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**Between Challenges and Expectations: EFL
Learners Reception of English Literary Texts
(student's perspective)**

**A case study: Master (I) students, Department of Letters and
English Language, UKM- Ouargla**

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Dedication

« Any job very well done that has been carried out by a person who is fully dedicated is always a source of inspiration »

Calos Ghosn

This study is whole heartedly dedicated to our beloved parents, who have been our source of inspiration and gave us strength when we thought of giving up, who continually provide their moral, spiritual, emotional, and financial support. To our brothers, sisters, relatives, friends, and classmates who shared their words of advice and encouragement to finish this study.

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Abstract

This study sheds light on the difficulties and challenges of learning English literature that may face English students at the University of Kasdi Merbah, Ouargla. The study is based on the responses of 7 undergraduate students (M1) to a questionnaire consisting of close-ended, multiple choices (quantitative data) and open-ended questions. The quantitative data is analyzed using the statistical analysis and the qualitative using thematic analysis. The majority of the students have positive perceptions towards literature integration in their study program. They show that it contributes to their language development in general and their vocabulary, speaking and reading skills in particular and novel is selected as the most beneficial literary genre for language development. Additionally, literature contributes to develop the learners' cultural awareness in general and helps to identify the similarities and differences between the English culture and the learners' own culture. The study also shows the contribution of literature to the learners' personal growth in terms of active participation in class activities, increasing their critical thinking and analytical skills and helps them to understand theirs and other people's experiences. The students are satisfied with the selected literary texts and topics and to some extent with the teaching methods, but they suggest more students' involvement. However, students face some difficulties, mostly language difficulty, that need to be taken into consideration. Generally, knowing the students' perceptions towards literature classes will be helpful to determine English language learners' genuine needs, motivation or challenges and issues in relation to the use of literary texts as teaching materials and to develop a suitable teaching approach to use the literary texts. Thus, the main objective of the study is to identify the most frequent challenges and obstacles encountering M1 students at Kasdi Merbah University along the English literature teaching-learning process from M1 students' perspectives and suggesting some potential solutions to them. The findings showed a variety of challenges that may face M1 students during the learning of English literature which include lack of vocabulary that hinders EFL students from understanding literary texts; lack of background knowledge and cultural background which results lack of understanding of literary texts, and texts which are not culturally related and difficult reduce students' interest in reading and interpreting literary texts. However, most of the challenges were in line with the challenges facing similar institutions in many parts of the globe.

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List of Abbreviations

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Second Language

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELD : English Literature Departement

M1 : master one

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General Introduction

Language as a phenomenon is the fundamental means of communication. It is considered as the heritage of humankind. In fact, it is a language in its distinctive shape or form that distinguishes the human race from other living creatures. Language is the source of comprehension, which sets one society apart from another. On the other hand, literature is the source of inspiration and expression of social, philosophical, theological, or whatsoever sort of ideas. Literature provides channels for expressing thoughts, emotions, and feelings. Literature has moral, aesthetic values, as well as linguistic values in which speakers also share their interaction with their surroundings and other speakers of the language in a variety of aesthetic and sensible way. Literature in the EFL classroom provides context that is similar to real-life situations. It involves learners by appealing to their imagination and developing their critical thinking. Also, students get an opportunity to develop a variety of vocabulary by reading dialogues and understanding a literary text. According to (Healy, 2010), “literature enhances the creative capability of learners and develops in them the awareness of the culture of the target language”.

The English Language has a huge heritage of literature both oral and written. Unfortunately, hunting for this treasure of literature is not as easy as it might seem for EFL learners due to linguistic variations, language complexity, and cultural factors. Every community has its socio-cultural characteristics that influence the process of learning English literature in a way or another and adds to the challenges of learning literature.

Reading a novel, a story or a poem is something most people do voluntarily for pleasure and enjoyment. Hence, undertaking such an act is expected to be easy, enjoyable, and stress-free. However, when literature is to be taught as a component in language programs with specific goals and ends, great challenges appear in the way and the task of learning becomes harder and tougher for most EFL learners across the globe. Since literature is a significant component in language curriculums, this analytic study aimed at identifying the most significant impediments and challenges encountering M1 students when learning Literature at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, the causes behind their existence to pave the way for suggesting some strategies to overcome them. Knowing the perceptions and perspectives of M1 students towards the role of literature in developing their language proficiency, cultural awareness and developing their skills are really helpful to determine English language learners' genuine needs, motivation or challenges and issues concerning

literature classes as teaching materials and to develop a suitable teaching approach to use the literary texts.

Thus, the current study investigates the challenges of learning literature at the university of Kasdi Merbah from students' perspectives and aims to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the perceptions of M1 students at Kasdi Merbah University about literature and its relevance to their language learning, cultural awareness, and personal development?
- 2) What are English M1 students' perceptions towards teaching methods and text selection?
- 3) To what extent are English M1 students engaged and involved in reading the English language literature?
- 4) Are culture, values, attitudes and perspectives that are 'entrenched' in literature, syllabi and examination papers relevant to the student's life experiences?
- 5) What are EFL students' objectives behind learning English literature?
- 6) What are the challenges do EFL learners encounter in the pursuit of achieving these goals?
- 7) What can be done to overcome these challenges and facilitate learning English literature in the Algerian universities in general and specifically at Ouargla Kasdi Merbah university?

Chapter one

Literature Review

Introduction

It is widely accepted that literature has recently revived a coveted position within the classroom of foreign languages. Although much is said and written about literature's relevance to language learning, the latter marks its presence worldwide in the various existing educational EFL curricula. On the other hand, it is considered challenging how authentic literature can be with students coming from a non-English educational major with different language proficiency levels and different cultural backgrounds.

Undeniably, teaching literature in a foreign language is a challenging activity, requiring both specialization and versatility. On this basis, the overall objective of the chapter is to unveil the specificities of teaching literature in the EFL context and the challenges that face EFL students during the learning process. An attempt is made to explore in detail the theoretical aspects of teaching literature in a non-native setting. To this end, many sensitive issues and influencing variables in teaching literature will be dealt with. The intention is to point to the sensitivity of teaching literature to non-native students with all the implications that this process carries.

Key words: literature, EFL, challenge, culture.

1. Literature in EFL Classes

It is generally accepted that language and literature are closely related, since literature is ultimately a function of language. Language is, in truth, the only medium of literature, and this latter, in essence, is the most advanced use of language. It is what makes the relationship between the two compatible in the way that the one enriches and glorifies the other. This relationship has been metaphorically described by Brumfit and Carter (1986) who consider language and literature as 'allies'. Also, Lado (1964) describes language and literature as one universe and cannot be separated from each other, he also defines language as the component of expressions and literature. Moreover, Ogunnaike (2002) says that through the experiences, it can be concluded that both language and literature are inter-related. In addition, Lobo Popoola (2010) also describes literature as the foundation of language learning; and that through

literature, different cultures could be identified. Language is, as has been pointed out, the source of communication, and literature is identified as cultural transmission from generation to generation. It can be said that literature is the legacy of any culture that can be expressed in a language. With this argument, it can be argued that learning literature has such a beneficial impact on language learning that it cannot be separated.

In this regard, it is commonly argued by researchers (Durant, 1993, 158-60; Brusch, 1989, 9-17) that there have been substantial improvements in the relationship between literature and language learning. So long, language teachers have worked hard to incorporate the outside world into their classrooms (Wilkins, 1976), but previously literature was taught as the extinction of information rather than a critical part of language learning (Delanoy, 1997). The Grammar-Translation Method was considered to be a preparation for the study of literary works (Kelly, 1969). For this reason, the use of literature was important primarily for teaching the grammar of a foreign language. The 1970s and 1980s saw new developments of language learning and a distinct pattern of language learning (Sivasubramaniam, 2006). Literary texts have not only been used for grammar-oriented and dictionary-based instructional methods, but also been used as a medium of creative, engaging and conversation exercises (Collie and Slater, 1987; Duff and Maley, 1990; McRae, 1991). Communicative language learning as a recent method has illustrated the need for language learning tools that learners can perceive as emotionally rewarding and intellectually challenging (introductory chapters in Brumfit & Carter, 1986; Widdowson, 1975). This approach has increased the utility of literary texts in promoting language learning practices (Duff and Maley, 1990). It also motivated students to develop skills in the use of the target language by supplying them with emotional participation in the target language (McRae 1991).

2. Why Teaching Literature?

Literature teaching was known with rich long history, and a relatively recognized body of knowledge has also developed in the discipline. This lengthy history has contributed a comparatively systematic understanding about why literature must be taught to EFL students.

In order to learn a language, one must study reading, writing, listening and speaking; the four skills of the English language, all of which will be found in literature. Moreover, reading the literature educates the whole individual (lázár1993) brings joy and purifies feelings.

