Investigating English Literature Teaching in Algerian Higher Educational Institutions

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THESIS ABSTRACT

This study explores the teaching and learning of English literature in higher educational institutions in Algeria, focusing on two universities and two higher colleges for teachers. It examines teachers' and students' views on literary texts in the Algerian context, the purposes of introducing English literature, and the methods teachers employ in literature classes. A qualitative case study methodology was used to achieve the study's aims and address the research questions by working with ten teachers and their students across Algerian institutions. The data was generated through a series of semi-structured interviews with teachers, focus groups with students, and a series of recorded teaching observations. The findings reveal diverse perspectives among teachers and students on what constitutes a literary text, emphasising its evocative, representational, linguistic, and moral aspects. The study also highlights the complex interplay between teachers' personal preferences and institutional directives in text selection, underscoring literature's role in cultural awareness, personal growth, and linguistic proficiency. Methodologically, this qualitative research fills a significant gap in the literature by providing in-depth insights into the experiences and views of Algerian literature teachers and students. Theoretically, it contributes to understanding literariness in an EFL context, linking it to moral values and cultural representation. The study employs Rosenblatt's transactional theory, offering a nuanced view of teaching practices and pedagogical approaches in Algerian higher education. The study provides valuable recommendations for policymakers, suggesting the need for updated teaching guidelines, enhanced communication between teachers and students, and the establishment of a feedback cycle to improve teaching practices.

Keywords: EFL Context, Algeria, Literary, English literature, Higher Education, Teaching and learning, Rosenblatt's transactional theory, Pedagogical Approaches in Algerian Higher Education

DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this work to the Adjeb and Harzali families, especially to my beloved nephews and nieces, whose names are honoured as the titles of the teachers.

I miss you all dearly.

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بسم الله الرحمان الرحيم

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teachers
L1	English as a First Language
L2	English as a Second Language
LMD	Licence Master Doctorate
BMD	Bachelor-Master-Doctorate System

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines teachers' and students' views on what counts as literary texts in Algerian classes, the purposes of introducing literary texts, and how the teaching unfolds. By working with ten teachers and their students in four Higher educational Algerian institutions (two universities and two Higher Colleges for Teachers), the thesis explores the status of English literature teaching in these higher educational institutes through teachers' and students' views and practical implications in the teaching setting. While previous studies highlight the ongoing theoretical debate on the literariness of literary texts, the various purposes of using literary texts in classrooms in international contexts, and the theoretically contested views on ways of usage and adaptation in class, this study takes another angle, focusing on the teachers and students' views and the echoes of such debates on the practicality of teaching setting. Therefore, this thesis contributes to knowledge by profiling the teaching and learning of English literature based on exploring (teachers' and students') views of what lies beyond these debates in practice.

Through this thesis, I demonstrate the complexity of the context by exploring teachers' and learners' views on the issue and observing real-life teaching and portrayal of this complexity. In doing so, I endeavour to open discussions and reflections on the current ways of teaching English literature in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts (by alluding to reader-response theories) rather than teaching about English literature. Such a discussion can add to the established literature on the issue, and challenge existing notions of teaching literature in Algerian universities and the EFL context. Finally, my position as a graduate of the Algerian system of teaching literature, together with my newly discovered researcher stance, leaning toward constructivist research, has been influential in developing such aims.

This study can be positioned primarily in the broader area of literature and language teaching and has some roots within literary criticism and theory. Acknowledging such a position means that the research contributes to the body of knowledge intersected by those research fields. My study adds to the already large body of English literature language teaching and, more precisely, the area of foreign language teaching of English literature. Mainly, my research addresses a gap in this field; to my knowledge, there was little published research with an explicit focus on EFL teachers' and learners' (Algerians') views of English literature teaching, literary texts, purposes, and ways in which the teaching practice unfolds. Moreover, there is a lack of focus on EFL students' interaction with texts in research and practice. Therefore, this thesis aims to understand the issue of English language teaching in the EFL context: the Algerian context per se.

My readings on the subject have led me to realise that perceptions about the literariness of texts and the purpose of literature influence literature teaching. Literary texts are the medium though which literary language is presented for study. However, research has failed to clarify the tension that rises form questioning the literariness of language and its principles in practice and the tension that rises in choosing particular texts for study between institutional drives and teachers' choices (Guillory 1993). Additionally, my readings have made me realise that literature teaching can be used for multiple purposes. Rosenblatt (1995), for instance, aspires that teaching of literature could uniquely contribute to democratic education. Other aims in the literature promote personal growth and language learning competencies (Carter & Long, 1991; Collie, Slater & Swan, 1987; Hall, 2015; Teranishi et al., 2015). However, without examining these understandings of what lies beyond the purposes of teaching in real practice, we cannot understand the place of literary texts in the classroom and how it is used. The literature also suggests that students respond similarly to literary teaching. This may indicate that students lack self-reliance when producing their responses, or perhaps another silent issue needs to be explored. These views and other emerging ones are touched upon throughout this study.

For this portrayal, understanding, and discussion to unfold, I designed a qualitative case study exploratory investigation on the status of teaching English literature in Algerian higher educational institutions. A constructionist view of knowledge influences me since this project explores teaching and learning English literature in Algerian universities by working with the participants (teachers and students). I believe that meaning is co-equally produced by the researcher and the participants. The knowledge produced about literature teaching was constructed after I observed and interviewed teachers and students. Therefore, I claim that knowledge is not discovered but created with the help of all parties involved in this investigation. Finally, I used a case study research design as an overarching methodology to explore teachers' and students' views on what counts as literary, their thoughts on the purposes of English literature teaching, and how teaching unfolds in practice. This was attained through various tools of data generation.

The data that this project relied on was purely qualitative and generated mainly from interviewing and observations. I sought to use these two data-generating methods because they align with the research aims and focus. My initial motivation for choosing qualitative data was personal and guided by my readings. These tools seem to apply to the context of this research. It is also suggested throughout literature on research that qualitative data methods can achieve an in-depth understanding. Observations allowed me to study the teachers' and students' behaviours and interactions with literary texts within the classroom. This gave me another layer of looking into and comparing their views on the issue, which was generated through interviewing. Additionally, interviewing allowed me to explore the teacher's knowledge and aims of using literary texts in the classrooms.

The overarching findings of this research are presented as answers to the three research questions guiding the study:

(RQ1) What could be considered a literary text in the Algerian higher educational context?
(RQ2) For what purpose is English literature introduced, read, and explored in Algerian universities?
(RQ3) How do Algerian University literature teachers use literary texts within the classroom?

