes the weight of attitude in learning a foreign language contending that *"Pupils' attitudes to the foreign language that they are learning or to the foreign culture (s) with which it is associated are recognized as crucial to language learning success"*.

Arguably, studies on attitude are likely to offer valuable insight into what actually learners think, feel, why they are successful and what reasons are behind their low performance or failure in a learning situation.

1.8.2. Attitude towards EFL Literature:

It is commonly acknowledged that literature was the major source of input for teaching language during the era of Grammar Translation Method, but since then it has been pushed to the margin. Collie & Slater (1987) assert that with the emergence of structuralism and audio-lingual method, literature was downplayed and dismissed.

With the advent of CLT, the neglect of literature continued as more attention was directed to the practical use of language in the real world situation. Maley (2001) argues that this attitude

toward literature is mainly due to a rareness of empirical research stressing the weight of the literary component in the language classroom. Maley adds that what exists, to this day, as empirical research on attitude towards literature is restricted to action research.

However, from the mid 1980s on, literature has made its comeback and language scholars have resurrected it as a source for language learning after being discarded for long (Duff & Maley, 1991). Hence, many researchers argue that producing positive attitude towards literature, as a genuine example of the target language and as a major source for cultural enrichment, is a key factor to attain successful language learning in general and in an EFL context in particular.

1.8.3. Attitude towards Literature Teaching Methods:

As previously stated, investigating the students attitudes in a foreign language setting should not be restricted to what perceptions the students hold vis-à-vis the subject -literature in our case- it should equally include the learning/teaching context in which they are involved. Noels et al (2000:63) assert that ***"Positive attitude toward the learning situation have consistently been associated with L2 achievement and related outcomes".*** This, in turn, would imply that having an evaluative aspect, attitude is not static as it can be changed by marking the direct sources of negative attitudes and, therefore,

improving them. This is the idea of Choy (2002) who reckons that factors like suitable materials, better teaching strategies and classroom supportive social environment may enormously help lessen negative attitudes.

In the same vein, Paran (2008) notes that even though much research has been carried out on how to best utilize literature in the EFL classroom, little research exists on students' reaction to literature teaching practices. Paran (2008:477) rightly posits that **"findings in this area [learner perspectives on the methodology of literature instruction] are still quite rare".** In fact, studies on attitudes towards literature teaching methodology are relatively recent as they only began in the 1970s when the number of the students opting for literary studies significantly dwindled as literature was considered both impractical and irrelevant (Kramsch and Kramsch, 2000).

1.9. Conclusion:

The present chapter has been devoted to the tenets of literature and its teaching. It has highlighted the most common definition(s) of literature. It has also discussed in details the different models that are recognized by educationalists in implementing literature in the EFL classroom alongside the objectives of each model. The chapter has equally shed light on the theories that literature teachers frequently apply in delivering literature courses. Equally, the chapter has raised some important

issues in the field, namely text selection, literacy competence and its invaluable place in literature learning / teaching and, finally, the notion of attitude and its weight in learning literature.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SITUATION OF TEACHING/LEARNING LITERATURE

Chapter Two

The Situation of Teaching/Learning Literature

2.1. Introduction

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2.3. The LMD System: an Overview

2.3.1. ELT within the LMD

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Notes to Chapter Two

2.1. Introduction:

This chapter touches on the teaching / learning situation of literature at the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen. More specifically, it attempts to both highlight and discuss literature teaching / learning at second year LMD level within the newly introduced system, i.e. the (LMD). The chapter firstly offers a brief account on the status of ELT at the tertiary level. Secondly, it introduces the LMD system and how it is implemented on the ground in the Algerian context. In addition to this, it provides some facts relating to the Department, literature teachers and their qualifications, the students and their needs the curriculum and its characteristics, the literature syllabus and its main objectives and at last, but not least, the chapter explores some challenges and constraints that constantly literature teachers meet.

2.2. ELT at University Level:

Undisputedly, the English language, at present, is the most widely used language in every corner of the globe. Its special role as a language of wider communication, international business and scientific and technological advancements is felt nearly in every country. In this respect, Kachru (1986:1) writes that,

In comparison with other languages

of wider communication, knowing

> **English is like possessing the fabled Aladdin's lamp, which permits one to open, as it were, the linguistic gates to international business, technology, science and travel. In short, English provides linguistic power.**

This unprecedented spread of English is closely related to the on-going globalization process[i] and the rapid cultural flows the world is witnessing.

Yet, the use of English around the world is not uniform since its roles may vary according to the different national contexts in which it is used. In this vein, Kachru (1985) divides the English speaking world into three main circles: (1) The inner circle consists of countries where English enjoys the status of a primary language for the majority of the population. This is the case in the USA, UK and Australia. (2) The outer circle comprises countries where English, alongside other local languages, serves the role of an official and institutional language. This is the case in countries such as Singapore, India and Nigeria. (3) The expanding circle includes countries where English has the status of foreign language only. Algeria belongs to this circle.

Like many other countries in the world, Algeria is well aware of the importance of English at the educational spheres. In fact, though the English

language does not serve the primary medium of instruction in the country, it is, undeniably, the most popular foreign language at the different levels of education, namely middle, secondary and tertiary (Benmoussat, 2003).

To back up this idea let us add the following quotation by Zughoul (2003:122) in which he notes that:

> **In Arab North Africa, and despite the fact that French has had a strong foothold in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, it has been retreating and losing a lot of ground to English. In fact the tendency of what can be termed a shift from French to English in these countries cannot be cancelled.**

At university level, nationwide, the English language marks its predominant presence in the different existing curricula, not only at the English departments where it is the major subject, but also in many other academic settings where it is considered additional but compulsory. This is the case in the departments of Physics, Mathematics, Economics, Medicine, and Engineering where students are required to follow ESP courses.(Mebitil,2012)

At the English Department, where the focus of teaching is English as "a major", the quasi majority of teachers are full-time teachers holding at least magister degree. Yet, part time teachers, who generally hold "Licence" in English and pursue magister studies, may also be in charge of some modules, not least literature.

2.3. The LMD System: an Overview:

Like many other countries in the world, Algeria has launched, in recent years, reforms of the higher education system in order to meet the new imposed requirements of the on-going globalization process. The Algerian university, thus, adopted the LMD system ("Licence" / Master / Doctorate). The shift from the former (classical) system; i.e. four years bachelor, two years magister, and four years doctorate to the new system was because the former **"did not respond to the main challenges imposed by the changing situation of economy, of politics and of society in Algeria** (Sarnou et al, 2012:180). In fact, the changing situation of the country's economic and political mechanism has led policy makers to re-think the educational system of the country seeking to keep pace with the latest advancements, in all fields, at a globalized era. In essence, this system was originally designed in the Anglo- Saxon countries basically to enhance the attractiveness of European education and make it more competitive in an

international market, and then it has gradually spread among other European countries.

The implementation of this reform in Algeria seeks, basically , to create competitive institutions that produce learning outcomes more adjusted to the needs of the labour market, for it has been commonly agreed among educationalists that **"there was a serious disagreement between social demands , market demands and what the university produced"** (Sarnou et al, Ibid).Thus, the LMD system aims at bringing the Algerian students to reach higher standards of learning outcomes and, therefore, meet the requirements of a business world.

Currently, the system, in Algeria, is in use phase as most universities have adopted it; the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research strives to afford the requirements (material and human resources) to achieve an efficient implementation of the LMD. This fact is gradually becoming a reality as teachers and students are involved in quality training locally and at international level. This will, it is hoped, guarantee (1) the improvement of the university education, (2) the adequacy between university education and the needs of the working world and (3) the development of academic training vocationally (Megnounif, 2008).

As far as its structure is concerned, the LMD is organised into three levels: Bachelor, Master and Doctorate.

In general terms, the design of the studies in Algeria revolves around three main grades:

- The "licence", granted after three years of study (corresponding to 180 ECTS).

- Master's degree taken after two years of study (corresponding to 120 or 300 ECTS credits earned).

-The doctorate taken after the completion of research for at least three years and presenting a thesis.

2. 3. 1. ELT within the LMD:

As previously stated, the teaching of English in Algeria is gaining more and more prestige because of the government policies, the opening of the Algerian market to foreign companies and investors and the recent rapid changes in the world (globalization). In fact, the educational system puts into practice the study of English as so important that all learners, regardless of their field of study, are required to learn English as a second foreign language.

As far as the students who enrol to major in English as a foreign language are concerned, the

Department of English covers a three-year course leading to a general academic or professionally oriented licence's degree (henceforth bachelor's degree). The third year LMD students may choose an area of expertise either the applied linguistics or literature and civilization.

Broadly speaking, the course syllabus comprises the following categories.

- Language practice: this category comprises the following modules: oral expression and comprehension and written expression.

- Language study: this category comprises linguistics, phonetics and grammar. During the third year, more specialised branches of linguistics such as psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics, semantics and pragmatics are introduced.

- Literary texts: these are devoted to the study of British and American literature and even the Third World literatures.

- Civilization: this category comprises the following modules: American, British and African civilization.

- Research methodology.

- Informatics ICT.

In general, the students who follow this course are aged between 18 and 22 years. All of

them are native speakers of a dialectal form of either Arabic or Berber and have learnt French as their first foreign language for ten years. Among the EFL students, many do not choose to join the Department but are oriented by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research on the basis of the grade / mark they obtain in the Baccalaureate exam. As a result, some of them spend from four to five years to complete the three-year program. In addition, many of the graduates of this Department end up as teachers in the secondary schools and few of them manage to work as translators in foreign companies or government institutions. Others, and these are very few, may follow a postgraduate course of studies, an academic research which leads to a university assistant teacher.

The English course syllabus currently in use at the Department of English at UABT has rarely undergone any changes. The changes so far implemented were rather of form than of content. The contents of different modules with which the teaching of English was initiated in the late eighties are still in use except for the teachers' individual efforts and inventiveness to bring some changes they think are in line with the recent developments in the field of applied linguistics and foreign language teaching research. These

initiatives depend on the lecturers' interests, and, apparently, no comprehensive research into the development and introduction of new modules that would concentrate on the teaching of culture as an important component within the English course syllabus was made. The only exception relates to the implementation of the LMD system -henceforth, Licence, Master and Doctorate- which, as mentioned above, has introduced new teaching modules which unfortunately are based on the teaching of language rather than culture.

2.4. The Target Department:

The present study has been carried out at the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Tlemcen. The Department, which was founded in 1988, at present, consists of four sections: English, French, Spanish and Translation.

The English section, on its own, offers to EFL students a set of courses on the English language studies. Aiming at reinforcing and strengthening language awareness of the new baccalaureate holders, the first two academic years are basically devoted to core subjects, namely grammar, phonetics (phonology), written production, oral production ; the program also offers base courses on linguistics, literature and civilization.

During their third year, the LMD students have to choose between two fields: literature and civilization studies or language studies. Therefore, Students opting for Language studies take no further compulsory courses on literature and civilization. Instead, the focus is on linguistics (language awareness) and TEFL courses.

As for those embarking on literature and civilization studies, the Anglo-Saxon literature and civilization courses are the major subjects. Adding to this, another course on research methodology is offered and devoted to research techniques for the sake of preparing students for empirical research.

Yet, it should also be noted that the number of students enrolled in the English section is, unprecedentedly, witnessing a continuous rise.

Table (2.1.) below serves a best illustration of this striking phenomenon:

Accademic Year	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Number of Students	444	839	1118

Table 2.1. Number of students from 2010 to 2013. (Source: Department of foreign language, Tlemcen University).

The remarkable increase in the number of the students opting for English language studies, particularly at the undergraduate level largely accounts for the popularity and the privileged place English, as a global language[ii], is enjoying among today's generation.

.**2.4.1. Literature Teachers:**

Since this case study involves also the teachers of literature at the Department, it seems crucial to shed light on their number, their qualifications, and their literature teaching experiences.

Teacher	Title	Lit. Teaching experience
Teacher 1	Senior lecturer	23 years
Teacher 2	Senior lecturer	15 years
Teacher 3	Assistant teacher	14 years
Teacher 4	Assistant teacher	07 years
Teacher 5	Assistant teacher	02 years

Table 2.2. Literature teachers and their teaching experiences. (Source: Department of foreign language, Tlemcen University).