Literature has the ability to inspire learning, to inspire intellectual creativity, and to deepen one's comprehension of the essence of truth. Equally the role of literature is significant in supplying its readers with a wide range of experiences. A work of literature, be it fiction, verse or play, has the ability to introduce the reader to various countries, times, cultures, values and societies separate from his own. Reading literature is so inspiring that one will learn from the knowledge that he / she will never have access to in everyday life. In addition, the literature's excellent ability to catch and inspire EFL student's imagination acts as a perfect way of embracing others, inferring their emotions and empathizing with them. (Diyanni 2002). The following is a detailed account of the importance of literature in the foreign language classroom.

2.1. Linguistic Benefit

Literary texts provide a rich source of linguistic information that can enable learners to develop the four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. They also contribute to the exemplification of grammatical constructs and the introduction of new terminology, as Povey points out that connotative terminology and figurative use of expression in literary texts may well lead to the development of the student's expression.

According to Lazar (1993), there is no limit to the linguistic benefit of applying literature in the context of EFL. She believes that the linguistic diversity of the various literary genres (novels, fiction, plays) encourages the efficient learning of English because literature is an authentic linguistic medium that all too frequently offers significant and unforgettable contexts for language learning. Indeed, as Parkinson and Thomas (2000) have argued, the literary text is an example of excellent prose, which gives linguistic complexity its fullest significance. The use of literature in the classroom of EFL facilitates the extension and improvement of learners' comprehension of vocabulary and syntax. In the same way of thinking, McKay (1982:531) accepts that Literature's role in language learning, as she writes that literature,

“can be useful in developing linguistic knowledge both on a usage and use knowledge level... it may increase their motivation to interact with a text and thus, ultimately increase their reading proficiency.”

In a very similar way, Brumfit and Carter (1986) consider the literature to be path of contact between the reader and the target language; hence, they are of the opinion that:

“Literary texts provide examples of language resources being used to

the full, and the reader is placed in an active interactional role in working with and making sense of this language.”

Recognizing the vital role of literature in broadening the linguistic repertoire of foreign-language learners, Elliot (1990), assumes that literature is the most efficient route to mastering English. Similarly, the importance of literature as a source of knowledge and a medium of language learning was also stressed by Goatly (2000), who strongly believes that reading literature encourages both language skills due to the fact that the language of literature is focused on implicit vocabulary usage and complicated syntax. In short, literature, being an authentic sample of the target language, is an invaluable source for enhancing the linguistic skills of students through its various stylistic features. Therefore, familiarizing language learners with different literary genres can improve their linguistic knowledge.

2.2. Cultural Benefit

Undoubtedly, mastering a foreign language cannot be separated from Learning the target culture because the two entities are fused and strongly intertwined (Kramsch, 1993). In the case of the EFL, however, the situation is somewhat more complicated because foreign language learners have little or no contact with the target language group. This means that foreign language learners have less opportunity to interact with members of the foreign language community. This is a good argument for the inclusion of literature in the EFL classroom to help learners assimilate the target community. In this very particular sense, Lazar (1993:16) argues that,

“Literature can provide students with access to the culture of the people whose language they are studying.”

Lazar's opinion is focused on the idea that the study of literature may well make it easier for a foreign language learner to become better aware of the social, political and historical contexts that the text represents and, thus, to obtain the full understanding of the meaning it conveys. Stressing the role of literature as a medium for achieving cultural values. Povey (1972), suggests that literature is invaluable to help learners of foreign languages understand and respect cultural values and practices of the target language culture that are so frequently alien to them. Accordingly, he finds literature to be the most effective means to transcend cultural distinctions and thereby to build a sense of empathy against otherness. Claiming that literature and culture are inseparable, Kramsch (1993:175) accordingly opines that through literature,

“students are given access to a world of attitudes and values, collective imaginings and historical frames of reference that constitute the memory of a people or a speech community.”

2.3. Motivational Benefit

The different literary genres provide an enticing learning framework which is likely to encourage the reader's interest in gaining empathy with the content of the text. In other words, the creative delight of literature serves a strong weapon and a guiding force to elicit in the reader differentiated emotions and feelings. This idea has been shown into play by Elliot (1990:197) who argues that:

“Literature embodies the aesthetic qualities of the language at its best and expresses through them powerful thoughts and emotions...literature will only be effective if students can genuinely engage with its thoughts and emotions and appreciates its aesthetic qualities”.

Indeed, the specificities of the literary text and its aesthetic virtues have the power to stimulate curiosity and attention among students that help them to be more engaged with literature and achieve their personal involvement. According to Lazar (1993) and Carter (1995) the literary text is highly exciting and pleasurable because apart from its pedagogic qualities, it reaches the student's imagination, dreams and fantasies. Collie and Slater (1987:07) write that:

“Engaging imaginatively with literature enables learners to shift the focus of their attention beyond the more mechanical aspects of the foreign language system.”

Similarly, Lazar (1993, p. 19) thinks that:

“Literature stimulates the imagination of EFL students, to develop their critical abilities, and to increase their emotional awareness”.

Literature generally provides common subjects and topics that are important to the students' own experience and can be a strong way to gain inspiration in the ELT classrooms. Recently, there has been a resurgence of interest in literature as a realistic, inspiring and productive platform for language learning. Thus, literary texts can improve the enthusiasm of the EFL student. Literary texts are thus subject to numerous and real interpretations. Students can link their own lives to ideas, events, and things found in literary texts. Moreover, Literature can also develop learners' pleasure in reading. When EFL learners enjoy reading literature and have encouragement to engage with a text, they will improve their reading proficiency. Literature,

thus, has a wider function because it fosters personal development in the readers. According to Carter and Long (1991, p. 3):

“It helps learners to grow as individuals as well as in their relationships with the people and institutions around them.”

From these various discussions, we can conclude that the use of literature yields many benefits. The most important justification is that literature can educate the whole person (Lazar, 1993, p. 19). Literature sharpens linguistic and cognitive skills and provides for some deepening of the students’ understanding of the human condition.

3. Literature, Language, and Culture: The Relationship

The relationship between culture, language and literature is extremely entrenched, and it is so strong to the extent that a change in one ultimately affects the other two. Culture shows itself in everything: language, literature, humanistic discipline, verbal and non-verbal behaviour of individuals, etc. People don’t only represent but also embody their respective cultures. For Lado (1964), to experience a literary work, it is necessary to understand the language in which it is expressed, the cultural meanings which it contains, and the circumstances surrounding it. According to Ibid (151):

“since literature is expressed through language, one cannot understand it unless he comprehends the meanings of the culture expressed by the words of the language, and unless the values and cultural experience against which the literature is written are also understood.”

3.1. The Relationship Between Culture and Language

It is normally acknowledged that language is an aspect of the culture and that it assumes a significant part of it. Some social researchers think that without language, culture would not be conceivable. Nida (1998: 29) argue that:

“Language and culture are two symbolic systems. Everything we say in language has meanings, designative or sociative, denotative or connotative. Every language form we use has meanings, carries meanings that are not in the same sense because it is associated with culture and culture is more extensive than language.”

There are not only several interconnections between the two (language and culture) but a lot of history, and that what makes the expression “language is culture, and culture is language” extremely expressive. Language and culture developed together, affecting the lives of people just as much as one another. Language at the same time reflects the lifestyle and is affected and formed by it. In the broadest sense, it is likewise the representative portrayal of people, since it includes their chronicled and social foundations, just as their way to deal with culture and their methods of living and thinking. In other words, language orchestrates the culturally influenced types of thought, attitude, and action of the group. It encodes these patterns by propositional, expressive, presumptive and evoked meanings. Brown (1994: 165) portrays the two (language and culture) as complicatedly mingled components, so that one cannot detach them without losing the meaning and worth of either. In a word, culture and language are indistinguishable.

Some people claim that language is a mirror of society, in the sense that it is a mirror of history. In other words, every language directly reflects the culture it serves - a language either enriches or impoverishes the culture it serves.

‘The iceberg’ a metaphor was used to describe the relationship between the two (language and culture), where language is the noticeable part and culture is the unseen part hidden beneath the surface. That is to say, that culture and language are inseparable, and it is this inseparability that gives English language teachers the chance to acquaint their learners with various cultures and different varieties of the English language.

3.2. The Relationship Between Culture and Literature

Literature and culture are two inseparable subjects. Once we mention the culture, the literature can also appear unconsciously, that is to say that the relationship between literature and culture and also the impact of these two on each other is rich and indisputable. In reality, cultures consist of peoples’ values, customs of every community, and literature on the other hand, in terms of various literature, shows these elements. So, literature deals with community and has an influence on culture. This interaction between culture and literature is the product of culture involvement in several areas like (traditional thoughts, and human perspectives), and during this process the literature acts as a strong instrument. Actually, this interaction both improve the culture and literature sublimity, human beings got to both literature and cultural values which are the outcomes of their views. In fact, the

literature is not only affected by society, but also it effects on society because the art not only reconstructs the life, but also forms it.