Answering the initial research question has revealed that both teachers and students in Algerian higher education institutions have various levels of understanding and reasoning when considering what counts as literary. These insights are evident in how they view literary texts as representational and evocative, their views of the language in literary texts as containing both simple and complex words and grammatical structures, and their emphasis on the moral and ethical messages embedded within these texts. Additionally, they recognise the significance of literary texts as a means of cultural experience and their emotional impact on readers. The teachers' and students' views in regard to this question are examined thoroughly in Chapter 5. Answering the second research question has revealed that there is a complex interplay of tension between teachers' personal preferences and institutional drives in relation to text selections for study purposes. Moreover, teachers' educational purposes for incorporating literary texts into teaching varies. These purposes include using literary texts to explore literary movements and theories, guiding students away from reading for pleasure to academic and specialised reading, examining literary works to understand diverse cultures and promote language comprehension and cultural awareness, encouraging personal growth and critical thinking through literature, and developing linguistic proficiency by studying language in action. The teachers' views in regard to this question are examined thoroughly in Chapter 6. Answering the third research question has revealed that teachers employ literary texts in diverse ways in the classroom: from guiding students through structured interpretations and responses, to employing various close reading techniques; from immersing students in evocative readings and encouraging critical discussions, to exploring abstract concepts and literary theories; and finally, using literary texts as platforms to integrate interdisciplinary perspectives. The teachers' and students' views in regard to this question are examined thoroughly in Chapter 7. The findings from each research question are restated and discussed in relation to the reviewed literature and theoretical and international literature guiding the study, where appropriate, in Chapter 8.

Having given a general portrayal of what this thesis is about, the rest of this general introduction is structured to portray the following items: 1) Key moments and the evolution of personal rationale to pursue this study; 2) Key moments shaping the focus of this research; 3) Research aims; 4) Significance and outcomes of the study. 5) outline the rest of the thesis.

1.2. RATIONALE

Several reasons have led me to research English literature teaching and learning in Algerian universities. These reasons have emerged through crucial moments in my recent history during the times I was a student of English at Ammer Telidji University and developed when I was granted a bursary to continue my studies at a United Kingdom (UK) university. Discussions with peers while attending a pre-sessional programme at Canterbury Christ Church University and an MSc in Educational Research at Exeter University shaped my resolutions and motives for pursuing this research project. The reasons for researching literature teaching in general and Algerian teachers teaching English literature, in particular, were expanded on in a chronological sequence of key events and discussions during my research journey.

First, the rationale for choosing an area of investigation into literature teaching and learning stems from my enjoyment and appreciation of literature classes that I attended while at Ammer Telidji University and the heated discussions that primarily emerged whenever we read or were exposed to a literary work. I can say that I used to wait eagerly for the literature session to take place. Discussions about texts, literary contexts, and our responses to the emerging themes throughout our readings drove me to investigate literature teaching and ways of reception, interpretations, and responses. The drive to investigate the subject has been evolving ever since.

Second, during my time at Canterbury Christ Church University and while I was trying to understand the culture of research in the UK universities, I was working on a research proposal that was related to researching the literature on American post-war and how the reception of such works of fictions at those times shaped views in American society. Having discussed my preliminary research ideas with my peers, I realised that the impact of my research would not be appreciated much if I did not focus on something that I enjoy and that would have a practical impact on the Algerian context. That was a turning moment in my research journey.

Third, having secured a place to work on my ideas at Exeter University, I benefited greatly from the MSc in Educational Research, for I had not previously been exposed to philosophy and methods of researching in educational settings in that sense, which helped shape my ideas to work on literature teaching in the Algerian higher education context. Ideas became plans, and possible ways for researching the topic were endless, and I had to think of a niche. So there comes the fourth moment when I realised I should focus on basics and exploring teaching and learning English literature in the Algerian context, rather than assuming how it is from my limited experience and trying to influence the teaching setting with a particular theory.

The fifth moment was coming to Aston University, having secured official permission to enter Algerian higher educational institutions for research. While working with my supervisors, I found a focus of

enquiry through thinking clearly about my options, the decisions I could take, and how that would influence the research process. Indeed, these choices made what this reach is now. In what follows, I describe how the choices I made shaped the research focus and how objectives shifted from looking into students' written responses solely to covering the understanding of the realities of teaching and learning English literature in higher educational institutions in Algeria from the perspective of teachers, students, the researcher view, and the student's responses.

1.3. Key Moments Shaping the Research Journey

This section describes vital moments throughout my research journey that shaped the study's focus and aims.

When I came to Aston University and started reading about the topic broadly, to cite a few (Hall, 2015a, 2015b; Rosenblatt, 1995, 2005), I developed an interest in reader response theory and the reading process and how that could be explored in action. I had initially intended only to explore students' responses to literature in the teaching setting and how these responses are constructed. My focus was imprecise as I wished to explore these responses based on the student's reception and the transaction theory without having a clear framework to investigate this. Moreover, I was reading about teaching and learning in the Algerian context (e.g. Belmihoub, 2018a, 2018b; Benrabah, 2004, 2004, 2013; Miliani, 2001) and realised the complex nature of the context. It would not have been ideal to assume the existence of certain realities about the teaching and learning context in higher education and build research on such claims. My focus then had to sharpen and consider how the context's complex nature could influence teaching and learning. Moreover, my readings suggested the presence of a debate on the nature of literary texts, purposes of teaching, and ways of seeing (looking) into texts. I then set to explore the teachers' and students' views on such debatable issues: the purposes of literature teaching in the Algerian context, the pre-assumed ideas about the literary text, and the ways of using the text in context.

Nevertheless, the scope and research aim began to sharpen once I entered the field. After several interviews with teachers and focus groups with students, and attending sessions in real-life teaching, I was immersed in the data and realised the interconnectedness of the issues I set out to explore. It was not only a belief or a view of literariness, purposes, and ways, but more on how these perceptions and their realisations are interconnected and influence one another in practice. Additionally, I have realised that each class, let alone an institution, has a unique realisation of complex and multi-layered issues. Other contextual issues were also raised, mainly influencing the teaching and learning process. At this moment, I ventured into coding the data to build an understanding of how I could discuss the richness of the stories I generated. Consequently, I had to restrict the analysis to literature teaching and flag other emerging issues for further research.

In summary, by delving deeper into the teachers' and the students' multiple ways of seeing and perceiving the teaching and learning of literature, I managed to shift the focus of the study from merely looking at how they view (literary texts, purposes, ways) to highlighting the implications and the interconnectedness of such beliefs in practice.

1.4. Research Aims

In this section, having tackled pivotal moments that shaped the progress and the focus of this research, I now present the research aims that this thesis stems from. This research, then, has three significant aims, as listed below:

The first aim is to understand how English literature teachers in the Algerian higher education context define literary texts and the criteria they employ to select texts for study purposes. This implies an underpinning relationship between literary texts and the purposes of using them in a class context and a potential tension between teachers' views and institutional drives. Therefore, it specifically seeks to examine the extent to which a relationship between a view or a definition of literary texts guides selecting texts for study purposes in practice.