The table above illustrates the shortage of literature teachers the Department is facing vis-à-vis the huge number of students. In fact, compared to that of their colleagues dealing with other subjects, the number of literature teachers is limited. Yet, to remedy the situation, the Department has recently initiated a new Magister option entitled "Didactics of Literary and Civilization Texts" within which ten (10) candidates have received training on literature and civilization teaching.

2.4.2. Second Year LMD Students:

Since the present study has involved a sample population belonging to second year LMD students, it seems wiser to supply, at least, the total number of students at this level. Unsurprisingly, like many other Foreign language Departments in Algeria, the total number of female students outnumbers by far that of male students. Table (2.3) gives the total number of students and shows the proportion of both male and female students:

Gender	Number
Male	101

Female	239
Total	340

Table 2.3.Number of students LMD2. Source: Department of foreign language, Tlemcen University).

2.5. The Curriculum:

Characterized by its smoothness and flexibility, the curriculum at university level provides only general guidelines for each modular course, not least literature, and it is up to teachers to collectively or individually design the content of the course and, hence, applying the most adequate teaching methodology (Benmoussat, 2003). In the same vein, it is worth noting that although it is common knowledge that at university settings there is a shift in focus from the communicative language teaching approach to what is so called "the heuristic approach"; i.e. using language as a tool to investigate reality or , simply put, to learn about the language (Benmoussat, 2003), things are quite dissimilar, yet complex as far as literature teaching is concerned, for the students had no previous literature experience at middle and secondary levels, except that of Arabic literature. This implies that both material selection and skilled teaching are of paramount importance for a

successful and fruitful literature instruction. Adding to this, issues such as aims and objectives of teaching literature should be seriously addressed-whether literature is taught to develop knowledge "of" literature or "about" literature. In this respect, it should also be noted that such issues are discussed on a regular basis at the beginning of every academic year during the "CPC" meetings. Henceforth, it stands for (Comité Pédagogique de Coordination).

The table (2.4) below shows the different modular courses offered by the English Language Department for the second year LMD students.

Subjects	Coefficients	Credits
Grammar	3	3
Phonetics	3	3
Oral production	4	4
Written production	4	4
Discourse comprehension (Written and Oral)	3	3
Anglo-Saxon literature	2	2
African civilization	2	2
Research methodology	2	2
General psychology	1	1

ICT (Information and Communication Technology.	1	1
Total	30	30

Table 2.4. Official curriculum of LMD year two. (source: Department of Foreign languages).

At a glance, compared with other subjects, the coefficient and the credit attributed to literature are relatively low. Consequently, such a coefficient may result in a lack of students' motivation to and interest in learning literature especially those who are extrinsically motivated as they devote their utmost efforts to do well in basic subjects.

2.6. Literature Syllabus:

Having taken an introductory course on literature during their first year, the students embrace literature again, at the second year level in a modular course entitled "Anglo-Saxon Literature". As its name denotes, the course in question aims to introduce the students to the major works in both British and American literature(s). Yet, it should be noted that it is commonly acknowledged that even though the literature syllabus seems very ambitious in terms of content in the sense that it aims to offer the students the opportunity to taste major masterpieces in both literatures, the recurrent practice, on the ground, is that almost no literary

text of any literary genre is read and studied as an entity. Instead, teachers due mainly to time constraints frequently resort to some selected excerpts.

As a matter of fact, time constitutes a major issue to be raised while describing the literature teaching / learning situation at the Department. In this very specific context, it is worth noting that the time allotted to literature is estimated to one hour and a half per week for first and second year students. This, however, would usually put teachers in a dilemma: whether to teach literature with the knowledge, proficiency and expertise it entails or simply brew some kind of bird's eye view on major literary genres and famous historical movements.

Below is a general description of the content of the literature syllabus for LMD year two.

- British Literature :

-The rise of the novel.

-Romanticism (poetry and the novel).

-The Victorian Age (poetry, the novel and drama).

-The Modern Age (poetry, the novel and drama).

- American Literature :

-The Colonial Period :1650-1765.

-The Rise of a National Literature.

a)(1765-1865)

b) 1865-1915

c) 1915-1945 (poetry, drama and prose.)

d) After 1945 (poetry-drama and prose)

(Official literature syllabus for LMD year two. Source: Department of Foreign languages).

2.7. Literature Teaching Objectives:

According to Showalter (2003), literature teachers are accustomed to define the objectives of their courses by the texts on the syllabus, not in terms of acts that the students are supposed to perform; she posits that

> **By and large, we [literature instructors] are not accustomed to defining our objectives as actions or competencies – what students will be able to do, as well as understand – or as transferable skills.** (Showalter, 2003:24).

Ironically, Showalter adds that if literature instructors are asked what they want their students to learn, the answer would be "Romanticism" or "Modern Drama" or even "Literary Theory". Yet, recent trends in pedagogy are inexorably shifting towards an emphasis on determining and precisely defining clear learning objectives for courses. Therefore, the objective of a course should not be covering certain topics, rather it ought to be,

adds Showalter, how efficiently to facilitate students' learning and their thinking as well. This is another way of saying that objectives are to be decided on from the point of view of the student rather than the teacher. Ultimately, learning objectives serve to guide teachers in designing assignments and carrying out assessments. This implies that listing objectives on the syllabus is insufficient as it only forces teachers in a way or in another to make their intentions for student learning rather explicit. Yet, there ought to be well-defined educational justifications for single activities, for every piece of content in the course of study. Hence, traditions or habits are dissatisfactory educational reasons.

Showalter (2003) and other specialists such as Robert Scholes (1985) argue that an ideal literary pedagogy should be oriented towards rhetoric and reading rather than only knowing about particular "great books" or "major canons". This new pedagogy aims basically at helping students gaining control over textual processes. If such an approach is adopted, the competencies below, according to Showalter (2003:26-27), are to be met:

1. How to recognize subtle and complex differences in language use.

2. How to read figurative language and differentiate between literal and figurative meaning.

3. How to seek further knowledge about literary work.

4. How to detect the cultural assumptions underlying writings to become aware of one's own cultural assumptions.

5. How to synthesize ideas and connect them into a tradition or a literary period.

6. How to use literary models as cultural references to communicate with others and/or clarify one's own idea.

7. How to read closely, with attention to detailed use of diction, syntax, metaphor and style, not only in high literary works, but in decoding the stream of language one in modern society is exposed to.

8. How to create literary works of one's own, whether imaginative or critical.

9. How to think creatively within and beyond literary studies, making connections between the literary work and one's own life.

10. How to work and learn with others, taking literature as a focus for discussion and analysis.

11. How to defend a critical judgment against informed opinions of others.

What has been stated above is quite ideal. At local level the researcher has strived to gather information related to the main objectives of literature teaching at the Department of foreign languages. Literature teachers were the source of

information. Mentioned below is a summary of their objectives in teaching literature:

1. Giving the students the opportunity to discover and enjoy the world of literature and raising their interest in it.

2. Developing the students' language proficiency.

3. Inculcating in the students the culture of reading, intensively and extensively.

4. Helping students read and analyze literary texts in English using appropriate strategies.

5. Widening the students' cultural knowledge about the target culture.

6. Informing students about the different literary movements.

2.8. Main Challenges and Constraints:

Literature teaching at the English Department at the under graduation level, in particular, has always been a huge challenge for some teachers, yet a nightmare for others.

To begin with, teachers have always been complaining about the low level of language proficiency of their students. Worse still, teachers report that the situation seems to get worse year after year despite the latest reforms launched by the Ministry of National Education. Ironically, some teachers announce that many newly

enrolled students face acute difficulties in introducing themselves. This unhappy situation has had a disastrous effect on students' achievement; impeding them to develop empathy with the literary discourse.

In addition, in spite of teachers' significant efforts to make space for reading in literature classes, students' lack of interest in reading is an undeniable truth. Today's digital generation, so as to speak, do not read as well as would be desirable owing to the heavy dependence on the new technologies, not least the Internet which has made students "lazy" to read books.

In a very interesting article entitled *"Is Google Making us Stupid?",* the American writer Nicholas Carr (2008) argues that the sporadic nature of on-line reading has significantly changed our reading habits; he writes:

> **I'm not thinking the way I used to think. I can feel it most strongly when I'm reading. My mind would get caught up in the narrative or the turns of the argument, and I'd spend hours strolling through long stretches of prose. That's rarely the case anymore. Now my concentration often starts to drift after two or three pages. I get**

> **fidgety, lose the thread, and begin looking for something else to do. The deep reading that used to come naturally has become a struggle.** (Carr, 2008).

Carr's article discusses the changes in reading habits that people have developed since they started relying on the Internet. His main thesis is that the human way of thinking has significantly become both impatient and unfocused. He also expresses his frustration with and astonishment at his inability to sit down and enjoy lengthy books. According to him, new forms of reading are emerging as internauts browse horizontally through titles and abstracts skimming for quick wins. This in turn has prevented people from deep reading which is, undisputedly, indistinguishable from deep thinking.

What is more, students' reluctance to read has been further encouraged by the lack of resources on the "shelves". The limited number of titles at the university's library is another factor that has worsens the situation.

Another problem of equal importance and that has been previously mentioned is the little time allotted to literature courses. One hour and a half a week seem insufficient to cover the syllabus.

2.9. Conclusion

In the second chapter, the researcher has made an attempt to touch on the main issues relating to literature teaching and learning. In so doing, it was quite necessary to, first, deal with the status of ELT at the tertiary level. Equally, the chapter has introduced the newly introduced system (the LMD) and its main objectives. Additionally, it has provided some insightful information relating to the English Department. In this vein, some statistical data related to both teachers and students have been presented. More importantly, the chapter has focused on the teaching of literature at the second year LMD level. Thus, an endeavour has been made to cover some important issues such as the curriculum, the syllabus and the course main objectives.

CHAPTER THREE

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

Chapter Three
Data Collection & Analysis

3.1. Introduction

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3.3. The Participants

3.3.1. Teachers

3.3.2. Students

3.4. Data Collection and Research Instruments

3.4.1. The Questionnaire

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3.7.2.1. Discussion of the Interview Results

3.7.3. Classroom Observation Results

3.7.3.1. Discussion of Classroom Observation Results

3.8. Discussion of the main findings

3.9. Conclusion

3.1. Introduction:

Systematically, this chapter is an analysis of the questionnaire submitted to the students, teachers' responses to the interview and, at last, but not least classroom observation and its main findings. This has been carried out from the strong belief that a sound interpretation of the research results is likely to significantly help the researcher to suggest adequate and practical strategies for change towards better literature teaching, and, equally, for efficient literature learning that, in turn, might strengthen positive and alter negative attitudes towards literary studies.

3.2. Aims of the Research:

At a preliminary phase, the study aims to reveal the way(s) literature is taught at the second year LMD level. It also seeks to investigate the students' attitudes towards literature and the teaching methods employed by teachers.Equally, the study aims to redress the balance from a teacher fronted approach towards more student centred literature teaching philosophy.

3.3. The Participants:

The study has involved the stakeholders in the teaching / learning process; i.e. teachers and students.

3.3.1. Teachers:

Three teachers of literature participated in the study, of whom two are senior lecturers specialized in literature, and the other one is an assistant teacher who has been teaching literature for almost two years.

3.3.2. Students :

The students involved in this study are second year LMD students at the English Department at Tlemcen University. They are thirty-five (35) students, 20 female and 15 male aged between 20 to 22 years old. They were randomly selected to complete a questionnaire about both their attitudes towards literature and the different strategies their teachers implement in delivering literature courses.

3.4. Data Collection and Research Instruments:

In collecting data, the researcher has opted for different research tools in order to obtain the information needed for a sound investigation of both the teaching of literature, learners' attitudes towards literature and the methods used by teachers as well. Conventionally, Data can be collected via a number of tools or the so called research instruments. The Present research aims to accomplish the "triangulation" through the use of: classroom observation, questionnaires and interviews.