Moreover, literature is seen as a mirrored image of culture and society, portraying people's ideas and dreams set in certain time and space frameworks within the most creative and imaginary way. It both depicts and inspires social changes and is usually treated as a reputable source of cultural representation. Following Hanauer (2001) argues that literature may be a valuable source of cultural knowledge precisely because it does present a private interpretation of the life and values because the author of the literary composition experiences them. Thus, Cruz argued that the study of literature allows people to develop new ideas and ethical standpoints and may help individuals to present themselves as educated members of society, and he focused also thereon studying literature are often an enriching eye-opening experience. Literature is probably one of the best ways to understand the culture and traditions of the target language, especially in those cases in which a visit or a stay is virtually impossible. According to Carter this enables students,

“to understand and appreciate cultures and ideologies different from their own in time and space, and to come to perceive traditions of thought and feeling and artistic form in those cultures”. (Carter, 1991: 2)

4. Expectations and Attitudes of M1 Students towards Learning English Literature

As has been noted previously in this chapter literature is considered as a crucial part of the EFL classes programs. Understanding student satisfaction during the learning process within the literature classes has consequences on the format of the courses delivered, and for universities, it is important to ensure the success of the programs. Expectations are considered as a serious link to evaluating student satisfaction. Moreover, students' expectations are generally related to their needs and interests, there are some students who choose to join the English department at the university to reach a specific objective or dream in their life. When they get their license and having a level that allows them to follow their studies, some EFL students select literature and civilization branch to reach out a little further and enjoy the wider thoughts and the emotional pleasures available in the recorded thoughts and experiences of others. While others join it expecting to have

the freedom to interpret the selected literary texts hoping that it would be in group or class discussions. This work aims at unveiling these expectations.

5. Challenges of Learning English Literature

Despite the benefits of the employment of literature within the language classroom which are mentioned within the previous section of this work, there are some major difficulties that need to be taken into consideration when teaching literature in an EFL context. The problem usually arises from students' inability to understand some literary texts due to the language used in these texts, the length of the text, and the cultural issues. What follows is a detailed account of these challenges.

5.1. Language Complexity

Language is the most familiar problem faced when using literary texts. Many EFL students find literature as an obstacle, since the literary language is seen as incomprehensible. This challenge is closely connected to the nature of English Literature that pertains to a totally different historical, geographical, ethnical, philosophical and religious background, leading to a great difficulty in understanding, imagining and interacting with it. English literature contains a considerable amount of difficult vocabulary, some of them are obsolete. Moreover, some grammatical structures are often considered to be too complicated. As Widdowson (1982) states, literature can provide 'misleading models' and this disruptive use of language, stimulating and refreshing for native speakers, might lead to possible confusions in case of EFL learners. Also, some ideas and concepts in poetry are so complex to the extent that they need to be explained and illustrated so that they can be clear and understandable to the students, as well as the diversity in the styles of the English authors requires the students to adapt themselves to it. EFL students frequently find that the language used in some literary texts does not adhere to more traditional usages, but violates and even distorts established concepts in new and unexpected ways.

5.2. Length of the Text

The length of the text is additionally considered by some scholars one among the main difficulties. Although most of the learners feel anxious when they are exposed to long texts, there are some others who find shorter texts harder to handle with, according to Maley and Duff (1990,7),

“they don't offer extended contextual support and repetition which longer texts do”.

(Duff & Maley, 1990: 7)

5.3. Cultural Issues

Cultural issues also end in some problems when it involves the use of literary texts in EFL classes. Consistent with McKay (2001), literature is soaked with cultural notions which may annoy and discourage the unexperienced reader. For Duff and Maley (1990), cultural aspects might present difficulties to the point of making it clearly impossible for an outsider to completely comprehend and share the scope of references of an insider. “Undesirable cultural connotations” conveyed by some literary texts may additionally restrain the utilization of certain texts (Collie & Slater, 1987: 2). Especially when there's no agreement among language teachers and designers of materials on the question of the culture —L1 Vs. L2— EFL students should be exposed to.

5.4. Text Selection

Text selection is also considered a hard task for both teachers and learners. According to khatib, Rezaei, Derakhshan (2011;204), many factors should be taken into consideration when selecting a text like student's age, gender, background knowledge, and language proficiency. McKay also believes that language teachers and educators should give appropriate consideration to pick the foremost suitable literary works. There are, of course, many authentic texts written within the target language which aren't appropriate for the extent of EFL students at both of the culture and linguistic levels. These factors are important as Lima (2005:186) points out that,

“teachers' desire to supply students with a literary experience can also end in a source of conflict just because students don't have the linguistic, literary and cultural competence to tackle the text” (Lima, 2005: 186).

6. What Should Be Done to Minimize the Challenges

6.1. Approaches to Enhance Students Cultural Awareness

Considering culture's important role in understanding literary texts, a more practical improvement of the literature teaching pedagogy is to bridge the cultural gaps between the readers and the literary works studied. Specifically, the subsequent approaches may be applied to facilitate cultural understandings of literature texts: (a) consider readers' cultural

context; (b) provide students with opportunities to watch and observe characters' experiences or provide access to the first-hand resources that would reflect the authentic culture within the text; (c) orient students to exploring a specific cultural issue or theme after an in-depth reading of 1 or more literary works; and (d) support students' inquiry towards a specific culture and facilitate cross-cultural communication within the learning process.

To sum up, students will learn the language quickly and in a better manner by learning the culture of the target language, which is English, since that information will familiarize students to a good degree with the English language. In fact, cultural understanding as a method of teaching literature in professional practice is essential to be considerate from language teachers when dealing with literature in ELT classes. The importance of using approaches of cultural understanding is as follows: First, it could demonstrate a form of unique cultural value that may not occur to students. The attitude that each literary text gives to students has to some degree special culturally accurate characteristics. Second, it encourages students to explore a multiplicity of cultural perspectives.

6.2. The Major Criteria That Should be Taken into Consideration to Select the Literary Texts

The ELT experts suggest some criteria that should be taken into consideration while selecting any material for an EFL class. And when it's about selecting any literary text for a communicative classroom in an EFL context, it noticeably necessitates more care and interest. For instance, McKay (1982:531) attributed the success of implementing literature within the classroom to the appropriateness and suitability of the teaching materials being used; she opines that:

“the key to success in using literature in the ESL class seems to me to rest in the literary works that are selected”.

Lazar also, (1993, cited in Alam, 2015) opines that

“students' cultural background, their linguistic proficiency, literary background, length of the text, the text's exploiting ability and fitting with the syllabus must be

considered before selecting the literary composition in the language classroom” (pp. 112- 113).

Other researchers like Collie and Salter (1987) also suggest more or less equivalent sorts of criteria to be considered before choosing any literary text for language classes like literary text’s ability to motivate the learners’ personal involvement and interest; texts relevant to life experiences, emotions, or dreams of the language learner. Generally teaching and reading literature in language classes will certainly encounter difficulties, especially in EFL contexts, unless the above-mentioned criteria are carefully considered before selecting any literary text.

However, in spite of the challenges; the advantages and justifications for incorporating literature in EFL classes under these circumstances are several for instance it enables the young learners in developing critical thinking, analytical ability, and intercultural awareness also as well as help them to enhance communicative competence. This is a brief explanation of the main parameters and criteria for text selection frequently discussed by authorities on teaching literature.

Conclusion

The present chapter has explored the principles of learning English literature. It aimed at highlighting the importance of literature and its major benefits in the classroom at the linguistic, cultural, and motivational levels. Additionally, an account has been made on the main obstacles and challenges that are likely to hinder the successful reception of literary texts within foreign language classrooms. In other words, the chapter investigates the main challenges and difficulties that encounter EFL students while studying English literature for instance low language proficiency and unfamiliarity with the cultural and social background of the text. Moreover, issues related to the text selection such as the level of linguistic and stylistic difficulty as well as the degree of cultural (un)familiarity to be important subjects which impact productivity learning English literature. To have a more comprehensive understanding of learning English literature issues, some important topics have been raised. These include text selection, literary appreciation, the relationship between language culture and literature. Finally, the discussed issues in this chapter will be investigated and explored in the following chapter on the basis of M1 English students’ responses and perspectives.

Chapter two:

Methodology

Introduction:

This section presents the methodology and research method chosen to conduct the research entitled: Between challenges and expectations EFL learners' reception of English literary texts. Creswell (2009) emphasizes the importance of researcher's justifications for selecting a research methodology and method which would base on the research problem and the researcher's personal experiences. The study adopts mixed methodology using structured questionnaire containing open ended questions, multiple choice, and close ended questions for data collection. Seven master one students from Kasdi Merbah university of Ouargla were asked and the collected data were synthesized, and analyzed with the purpose of finding out about the main challenges and obstacles encountering EFL students in general and specifically English Master one students in the process of learning English literature at the University of Kasdi Merbah. Thus, the aim of this research is also to suggest some solutions that may contribute in reducing these difficulties as well as in facilitating leaning English literature.

I. Participants:

The whole population include 97 Master one English students that study at Kasdi Merbah University. However, Only English master one student that are specialized in English literature and civilization were chosen since our research is related to literature topics. Thus, the sample of the study consists only of 7 students. It is a group composed of 4 males and 3 females. The data was collected during the academic year (2019- 2020). This study investigates the major challenges. They were given a questionnaire for the purpose of collecting data as much as possible to examine the major difficulties that may face M1 English students in learning English Literature which may be helpful in suggesting some solutions and keys that might overcome these problems.