The second aim is to explore the different purposes teachers and students consider when studying English literature in Algerian higher education. Specifically, it attempts to ascertain whether teachers have different views on the issue and whether such views affect how the text is introduced, read, and explored in class.

The third aim is to examine how teachers use literary texts in class.

1.5. Significance and Outcomes of the Study

The importance of this study stems from the scarcity of knowledge about English literature teaching in a second language context, let alone a foreign language context, and in Algerian higher educational context per se. This study's findings can make an original contribution to knowledge to the study fields in several areas. First, exploring how Algerian teachers and students in higher educational institutions view literary texts, the purposes of using literary texts, and the ways of implementation using a qualitative approach has yet to be done before. This approach is suitable to examine and understand these views deeply. Therefore, this study addresses this methodological gap by using an exploratory case study research design, interviewing 10 teachers and conducting 10 focus groups with students working and studying at higher educational institutions. This approach allows participants to share their views and perspectives deeply. This is important because these teachers and students are

considered to be in an EFL context, which needs further exploration as Hall (2015, p. 86) observed: “We know less about second language reading’, let alone ‘second language literature reading and teaching.” This study, then, provides groundwork for future research in teaching and learning English literature in higher educational EFL contexts. Second, this study examines how Algerian readers interact with literary texts in practice by echoing theoretical lenses such as New Critics and Rosenblatt’s (1969) theory of reading and other literature on the subject. Therefore, the importance and the originality of this thesis lie in examining the experiences of teachers and students alike at Algerian higher educational institutions by trying to understand the process of selecting literary texts and the tension that may arise from that, the interplay of purposes and their applications through teachers’ ways in classrooms. Outcomes from this study may enrich the field and offer insights into how Algerian readers construct their views on the subject through the previously mentioned theoretical lenses.

Finally, answering the research questions from the extensive reviewed literature will fill in the methodological and theoretical gaps outlined. The findings will make an essential contribution to the field and inspire future researchers to address the limitations of this study. The scope of the study is limited as it addresses three questions across several cases through an exploratory research design. This means that the focus is on profiling the teaching and learning. This allows future researchers to focus on specific issues concerning the teaching and learning of English literature in EFL higher educational contexts.

1.6. THESIS STRUCTURE

To conclude this general introduction, I now lay out the organisation of chapters are follows:

Chapter 2 – Context of the research. This chapter lays the foundation for the complex nature of the place where this research takes place. It provides a snapshot of Algeria's contextual and cultural setting, focusing on the education system. It then presents the post-independence Algerian educational system, focusing on the place of foreign language teaching, where it highlights the debate on the place of foreign languages in the teaching setting, reflected by abrupt policy changes up to today. Then, it highlights the results of system change (from classical to Licence Master Doctorate (LMD)) and how it has affected the organisational policy of higher educational institutions. Finally, it presents the teaching model that the new system should follow.

Chapter 3 – Central debates on English literature language teaching. While the previous chapter focuses on the context of teaching and learning, this chapter describes the central debates concerning this study. It starts by exploring the term literary text. It highlights the ongoing debate on the literariness of literary texts and how research still fails to draw a clear boundary between literary

and non-literary (if there are any). Then, it covers reasons to use literary texts in classrooms, highlighting several arguments for such use, such as the linguistic argument, the cultural argument, and the assumed personal growth for readers for teaching literature in English as a First Language (L1) and EFL contexts. Then, it seeks to lay the foundations for debates regarding teaching English literature and annunciate historical debates on how to use texts in the teaching setting, highlighting Rosenblatt's (2005) struggle against the traditional model of teaching literary texts, where it focuses on the text and ignores the reader and even the author. Then, this chapter unpacks some of the challenges the EFL context brings to teaching and learning and concludes with contextual studies about English literature teaching in the Algerian context. Finally, it highlights a gap in the literature and sets a trajectory for this study.

Chapter 4 - Research design and methodology. This chapter describes the methodological choices I made to undertake this study. First, it situates the study within the interpretivist paradigm, where I reason for such a choice. Then, it discusses the reasons for designing the study as a case study exploratory research and the sampling procedures that followed, where it provides information about the participants in the study. Then, this chapter discusses the reason for the choice of data generation methods and how the piloting was carried out. Next, it discusses the data analysis strategy and its procedures. After that, it examines the quality assurance policy and some of its central concepts. Finally, it discusses the ethical considerations that were followed while undertaking this study.

Chapter 5 - Views on Literary Texts in Algerian Universities is the first analysis and presents the findings for the first research question. This chapter demonstrates how participants (teachers and students) in higher educational Algerian institutions view what counts as literary texts. The analysis reveals multiple views on what constitutes literary texts, shaped by personal experiences, studies, and broad exposure to literature. Four main themes emerged: First, literary language is seen as evocative, representing society and literary history. Second, participants' views diverge on whether literary language should be simple or complex and dense. Despite this, the participants agree that literary texts provide valuable content or messages, often embodying moral values and allowing reflection on these emerging meanings. Third, the participants view literary texts as capturing and representing specific cultural contexts through sophisticated language. Fourth, a more minor yet significant theme emphasises the transformative and emotional impact of literary texts, especially from the readers' perspective, highlighting profound emotional experiences during and after reading.

Chapter 6 - Purposes of Introducing English Literature in Algerian Universities is the second analysis and presents the findings for the second research question. This chapter illustrates the multifaceted purposes behind teaching English literature in Algerian higher educational institutions, drawing from teachers' perspectives. It begins by examining the tensions between teachers' personal choices of texts and institutional drives, showcasing their efforts to navigate this conflict while involving students

in the selection process, thus setting the stage for understanding the dynamics surrounding text selection to meet diverse purposes. The chapter progresses to explore the overarching goals of teaching literary texts, emphasising their use as platforms for broader contextual discussions and exploring various literary movements and periods within English literary history, underpinning the pedagogical intentions behind particular text selections. Additionally, the chapter highlights another purpose of using literary texts to foster cultural understanding among students, allowing teachers to use texts to explore diverse issues and perspectives, challenge stereotypes, and contribute to a nuanced understanding of self and others. Another essential purpose highlighted is the role of literary texts in fostering critical thinking and personal growth, where teachers use texts to encourage students to engage critically, enhancing their cognitive skills and fostering personal growth. Lastly, the chapter addresses how teachers view literary texts as instrumental in language learning, utilising these texts to strengthen linguistic skills and explore the intricacies of language in various literary contexts, thereby deepening students' understanding of language in action.