3.4.1. The questionnaire:

As a tool to elicit valuable information from informants, second year LMD students in our case, the questionnaire can serve a valid research instrument. In this vein, Nunan (1992:231) asserts that:

> **A questionnaire is an instrument for the collection of data, usually in written form consisting of open and/or closed questions and other probes requiring a response from the subjects.**

The quality of the questionnaire is a crucial determinant for the validity of the data to be gathered. Such a tool is used in our research work due to the myriad of advantages it offers. Therefore, it seems wiser to highlight the main positive aspects of using the questionnaire:

- The collected information is standardised and there for easy to be analysed

- Data can be quickly gathered from a wide number of respondents.

- The use of such an instrument takes into consideration the ethical issue of research; it preserves the anonymity of the respondents, therefore, it may result in reliable data.

The questionnaire, in the research work, was submitted to thirty-five (35) second year LMD students in order to gather maximum data about how literature is taught, their attitudes towards literature and the methods being used by teachers. The questionnaire,

hence, was a combination of open-ended, close-ended and multiple choice questions in order to obtain a combination of qualitative and quantitative data.

3.4.2. The Interview:

As stated earlier, the present research aims basically at achieving the triangulation of data collection. That is why the researcher supplemented the above research instruments (classroom observation and the questionnaire) with a third tool: the interview.

It would be wiser, then, to define what the interview is. Gillham (2000:1) defines it as:

> **A conversation usually between two people. But it is a conversation where one person-the interviewer- is seeking the response for a particular purpose from the other person-the interviewee.**

In other terms, the interview, as a research tool, is used to collect data from individuals via conversations / talks to understand a particular situation or a matter of interest.

There are different kinds of interviews; the present research work makes use of the so-called "structured interview". The latter is used when "**the researchers are aware of what they do not know and therefore are in a position to frame questions that will supply the knowledge required**". (Lincoln et al: 1985:269)

The interview is held with a number of literature teachers at the Department of English at the University

of Tlemcen in order to obtain information about the teaching of literature, the methods being applied and learners' attitudes and motivation towards literature.

3.4.3. Classroom Observation:

In an attempt to have a clear image of how literature is taught and to investigate learners' attitudes towards the methods used by teachers in delivering literature courses, the researcher used classroom observation as a useful tool to gather realistic, yet reliable data. In this respect, Mason (1996:60) points out that:

> **Observation are methods of gathering data which involve the researcher immersing himself or herself in a research setting, and systematically observing dimensions of that setting, interactions, relationships, actions, events and so on within it.**

Undoubtedly, classroom observation is a key tool to provide direct information about a given teaching / learning situation. Besides, it is one of **"the three basic data sources for empirical research".** (Dorneyei, 2007:178)

To note, the observation process is carried out over a whole semester on a regular basis.

3.5. Data Analysis Methods:

The research made use of a mixed-methods approach in analyzing data; i.e. qualitative and quantitative. Yet, as claimed by Dorneyei (2007: 268)**"the analysis of data should proceed independently for the Qua. and Qual. phases and mixing should occur only at the final interpretation stage"**.

Needless to recall, combining the two methodologies is worthy since it is, in a way or another, conducive to solid research design, which, in turn, would result in adequate summary, discussion and interpretation of the findings.

3.6. Limitation of the Study

The present research is descriptive in nature; it is not **"designed to allow systematic generalization to a wider population"**. (Maxwell, 1992: 2)

Nevertheless, it endeavours to make sense of the participants' experience with literature learning and teaching. Yet, the perceived limitations to the study include:

(1) The number of students questioned: as stated earlier the sample population involves 35 students.

(2) The number of the teachers observed: the researcher has observed, on a regular basis, one (01) teacher. The reason for this is that only one teacher is, at present, in charge of the Anglo-Saxon literature course at the second year level.

3.7. The Results of the study:

Below is the summary of the main findings of the present study.

3.7.1. Students' Questionnaire:

Item 1. The Students' Attitudes Towards Literature

Question1: *Student's attitude towards reading literature.*

The first question aims at investigating the students' attitude towards the act of reading. A total of 40% of the students expressed their joy of reading literature in English, whereas 60% showed their lack of interest in literature reading.
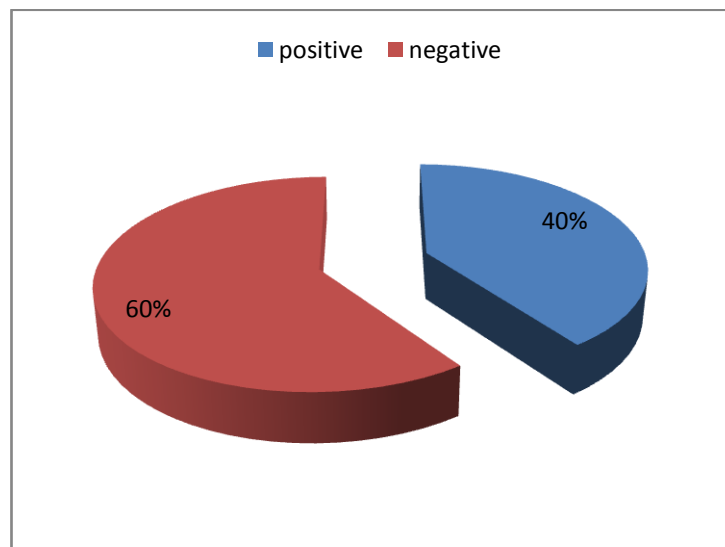
Pie chart 3.1: The Students' Attitudes towards Reading Literature

Question2: Students' perceptions of learning literature.

The aim of this question is to elicit from the students their main motives for learning literature in English. It is a multiple choice question in which eight (08) items are provided; students are allowed to tick more than one item, however. The results show that a significant number of students representing 41% considers literature as a difficult subject and contributes nothing to their future professional careers.

Another total of 40% of the students holds the view that learning literature helps improve both their proficiency in the English language and their cultural awareness about other cultures, not least the British and American. A total of 11% students believes that literature learning is motivating and rewarding outside the classroom; they also add that literature provides fun. Only 08% of the respondents report that, to them, literature learning is boring and waste of time.

Pie chart 3.2. **The Students' Perceptions of Learning Literature**

Item 2: literature teaching

Question3: The students' view on the way literature is taught.

The rationale of this question is to gather information concerning the way literature is taught: is it taught in a student-centred way or is it teacher-centred?. The whole informants strongly agree that literature courses are teacher-centred, in the form of lectures followed by note taking.

Question4: The students' opinions about texts.

This question is posed to collect students' opinions about the texts on the literature syllabus in terms of difficulty. Stated differently, the question seeks to reveal whether the texts studied fit the students' language level or not. The result is that texts are beyond the students' level and, therefore hard to handle. The overwhelming majority of the students (43 %) consider the texts as being fairly difficult, while (35%) states that the texts are very difficult; only eight students representing (22%) point out that they find them easy to read and understand.
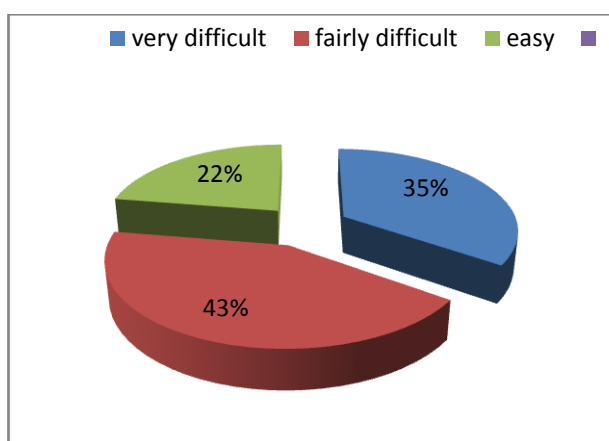
Pie chart 3.3. The Students' Opinions on the Texts.

Question 5: The students' opinions on the themes of

the texts.

This question is addressed to the students in order to investigate their attitudes towards the themes of the texts they are dealing with. In other words, to what extent the texts on the syllabus meet the students' interest. In this regard, a total of 40% of the students finds the texts quite interesting. Only (10%) of the students acknowledges the extreme relevance of the texts to their interests as they consider them very interesting. Some of the students comment that the texts can be judged "interesting". However, a considerable number of our informants (30%) report that the texts mismatch their interests.
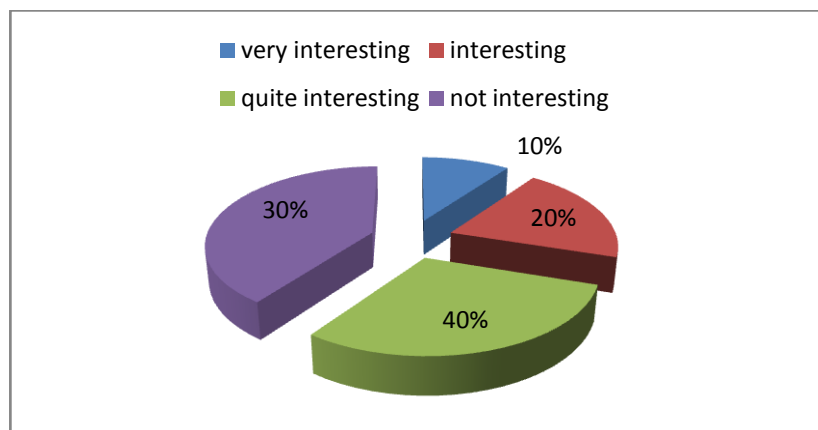
Pie chart 3.4. The students' Opinions on the Themes of the Texts.

Question 6: *Providing background information about the studied texts.*

This question is addressed to students to check whether teachers provide them with the background information related to the text. This would include: the author's biography, political setting, and other socio-

cultural facts. All the informants affirm the fact that teachers supply such information prior to approaching any literary text.

Question 7: The usefulness of the background information in comprehending texts.

The intent of this question is to gauge the effect of prior knowledge about the text on grasping its message. The whole informants admit that background information are vital to understanding a text.

Question 8: Activities around the texts.

This question is an attempt to have an idea about what sort of activities literature teachers usually devise around the studied texts in literature courses. The informants, as a whole, claim that the only activity in which they are involved is "literary analysis".

Question 9: Working in groups in literature courses.

At this stage of investigation, the informants are asked whether they have ever been involved in group works in literature courses. Their answer is that they have never experienced working in groups.

Question 10: students' attitudes towards group works.

The focus of this question is to investigate the students' attitudes towards working in groups. They are also asked to justify their choice. In this respect, almost all the students show a strong desire for working in groups. They thought that group works are very useful in promoting literature learning. They also

believe that working collaboratively would enhance their understanding of the literary texts, and, thus, appreciating literature. Only (11%) of the students are against group works; most them report that are not accustomed to such learning technique.
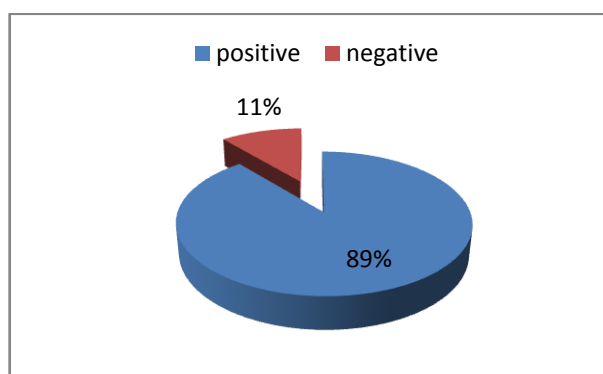
Pie chart 3.5: Students' Attitudes Towards Group works.

Question 11: The involvement of the students in text interpretation.