- The demographic information and the number of the participants are presented in table 1.

II. Data collection:

➤ **Instruments:**

The research instrument used in this study to collect the perceptions of the students toward literature classes is a questionnaire (attached in appendix A). Questionnaires are designed to allow the collection of reliable and valid data. According to Nunan (2005) using questionnaires would enable researchers to collect data in the field settings, and the data themselves are more amenable to qualification. Also, they are administered to groups and provide information about participants' way of thinking. Additionally, "A questionnaire is relatively economical, has standardized questions, can ensure anonymity, and questions can be written for a specific purpose" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: 238). Since the population of the current study is a large one, a questionnaire is one of the best tools used to collect data needed through a questionnaire.

The questionnaire consists of three parts: part one (close-ended), part two (multiple choices) and part three (open-ended) for gathering qualitative and quantitative data. However, some points are designed on the basis of the purpose and context of the study and also on the basis of the knowledge developed through literature review.

The closed-ended part of the questionnaire comprises 18 items which are responded by a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to uncertain. This part is distributed on the following themes: literature classes contribution to develop language proficiency (items 1-7), literature classes contribution to enrich cultural awareness (items 8-9), literature classes contribution to the overall personal development or growth (items 10-15) and the last theme text selection and teaching methods (items 16-18). The multiple-choice questions (items 19-34) have the general theme perceptions towards the relevance of literature to education. The students are given freedom to choose more than one choice and to write down their own choices if there are any based on their preferences in order to get as much information as needed and to know their perceptions. Secondly, in the option part of the questionnaire, the item is written along with the choices and this gives students more opportunity to comprehend the subject and respond more comprehensively to the items.

The open-ended questions are mainly about how to make literature classes more motivating in the view of the participants, the difficulties they face in literature classes, and what literature added to their education linguistically, culturally and personally. The purpose behind using open-ended questions is not for statistical analysis but to give details (Gorard, 2006, as cited in Wasti, 2016). Furthermore, the open-ended question is an excellent method

when clarifying the perceptions of respondents because it gives them space to write down their own perspectives on aspects being asked (Wasti, 2016). This sort of data helps the researcher to collect subjective, in-depth and context-specific perceptions and interpretations from the participants of the study (Cohen et al., 2007). To add more, the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended part, assists the researcher to collect as well as generalize the perceptions of a large population of participants (Morrison, 2007). All in all, the open-ended questions help to further elucidate the participants views on the subject.

➤ **Data Collection Procedures:**

We made strategic choices in order to determine where to implement our questionnaire, and since our research is related to literature subjects, we've selected English Master one students that are specialized on English literature and civilization and they are more concerned with these kinds of researches. However, we found some difficulty to reach enough number of students to answer the questionnaire because of the bad circumstances caused by The Covid 19 Pandemic, but thanks to our supervisor Dr. HALIMI who facilitated the process and enabled us to be in touch with a specific number of M1 students that are chosen as a sample for the study.

It is very important to mention, ahead of the data collection, all students were informed of the purpose of the study. Besides, they were also informed of anonymity issues too and data collected would be just used for research purposes. Then the questionnaire was administrated and was explained clearly as it is consisted of three parts and the arrangement of each part was different from the other.

III. Data analysis:

➤ **Data Analysis Procedures**

The study employed a mixed method approach for analyzing the data because of the different sets of data (qualitative and quantitative) obtained from the participants. A mixed method approach is a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research “techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language” in one study (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.17 as cited in Wasti, 2016, p. 63). The two methods are used for deeper investigation and finding of the area of study.

The quantitative data gathered through the questionnaire (namely part one and two) was analyzed using the statistical analysis. In this regard, Morrison (2007) mentions one of the advantages of the quantitative method saying that this method assists the researcher to gather and generalize the opinions of big numbers of populations. This is called generalizability which is one of the points of maintaining validity.

The data obtained from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire was analyzed using qualitative data analysis. Qualitative data analysis **“is a matter of interpretation especially the researcher’s interpretation of what respondents and participants say and do”** (Gibbs, 2007: p.7). In qualitative research, a researcher commits to view the social reality through the eyes of respondents and participants (ibid). The qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions was coded based on themes then prepared for analysis in terms of frequency using excel. The process is called thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is defined as the process of encoding qualitative information (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 4 as cited in Baba, 2008). In other words, the process involves codes that are generated based on the development of themes. The Qualitative approach is used for the following reasons:

1. It helps gathering subjective and in-depth as well as context specific information from the respondents (Co- hen et al., 2007).
2. When it comes to analysing the interpretations and perceptions of a reality, these kinds of data give the re- searcher a more comprehensive picture of the issue to be studied (Morrison, 2007).

The exploratory nature of this approach assists the re- searcher to explore those areas which lack existing literature and research (Creswell, 2005, as cited in Wasti, 2016, p. 66). Because the perceptions of students in the Kurdish EFL context are left unexplored, it seems wise to adapt this approach to uncover the issue of literature teaching and learning in the present context.

➤ **Discussion and Results**

This section is devoted to the presentation of results of the present research, which aims at analysing the data obtained that could answer the research questions. Data obtained from M1 English students’ questionnaires will be analysed and presented.

The findings of the classroom of the survey questionnaire were analysed and classified into sections. The close-ended items of the questionnaires were presented in tables and charts, and multiple-choice items were also presented in tables. For the open-ended responses, a content analysis was conducted. They were classified into different categories and presented in tables.

This chapter is divided into three major sections:

- 1- Presentation and analysis of Learners' Responses to the first part of the questionnaire.
- 2- Presentation and Analysis of Leaners' Responses to the second part of the questionnaire.
- 3- Presentation and analysis of Learners' Responses to the last part of the questionnaire.

• **Students' Demographics :**

Gender	number
Male	4
Female	3

Table 01: students' respondents' numbers according to their gender

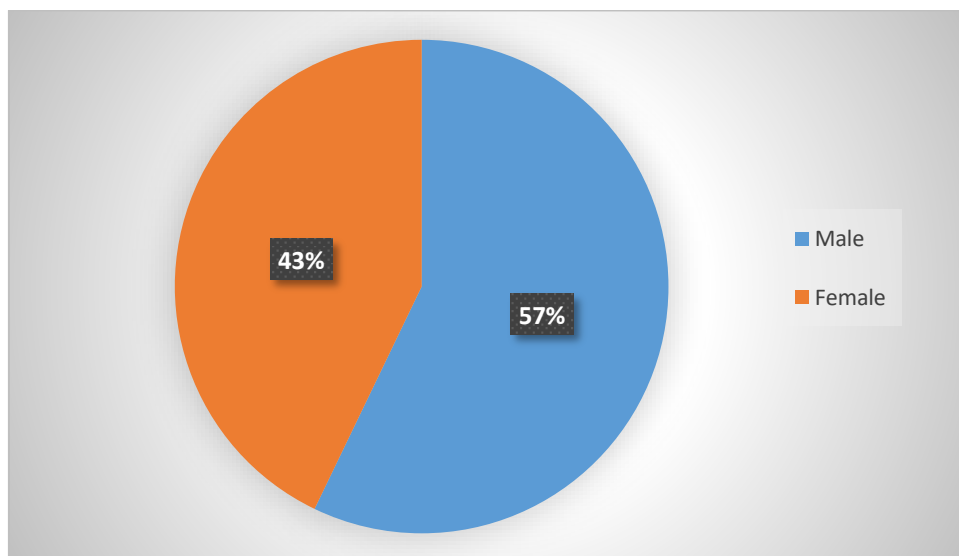


Figure 01: students' respondents' numbers according to their gender

A.Part One: Presentation and analysis of Learners’ Responses to the first part of the questionnaire

- **Students’ perceptions toward literature classes in developing their language proficiency or development:**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	uncertain
1. Studying literature increases my interest to learn English language	3	2	1	0	1
2. My knowledge and use of grammar have improved as a result of work done in literature classes	1	4	2	0	0
3. English literature helps me to improve English language vocabulary	0	6	1	0	0
4. Literature classes helps me to understand the symbols and meanings of English texts easily	1	5	1	0	0
5. My reading skills has improved as a result of the work done in literature classes	4	2	1	0	0
6. My speaking skill has improved as a result of the work done in literature classes	1	4	2	0	0
7. My listening skill has improved as a result of the work done in literature classes	0	5	2	0	0

Table 02: Students’ perceptions toward literature classes in developing their language proficiency or development