Chapter 7 - Ways of Using Literary texts in Algerian Universities is the third analysis and presents the findings of the third research question. This chapter highlights various teachers' ways of using literary texts in Algerian higher educational institutions, as demonstrated through the data from interviews and classroom observations. It begins by examining teachers' views on using literary texts to guide structured interpretations, revealing that teachers consider these texts essential for helping students develop structured interpretations and emphasising the importance of knowledge about literature and analytical frameworks. The chapter then explores teachers' use of close reading practices, highlighting how teachers employ close reading to scrutinise texts, emphasise specific literary features and involve detailed textual analysis to unpack implicit meanings within the texts. Additionally, the chapter examines how teachers use literary texts to initiate evocative readings and critical discussions, encouraging more profound reflections and engaging students in meaningful dialogues. Then, this chapter draws on observational data to show how teachers implement literary texts in classroom lessons to exemplify literary and theoretical concepts, prompting students to understand abstract concepts. The chapter also uses literary texts as reference points for critical analysis and interpretations, fostering discussions about themes and characters. Lastly, the chapter explores how teachers adopt interdisciplinary approaches, linking literature to fields such as history, psychology, and cultural studies, enriching students' understanding and enhancing their interpretive skills through various lenses.

Chapter 8 - Discussion summarises the main findings presented in the analysis chapters 5, 6, and 7 in dedicated sections that address specific research questions. The literature and theories guiding the study are discussed in every section.

Chapter 9 – Conclusion is the last chapter of this thesis, where I reiterate the research questions and findings. It also outlines the theoretical and general implications of the study by suggesting implications for policymakers, teachers, and further research. It then provides my reflective thoughts on the research.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The context in which this research takes place affects the views and practices of teachers and students alike in English literature studies. This is because teachers and students function within their country's contextual and cultural boundaries. This chapter describes Algeria's contextual and cultural setting, focusing on the education system. First, it describes the post-independent Algerian educational system, focusing on foreign languages. Second, it discusses the government's higher education policy and the organisation of higher educational institutes.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF EDUCATION IN POST-INDEPENDENT ALGERIA

It is impossible to tackle the issue of English literature teaching in Algerian higher education institutions without understanding the context in which the English language is introduced and its related challenges. To this day, foreign language teaching is still questionable in Algeria. However, it appears that there is no consensus among policymakers on the issue. This can be depicted through the educational system of post-independent Algeria. The system witnessed several changes from its inception regarding what it is for and what place foreign languages take.

Upon independence, around 90% of Algerians were illiterate (Sharkey, 2012). Even though Algeria is often portrayed as a country where French replaced Arabic, the reality is very different. French education had never been available to all people in colonial Algeria. As Holt concludes, the French education system during colonisation suppressed Arabic, and it only reached some of the population. Thus, many were left with neither French nor Arabic institutional education (Holt, 1994; Suleiman, 2013). Such a situation led the new leaders of independent Algeria to embrace Arabic as a national literacy language, even though they were less fluent in Arabic than in French. Evidence of this appeared when the first president of independent Algeria spoke in French and promised a rebirth of the Arabic language: “Notre langue nationale, l'arabe, va retrouver sa place” (our national language will recover its place (Abu-Haidar, 2000, p. 154)). However, before discussing changes that nationalist leaders adopted in post-independent Algeria, which still resonate today, it is worth discussing the decisions made by French officials in colonial Algeria, which resulted in a complex linguistic situation.

The French colonised Algeria from 1830 till 1962. During the colonial period, the French language was promoted in teaching (Bouazid & Le Roux, 2014), and the country’s history of linguistic diversity was denied any status. The majority of Algerians are Arab or Arabised. They descend from a population that was historically Berber (Berber languages or Tamazight), Turks (Muslim ruling elites of diverse origins associated with the period of the Ottoman protectorate over coastal Algeria 1517-

1830), Andalusians (Muslims who fled from Spain after the Reconquista), blacks (originally from Sub-Saharan Africa) and Jewish communities (Valensi, 1977). Colonial authorities ignored this diversity and shut down the population's rural and urban Quran schools of traditional education (reading and writing in Arabic plus principles about religion) (Sharkey, 2012). By shutting down schools and marginalising Arabic and Berber indigenous languages, Arabic literacy rates plummeted (Ibid), and French was developed to be the lingua franca of colonised Algeria. By the 1870s, Ruedy (1992) recorded that less than 5% of Algerian children attended school. Meanwhile, a small segment of the Algerian population had acquired access to French language schooling, with French colonial rule attempts to place them as the new elite (Sharkey, 2012).

However, the Algerians resisted due to the French aggressive nature of the assimilation policy, which Turin terms an “instruct-to-conquer” philosophy (Turnin in Bouazid & Le Roux, 2014, p. 17). A group of Muslims Ulama insisted that the cultural primacy of Arabic and Islam for Algeria is of paramount importance to this nation: “[T]his Muslim Algerian nation is not France”, some of them declared in a manifesto in 1936, “[t]his nation does not want to become France” (Djité, 1992). As a result, many Algerian parents chose not to send their children to colonial secular schools, as they believed they would deviate their children from the teachings of Islam (Saad, 1993). They chose, however, to secretly send their children to traditional Arabic schools, which resulted in the survival of the Arabic language (Heggoy, 1984; Horne, 1987). Following this resistance, French authorities recognised Arabic as an official language in 1947, and it was authorised to be taught in government schools, but that was not the case because the Arabic instruction was of *Darja* (colloquial Arabic), which there was a lack of. Subsequently, Heggoy (1984) noticed that by the late 1960s, there was only one Arabic instructor, on average, for every 1200 primary school children.

Upon independence in 1962, the leaders of newly independent Algeria promoted the policy known afterwards as Arabisation (ta'rib). Arabic was chosen to be the official language of the government. This decision was bold and had several implications for the new Algeria. The core principle of this policy was to enact standard literary Arabic at the expense of French, and, fortunately, other local languages also survived the French colonial aggressive policies. This language policy attempted to break from the colonial past and start anew while forming alliances with the Arab world. Sharkey (2012) argues that this policy successfully reinstated Arabic in Algerian government bureaus, schools, and universities. However, it helped to stimulate identities that rejected pan-Arabism as a national point of pride and challenged the linguistic and cultural diversity of the nation.