The purpose of this question is to find out whether the students' are asked to let out their own opinions on and their personal interpretations of the texts. It also aims at revealing the teacher(s) reaction(s) to their interpretations. In this vein, (17%) of the students admit that they are always given the opportunity to express their literary judgments about the text. Another group of students (20%) note that their personal interpretations are sometimes taken into account. Yet, a total of (23%) of the students says that they are rarely asked for their opinions. Interestingly, an overwhelming majority of our

informants (40%) asserts that they have never had their say on the text.
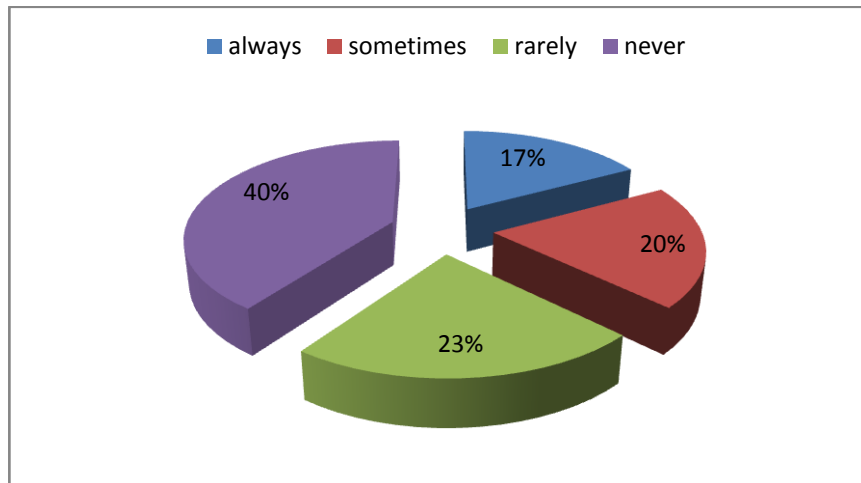
Pie chart 3.6: The Students' Involvement in Text Interpretation

Question 12. Teacher's reactions to the students' wrong interpretations.

This question targets revealing the teacher's reaction to the interpretations provided by his / her students. In this respect, (28,57%) of the students acknowledge that the teacher usually accepts wrong interpretations while (31.42%) of them state that their interpretations are often corrected. Only (11.42%) of the informants answer that their teacher rejects wrong interpretations, and, instead s/he supplies his / her own or other critic's.
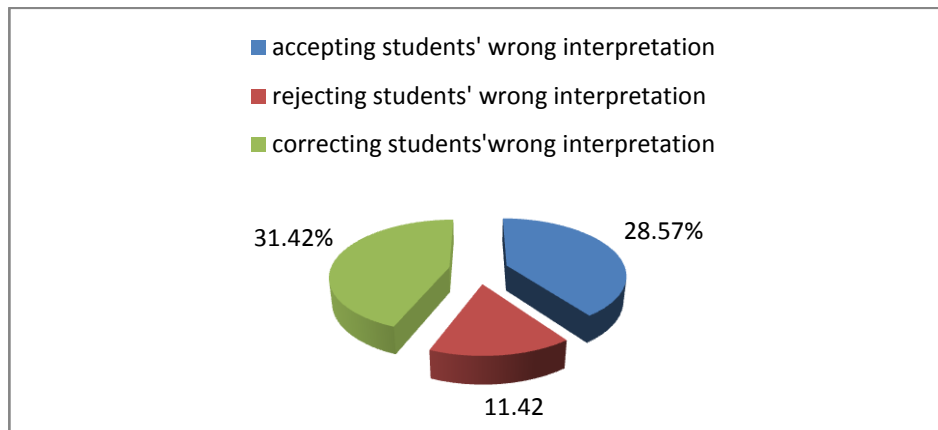
Pie chart 3.7: Teacher's Reactions to Students' Own Interpretations.

Item 3: The Students' overall opinions about literature teaching methods.

Question 13: students' attitudes towards literature teaching methods.

This question is designed to get students' overall attitudes towards the methods used in teaching literature. Our findings show that a considerable number of students, representing 58% did not appreciate the way literature courses are conducted. Only 34% display their satisfaction with the way literature is taught. Yet, (08%) of the informant are neutral as they show their indifference towards literature instructional methods.
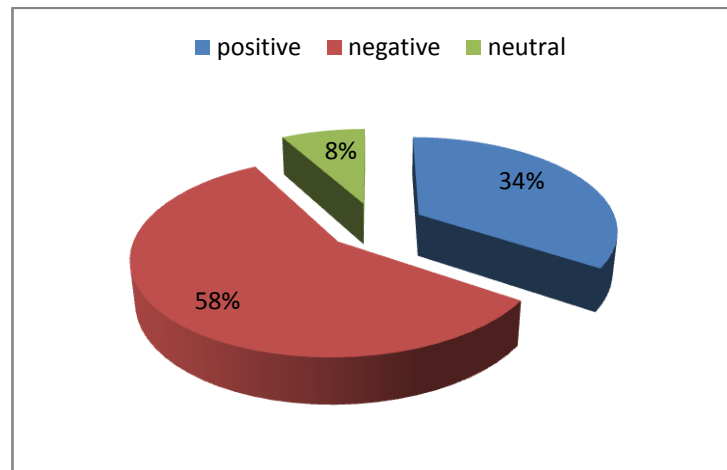
Pie chart 3.8: The Students' Overall Attitudes Towards Literature Teaching Methods.

Item 04: The students' Suggestions for Literature Teaching Improvement.

Question14: The Students' own suggestions for better literature learning / teaching.

This question is included in order to give the students the opportunity to have their say on what can be done to make literature courses more interesting and appealing to them. The students' suggestions are summarized as follows:

-literature courses should be held in classrooms, not in lecture theatres.

-devoting much more time to literature.

- Selecting interesting and accessible texts.

-working in groups.

-planning a variety of activities on the texts.

-Giving and sharing their own opinions on the text

with the teacher and peers.

-Using film adaptations of literary works, namely novels and stories.

3.7.1.1. Discussion of the Questionnaire Results:

The questionnaire submitted to the students is significantly important to come up with answers to the main queries of the study.

It is first hypothesized that the students' attitudes towards literature will vary; i.e. positive and negative. This assumption is confirmed by the students' responses to questions one and two, where it is revealed that some of them hold negative attitude towards reading literature. This might be due to the fact that they are not accustomed to reading literature books or they are not aware of the main reading strategies that will enable them to, efficiently, understand and, ultimately, taste and appreciate literature. Question two shows more interesting facts about the students' perceptions of studying literature. Here again different views are obtained. Students with positive attitude towards literature consider literature as an invaluable source for language improvement and cultural enrichment. Conversely, students holding negative attitude towards literature dismiss its merits on the basis that it is difficult for them to understand literary language. Another considerable portion of students hold the view that literature will contribute nothing to their future professional careers. Understandably, those students

would have the intention to pursue language studies, not literature and civilization studies.

As for the second item in the questionnaire, which relates to the way literature is taught, the results are an approval of the assumption that literature teaching is teacher-centered. The students' responses to questions (03, 09, 11, 08, and 12) affirm that the students are not actively involved in making meaning; they are rather receiving knowledge, by means of lecturing. The notion of text difficulty is also dealt with in order to make it clear that once the text is beyond the student's level, the most common scenario is, forcibly, the teacher's monopolization of the course. In this vein, the majority of the students felt that the texts being studied mismatch their actual language proficiency level. What is more, a considerable number of students shows their lack of interest in the texts being studied.

In addition to this, the non-existence of group discussion considerably contributed to a teacher-led literature teaching. The quasi-majority of the students express their strong will to be involved in group works; this is likely because they are accustomed to work collaboratively at their lower levels of education. Another important point to be highlighted is the teacher's reactions to the students' own interpretations of the texts. In this regard, the students make it clear that even though, they are given the chance to voice their opinions on the texts, this does not occur on a regular basis. Worse still, some

students reported that their wrong interpretations are, sometimes, rejected. This, perhaps, reflects an exam-oriented teaching policy within which the teacher is very cautious about providing the students with the right interpretation of the text.

The third item in the questionnaire is a summary of the students' overall attitudes towards the way literature is being presented to them. The majority of the students show their dissatisfaction with literature instructional methods. A need for change, therefore, is urgent. The last item (question 14) offers the students the opportunity to freely express their own suggestions for better learning / teaching of literature. A sound examination of the students' suggestions indicates their strong desire for being increasingly involved in building knowledge, not only regurgitate what is presented to them. They also want to pair and share their views with the teacher and peers as well. This could be realized if much more time is allotted to literature. Another important suggestion put forward by students is the use of technology in literature instruction-film adaptation of novels and short stories is one example given by the students in this area.

3.7.2. Teachers' Interview Results:

From the belief that interviewing teachers would significantly generate in-depth data relating to the teaching of literature in general, students' attitudes

towards studying literature and, equally, towards the way(s) literature courses are delivered, The researcher intended to hold the interview with, at least, four (04) literature teachers. Unfortunately, due to some constraints, namely teachers' loaded schedules and professional commitments, only three (03) teachers were interviewed.

For the sake of research reliability and to ensure anonymity, the informants are referred to as (R1), (R2) and (R3). The results of the interview are summarized below:

Question 1: How long have you been teaching literature?

Responding to this question, (R1) admitted that s/he is novice in teaching literature: an experience of less than two years. As for (R2) and (R3), their experiences vary from ten to fifteen years.

Question 2: How would you qualify literature teaching in an EFL context?

All the respondents reckoned that despite the fact that literature teaching is a wonderful journey, it is challenging and effort-demanding. This point was strongly emphasized by (R1) who went further to qualify the job as being hard.

Question 3: What can you tell us about the main objectives you intend to achieve in teaching literature?

The three respondents seemed to have, to some

extent, the same objectives. They thought that through reading and studying literature, their students will have the opportunity to improve their language proficiency, enrich their cultural knowledge of the target culture (British and American) and, vividly, experience the joy literature provides.

Question 4: Which literature teaching model do you adopt? Why?

Answering this question, (R1) did not hesitate to, directly, state that s/he adopts the cultural model, while (R2) and (R3) argued that sometimes they find themselves using a mixture of models. They referred to this as an integrated model. As for the second half of the question, (R1) justified the use of the cultural model on the basis that should know about famous authors, genres and literary movement in British and American literature.

The other two respondents said that the students' low-language proficiency lead them, at times, to shift to language teaching rather than teaching literature.

Question 5: Do you involve your students in the choice of the text to be studied?

"No, I don't" was the common answer for the three respondents.

Question 6: What about the texts on the syllabus? Do you think that they match your students' actual level?

(R1) strongly thought that they are difficult for

them; whereas (R2) and (R3) said that some texts are difficult, but others are not.

Question 7: Do you think the themes of the texts on the syllabus seem interesting to your students?

All the respondents shared the view that some texts are thought-provoking and their effect on students can be easily noticed. Other texts, however, receive little if not no attention from students.

Question 8: Do you target developing your students' literary competence? If yes, how?

The three respondents provided a positive answer. They, fundamentally, see that their task is to enable their students handle literature competently. Yet, (R3) noted that at this level-2nd year-it is quite early to talk about literary competence as such, because according to him / her literary competence is a vague and loaded term. As for the how, (R1) believed that literary competence can be attained through motivating students to read literature. Another view was held by (R2), noting that s/he strives to indoctrinate the students with the basic literary notions through lecturing.(R3)summarised his / her view in the phrase: "I provide guidance, and it is up to the students to do the rest".

Question 9: What techniques do you use in delivering your courses?

Even though the three (03) respondents pointed that they do their utmost to urge the students to actively participate in literature courses, usually through

questions and answers around the text, they did not hide that the predominant technique is merely informative; i.e. Lecturing about literature.

Question 10: Do you engage your students in group works?

The respondents' answer to this question revealed that collaborative learning in literature courses is "non-existent".

Question 11: What activities do your literature courses include?

According to (R1) "Literary analysis" is the "unique" activity s/he designs for students at this level. (R2) and (R3) reported that, at times, motivated students are involved in creative activities: role play and performance.

Question 12: How would you describe literature teaching at this level: teacher-centered or student-centered?

The three informants admitted that literature teaching at this level is still teacher-led. (R2) claimed that students, at this level, should, first, be informed about literature. (R3) argued that since literature courses are held in lecture theatres, teacher-centeredness is inescapable.

Question 13: Can you provide us with a summary of the major problems you usually encounter in teaching literature at this level?

The whole informants mentioned the issues below:

-Lack of time devoted to literature teaching.

-Students' low level of language proficiency.

-Students' lack of reading.

-Some students' low level of motivation.

-Students' inability to use appropriate reading strategies.

-Lack of coordination between literature teachers. This point, to note, was raised by (R1).

Question 14: What about your students' attitude and motivation to study literature? Do they look forward to their literature courses?

This question received a common answer from our informants. They all agreed that some students show high level of motivation to taste literature; others, regretfully, to use the respondents' words, are careless about it. (R1) makes this point very clear stating that only a minority of students do their reading assignments.