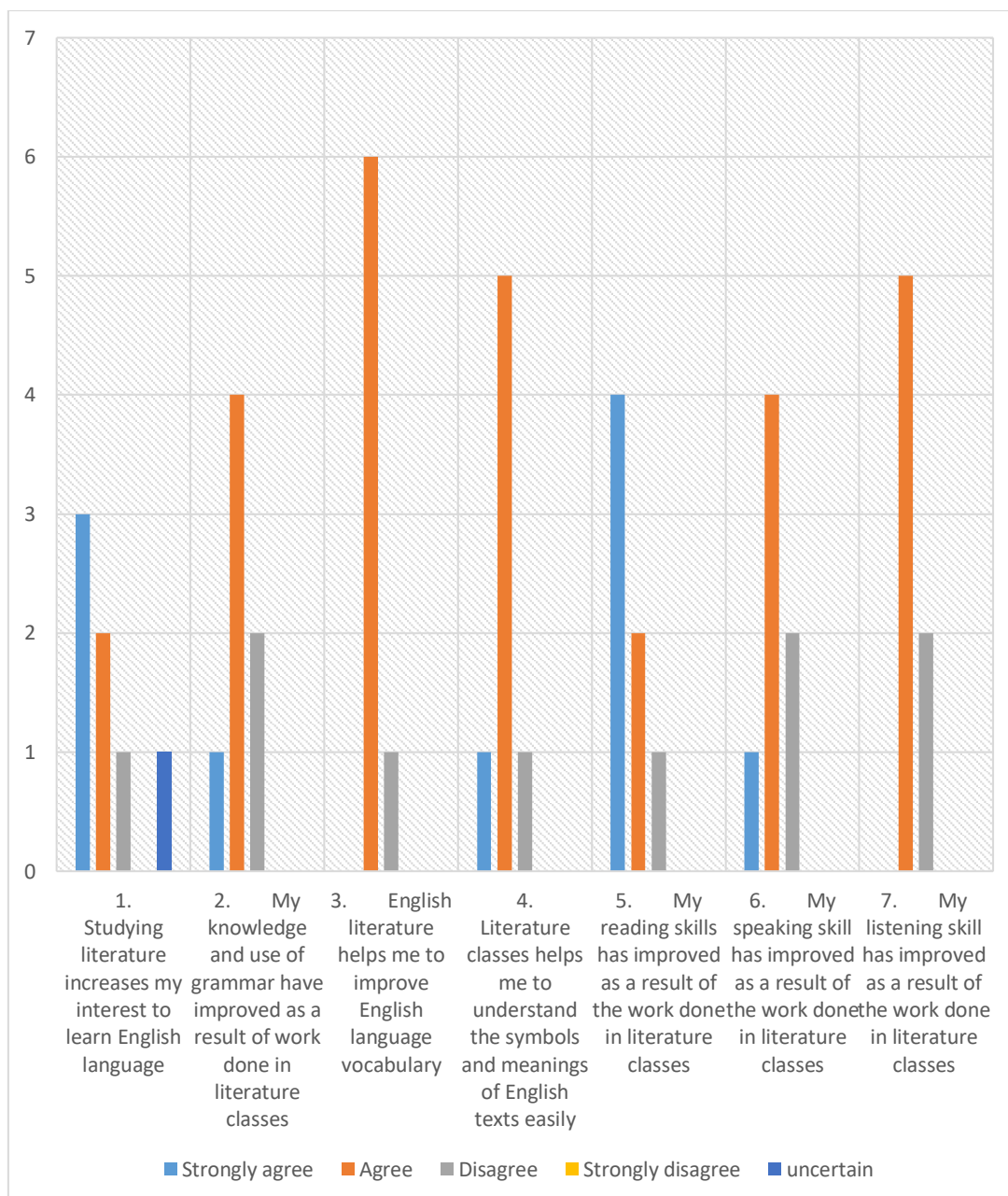


Figure 02: Students' perceptions toward literature classes in developing their language proficiency or development

Items	Number of students	percentage
32 . Do you think that literature should be used in language learning?		
a. Yes	5	71%
b. No	0	0%
c. I don't mind	2	29%
33. Which type or genre of literature do you benefit the most from when developing your language skills?		

a. poetry	1	11%
b. drama	0	0%
c. novel	6	67%
d. literary criticism	2	22%
34. What language skill (s) does study literature help improve specifically?		
a. speaking	3	21%
b. listening	0	0%
c. reading	5	36%
d. writing	6	43%

Table 03: students' responses to items 32- 33-34 related to the contribution of literature to develop students' language proficiency

This section which is identified by items 1-7 from the first part of the questionnaire provides students perceptions towards the relevance of literature to their language learning. The table (2) and the graph above show the students responses to items 1-7 related to the contribution of literature to develop students' language proficiency

The table shows that the majority of the responses to this theme fall above the midpoint of the scale which means that students perceive it positively. Vocabulary improvement through literature classes gets the highest mean 85% followed by understanding symbols and meaning in literary texts as well as improving listening and speaking skills 71% and 57% of the participants find that literature helps them to improve grammar, speaking and reading skills. Whereas 42% of respondents indicates that studying Literature increases their interest to learn English language.

Items 32, 33 and 34 from part two of the questionnaire are also related to students' language development through literature classes. The responses are presented in table 3.

The table indicates that a large number of informants representing 71% agree that literature should be used in their language learning. Besides, a significant number of students representing 67% of the informants choose novel as the most beneficial genre in developing their overall language proficiency. 22% ticked literary criticism. Poetry ticked by 11% percent of the students respectively. However, all participants find that drama doesn't contribute in developing their language proficiency. Finally, the results show that writing (43%) and reading skills (36%) are mostly improved through studying literature. According

to 21% of the students, studying literature is helpful to develop speaking skill. Whereas, no participant finds studying literature as a helpful tool to develop speaking skill.

- **Students’ perceptions toward literature in enriching their cultural competence and awareness:**

Items	Strongly agree	agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	uncertain
8. Literature helps learners to get knowledge about the English culture (values, behaviour, beliefs, and basic assumptions)	7	0	0	0	0
9. Studying literature helps to identify the similarities and differences between English culture and my culture	6	1	0	0	0

Table 04: Students’ perceptions toward literature in enriching their cultural competence and awareness

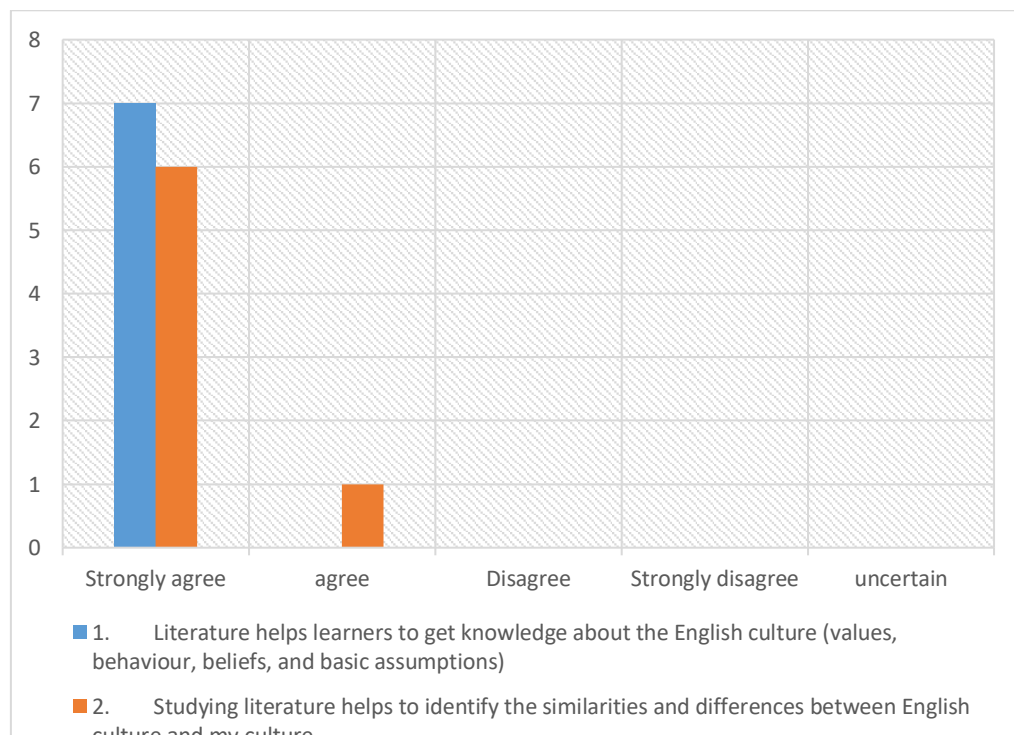


Figure 03: Students’ perceptions toward literature in enriching their cultural competence and awareness

This section provides students' perceptions towards the relevance of literature to their cultural awareness. The results show that literature contributes to develop learners' cultural awareness in general. Table 4 shows the general responses of the participants.