The implementation of this policy was systematic throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The new government of Ahmed Ben Bella, the first president of independent Algeria, promoted standard Arabic. An official decision was made in 1964 that all children should receive 7 hours of Arabic instruction in schools per week and, later, even more. The challenge was that the newly independent

Algeria lacked qualified Arabic teachers, thus, they had to import thousands of Egyptians, Iraqis, and Syrians to help with the teaching. Moreover, the newly established Ministry of Education implemented a monitor system where old, qualified teachers (graduates from traditional Islamic schools) could teach young learners. The government of Houari Boumediène (r.1965-1978) extended this policy by an official Act No. 71-229 of 1971 decree to set the birth of the *original teaching* (ta'lim assli). This teaching policy gave power and accreditation to (za'wiya) and (madrasah) the teaching bodies that constantly challenged the French educational policies in colonial Algeria. Teaching in this system consisted of nine years (merging between primary and middle school grades), with all teaching conducted in Arabic, except for foreign languages. The government of Chadli Benjedid (r. 1979-1992) had additional measures for enforcing this implementation. For example, primary and secondary schools, university humanities and social science programmes and road signs were all Arabised (written and taught in Arabic). Government employees were also required to demonstrate proficiency in Arabic and conduct court cases in Arabic (Abu-Haidar, 2000). It was only by 1976 that all subjects were taught in Arabic, except the teaching of foreign languages (Saad, 1993).

However, reinstating Arabic as the official language has continued with political challenges. Algeria was unified linguistically by choosing Arabic as the official language and focusing on its implementation. However, like French policies, other minority languages (Berber/Amazigh) were not nurtured – perhaps that is why the debate on Berber/Amazigh is still relevant. One major critique of such policy was that even in the 1990s, it was incomplete, even though the children of officials who were insisting on this policy of Arabisation continued to send their children to the few remaining French schools (Benrabah, 2007). Furthermore, some government officials continued to write documents in French and use Arabic texts only when necessary, despite a clear law stating otherwise (Benrabah, 2007). It could be argued that these officials are the few trained French speakers who graduated in colonised Algeria, and they felt endangered by this policy. Perhaps that is why there is a discourse in academia stressing the failure of this policy.

Conversely, a historian, James McDougall, had a more constructive view of the Arabisation policy in Algeria and questioned the discourse of *failure* around it (McDougall, 2011), even if it might be argued that promoting such policy was wrong. However, for ordinary Algerians, McDougall (2011) ascertains that Arabic culture retained the "ability to evoke a 'dream' or promise" for its ability to build an aspiration of self-expression and political actions (McDougall 2011, p. 253). Indeed, the Arabic literary genre flourished in Algeria during the 1990s (Sharkey, 2012). Perhaps the conclusion of the political scientist Selma Sonntag (1995), after surveying case studies from Belgium, India and other places, is that official language movements are usually used as political strategies by emerging elites in multilingual states to replace old elites and consolidate power (Ibid). Indeed, Sharkey (2012) agrees that Arabisation was not simply a matter of language promotion; it was, however, a political strategy by the ruling elites to confirm claims to political power. Such unclear intentions and deficient

consensus towards Arabisation policy by government officials echo the debate on the language of instruction in schools and universities.

2.3 The Debate on The Language of Instruction

The policy of choosing which foreign language to implement was also based on several political changes, which usually resulted from the clash between two prominent lobbying bodies (francophone and arabophone). In 1977, Minister Mostefa Lacheraf paused the Arabisation policy and introduced bilingual education. He believed French would act as a reference point that would force Arabic to be on the alert (Benrabah, 2007). This pause in Arabisation marked a temporary shift in focus, influenced by political dynamics. Lacheraf suspended fundamental schools (ta'lim asli), dismissed arabophone personnel in the ministry and reinstated teacher training in French. Additionally, he changed how scientific subjects were taught, making French the language of instruction for these subjects (e.g., maths, calculus, and biology) at the primary level (Benrabah, 2007). French, during his term, served a dual role as both a foreign language and a language of instruction for key subjects. Another sudden political change occurred in 1979, when the newly appointed minister, Mohamed Cherif Kharroubi, resumed the Arabisation policy. As part of these efforts, French, which was previously used for instruction in certain primary-level subjects, was demoted to a foreign language subject and deferred to grade 4. For the first time, English was introduced as the second mandatory language in grade 8 (Benrabah, 2007). While this represented progress for EFL, the focus on French as a foreign language remained prominent. The status of English was upgraded in the 1990s and regarded as equal to French (Benrabah, 2007). In grade 4 of primary school, students had to choose between French or English as a second language. Despite these adjustments at the primary and middle school levels, French retained its dominance as the language of instruction for higher education in scientific fields. At the higher education level, Miliani (2001) observed that 95% of postgraduate courses in scientific disciplines and 95% of undergraduate courses in medicine were taught in French. Another significant shift occurred in 2001 when the National Commission for Reform of the Educational System suggested endorsing French as the foreign language to be taught starting from grade 2. They also recommended that secondary-level science subjects revert to using French as the language of instruction (Sebti in Benrabah, 2007). These changes were applied in 2004, when French began in grade 2 and English was introduced in grade 6. Later, in May 2007, adjustments for French as a foreign language were implemented again, moving it to grade 3 as the starting point (Ibid).

The debate on the language of instruction, the place of French or EFL, remains unresolved. Moreover, a discrepancy between the language of teaching in primary and secondary schools and universities is also still unresolved. Students are taught in Arabic in primary, secondary and high schools and then, at university, they shift towards learning in French for science and technological subjects (STEM). Furthermore, as a political result of the uprising in February 2019, English was promoted by the Ministry of Higher Education to replace French as a research language.

Nevertheless, a year later, the same minister was removed, and French is still used in some higher education administration and even as a language of instruction in specific fields.

Evidently, there is a severe clash in higher levels of policymaking about the language question in Algeria as Berger (2002) noticed that the most severe problem in Algeria is the linguistic question where its consequences extend beyond the political scene. The ruling nationalists favoured Arabic on the eve of independence as a political strategy for union, while they chose to enrol their children in institutions controlled by the French government (Myers-Scotton, 1993), ensuring they were fittingly taught in French for promising careers in modern businesses and technology and would have access to vital governmental positions in the country (Thomas, 1999). This clash can yet be seen in today's Algeria, where there is a clear official Act No. 91-05 of 1998, prohibiting all official public use of languages other than Arabic (Bouazid & Le Roux, 2014), yet some government officials still use French in their correspondence and even in some of their public talks.

This depiction is pertinent to English literature teaching in higher education because the personnel (students, teachers, and administrative staff) are affected by how these debates influence their choices and decisions. Having surveyed the language question and the place of foreign languages in post-independent Algeria, I will now describe the nature of higher education institutes and what organisational changes could have affected teaching, specifically English Literature teaching.

2.4 The Nature of Higher Education Institutes In Algeria

In the following section, I will depict the changes that have occurred in the organisation of the higher education system in Algeria. I will draw on resources from the officially published journals of the Algerian government (Gazettes), the higher education system in Algeria report published by the Mediterranean Network of National Information Centre on the recognition of qualification (MERIC, 2019), and the overview of the higher education system in Algeria (Saidani & Khecheni, 2018) supervised by the Erasmus+ office and the authority of the audiovisual and the culture executive agency (EACEA). The descriptions provide an overview of the changes that have occurred, which will serve as a reference point for later discussions.