3.7.2.1. Discussion of the Interview Results:

The interview with literature teachers enabled the researcher to have a clear picture of literature teaching at the Department. Basically, the structure of the interview falls into three main parts: general questions, questions about the practice of teaching literature and,

at last, but not least students' attitudes towards literature.

In the general part the teachers were asked about their teaching experiences, their personal views about the value of literature in the EFL context and, finally, their objectives in literature instruction.

The respondents' answers to these preliminary questions revealed that their teaching experience ranges from two to twenty-three years. Thus, except for one teacher who is quite novice in the field, the other two have a close personal relationship with literature; it is their "cup of tea". All the respondents share the view that literature is of paramount importance in foreign language learning. Yet, they confessed that its teaching is not that easy task. One might open a bracket to say that efficient teaching might largely depends on quality training. When it comes to literature teaching objectives, all of them want their students to benefit from literature linguistically, culturally and entertainingly.

The second part of the interview consists of questions about the respondents' teaching practices. Its major aim was to find out whether their teaching practice is teacher centered or learner centered. In so doing, the researcher raised the point of the literature teaching model being used in the classroom at this level (2nd year). Their answers implied that at this level learners need to know "about" literature. Yet, they admitted that this had sometimes transformed the course into a simple transposition of the teachers' own impression or other

critics' about the text to the students. And this, no doubt, is for the sake of preparing the students for written exams. Other important issues were dealt with namely, the involvement of the students in group works. The respondents' answers reflected a teacher-led teaching; students are rarely engaged in group works simply because the latter are time consuming. Yet, one also might take into account the great benefit of such learning technique in promoting cooperative learning. Text selection was also a major point in the interview. In this respect, teachers admitted that some texts pose hurdles for students to comprehend them, they added that some themes are of no interest to the students. Undoubtedly, this would result in the teacher's monopolization of the scene and also in a monotonous class environment. Enhancing the students' literary competence was another chief concern of the interview. Yet, the interviewees' answers to question (08) revealed that they do not set tasks for learners to help them develop their literary competence. The reason is always time shortage.

The third part of the interview deals with the students' attitudes and motivation to study literature. The informants confirmed the idea that there are some students who show the good will to taste literature, while other because of a number of reasons, they make little effort. One might, possibly, argue that those students hold no literary tendency,

or they want to follow language studies.

3.7.3. Classroom Observation Results:

Having no doubt about the efficacy of classroom observation as an essential research tool conducive to uncovering realistic facts about literature teaching practices as well as students' attitudes towards literature and the methods being employed, the researcher intended to observe, on a regular basis, more than one teacher. Unfortunately, it was possible to observe only one teacher; this was because the whole second year LMD students were instructed by the same teacher. To note, the observation was carried out throughout the first semester of the current academic year.

Taking into account the conventional ethical considerations, the researcher asked for permission from the observed teacher, who did not hesitate to collaborate.

As stated above, the aim of the observation was, in essence, to reveal the way literature classes are conducted as well as investigating the students' overall attitudes towards literature and its teaching.

As a matter of fact, classroom observation divulged a lot about both literature teaching on the side of the instructor and, equally, much about literature learning on the students' side.

Held in lecture theatres, where the teacher

sometimes misheard the students and vice-versa, literature courses that the investigator attended witnessed the absence of many students, sometimes the number of the students missing the course approached thirty students.

As far as the teaching methodology is concerned, the courses were conducted in the form of formal lectures where the teacher is the epicenter, transmitting background information to students and asking them, later to read, at home, the excerpts that he/she has chosen for them. This, however, does not mean that the teacher did not give the students the opportunity to speak. There were, in fact, moments where highly motivated students heated debates about some topics that interested them. This was the case when the teacher introduced them to the literary era of "Romanticism".

As for the approach that the teacher applied, it was quite easy to single out that the cultural model was predominant. This approach (see 1.4.1) is informative in nature and teacher-centered in terms of classroom practice, in the sense that the teacher preaches knowledge about literature to students. The observation also revealed that activities around the texts are almost non-existent. Instead, a heavy focus was noticed on "literary analysis" of texts. This was usually carried out through addressing some questions to the students about the plot, theme, characters and so forth. However, only some students who, seemingly, had read the texts or about the text

were able to interact with the teacher, and, simultaneously, were jotting down notes. Other students, however, were "zombies", contributing nothing to the course.

The teacher did not involve the students in group discussion as s/he was "in hurry" to cover the points of courses. This methodology of instructing literature, despite the teacher's energetic spirit and the good will s/he showed led, at times, to monotonous classroom atmosphere. Table3.8. summarizes the data gathered from the observation process.

Elements of observation	Practical Observation
Setting	Lecture-theatre
Teacher attendance	Regularly present on time.
Students' attendance	A considerable number of students missed the courses.
Materials	Board, chalk and handouts (texts)
Time	One hour and a half a week
Way of teaching (methodology)	Lecturing and, at times, questions and answers around the texts, followed by note taking.
The approach /model	The cultural model.
Reading in class	Non-existent; students are required to read the texts at, home.

Activities around the texts.	Literary analysis, orally done and led by the teacher.
Group discussion	Non-existent.
Group works	Non- existent.
Students' participation	limited
Students' attitude and motivation to study literature	Some students are motivated; others are not.
Course general atmosphere	At times, monotony and boredom.

Table.3.8. Data Derived from Class Observation.

3.7.3.1. Discussion of Classroom Observation Results:

The class observation process helped the researcher to come up with the conclusion that literature teaching is quasi-teacher centered. Literature classes are presented in the form of formal lectures, wherein the teacher is the "all-know" master who enjoys a dominant role in telling everything. The students are rarely involved in penetrating underlying meanings of texts. This way of handling literature, consequently, led to increase students' passivity. Although this might be due to some factors, namely time shortage, overloaded syllabus and even setting (amphitheatre), this does not fully justify the teacher-centeredness.

Admittedly, lecturing is ubiquitous at university settings, and its extensive drawbacks are,

sometimes, inevitable, but the teacher is, supposedly, wise enough to find adequate strategies to actively involve his/her students in learning. The observation also allowed the researcher to clearly notice the non-existence of buzz discussions that would transform the lecture from passive listening to active thinking. The students seldom interfere in the course. Their participation is limited except when they feel familiarity with the themes of the texts.

Reading in class has no room as the students are supposed to read the texts at home, and because, sometimes, they do not, reflexive teaching automatically takes place. In short, the observation process proved, to a larger extent, that literature teaching is, regretfully, still a traditional "chalk and talk" practice.

As for the second part of the observation process, and, which, was mainly concerned with the students' attitudes towards literature and its teaching. The researcher has noticed, throughout the process, that there are students who really show a high level of motivation to study literature. They are all the times inquisitive about the subject, yet, at times, possibly, because of time constraints, they are not fully given the floor to demonstrate what they can do with literature. In this vein, the researcher acquainted some

talented students who would easily be innovative in literature, particularly in poetry. Another category of students are totally indifferent about literature or/and the way it is presented to them; they are always busy with Xeroxing previous lectures.

3.8. Discussion of the main findings:

The results of the present study have confirmed our assumption that the students' attitudes towards literature would vary. A total of (49%) students have positive stance towards learning literature; they acknowledge its linguistic, cultural and motivational significance. Put differently, they feel that they gain benefit in learning literature as the latter helps them develop their language awareness and their understanding of many aspects of the target culture. In the course of such insightful yet heightened awareness, it is very likely that these students would develop a better understanding of their major weaknesses in language learning. This, in turn, might tremendously encourage them to find ways towards better achievement.

Conversely, another category of students estimated to (51%) showed their lack of interest in studying literature. They considered literature a difficult subject due to its fictionality and creative use of language. In the same context, it is enlightening to add that some of them justified their negative attitude towards literature on the basis that they do not have the intent to embrace literary studies. Hence, literature will contribute little to their professional careers. This negative stance towards literature implies

that much is awaiting teachers and administration alike to sensitise students to the value of literature not only in terms of academic and / or professional ends, but also in educating the whole person.

Shifting to the practice of teaching literature, the study has evidenced that literature classes are still, to a greater extent, teacher centred. Regardless of the factors that have contributed to shaping this old-fashioned approach to teaching literature, the reality is that the practice on the ground is "spoon feeding"; i.e. preaching to the students biographies of authors, historical and cultural background and synopses of texts.

This, in turn, has led many students to demonstrate their disapproval with this methodology. A total of 58% of the students expressed their negative attitudes towards the way literature is being instructed.

3.9. Conclusion:

This chapter has presented the data collected via the students' questionnaire, classroom observation and teachers' interview. Initially, it has respectively dealt with the aim of the research, the participants involved, the research instruments and the methodology applied. At a second phase, the researcher has strived to analyse and discuss, in-depth, the main findings gathered via the different research tools.

CHAPTER FOUR

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Chapter Four
Recommendations & Practical Suggestions

4.1. Introduction

4.2. Material choice: Towards Familiar Themes

4.3. Process-Oriented Literature Teaching

4.4. Task-Oriented Literature Classroom
4.4.1. Suggested Course Outline

       1. Course Pre-requisite
       2. Pre-reading
       3. Lower Order Thinking Skills
       4. Advanced Order Thinking Skills
       5. Presentation
       6. Post Reading

4. 5. Exploiting Literature Further
4. 5. 1. Linguistic Analysis
4. 5. 2. Summarising the Text
4. 5. 3. Prediction Activities
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4. 6. Cooperative Learning Strategies
4. 6. 1. Cooperative Learning Vs Traditional Group Learning
4. 6. 2. Introducing Literature Circles

4. 7. Encouraging Reader Response

4.8. Encouraging Students to Read Extensively

4.9. Implementing the Filmed Versions of Literary Works

4.10. Conclusion

4.1. Introduction:

At this stage of the current study, the researcher has strived to come up with some useful suggestions and recommendations that, hopefully, might improve the teaching of literature, and, therefore, reinforcing positive and altering negative attitudes towards literature and literary studies among EFL students. In its very essence, the study is an attempt to investigate second year LMD students' attitudes towards literature teaching methods. To this end, it has been quite methodological to, first, poll the students' general perceptions of learning literature. At a second phase, the study has examined the way literature courses are run. It has, then, cast light on the different teaching practices in the literature classroom. This, in turn, has been very useful to spot the strengths and the weaknesses of the teaching methodology being employed. Therefore, in the light of the main findings obtained from the study, and, as mentioned earlier, for the sake of both producing positives attitudes towards literature among the students and contributing to the development of an adequate teaching methodology, a set of recommendations and a number of practical suggestions will be dealt with in this chapter.

4.2. Material choice: Towards Familiar Themes:

The study has revealed that a considerable number of the students find it quite hard to read, understand and ultimately penetrate the texts on the

syllabus. This calls for an urgent reconsideration of these texts and opt for others that, hopefully, meet the students' language proficiency level and their interests as well.

Admittedly, teachers sometimes find themselves bound to a prescribed syllabus that serves the basis for literature teaching within which text selection is decided by the central educational authorities. Therefore, the students are required to read the selected texts, and their knowledge will be tested with an exam at the end of the course. Yet, this might encourage rote learning of already- established opinions and, thus, contributes little to developing the students' own literary appreciation.

However, as mentioned in the present study the curriculum gives the teacher a certain deal of freedom to design the content of the course. (see.2.5)

Therefore, it is strongly advisable to reconsider the suitability of the texts on the syllabus as many students showed their inability to cope with them.

Our suggestion is to opt for familiar themes. Familiarity, in this sense, is not seen in generic terms, for familiarity with the values, themes and issues portrayed in literary texts can significantly affect the students' comprehension and appreciation of literature more than concrete specifics such as setting, or time (Brock, 1990). In the same vein, Ali

(1994:289) reports that opting for universal themes such as love and sacrifice allows learners to **"view literature as an experience that enriches [their] life[ves] "** .In other words, if the subject-matter is relevant to the real life-worlds of the students, they may explore texts more intimately simply because the themes embedded in the text are not that alien to them. This way literature addresses directly the emotions of learners; it meets their interests, needs, and concerns. Thus, the relevance of the theme and values portrayed in the literary texts are of paramount importance as they may help overcome linguistic handicaps.

4.3. Process-Oriented Literature Teaching:

The study has revealed that students' participation and involvement in literature classes are at minimum. This unhappy situation does not reflect the relevance and the true value of literature in a language classroom.