The table indicates that the perceptions of all M1 students of learning culture through literature classes are highly positive (100%) since all the learners express that literature helps them to get knowledge about the English Culture. Moreover, the majority of the participants 85% indicate that studying literature helps them to identify the similarities and differences between the English culture and the learners' own culture

- **Students' perceptions towards literature as a tool for enriching their personal growth:**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Uncertain
10. I can interpret and comment on the literary texts according to my understanding of the text	4	3	0	0	0
11. Literature helps me to participate in class discussions, group work, and presentation	0	4	3	0	0
12. Literature helps me learn and understand about people and their experiences similar to my own experiences	5	2	0	0	0
13. Literature classes help to develop my critical thinking	6	1	0	0	0
14. Literature helps me to learn more about life and grow personally, intellectually, and emotionally	0	2	2	1	2
15. Literature is an important part of my personal development	1	2	1	0	3

Table 05: Students' perceptions towards literature as a tool for enriching their personal growth

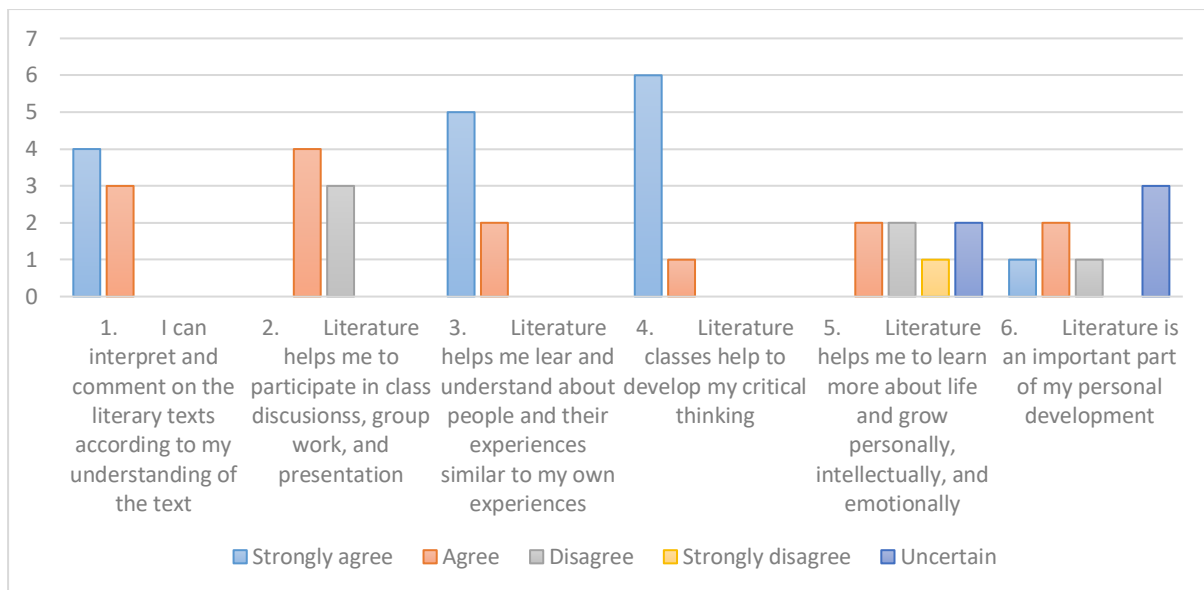


Figure 04: Students’ perceptions towards literature as a tool for enriching their personal growth

As for students’ perceptions towards the relevance of literature in developing their personal growth, there is a general agreement that literature contributes in the development of the learners’ personal growth. The main responses are presented in table 5.

The table shows that the responses to this theme are also positive. The highest percentage for item 13 which indicates that the majority of the students 90% show that literature helps them to develop their critical thinking. The second high score 71% is given to learning and understanding about people and their experiences similar to their own experiences. Also, 42% of the students indicate that literature enables them to interpret and comment on the literary texts according to their own understanding of the text as well as help them to participate in class discussion and group work and presentation. Furthermore, 70% consider literature as an important part for their personal development. While, few students 28% the think that literature classes help them to learn more about life and grow personally, intellectually and emotionally.

- **Students’ perceptions toward explanation, text selection, and teaching methods:**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Uncertain
16. I find the literary texts selected by the curriculum interesting	0	1	3	1	2
17. The literature classes are designed according to my expectations, needs, and interests	1	4	2	0	0
18. The teaching methods used by my teachers is interesting	1	5	1		

Table 06: Students’ perceptions toward explanation, text selection, and teaching methods

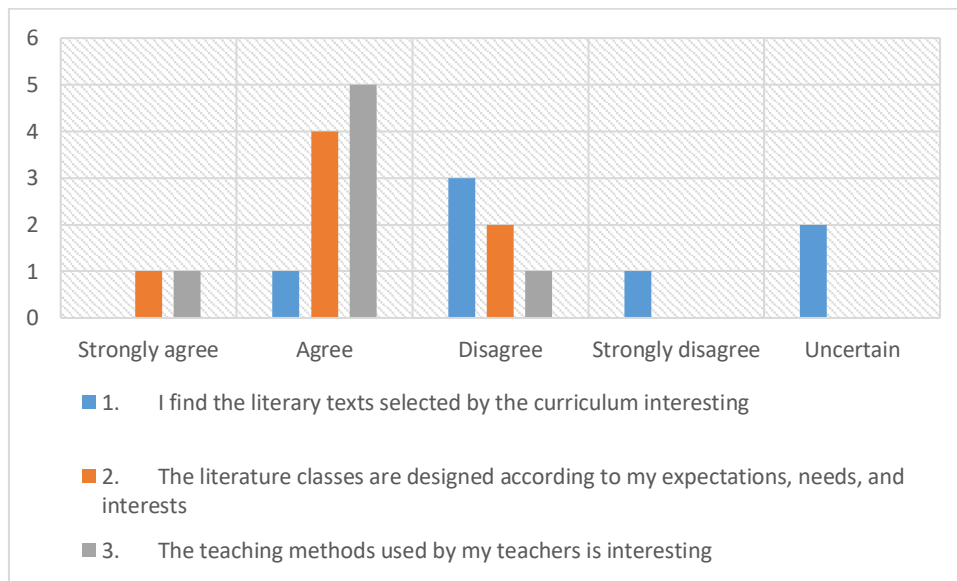


Figure 05: Students’ perceptions toward explanation, text selection, and teaching methods

- **Students’ responses to items 21- 25 related to the difficulty of the selected texts**

Items	Number of students	Percentage
21. Are you satisfied with the number of literary topics covered during the academic year?		
a) Always	2	16%
b) Sometimes	2	16%
c) Rarely	2	16%
d) Never	3	25%
22- what difficulty do you face in literature classes?		
a) I find difficulty in understanding the language of the text.	1	13%
b) Unfamiliar ideas, experiences, or culture in the text	2	26%
c) Not enough time to read and study the text carefully.	5	62%
25. How do you find the texts you are dealing with in terms of language?		
a) Very difficult	0	0%
b) Fairly difficult	6	75%
c) Easy	2	25%

- **Table 07: Students' responses to items 21-22- 25 related to the difficulty of the selected texts**

This part investigates students' perceptions of texts being studied in terms of difficulty and interesting themes, in other words whether they match or mismatch students' language level and interests because it affects their perceptions. The main responses on the items related to text selection are presented in table 6 and figure 5.

The table shows that the majority of students 56% find the literary texts selected by curriculum are not interesting and some of them decide to stay neutral (28%). Whereas, most students 71% agree that the literature classes are designed according to their needs, expectations and interests.

Furthermore, the study also investigates the satisfaction of the students with the number of the literary topics and their perceptions towards the difficulty of the selected texts. The main responses are presented in table 7.

The table 7 indicates that the students are sometimes or always or rarely satisfied with the number of literary topics covered in the academic year with the same percentage 16%.

Whereas, 25% of the participants adds that they are never satisfied. Besides, the majority of students 75% admit that literary texts they study are fairly difficult in terms of language, also another group of respondents 25% claimed that the language of the texts is easy. On the other hand, 62% of the informants that the time provided to them when dealing with literary texts is not enough. Also, 13% indicates that the difficulty they face in literature classes is related to the difficulty of texts while 26% said that it is because of the unfamiliar ideas and cultures presented in literary texts to them.

B.Part Two

- **Students’ perceptions towards the relevance of literature to their education:**

Items	Number of students	Percentage
19- Why you have joined the English Language Department?		
a) To get a degree	1	14%
b) To learn about the English language	1	14%
c) To learn about the English literature	2	28%
d) A qualification in English language will help you get a job	0	0%
e) To learn about the culture and traditions of English-speaking people	0	0%
f) You are interested in reading and studying literature (e.g. novels, poetry, drama)	3	44%
g) Please add any other reasons that you can think of	/	/
20- do you think that master one literary stream's curriculum should focus on?		
a) Literature only	3	43%
b) Practical language skills	0	0%
c) Knowledge about the language	0	0%
d) A combination of the above	4	57%
23- 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.	2	12%
b) It helps increase cultural awareness between different cultures.	6	31%
c) It provides fun	5	30%
d) It is motivating	1	6%
e) It is rewarding outside the classroom.	3	17%
f) It is boring and a waste of time.	0	0%
g) It is difficult because literary texts are difficult to comprehend.	0	0%
h) It is not important to me because it contributes nothing to my future professional career	0	0%
i) It helps me to grow personally, intellectually, and emotionally	0	0%
j) Others	/	/
30- Do you like literature as part of your study (education) at university?		
a) I do like it	7	100%
b) I do not like it	0	0%
c) I want other topics	0	0%
d) I don't mind	0	0%
31- Do you think literature helps you to achieve your academic goals?		
a) Yes	7	100%
b) No	0	0%

Table 08: Students' perceptions towards the relevance of literature to their education

The study analyzes the motive behind students' choice of ELD and whether literature is part of that motive and how they perceive it. The main responses are presented in table 9. For item19, the table shows that the option 'you are interested in reading and studying literature' is ticked by respondents 44% and the options of 'to learn about English literature is ticked by 28% of the participants. Additionally, few students 14% indicate the reason behind that joining English literature is for the purpose of getting a degree or learning about English language. As for item 20, none of the options got the majority score. The highest score (57%) is that students prefer combining the different options mentioned in the table. Also 43% of the informants show their desire to be involved in literature for literature sake course. Concerning item 23 about students' opinions about learning literature, the table shows that 31% of the students ticked literature is a good source for increasing their cultural awareness of different cultures and 30% state that literature provides fun. All the other options are chosen by only a small number of the students. Despite these different opinions about learning literature. Item 30 indicated that the all the participants like literature as part of their education. Furthermore, item 31 about whether literature helps students to achieve their

academic goals, all the informant's 100% believe that literature fulfills their academic goals.