The higher education system in Algeria has undergone several significant changes since its foundation. Ordinance number 76-35 of 16th April 1976 adopted the organisation of education in light of economic and social changes. The purpose of this was to emphasise the principle of nine years of free education, which is compulsory. It also set up the fundamental policy of direction emphasising science and technology (classical system). Then, in 1999, after conducting an in-depth review of the system with the need to democratise access to higher education, the new implementation in the higher education and scientific research sector emphasised new reforms focusing on the curriculum

content, the course structure and pedagogy management - that is shifting the focus of learning to students while teachers are supposed to be moderators and enablers. Following this, the new system was organised into three levels: bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctorate (LMD system). Ordinance number 99-05 of 4th April 1999 adopted the new organisation of higher education by allocating the new degrees for all specialities, except medical sciences and agronomical sciences, which continue to follow the traditional model of instruction (classical system). In 2005, the universities launched the LMD reform because of Executive Decree 04-371 of November 21st, 2004, which asserts the creation of a new bachelor's degree. The new system changed the organisation of course syllabi, the length of the degrees and their names. However, the system remained free, i.e., endorsed and funded by the government.

As was stated previously, the new system resulted from an in-depth review conducted by the National Commission for education system reforms. The Commission highlighted the constraints and an action plan to ease the adaptation of the BMD system (Bachelor-Master-Doctorate). The new reform doctrine emphasised the overarching design, the participatory approach, and inclusivity in application. The new system was adopted gradually from 2005. In 2009, all academic higher education institutions introduced it. Eleven years later, The National Assessment Conference assessed its implementation alongside representatives from the business sector. It was recommended that the assessments of the degrees could benefit from international cooperation, establishing relationships with business partners and enhancing university governance (Saidani & Khecheni, 2018). It could be argued that this change would open up the universities to the global world by maximising opportunities for students to conduct research inside and outside Algeria, arising from the benefit of knowledge and experiences/expertise exchange.

2.4.1 THE UNIVERSITY

It is argued that the LMD system updated the various teaching programmes through the more widespread use of cross-curricula teachings, such as information technology, history of science, foreign languages methodology and even international law. The LMD aims to broaden the content by expanding students' competency and introducing optional teaching units to provide more multi-diverse interdisciplinary teaching (Saidani & Khecheni, 2018). Practically, such purposes are carried out through a new organisational structure. Knowledge is explored through semesters organised by teaching units. Each unit is worth various credits, which reflect the amount of work a student has to complete (such as lectures, seminars, practical works, and internships). The teaching unit is composed of one module or more. There are four types of teaching units. Firstly, the fundamental teaching unit, which determines the student's course of study and specialisation. This unit is essential. All students must pass all the constituent elements of the fundamental unit. The second is the methodology teaching unit, which enables students to develop the ability to work independently. The

third is the introductory teaching unit, which serves as a bridge between professional skills that students need to help out in their career planning. It also serves as a bridge between different disciplines. The fourth is the cross-disciplinary teaching unit, which is designed to provide students with the tools they need for their studies, such as languages and IT skills. The sum of these teaching units forms a course.

Courses are categorised according to the field of study, broadly defined as a coherent whole comprising several disciplines. For example, the first cycle of the system is a licence degree (bachelor's degree), which is taught through six semesters. Each year covers two semesters, meaning a licence degree is covered in three years. This is allegedly the structure of the first cycle of the LMD system. All courses in a field of study must adopt this way of carrying out and structuring their course materials to meet these teaching and learning criteria in higher education. An English language degree, for example, at university level, must meet these guiding criteria: modules such as introduction to linguistics, introduction to literature, phonetics and phonology, morpho-syntax, oral expression and written expression in the fundamental units of the semester may be seen. What may also be seen is the research methodology and an additional language in the discovery unit. Moreover, we may find ITC in the introductory unit. The module structure and how they are set up are usually negotiated at the university level with approval from the ministry.

Additionally, each year has a general purpose, broken down as follows: the first year aims to adapt students to university life and experiments with various pieces of training, which is why first-year students are taught all together regardless of their future speciality. The second year aims to deepen students' knowledge of the subject chosen, whereby the common core of teaching is allocated to 80% of the content, and the specific subject chosen is 20%, which is subject-specific and varies from one field to another. The third year focuses on the student's chosen subject, with 80% and 20% on common core subjects. Each year, there are, on average, 8 modules, with at least 337 hours of teaching and assessment per semester (Saidani & Khecheni, 2018). An English language degree, for example, will expand to focus on a specific speciality starting from the second year, such as English literature, civilisation (British and American studies), and the art of teaching (pedagogy). During the six semesters of a bachelor's degree, students may be required to complete a practical project or internship specific to their course. For an English degree, for example, a student may choose a topic of research negotiated with their supervisor in the field: (American, British, or African literature), (British civilisation or American civilisation), and (the art of teaching and learning). Students must write a report/thesis and potentially present a viva before a panel of teachers and researchers in the field. Students are awarded bachelor's degrees at the end of the first cycle if they successfully accumulate 180 credits. Each module/semester is taught for around 14 weeks per semester, which equates to four months of teaching (Saidani & Khecheni, 2018).

The second cycle of the LMD system is the master's degree. A master's degree lasts two years and is completed after a bachelor's degree. Master's courses are taught over four semesters (2 years). The first year of the master's course is devoted to deepening students' knowledge in their chosen speciality, and the second year is dedicated to developing professional/research skills for the particular chosen speciality. It consists of 24 modules spread over three semesters. The fourth semester is assigned to a practical internship and/or a written thesis defended before a jury of researchers who specialise in the field. Master's courses, stemming from an English degree, can be categorised into three specialities: English literature (American, British or African, depending on the university openings), civilisation (British studies, American Studies), applied linguistics, and didactics (which refers to the art of teaching and learning the English language).

2.4.2 THE ENS (ECOLE NORMALE SUPERIEURE) HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOOL

The schools are a particular type of institution created under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education, with the aim of training managers and vocational degrees in several fields, such as tourism, shipping and teacher training for the benefit of national education, among others, with a job guaranteed contract after the successful completion of the course.

For teacher training, the schools (Higher College of Teachers) work to provide enhanced and curtailed training for future teachers of primary (3-year course), secondary (4-year course) and college institutions (5-year course) for the benefit of the Ministry of National Education. The schools cover various training fields, such as the training of teachers in mathematics, physics, chemistry, computing, natural science, music and English.