Literature, instead, must capture the interest of the students and ensure their active engagement with it. This cannot be achieved unless the students feel that what is being presented to them cater for their present needs and future concerns. The current literature teaching practice can be summarized in littlewood's words when he succinctly asserts that teaching literature as product is nothing but a setting where **"the teacher**

translates passages and dictates notes" (Littlewood, 1986:177). This practice, however, does little to meet the students' individual response. Additionally, the literary texts are followed by traditional close ended questions such as: Who is the main character? Or what happens?

Questions that lead, most of the time, to further increase students' passivity rather than involving them.

Our suggestion is to adopt a process approach to teaching literature. The latter has recently gained ground in educational settings, not least literature classrooms. The very assumption underlying such an approach is that learning is considered as a multifaceted process where the interest is activated and actively maintained as well. Also, a process approach stresses a retrospective self-evaluation of how things were carried out. Carter and Long (1991:10) assert that **"It is only through process-oriented teaching rather than through product-based or transmissive teaching that such goals of fuller interpretation can be reached"**.

Within a process approach to literature teaching, many strategies and techniques can be applied including tasks, prediction activities, role-playing, summarizing texts, rewriting and so forth. This approach, in short, aims at involving the students with the text and enables them to develop

their own perception of it. It also aims at creating a student-centred classroom and equally the promotion of collaborative learning.

4.4. Task-Oriented Literature Classroom:

In order for teachers to ensure their students' engagement with literature, the need for learning by doing becomes "de facto" a "sine qua non". This is the idea of many researchers such as McCarthy and Carter (1994), Nunan (1988), Carter and Long (1991) and Willis (1996).

Yet, before going any further, it seems wiser to define what a task is. In his *book Task Based Language Teaching,* Nunan (2004) provides a series of definitions, but as far as the present study is concerned, we shall opt for the one suggested by Breen(1987:23) in which he posits that a task is:

> **Any structured language learning endeavour which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specific working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. *'Task' is therefore assumed to refer to a range of work plan which has the overall purpose of facilitating language learning-from the simple or brief exercise type to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem solving or simulations and decision making.***

In other words, tasks must be carefully planned

with well defined objectives and which have the very potential to actively engage students in the process of learning. This is, in turn, another way of saying that tasks can serve a mean to **"remove the teacher's domination"** (Willis, 1996: 18). Instead, the teacher becomes an "enabler" devolving the responsibility to the students to look after their learning. What is more, through tasks, the students are likely to boost their literary competence (Lazar, 1993).

According to Khatib et al (2011), task based literature teaching has the very potential to linguistically, creatively, physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially, critically, meaningfully, aesthetically, and motivationally involve the students in the process of learning.

4.4.1. Suggested Course Outline:

In designing a task based literature course, it is suggested that the teacher might adopt the following course outline which, it is hoped, to be of great interest and help:

1. Course pre-requisite:

For the sake of making the students responsible for their own learning, the teacher assigns a research work through which the students gather information about the literary era, the author and his/her famous works.

2. Pre-reading:

This phase is set to increase the students' involvement in the topic. The teacher, then, might use a picture or a video, if available, to brainstorm the theme of the study material.

3. <u>Lower Order Thinking Skills</u>:

This section comprises two main rubrics:

(a) Vocabulary and allusion, wherein difficult words are to be looked up by the students using their dictionaries. Allusions that are most of the time cultural references are to be provided by the teacher, however.

(b) Basic Comprehension Questions: this rubric consists of questions that seek to check the students overall understanding of the text. In other words, the students skim the text for the gist.

4. <u>Advanced Order Thinking Skills</u>:

It is a section wherein the students penetrate the text. It is mainly devoted to analysis questions and literary aspects of the text.

5. <u>Presentation</u>:

At this stage, the students are supposed to present the data gathered about the author's biography, the historical, social and cultural aspects of the text.

6. <u>Post Reading</u>:

The post reading phase includes two major points: (Adapted from Khatib et al, 2011: 217)

a) Personal response: it is a space wherein the students freely express their opinions on the text, orally and in writing.

b) Reflection: the students focus on the literary devices used in the text. And if any element seems

still strange, the teacher is supposed to further exemplify it through tasks.

Let us now put the outline above into practice. Our choice has fallen on poetry because teachers have always found it quite difficult to engage the students with this literary genre.

Text:

"The Daffodils"

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee: -
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company:
I gazed -and gazed -but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth. (1804)

1. **Course prerequisite:**

The students have to read in advance about the literary era of "Romanticism" with a particular

focus on the poet William Wordsworth and his major pieces.

2. Pre-reading:
- The teacher may use a visual input representing nature in general or the flowers "Daffodils" in particular, and ask the students to describe it. This phase is useful to make the students anticipate some vocabulary and to create expectations about the poem.

- If available, the teacher may use an acoustic aid: s/he plays a CD or a cassette in which the poem is read by a native speaker. This phase is also useful for the students to get familiar with the pronunciation of words and the rhyme and rhythm as well.

3. Lower Order Thinking Skills:
a) Vocabulary and allusion:
Look up the difficult words in your dictionary.
b) Basic understanding questions:
1. Skim through the poem and answer the following questions:

a. What did the poet see beside the lake?

b. How did they look?

c. Underline the lines that express that the daffodils were moving gently in the breeze.

4. Advanced Order Thinking Skills:

1. Identify the genre of the poem.

2. Note down the rhyme of the poem.

3. Read the poem again and answer the following questions:

a. why does the poet compare himself to a cloud ?

b. What does he compare the daffodils to? Is the comparison appropriate? To what extent is it?

C. How is he affected by the experience of seeing the daffodils?

d. How does the poem make use of contrast? Consider the contrast between the poet and the daffodils, and between his feelings before, while and after seeing the daffodils.

e. In your opinion, what attitude does the poet hold towards the following: nature, memory, loneliness?

f. Identify examples of the following literary devices in the poem and explain them in your own words.

(a) simile   (b) an alliteration (c) personification   (d) a hyperbole

- How do these devices contribute to the overall effect of the poem?

(Adapted from: Bridging the Gap-Language, Culture and Literature: An Integrated Course)

5. Presentation:

The students present the data they gathered about both the literary era of "Romanticism" and the poet William Wordsworth.

6. Post reading:

a) Personal response: Have you enjoyed reading the poem? What do you like most about it? Write a short account.

b) Reflection: The teacher might set tasks on one of the literary devices in the poem, simile for example.

Sample task (1): Complete the blanks to form similes.

a.   John laughs like a........

b.   She is white as..........

c.   I feel free as...........

d.   James is always selfish. He wouldn't listen to anyone;   he walks like an........with its hand in the sand.

e.   ....as a mouse.

f.   After his success in the exam, Bob was happy as a......

Sample task (2): Read the following passage from Dickens's _Hard Times. Then pick out a simile and analyze its syntactic structure._ Here, initially, the teacher gives a short social and historical background of the novel in question.

<p align="center">"Coketown"</p>

"It was a town of red brick or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys,

out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves forever and ever, and never got uncoiled."

    (a) The tenor:....................
    (b) The vehicle:.................
    (c) The simile marker:..........
    (d) The ground:.................
    (e) The topic:....................
    (f) The purpose:.............

Sample Task3 (Competitive task): in pairs, write a short poem ,of one stanza, using similes.

4. 5. Exploiting Literature Further:

For the sake of maximizing the benefit of literature in the EFL classroom and to ensure the students engagement with it, many researchers such Carter & Long, 1991, (Carter &McRae, 1996), Parkinson & Thomas (2000) offer a wide range of activities that teachers might develop in a literature course. In what follows, are examples of such activities.

4. 5. 1. Linguistic Analysis:

According to many researchers, linguistic analysis of the literary text is and yet should be one of the major activities to be planned in an EFL

literature class. This is the view of Parkinson & Thomas (2000) who reckon that this activity as being very appropriate for foreign language learners. In its essence, a linguistic analysis involves a close examination of the language of the literary text. In so doing, the students are prompted to spot the different features of the literary language. These include: deviance, regularity polysemy and equally features of discourse organization and the structure of the narrative that operate in the text.

In fact, such type of analysis is praised in the foreign language classroom as it makes the students well aware of questions like syntax and vocabulary. This, in turn, would build in the students the confidence to take their own steps to solve potential language problems that they may encounter in reading authentic texts.

4. 5. 2. Summarising the Text:

Within this type of activities, the students are required to make an abstract which gives a short summary of the literary work. Yet, writing a plot summary, for example, is not the same thing as writing an analytical paper. Plot summaries describe what happens in texts. Analytical papers, however, make arguments about texts. Although this activity is sometimes judged as being less challenging, it is crucial in engaging students with literature. Furthermore, it is an opportunity for the students to enhance their writing skills.

4. 5. 3. Prediction Activities:

It is a type of activities that raise the students' inquisitiveness about the text. Therefore, the students are encouraged to guess what will happen in the text on the basis of the title or, at a later phase, after reading opening passages. Yet, students' wrong anticipations are not considered as a failure. Rather, the students should be further prompted to continue reading and eventually correct or readjust their wrong predictions themselves.

Another advantage of this technique is that it considerably raises the students' awareness of the literary conventions in the sense that a closer look at the bits of the plot is likely to assist the students in developing empathy with the text.

4. 5. 4. Creating Text:

Basically, this activity aims at inculcating creativity in the students of literature. The students, hence, are required to write their own text or a parody or, at least, transferring a text into another genre; for instance, transforming poetry into prose. This activity also encourages the students to turn a love of the written word into a personal experience. There are other techniques that teachers might opt for in encouraging creative writing. For example, the students may be asked to write an alternative beginning or ending of the story or they may be asked to make their reading portfolios wherein they can write their own thoughts about and interpretations of what they have already read.

Although these activities may appear challenging as they entail the students' sense of creativity and imagination, they have the very potential to motivate the students to read and innovate if teachers support them with stage-by-stage guidance and constructive criticism as well.

4. 5. 5. Performing a Literary Work:

Usually associated with drama, this activity encourages the students to assume an active and creative role in a literature class. In its minimal, as a classroom practice, performance can be simply reading dialogues aloud, using pauses, tone of voice or even making use of facial expressions; i.e. body language. Yet, at its fullest sense, performance in relation to drama entails a whole process of casting, rehearsals, and costumes and, of course, the presence of an audience. Performing drama, in short, is "the stage". Although it is common knowledge that performance might put the students in an uncomfortable situation as they face the audience, its benefit is boundless. (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000)

Motivationally, the students can have fun with the materials they are learning. This, in turn, will heighten their motivation and make them consider literature as something alive, vivid and yet relevant instead of being merely words on pages. Therefore, the Students who are required to read and play different roles feel more motivated to follow along with the play so as not to miss their lines with it.

Language wise, performing drama will help the students achieve fluency in the target language. Additionally, their communicative skills are likely to be improved.

Furthermore, performance increases the students' retention of a literary work as it becomes more familiar to them, and making it easier for them to remember basic plots.

At last but not least, performance makes place for "differentiation" in the classroom. The latter term is used by educators to refer to employing different types of teaching methods to appeal to students with different aptitudes and learning styles. Hence, dramatizing a work of literature instead of simply reading it can serve an effective tool to actively engage students with literature through both action and motion.

4. 6. Cooperative Learning Strategies:

Another interesting finding of present study is that working in groups in literature courses is non-existent. Paradoxically, the students have expressed their wish to work collaboratively in dealing with literature. They have indicated that collaborative learning and class discussions would be worthwhile of interacting with their study material and, consequently, improving their understanding.

Accordingly, to cater for the students needs, our suggestion is to make use of Cooperative Learning, (CL) for short, in teaching/learning literary texts.

The very assumption of such an approach is that the classroom is organized in a way that students work together in small groups to carry out a common academic task (Johnson and Jonson1999). In so doing, the students would maximize their own and each other's learning.

(CL) necessitates both cooperative interaction and negotiation of meaning among heterogeneous members engaged in tasks in which each group member has to learn from and contribute to other members' work as well. This is another way of saying that (CL) is more than mere small group activities, but, ideally, it must be carefully structured. In this vein, Johnson and Johnson (1999) claim that simply placing students in groups and instructing them to work together is not likely to produce a cooperative effect. Teachers, therefore, must strive to concretize the essential components of (CL) that, according to Jonson et al (1993), are:

(1) Positive interdependence, in the sense that student must hold the belief that s/he linked with others in a way that one cannot succeed unless the other members of the group succeed and vice versa.