- **Students' responses to items (24-26-27-28-29) related to students' perception towards teaching method**

Items	Students' number	Percentage
24- what do the literature courses you are taking look like?		
a) Lectures led by the teacher followed by note-taking.	6	86%
b) A sort of small group discussions.	0	0%
c) A sort of class discussion	1	14%
d) Others	/	/
26- Do your teachers provide background information useful to comprehend the text?		
a) Always	3	43%
b) Sometimes	4	57%
c) Rarely	0	0%
d) Never	0	0%
27- Do you do group working in literature classes?		
a) Always	0	0%
b) Sometimes	4	57%
c) Rarely	3	43%
d) Never	0	0%
28- How often are you asked to express your opinion and your interpretation of the text?		
a) Always	2	28%
b) Sometimes	5	72%
c) Rarely	0	0%
d) Never	0	0%
29- What is your teacher's reaction to your opinion and interpretation?		
a) S/he usually accepts wrong interpretations.	5	72%

b) S/he usually rejects wrong interpretations.	0	0%
c) S/he usually corrects wrong interpretations.	2	28%

Table 09: Students' responses to items (24-26-27-28-29) related to students' perception towards teaching method

Generally, the students perceive the teaching methods being employed negatively to some extent since the questionnaire that includes items 24,26,29 which further investigates the students' perceptions towards the teaching methods. Table 9 above presents the main responses for each of these items.

For item24, the table shows that the majority of the students (86%) indicated that literature classes are led by a minority of M1 students 14% who described Literature classes as a sort of class discussion. However, class group discussion was not given a place while studying literature. Thus, these results show that the classes are teacher- centred. Similarly, for item 26 regarding whether teachers provide background information useful to comprehend the text. The answers were confined between always and sometimes; the majority of the students 57% ticked sometimes, and 43% % said always. As for item 27 about whether teachers involve students in group working in their literature classes, the option sometimes is ticked by the majority 57% while 43% of the students are rarely involved in the activity. Furthermore, the study also investigates whether the students are given chance to express their personal interpretations and opinions and also to figure out their teachers' reactions (item28). The majority of the respondents 71 % ticked sometimes 28% chose always. Additionally, how teachers react to students' opinions is also examined in item 29 of the questionnaire 72% of students said that their teachers usually accept wrong interpretations while 28% said that their teachers usually correct wrong interpretations. Moreover no one of the students' state that their teachers reject their interpretations and provide them with their own literary judgments.

C.Part Three

- **Presentation and analysis of Learners' Responses to the last part of the questionnaire.**

Q1- In your opinion how to make literature classes more interesting?	Students responses	
	Student 1	By adding more workshops in the classroom.
	Student 2	By including modern pieces of literature to the academic program
	Student 3	By getting rid of the traditional method of a teacher leading the lesson followed students taking notes. Instead we should enhance group working and discussions about certain literary topics that fulfils the needs of students, and use practical assignments in and outside classroom to make sure students understand the theoretical part of the teacher and are able to test it.
	Student 4	Maybe if the students are assigned to read more books on a regular basis.
	Student 5	I believe that the program isn't various enough. I mean it's good I mean it's good to study Shakespeare, Charles Dickens...etc. but it's better to learn about other cultures other eras...etc.
	Student 6	Group work and discussions, interactive lessons are always the best, technologies and new materials we may use them all to tackle certain literary topics that fulfils the needs of students, and use practical assignments in and outside classroom to make sure students understand the theoretical part of the lessons and ne able to test it.
	Student 7	They are already very interesting to me but if I was to add something it would be workshops some teachers use this method and it's really useful it motivates me to work harder and I really like group work it allows us to make literature more flexible

Table 10: students' responses to the first item from the open-ended questions

- **Suggestions for making literature classes interesting**

The first item is seeking students' responses concerning how to make literature classes more interesting. In their responses, students suggest different strategies. Table 13 presents the participants responses.

The table shows that the majority of the students ask for more workshops, group work and discussion to make the classes more interesting, attractive, and motivating. while one

student only state that presentations should not be teacher-centered and s/he also insists on the importance of workshops and group work in and outside the classroom to make literature courses more interactive. Also, it can be observed that a number of students ask for including more topics in literature claiming that the program isn't various enough.

This part gives the learners a chance to pen their perceptions and preferences of interesting literature classes. Learners provided good suggestions. Using a variety of activities inside literature classes will get the students actively involved in the learning process and most surprisingly students show their preferences for such a thing which means they are ready to take charge and be the center of their learning.

Q2- Any comments you may wish to add about problems you experience when studying literature?	Students responses	
	Student 1	Nothing I can think of.
	Student 2	I would say it's the short period of time the teacher gives us when assigning a book lecture or analysis.
	Student 3	The tone of some teachers when they lead their lectures should be watched carefully. That includes negative and pessimistic criticism that demotivates certain students and break others.
	Student 4	There's no such diversity in the choosing of the pieces of literature we deal with usually we go through the same things
	Student 5	I think 2 years isn't enough to study a specialty as wide as literature and 3 years is too much before you get specialized, I understand that written, oral, and other modules are important but they can gather them in one year, two years top. Then we get specialized. And I think it's the same way with translation and linguistic
	Student 6	The tone of some teachers when they lead their lectures should be watched carefully. That includes negatives and pessimistic criticism that demotivates certain students and break others. The module of critical theories is a huge subject to take care of, we would have practiced them on some literary works for better understanding.
	Student 7	Some modules aren't given the importance they deserve in my opinion like literary theories there should be at least two sessions for the module.

Table 11: students' responses to the second item of the open-ended questions

- **Major problems students encounter in literature classes**

In item 2 in the open-ended questions, we further investigated the major problems

students encounter in literature classes. Other problems students encounter is presented in table 11.

The table shows that the major problem students encounter is concerned with time provided to them when dealing with some literary texts, and as it is mentioned by a number of the students some modules aren't given the importance they deserve. Also, the difficulty lies for some of them in the topic covered by the program as they mentioned that there is no diversity in it. difficult ideas and the students lack of language. Furthermore, the students stated another problem which is their need for more practice to deepen their understanding, and it can be observed two participants stated that the tone of some teachers needs to be watched carefully in order not to demotivate their students.

It can be found that most of the students' suggestions of interesting classes (asking for more practice, more time, and choosing more modern topics) are translated to problems if not taken with importance. Since most of the learners' responses to each question are echoed in the other.

Q3 - Throughout your experience of studying literature, what did it add to your education personally, culturally, and linguistically?	Students responses	
	Student 1	I learned about the literary theories and that changed the way I read. And also, I'm developing my English and my general knowledge the more I read.
	Student 2	I learned more about other cultures, I am reaching my own personal and professional goals through studying English literature, and yes, I am developing my language skills with literary texts our teachers provide.
	Student 3	It enhanced and broadened my perspective and views towards life and world (society) and enriched my understanding of literary works through critical thinking
	Student 4	It helped me with developing my writing skills and I was introduced to new books new ideas I wasn't familiar with
	Student 5	It changed my life my vision I am developing a remarkable critical mind. I learning about other peoples' culture and civilization, and I am developing my writing, reading, and speaking skills.
	Student 6	It helped me see everything differently, new eyeglasses, new vision. It enhanced and broadened my perspective and views towards life and world (society) and culture and customs, enriched my understanding of literary works through critical thinking I become a fun of reading novels, learned new words, I met different ways of thinking that I learned to accept them and discuss
	Student 7	It improved my judgement towards everything and I gained maturity throughout the texts we study in class.

Table 12: students' responses to the third item of the open-ended questions

- **Literature contribution to education: personally, culturally and linguistically**

The final item in the open-ended questions is targeted to know the extent literature affect the students' education in terms of personality, culture and language. The table 12 presents all the participants responses to the third item of this part.