Since English is introduced in the national education at the secondary education level, the schools work at training teachers of English for secondary (4-year course) and college level (5-year course). Interestingly enough, schools also adopt the LMD system with a unique twist, i.e., students are awarded a licence degree regardless of their choice of teacher training. This allows graduates to access the LMD system where they can register for a master's degree of 2 years in the event of having a four-year course or an additional one-year research training if they had completed the 5-year course.

Like the LMD system design, English language students are first introduced to modules in units such as listening and speaking, grammar, writing, reading techniques, phonetics and introduction to linguistics. Students are introduced to physio-pedagogy, TEFL, material design, textbook evaluation and syllabus design in the following years. They are also introduced to English literature and civilisation modules.

2.5 Teaching Methods in The LMD System

Due to the high number of students in the first cycle of the LMD system, teaching consists primarily of lectures where teachers act like a sage on the stage (King, 1993) or, as Miliani (2012, p.221) puts it, the “Old Wise Man model.” Alternatively, as per the policy of the LMD, group work is encouraged in seminars, where practical work is involved, and the teacher's role is to act as a guide on the side (King, 1993). Personal work is also essential to the student's training and is assessed and graded by the teachers. The assessment depends on a mixture of systems combining continuous assessment (such as research work carried out by students, oral or written questions, and presentations). The assessment also depends on a final end-of-semester exam with a single opportunity to retake the exam (Saidani & Khecheni, 2018). The weight of the assessment system is usually 50 to 75% for the exam and 25 to 50% for the continuous assessment. The assessment methods differ from one field to another, and the teaching team in a particular field of study usually sets them up. For English language and literature, the module teachers set the assessment criteria in collaboration with the teaching staff at a particular university/institution. Similarly, teaching and assessment methods are very similar in the second cycle (Master) of the LMD System.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have laid the foundations and described the research context through this chapter. I provided a snapshot of Algeria’s contextual and cultural setting, focusing on the education system. I then presented the debate on language policy in post-independent Algeria and how such a debate is reflected in the place of foreign languages in the teaching context. In this chapter, I also described the official policy governing the higher educational institutions (universities and higher education schools) and their system. Finally, I presented the teaching model of the LMD system.

CHAPTER 3: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

After outlining the complexity of the Algerian context and the place of English literature in higher education, this section depicts the most relevant and central topics and debates around teaching English literature. The first emerging theme through my reading was the literature itself - what could be considered a literary text? The second theme related to this project is the reasons for teaching literature in both English as a First Language (L1) and English as a Second Language (L2) contexts. The third theme relates to how these teachings are usually catered for and challenges that occur specifically in the L2 context of literature teaching. This section is, then, a synthesis of the literature to bring to light the central themes and concepts that intervene in the teaching of literature. While the debates and discussions surrounding these themes are presented in this review, no definitive position or conclusions are drawn at this stage. This is a deliberate choice, as one of the aims of this study is to explore how teachers and students define these concepts. As such, the task of forming conclusions will be left to the research participants and will be discussed in the findings chapter. This literature will help inform the main themes of this research, direct the methodology, and enrich discussions and conclusions made throughout this thesis.

3.1 LITERARY TEXTS

The literary text is a fundamental element in teaching literature. It serves as the medium through which literary language is presented for study. It is, therefore, crucial to explore what is considered a literary text in the classroom. It has been argued that the literary language is often specialised, complex or different (Eagleton, 2011). Such an argument assumes a binary distinction between literary and non-literary texts. This view also has roots in the formalist writings of the Russian, Czech and New Critics. In this view, literary language is usually figurative, obscure, old-fashioned and, most of the time, challenging to understand with intense functional features, such as symbolic language. In other words, it is different from everyday language. In addition, this view assumes that literariness, a character of literary language - could be traced. In line with this argument, literature has some distinguishing features, such as literariness, which renders it an “identifiable linguistic phenomenon” (Hall, 2015, p.11). Furthermore, literary language is sometimes seen as independent of readers' views and the context of reading. This independence invites a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations. Literary language also invites the use of complex language forms and vocabulary, making it attractive to teachers and learners. In other words, literary language provides rich content which informs teaching and learning.

Still, some scholars, such as Carter and Nash (1983), challenge the concept that a fixed set of linguistic elements is exclusive in their literature usage. Instead, they argue that literariness is a nuanced and dynamic interplay between various linguistic features and a mere compilation of *literary* vocabulary. Therefore, "Literariness in language, [they] believe, comes from the simultaneous operation and interrelation of effects at different levels in the language system" (Carter and Nash, 1983, p.124). Carter and Nash (1983) deny the principle of thinking of literary language in a dividing manner, which entails that *literariness* is on one side of the spectrum and stops at the end side of it. Instead, they think of "literary language" as existing along a "cline" of graduation. This means that aspects of "literariness" could be identified in any "ordinary" or "scientific" or "normal" or any other label that tends to be used in describing "non-literary texts" (Carter and Nash, 1983, p. 124). Carter and Nash (1983) argue that no singular inherent property can unequivocally be designated *literary*. While they concur that certain words and expressions, such as figures of speech, can be seen as a sort of lexicon specific to literature, they are usually defined as literary. In isolation, however, figures of speech, such as metaphors, do not embody the entirety of what could be considered literary qualities.

Carter (2012) observes that the division between literary and another kind of language emerged from the early formalists such as Shklovsky, Tynyanov, Eichenbaum and Jakobson, who focused on the literary text's linguistic elements and used linguistics to argue for a theoretical and descriptive means for "literariness" (p. 124). Literariness, stemming from these writings, is, therefore, inherited to the degree of using language that deviates from the expected norms of language; it uses these patterns to de-familiarise the reader – that is what makes a literary text. However, Carter and Nash (1983) argue that such a division between norms and what could be considered an aesthetic departure from them marks ambiguity surrounding the definition of norms in language. Their critique centres on the tendency to define these norms in one or two linguistic levels. Additionally, such a departure from one linguistic level in one work could align with a norm at another level. Therefore, such analytical accounts for literary language fall short in comprehensively considering "the multi-layered nature of stylistic effects" (p. 125).

Even more so, Carter and Nash (1983, p.125) recognise that there is more to literariness than language. They consider that literariness "is a property of texts and contexts." In their view, texts fulfil two requirements. First, texts provide a map of linguistic relationships where fields of semantic values are connected. Second, texts establish relationships with respondents (readers). These relationships mark the context and are a defining aspect of its literariness.