(2) Face-to-face interaction, that is to say students are expected to assume an active role in explaining orally to each other how to solve problems, discuss concepts and, equally, teach their knowledge to each other.

(3) Personal accountability:

This simply means that the students learn together so that they can, in a later stage, perform better as individuals. Common ways to achieve individual accountability include setting an individual test to each student; in other words, calling on individual students to present their group's work.

(4) Interpersonal and social skills:

Teachers must often introduce team-work skills by assigning differentiated roles to each group member. These skills include, for example, how to provide directives to the group by acting a coordinator or a checker.

(5) Group processing:

A common procedure for group processing is to ask each group to list things the group have well done and things that should further be improved.

4. 6. 1. Cooperative Learning Vs Traditional Group Learning:

In a rather detailed examination of cooperative learning, Putnam (1997) provides an insightful comparison between cooperative and traditional group learning. Table.4.1.below shows the main differences between the two kinds of learning.

Traditional group learning	Cooperative learning groups.
No positive interdependence	Positive interdependence
No Individual accountability	individual accountability
No cooperative skill instruction	Cooperative skill instruction
Homogenous groups	Heterogeneous groups
Teacher selected groups	Students selected groups
No teacher observation and feedback	Teacher observation and feedback
Uniform standard for success	Equal opportunity for success
No concern for peer learning	Concern for peer learning

Table.4.1. Cooperative learning Vs Traditional learning. Adapted from Putnam (1997)

Cooperative learning, if critically implemented, would significantly boost the literature students' comprehension. Structured cooperative learning situations where groups are provided with well-defined guidelines regarding the task and what should be achieved by the end of the course have the potential to deeply engage the student with literature. Through group discussion of the text, students are likely to enhance their critical thinking. Yet, as mentioned earlier, the condition for successful cooperative learning is to structure groups in a way that each group member contributes a complementary skill. This could be achieved by,

first, building confidence in small groups before engaging students to become involved in larger groups and / or general class discursive setting.

Another pre-requisite that might contribute to creating a discursive environment is that students assume their accountability and come to class fully prepared, having at least read the texts and, thus, ready for initiating literary debates.

4. 6. 2. Introducing Literature Circles:

In an attempt to strengthen cooperative learning in literature courses, it is suggested that teachers of literature may, at times, introduce literature circles as a tool to achieve this goal. Yet, it seems important, first, to shed light on this collaborative literature learning strategy that, if critically implemented, might considerably contribute in making the students responsible for their own learning. Our endeavour is to "adapt" this strategy that has proved very successful in many literature teaching/learning settings across the globe.

Literature circles refer to a reading strategy in which informal discussions are organized prior to analyzing literature (Harste et al, 1988). Stated differently, literature circles are small student-led literature discussions that connect the students with their reading assignments. Blum Lipsett and Yocon (2002) characterize literature circles as a type of literary engagement that motivates the students to read. Their suggestion is that once the material had

been read, the students would summarize what they determine to be the most important aspects of literature.

In the same vein, Stien and Beed (2004), assert literature circles are very likely to build up an ideal environment in which students share what they had read in a text or in a book.

Yet, Burns (1998) puts heavy emphasis on assigning roles within a literature circles setting. She, therefore, suggests that some type of organization within the small allows the students to have the entire opportunity to get involved.

Additionally, assigning roles often boosts the students' comprehension and makes them ready to discuss literature. What is more, literature circles envelop a variety of features that might create more supportive and relaxing classroom atmosphere. One of these features is that student-centered small discussion groups allow students enhance their communicative skills. (Day et al, 2002)

Another important advantage that literature circles offer is the promotion of social interaction that, in turn, helps students share their ideas about literature with one another. Students may negotiate within a group to come up with a common meaning of the text.

Our suggestion is that the students of literature voluntarily nominate their small groups,

and once the teacher assigns a reading task, each member of the group will, automatically, focus on one element of the text. In reading fiction, for example, one student may read for the plot, the second reads for characters and characterization, the other for the theme, another member might look for figures of speech and so on. Once the students have finished the task, they mutually discuss the text as an entity. Afterwards, each group presents its output followed by a classroom discussion. Figure 4.1 below shows a sample literature circles sheet.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                 │
│  Student's Name:..........                      │
│  Level: ..........                              │
│  Group:........                                 │
│  Literature Circles Group:..........            │
│  Literary Work:..................               │
│  Assignment: Your job is to read for the characters │
│  in the story.                                  │
│                                                 │
│                                                 │
│                    Out put                      │
│  The characters..................................  │
│  ...............................................   │
│  ...............................................   │
│  .......                                        │
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│                                                 │
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Figure 4.1. <u>Sample Literature Circles Sheet.</u>

4. 7. Encouraging Reader Response:

Our findings have shown that literature courses

are conducted in a quasi-teacher-centered method within which the teacher enjoys a dominant role, in the sense that s/he sometimes supplies students with ready-made literary interpretations, unwillingly underestimating the students' own critical abilities.

If an effective literary reading in the literature classroom is to be attained, it is strongly advisable to develop an adequate pedagogy that might assume a place for the teacher to enable the students reach independency in reading and appreciating literature. It is believed that this could be achieved if a reader response approach is encouraged.

Fundamentally, the reader response theories in literature have remarkably shifted the exclusive focus on the text, without neglecting its importance of course, to an emphasis on the reader. It was Louis Rosenblatt who broke the path towards the so called "transactional" model of reading literature.

The crux of this model is that meaning is built between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, 1994). Texts, according to Rosenblatt, do not exist alone nor do they constitute meaning or invoke emotions without a reader. Rosenblatt adds that during the transaction, the reader selects possible meanings from a set of assumptions and beliefs that are stored in what she referred to as "our personal-experiential-linguistic reservoirs", a term that

Rosenblatt (1994:381) coined to refer to ”**a fluid pool of potential triadic symbolization**”. In other words, the selection process is, usually, influenced by the attention, the physical and the emotional state of the reader. The latter brings to the text a host of experiences, characteristics, qualities and ideas that interact with the message embedded in the text to, ultimately, produce the meaning of the message. Due to the fact that every reader brings his/her private experiences, each reader's response is, therefore, unique, not duplicated.

In a deeper sense, within this model, the reader brings to the literary work personality traits, past events, present preoccupations within an idiosyncratic mood that makes his relationship with the text distinct. In brief, in Rosenblatt's view reading literature is not generic where solely one interpretation is right. This would lead us to raise the point of "efferent" and "aesthetic" stance to reading. Yet, it would be quiet inappropriate to fully cover this point at this stage. Suffice it, one might put it simply that an aesthetic stance acknowledges the validity of the emotions and the judgments brought by the reader to the text. Conversely, efferent stance seeks to encourage the reader to, immediately, search for the message the text carries. Holding the second stance is nothing but an overt declaration that there is one correct interpretation of the text, and, thus, pushing the

affective side of the reader to the margin.

Our advocacy to encourage a reader response stance in the literature classroom is based on the belief that this model might help the students develop their own critical thinking and make them freely express their opinions on the texts. Accordingly, the teacher would act as a facilitator assisting them to embrace the joy of literature.

4.8. Encouraging Students to Read Extensively:

Although the study has been carried out on a small scale, with a limited number of students, it appears that many of them have a negative stance towards reading literature.

Unsurprisingly, the lack of interest in reading is not the problem of students only; it is a matter of our Algerian society where alitracy is gaining ground. Therefore, the main challenge for teachers is to make their students avid readers. This, one might think, depends, first, on the teacher's personality: if the teacher, her/himself, is an enthusiastic reader, s/he will try to motivate the students to engage in reading. And if the texts that students are introduced to are carefully chosen in harmony with their actual language level and meet their interest, students will feel motivated and encouraged to take a step further to engage in extensive literary reading: reading long texts and large amounts of materials for global understanding

and for pleasure too. (Susser and Robb, 1990).

Basically, extensive reading aims to build in the reader language fluency and also reading confidence. It also intends to develop good reading habits and encourage a general positive attitude towards the act of reading. Furthermore, it helps EFL students to improve their language proficiency as it builds up knowledge of vocabulary and language structure.

Literary extensive reading, in short, energizes and motivates EFL students to independently read whole works for language improvement, culture enrichment and for pleasure too. In this vein, experts suggest that extensive reading or else supplementary reading should complement intensive reading done in class.

What is more, many literature specialists, such as Lazar (2000) assert that in order to enhance EFL students' literary competence, reading extensively becomes a "sine qua non."

4.9. Implementing the Filmed Versions of Literary Works:

Admittedly, the written versions of some literary texts alongside the teacher's explanations are, sometimes, insufficient to lead the students of literature achieve the full understanding of the cultural load of some texts. In fact, because of the

students' lack of extensive exposure to the target literature, the teacher may occasionally find himself/herself in a "catch 22 situation" as how to efficiently convey the cultural messages to students.

Based on the findings of the present study which have revealed the students' strong desire for the integration of technological devices in the teaching/learning of literature, it is believed that the implementation of the filmed versions of some literary works, fiction in particular, might, to a larger extent, help reinforce the students' understanding of literary works.

Recently, films and movies, as teaching material are widely used in the foreign language classroom. They are so useful that teachers worldwide use them as a tool to convey content and raise students' interest and motivation in learning. In this very specific context, Kramsch (1993) claims that films, as a multimedia technology, could generate fruitful and memorable learning experiences. Thanks to them, the students of literature are invited to re-interpret and reconstruct prior knowledge in the light of the newly acquired. Furthermore, films and movies provide a world of knowledge that is not sequentially organized; in this way, the students are incited to initiate relational thinking and hierarchical structuring of what is being watched (Champoux, 2007).

Notwithstanding, being a helpful tool to ease the burden of understanding literary works, the implementation of films and movies in the classroom should not contribute to the students' passivity: being only spectators. What is hoped is that the students ought to be more involved in constructing meaning. This could be achieved, one might think, if the post-watching phase is followed by carefully planned tasks. There are various activities that might follow the watching stage. Our suggestion is that the students will be instructed, first, to work on the literary aspects of the film. In so doing, the students are asked to identify (1) the characters (2) the setting (3) the main elements of the plot (4)the point of view (5) the theme and (6) the mood in the film.

In addition to this, the students should be encouraged to initiate debates on the cultural aspects the film embodies. They should let out their opinions, thoughts and feelings about the cultural load of the projected material. This is, in fact, another way of raising the students' cultural awareness through the process of comparing aspects of the home culture with those in the target community.

Summing up, one might argue that the benefit of the implementation of the filmed versions of the literary would be, undoubtedly, significant both linguistically and culturally providing that the students are actively involved through interesting

and carefully designed activities.

4.10. Conclusion:

Within this chapter, the researcher has strived to provide some useful recommendations, suggestions, and yet strategies for change towards fruitful teaching of literature. This has been carried out from the belief that this might help both pre-service and in-service teachers to better cope with literature, and, equally, engage students with it. Yet, we are strongly convinced that our recommendations and suggestions would not be considered effective if they remain theoretical. Practice is, then, more than necessary.

GENEARL CONCLUSION

GENEARL CONCLUSION

In essence, the present dissertation has been an endeavour to investigate second year LMD students' attitudes towards literature teaching methods. To this end, it has been quite methodological to, first, examine the students' general perceptions of learning literature. At a second phase, the study has examined the way literature courses are run. It has, then, cast light on the different teaching practices in the literature classroom spotting both the strengths and weaknesses.

Many conclusions can be drawn from the present work. Yet, the most important one is that much is awaiting teachers to inculcate in the EFL students a positive attitude towards the literary component of the English language. And, equally, much has to be done in engaging students with literature and, thus, creating an active learning environment.

Needless to recall, despite the common arguments that some researchers develop against the use of literature in the language classroom, literature, if adequately exploited, can play a significant role in language learning. In fact, the interface between language and literature is considered the richest vein of learning potential for students at different levels of language and of literary studies as well.