Personally, the majority of the students perceive literature as having a positive impact on their personalities. They claim that literature has broadened their perspectives on themselves and life in general in a way that they become more aware. In addition, it helps them to understand and accept others ideas and think more critically and deeply. While, some of the students point out that through literature they become familiar with books, writers and literary language.

Culturally, students' perceptions towards learning about culture through literature are mostly positive. Some students think that through literature they develop awareness of other cultures, their traditions, and life style.

Linguistically, the students emphasize the role of literature in developing their language skills, as some of them mentioned that literature helps them improve their writing and reading skills.

In general, learners' perceptions towards this question is positive. They value literature classes as a place where they develop language skills, cultural awareness about foreign cultures and their owns, and most importantly, they are educated personally through the classes which is overwhelmingly a great finding as the major goal of any university department should be building personalities and broad-minded educated individuals.

Conclusion

This part was designed to investigate the difficulties and challenges that might face M1 students studying English literature and civilization at Kasdi Merbah University from English M1 students' perspectives. This practical study has also discussed what literature is, why it is taught, and what should be selected at the context of English literature curriculum. Many issues and dilemmas have been identified and delineated. In response to the perceived issues and dilemmas, some practical suggestions have also been forwarded so that initial thinking and concrete actions can be initiated to improve studying English literature.

Data analysis reveals that M1 English students' low language proficiency and unfamiliarity with the cultural and social background of the text is one of the most serious student-related challenges. The research has argued that language difficulty in a literary text,

coupled with relative lexical impoverishment of some EM1 students, is responsible for some students struggling with literary texts. Literary texts, by their nature, necessitate interpreting, comprehending and critiquing. In addition, the respondents considered issues pertaining to the text such as the level of linguistic and stylistic difficulty as well as the degree of cultural (un)familiarity to be crucial issues which impact the productivity of learning English literature process.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of the current study. According to English M1 students, program assessment and teaching methodologies could be reconsidered to incorporate new methods, strategies and techniques which would first target development of English literature for instance enhancing group working discussion and relying more on workshops. This could certainly aim to revise English literature curriculum content according to students' expectations, needs and interests which should to be defined and categorized. In conclusion, it is very crucial that teachers and course designers should have a full understanding and appreciation of this reality prior to the selection of literary texts, and the level at which texts are prescribed.

General Conclusion

This study analyzed the integration of literature in the language learning at the ELDs at Kasdi Merbah University especially in terms of the student's perceptions towards this integration. The results state that students have positive perceptions towards literature integration and it contributes in developing the learners' language proficiency, their cultural awareness and personal growth in general. Additionally, literature helps to improve vocabulary, language skills, grammar and understanding symbols and meaning in literary texts

Students like literature as part of their education because it is a good source for developing their language proficiency and increases their cultural awareness of different cultures. On the other hand, their main intention to join the ELDs is to learn English language as well as to learn about literature because it helps the students to achieve their academic goals. Thus, the main reason behind joining the department is to get a degree. The study show that some students hold positive attitudes towards learning English language but negative attitude when it came to the selected literary texts and teaching methods used by their teachers.

Finally, the study identified some problems that students encounter in literature classes such as difficult texts in terms of language, big amount of material that has to be covered, teaching methodology, unfamiliar ideas, experiences and cultural differences contained in texts, feeling shy and difficult exam questions. These problems need to be taken into consideration and teachers should categorize them and find solutions for them because they will affect their perceptions. In general, the study investigates the English M1 student's perception which is very helpful to expand an understanding of the teaching and learning. It is recommended that literature should be kept in the ELDs' curriculum and be given more attention. Literature classes turned quite helpful in developing those individual students thus they should be encouraged to be integrated. In other levels studying literature helps students to be more developed, build strong personalities and broad-minded educated individuals. Furthermore, knowing the students' perceptions towards literature classes will be helpful for the researchers, educational policy makers, and the language teachers to determine English language learners' genuine needs, motivation or challenges and issues in relation to the use of literary texts as teaching materials and to develop an appropriate teaching approaches or methods to use the literary texts.

Appendix 1

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

We would be so grateful if you could answer the following questions for the sake of identifying the challenges that encounter students through the process of learning English literature, the causes behind their existence to pave the way for suggesting some strategies to overcome them.

Your answers to this questionnaire will be confidential and helpful for the benefit of this work.

Thank you

In advance!

First-year master (Literature)

Academic year 2019/2020

Gender: male **female**

Stream:

University:

Part One

Please encircle your choice among the items given, Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), disagree (3), Strongly disagree (4), Uncertain (5).

➤ **Your perceptions towards literature classes in developing your language proficiency or development:**

Item	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Disagree (3)	Strongly Disagree (4)	Uncertain (5)
1. Studying literature increases my interest to learn English language.					
2. My knowledge and use of grammar have improved as a result of work done in literature classes.					
3. English literature helps me to improve English language vocabulary.					
4. Literature classes help me to understand the symbols and meanings of English texts easily.					
5. My reading skill has improved as a result of the work done in literature classes?					
6. My speaking skill has improved as a result of the work done in literature classes?					
7. My listening skill has improved as a result of the work done in literature classes?					

➤ **Your perceptions towards literature in enriching your cultural competence and awareness:**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly	uncertain
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- 8. Literature classes help learners to get knowledge about the English culture (values, behavior, beliefs, and basic assumptions).
- 9. Studying literature helps to identify the similarities and differences between English culture and my own culture.

➤ Your perceptions towards literature as a tool for enriching your personal growth:

Items	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Disagree (3)	Strongly Disagree (4)	Uncertain (5)
10. I can interpret and comment on the literary texts according to my understanding of the text.					
11. Literature helps me to participate in class discussions, group work, and presentations.					
12. Literature helps me learn and understand about people and their experiences similar to my own experiences.					
13. Literature classes help to develop my critical Thinking.					
14. Literature helps me to learn more about life and grow personally, intellectually, and emotionally.					
15. Literature is an important part of my personal development.					

➤ Your perceptions towards explanation, text selection, and teaching methods:

Items	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Disagree (3)	Strongly Disagree (4)	Uncertain (5)
16. I find the literary texts selected by the curriculum interesting					
17. The literature classes are designed according to my expectations, needs, and interests.					
18. The teaching method used by my teachers is interesting.					

Part Two

Please encircle the appropriate choice (you can choose more than one item).

➤ Your perceptions towards the relevance of literature to your education:

19. Why you have joined the English Language Department?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To get a degree. b. To learn about the English language. c. To learn about English literature? d. A qualification in English will help you get a job? e. To learn about the culture and traditions of English-speaking people? f. You are interested in reading and studying literature (e.g. novels, poetry, drama) g. Please add any other reasons that you can think of:
--	--

20. do you think that master one literary stream's curriculum should focus on
:
- Literature only.
 - Practical language skills.
 - Knowledge about language.
 - A combination of the above.
21. Are you satisfied with the number of literary topics covered during the academic year?
- Always
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
22. What difficulty do you face in literature classes?
- I find difficulty in understanding the language of the text.
 - Unfamiliar ideas, experiences, or culture in the text.
 - Not enough time to read and study the text carefully.
 - Other
- reasons:.....
.....
.....
23. What do you think about learning literature?
You can tick more than one item
- It helps me improve my proficiency in the English language.
 - It helps increase cultural awareness between different cultures.
 - It provides a fun.
 - It is motivating.
 - It is rewarding outside the classroom.
 - It is boring and a waste of time.
 - It is difficult because literary texts are difficult to comprehend.
 - It is not important to me because it contributes nothing to my future professional career.
 - It helps me to grow personally, intellectually, and emotionally.
 - Other
- reasons:.....
.....
.....
24. What do the literature courses you are taking look like?
- Lectures led by the teacher followed by note-taking.
 - A sort of small group discussions.
 - A sort of class discussion.
 - Others:.....
.....
.....
25. How do you find the texts you are dealing with in terms of language?
- Very difficult.
 - Fairly difficult.
 - Easy
26. Do your teachers provide background information useful to comprehend the text?
- Always
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely.
 - Never
27. Do you do group working in literature classes?
- Always
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
28. How often are you asked to express your opinion and your interpretation of the text?
- Always
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
-

29. What is your teacher's reaction to your opinion and interpretation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. S/he usually accepts wrong interpretations. b. S/he usually rejects wrong interpretations. c. S/he corrects wrong interpretations.
30. Do you like literature as part of your study (education) at university?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. I do like it. b. I don't like it. c. I want other topics. d. I don't mind
31. Do you think literature helps you to achieve your academic goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No
32. Do you think that literature should be used in language learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No c. I do not mind
33. Which type or genre of literature do you benefit the most from when developing your language skills?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Poetry b. Drama c. Novel d. Literary criticism
34. What language skill (s) does studying literature help improve specifically?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Speaking b. Listening c. Writing d. Reading

Part Three: Open-ended questions

Please write down your answers to the following questions

1. In your opinion how to make literature classes **more interesting**?

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Any comments you may wish to add about **problems** you experience when studying literature?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. Throughout your experience of studying literature, what did it add to your education **personally, culturally, and linguistically**?

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.....
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