Based on the findings of the present research, a considerable number of students have shown a positive attitude towards studying literature. Such students seem to be well aware of the limitless benefit of literature in gaining proficiency in English. They also consider literature as an efficient avenue to get insight into the various aspects of the target culture. Moreover, they reckon the motivational role of literature towards better learning of the English language. This enthusiasm, one might assert, has to be further encouraged by teachers.

However, another significant number of students have reflected a lack of interest in literature. Regardless of the main factors that have shaped this negative stance, the teachers' task, one might think, is to find a way as how to alter it. This might be achieved, one might argue, if the teaching methodology fits the students' main needs and their major concerns. That is why the present work has, with scrutiny, examined the different teaching strategies that the teacher employs. The data collected throughout the study has revealed that these strategies reflected a traditional teacher-fronted instruction in the sense that the teacher tends to retreat into

teaching *about* literature: teaching historical/ cultural backgrounds, literary movements, biographies of authors and synopses of literary works. This does not mean, however, that background knowledge is not relevant or less important in approaching literature, but it should not overshadow the students' active role with the text in the classroom. Unfortunately, this teacher-led practice has generated negative attitudes among the students towards the way literature is being presented.

To move away from this traditional literature teaching, the researcher has strived to come up with some recommendations and suggestions that, hopefully, might reinforce positive and alter negative attitudes towards literature and its teaching. Our first recommendation concerns the text itself; the latter has to be carefully selected if the students are to develop empathy with literature. If the text meets the students' interests, this would motivate them to engage in extensive and independent reading.

As for the teaching methodology, our suggestion is to adopt a process teaching methodology that is, fundamentally, task based oriented; a methodology within which the students are expected to interact with the texts by doing. Down to earth, a methodology that is student-centered. The teacher, then, has to come down from

the pedestal, helping students play more active role in learning. This methodology also calls for more complex strategies: cooperative learning in particular. Our suggestion, then, is to make use of cooperative learning strategies namely literature circles: a learning technique that has proved very successful in engaging students with reading literature worldwide. Last but far from least, our suggested teaching frame work makes a place for technology in the literature classroom through the implementation of the filmed versions of literary works. This suggestion stems from the belief that film adaptations of literary works might reinforce the students understanding of literary aspects of the studied material, and can also ease the burden of conveying to the students the cultural aspects of the text.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE: The Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

I am presently conducting a research on EFL students' attitudes towards literature teaching methods. I would be very grateful if you could answer these questions. Your responses will be used for research only and will remain confidential.

1. Do you like reading English literature?

Yes   []   No []

2. What do you think about learning literature? You can tick more than one item

a. It helps me improve my proficiency in the English language. []

b. It helps increase cultural awareness between different cultures.[]

c. It provides fun. []

d. It is motivating. []

e. It is rewarding outside the classroom.

f. It is boring and waste of time. []

g. It is difficult because literary texts are difficult to comprehend. []

h. It is not important to me because it contributes nothing to my future professional career. []

Other:…………………………………………………………………….

3. What do the literature courses you are taking look like? Tick in the appropriate box.

a. Lectures led by the teacher followed by note taking.[]

b. A sort of group discussion. []

C. A sort of class discussion []

4. How do you find the texts you are dealing with? Tick in the appropriate box.

a) Very difficult []   b) fairly difficult []   c) easy []

5. How would you qualify the themes of the text you are dealing with?

a) Very interesting [] b) interesting c) quite interesting [] not interesting []

6. Does your teacher provide background information (author's biography/setting) about the text?

Yes []   No []

7. Do you find the background information useful to comprehend the text?

Yes []   No []

8. What sort of activities does your teacher devise around the text?

……………………………………………………………………

9. Do you work in groups in a literature course?

Always []   occasionally []   rarely []   never []

10. Do you like working in groups?
Yes []   No []
Why?..........................
11. How often are you asked to express your own opinion and your personal interpretation of the text?
Always []   sometimes []   rarely []   Never []
12. What is your teacher's reaction to your opinion and interpretation?
   a. S/he usually accepts wrong interpretations. []

   b. S/he usually rejects wrong interpretations. []

   c. S/he corrects wrong interpretations. []
  13. Do you like the way literature is taught?
      Yes []   No   []   neutral []

  14. In your opinion, how to make literature classes more
     interesting? (Please, write your suggestions in the form of
     notes).
  ……

                                  Thank you very much indeed

Appendix Two: Teachers' Interview

Dear Sir/Madame,

I am presently conducting a research on EFL students' attitudes towards literature teaching methods. Therefore, I would be very grateful if you could provide answers to my questions. Thank you very much in advance for your collaboration.

Mr. Mohammed KHELADI

Question 1: How long have you been teaching literature?

Question 2: How would you qualify literature teaching in an EFL context?

Question 3: What can you tell us about the main objectives you intend to achieve in teaching literature?

Question 4: Which literature teaching model do you adopt? Why?

Question 5: Do you involve your students in the choice of the text to be studied?

Question 6: What about the texts on the syllabus? Do you think that they match your students' actual level?

Question 7: Do you think the themes of the texts on the syllabus seem interesting to your students?

Question 8: Do you target developing your students' literary competence? If yes, how?

Question9: What techniques do you use in delivering your courses?

Question 10: Do you engage your students in group works?

Question 11: What activities do your literature courses include?

Question 12: How would you describe literature teaching at this level: teacher-centred or student-centred?

Question 13: Can you provide us with a summary of the major problems you usually encounter in teaching literature at this level?

Question 14: What about your students' motivation to study literature? Do they look forward to their literature courses?

Teachers' Answers Protocols
Respondent (01)

1. I am quite novice in teaching literature; I have almost an experience of two years.
2. Well, teaching literature is challenging; it puts you closer to the artistic side of the English language. But, it is also hard within some circumstances.
3. Generally speaking, my major purpose in teaching literature is to introduce the students to the target culture, discover the beauty of the world of 'imagination'. I want them to improve their language as well.
4. Personally, I adopt the cultural model; we are at a time where cultural awareness accounts a lot. And I feel that students have to get in touch with the aspects of the target culture.
5. No. We, literature teachers, together collaborate to opt for some texts.
6. Actually, the texts we opted for are difficult for the students. We did not expect this.
7. Well, some texts have a noticeable impact on the students, while others do not evoke the students' curiosity although they are masterpieces in both literature(s).
8. Of course, this is our job. We want to see our students dealing with literature with a great deal of confidence. I think that the students' literary competence can be enhanced if we, teachers, succeed to motivate them to read.
9. The predominant technique is lecturing; however, I do my best to involve them.
10. I don't involve the students in group works or other collaborative/cooperative learning techniques.
11. At this level, the major focus is to get the students decipher the text through literary analysis.
12. I cannot deny that literature courses are teacher-centred. The students are still novice in dealing with literature; they need be informed about it.
13. Many problems can face you as a teacher of literature. But I think the major problem is the students' low level of language proficiency; some of them misspell easy words. Adding to this, not all of them are motivated to read literature. Another issue is time; it is really a serious problem. I can also add that recently because of teachers' professional commitments, coordination among us is minimal.

14. As far as I see, only a minority of students seem to be really motivated to study literature.

Respondent (02)

1. I have been teaching literature for fifteen years.
2. To me, teaching literature is rewarding, but it is not as easy task.
3. In teaching literature, I seek to make the students embrace a new world full of beauty. As foreign language learners, I also want them to be aware of how the English language works in terms of structure. I want them to uncover how language can be literary. The cultural benefit of literature is also a major purpose.
4. I do not adopt a unique approach to literature; I prefer to use a mix of approaches.
5. No. text selection is a matter of a syllabus guidelines and a choice made by teachers at the very beginning of the academic year.
6. According to me the text on the syllabus are not very difficult.
7. It depends on the students, sometimes they find the texts interesting; other times no interest is aroused.
8. Yes, a teacher of literature is primarily concerned with inculcating in the students a kind of literary competence, though the term is a bit loaded. Personally speaking, I incite them to read.
9. I try to kill the deadly routine of lecturing by involving them through debates, but lecturing is still the predominant practice. The students need to be informed, I think.
10. Not in the classroom, but I ask them to do extended research outside the classroom.
11."Literary analysis" is what the students should be introduced to at this stage. The focus is on the literary aspects of the text.
12. Sincerely speaking, despite our efforts to involve the students in learning, teacher centredness is persistent.
13. Let us me put them in a chronological order. First, the time devoted to literature is insufficient. Second, some students low level of language. Third, some of them do not read a lot.
14. It depends on the level you are dealing with. You may encounter students highly motivated; others regretfully are not.

Respondent (03)

1. For twenty years now.

2. Literature is an art, and as you know, art calls for artists. I enjoy teaching this subject in spite of all the difficulties I may encounter.

3. Literature is the meeting ground of all sciences. So, if well exploited, the learner can benefit linguistically, culturally, motivationally, academically and even entertainingly. I try to make my students benefit from all what literature provides.

4. With today's students you sometimes shift to teaching language, not literature. No fixed approach is adopted.

5. Within the LMD system, the students have to be involved in learning; they are decision makers, but as far as literary text selection is concerned, it is a matter of teachers' choice.

6. Although I am not dealing with the second year level, I can judge that the texts are not very difficult.

7. It is a matter of the students' own tastes.

8. Absolutely, although this term is quite loaded, I think that a literature teacher has to help the student acquire literary competence. My job as a facilitator is to provide guidance; the student has to act.

9. In a lecture theatre, most of the time, literature teaching is unidirectional; i.e. the process is merely informative.

10. I don't involve them in group work; the teacher has to cover the syllabus. Group works are time consuming.

11. At the second year level, the focus is on analyzing the literary text. Students are required, at least, to spot the text-literary governing forces.

12. It is an undeniable fact.

13. A plenty of problems may hinder the process. Our students do little reading. Besides, the time constraints always lead to pseudo literature teaching.

14. It is a matter of self conviction. Some students show the good will to benefit from literature; and others are indifferent, not to say careless.

Appendix three: Classroom Observation Sheet

Elements of observation	Practical Observation
Setting	
Teacher attendance	
Students' attendance	
Materials	
Time	
Way of teaching (methodology)	
The approach /model	
Reading in class	
Activities around the texts.	
Group discussion	
Group works	
Students' participation	
Students' attitude and motivation to study literature	
Course general atmosphere	

الملخـــص

تتمحور هذه الدراسة حول طرق و كيفيات تدريس و تعلم مادة الأدب الإنجليزي لطلبة غير
الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية. و تهدف الرسالة للكشف عن اتجاهات طلبة السنة الثانية ل.م.د. نحو ما مدى
تعلم هذه المادة و كذا طرق تدريسها و كيفية تفعيل نجاعتها بواسطة وضع معادلة تنحو نحو تغير تعلم
هذه المادة من مقاربة يكون الأستاذ فيها طرفا كليا إلى مقاربة تعتمد على الكفاءات تجعل من الطالب
محورا أساسيا في عملية التعلم. و قد خلص البحث إلى النتائج التالية و هي أن للطلبة اتجاهات مختلفة نحو
تعلم لأدب و كذا طرق تعلمه، كما أثبتت الرسالة أن تدريس هذه المادة ما يزال مركزا على الأستاذ.
كما تضمن البحث بعض الاقتراحات الكفيلة بتغيير اتجاهات الطلبة نحو الإيجاب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الآداب – طرق تعلم و تدريس مادة الآداب – الاتجاهات

Résumé

Cette étude réside sur une approche pour mettre en œuvre l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de la littérature anglaise dont les objectifs principaux sont de donner des attitudes adéquates pour promouvoir l'enseignement de cette matière qui s'effectuait par une méthode ou l'enseignant est l'acteur principal pour une méthode alternative qui s'articule fondamentalement sur l'implication active de l'apprenant dans le processus d'apprentissage.

Mot clés: littérature – approches /méthodes – attitudes.

Abstract

The study investigates the teaching of literature in the EFL context. It attempts to elicit the students' attitudes towards literature and the different methods employed by teachers. The findings of the study indicate that students hold mixed feelings towards literature. The second finding is that literature teaching is still teacher-fronted. The study has also shown that a great number of the students have displayed their dissatisfaction with the way literature is being instructed. The recommendations put forward include an urgent need to more student-centred teaching philosophy that is basically task based oriented and that also calls for more cooperative learning. The suggestions, equally, make a place for technology in the literature classroom.

Key-words: literature – approaches /methods – attitudes.