McRae (1991), however, has a different view of literary language. McRae (1991, p. 94) considers the L2 learners, and he argues for the use of "imaginative materials" in language learning and considers it to be "engaging". McRae (1991) distinguishes between two types of language: referential and

representational. According to McRae (1991), referential means a language that emphasises description and deixis. It communicates on one level of linguistic function in terms of informing or giving instructions about how to manage a social situation. It does not engage in any way the imaginative faculties of the interlocutors. In simpler words, a language that is mainly used in real-life situations (e.g., agreeing, apologising, offering, requesting, rejecting, verifying and wishing). Whereas representational language, in McRae's (1991, p.3) analysis, is a language that "opens up, call upon, stimulate, and uses areas of the mind, from imagination to emotion, from pleasure to pain." In a simpler term, representational language involves, and referential language informs.

In his distinction between representational and referential, McRae (1991) observes that learning could easily be attained by using referential materials in the context of L2. As the focus in L2 teaching contexts is on the four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing, learners in these contexts need specific and targeted skills and are not interested in the overall package that language may offer. For example, when choosing employees, a hiring manager at a journal will focus on and be satisfied with their writing abilities, even though they might experience difficulties in speaking. Therefore, a student in such a context will pass the written examination without thinking of other aspects related to spoken language.

Similarly, in an English-speaking context, a non-English speaker may only wish to communicate in basic terms with social actors. Therefore, if the focus is on using referential language, the risk of ignoring what McRae (1991) terms as the fifth skill - thinking in English - is high because such a type of language does not involve the L2 learners. L2 learners risk losing their communicative impetus, for they need to focus on the mechanical aspect of language in use (grammatical manipulation), which can be intuitive to first-language users.

Therefore, it is essential to consider representational literary texts because their language is open "to be decoded by a receiver; it must engage the receiver's imagination" (McRae,1991, p. 03). We can argue that literary texts, seen as representative texts, would lead to thinking in English, which enhances the English teaching and learning experience. Hence, they are essential for L2 and EFL learners.

3.2 LITERARY TEXTS AS A CANON

The distinction between literary and non-literary language extends to and involves many aspects, including written and oral forms of literature. Nonetheless, research has yet to identify clear boundaries between literary and non-literary language (Hall, 2015). Some views, such as that of Hall (2015), argue that literature does not have a language of its own; instead, its range makes the readers and teachers think so. Hall (2015) argues that modern literature tolerates distinctive linguistic

variety, including many features of spoken language. It is difficult to trace a dividing line between literary and non-literary text. Perhaps the best comment on this issue is that “Literary language is often surprisingly ordinary, as ordinary language is often surprisingly poetic” (Hall 2015, p. 44).

Therefore, the question of what makes a literary text a literary text depends on the view that the assessor would develop, possibly the institutions and, by extension, teachers. Suppose they look at the text as it is, independent from the readers and the context. In that case, we are then leaning towards a textual study for the features of the text, and more often, we take the views of the early formalists, such as Jakobson and the New Critics, such as John Crowe Ransom. If we see the text as not independent from the reader and the context, literature is no longer just a written text; we see literature as discourse (Fowler, 1981; Pope, 2005). That is to say, it could be considered as verbal art that evolved mainly from oral forms, as Finnegan (2018, p.2) would put it: “There is no clear-cut line between oral and written literature…there are constant overlaps.” These ideas can be linked to the reader-response tradition (e.g., Beach, 1993; Fish, 1970, 1980; Iser, 1974, 1978; Ransom, 1938, 1979; Rosenblatt, 1995; Wimsatt & Beardsley, 1946, 1949) that sees the text as nothing without the reader. Perhaps the term *canon* best describes the sum of literary works perceived as literature (Carter, 2007)

Still, the term *literary canon* holds challenges as it is difficult to ascertain what works could be considered canonical and how they are chosen for study. In his book *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (1993), Guillory explores the issue of canon formation in literary studies and challenges the idea of *exclusion* that governs historical accounts of canon formation. Guillory highlights a crisis around literary studies, particularly how the canon debate is misunderstood. The issue for Guillory (1993, vii) is not which authors or texts ought to be included in the literary canon, nor is it “the school, and the institutional forms of syllabus and curriculum” but why such a debate represents a crisis in literary studies and two decades later a crisis in the humanities, as Emre (2023) outlines in her introduction to the new edition of the book.

To dissect this crisis, Guillory (1993) proposes a shift from the traditional explanatory hypothesis based on exclusion, which argues that the canon is formed by a selection process, in which some authors or texts are excluded based on social or ideological factors. Others are included based on their aesthetic or literary value. Instead, Guillory (1993, p.vii) argues that evaluative judgements are essential but not satisfactory for the process of canon formation and that “it is only by understanding the social function and institutional protocols of the school that we will understand how works are preserved, reproduced, and disseminated over successive generations and centuries.” These social functions and institutional protocols of the school are necessary components that contribute to canon formation. Therefore, literature is not a stable category – institutional and social factors constantly redefine it.

The institutional factor is the school. It regulates access to literary production and consumption and even controls literary practices, argues Guillory (1993). According to Guillory (1993), this regulatory function contributes to the reproduction of social inequalities. Emre (2023) states that the school's job in modern society is to reproduce social order. Therefore, it is the school, through a selection of works, that they become canonised, and later on, these works redefine the category of what is known as literature. Guillory (1993) borrows the term *cultural capital* from the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu without endorsing Bourdieu's project in its totality but to introduce an entirely different theoretical perspective into the present debate (viii) to explain this. Emre (2003) argues that the term *cultural capital* is used to portray the unevenly distributed linguistic and symbolic knowledge that underpins the production and consumption of literature.

Through such a foundation, Guillory (1993) asserts that *cultural capital* assumes the form of the *literary canon* within the educational system. Guillory (1993) challenges the fixity of the canon by describing it as an "imaginary totality of works" where no one has access to this list in its totality (p.30). Guillory's assertion is viable because no one can claim to have read every canonical work that ever existed, and because the *imaginary list* is in continual change according to different institutional, social and ideological judgement or contestation. Guillory (1993), therefore, distinguishes between the canon and the actual instrument of the school, which is the syllabus and the curriculum.

Here, we can add that the essential aspect of this distinction is the evaluative act of judgement, which is perpetuated by the individuals to include works into syllabus or curriculum. Emre (2023) for example, comments on how such acts of individual evaluations converged with the social institutional condition, which is in the crux of what makes cultural capital a sociology of judgement. Emre's (2023) viewpoint is important to consider because it raises questions about the criteria used to canonise works. Emre (2003) argued that if canonisation was premised on the error of the relationship between symbolic and representational politics, then that must lead to an error concerning the nature of the cultural capital of literature. Furthermore, Emre (2023) explains that judgement centres on the belief that literary texts constitute a *repository* for the *values* of authors or the social group that progressive scholars and their conservative critics belong to. The selection, therefore, of such text is based on the premise that these values will be transmitted from authors (texts) to readers, or teachers to students in the context of the school. Such logic is arguably flawed for it leads to misguided attempts to canon reforms and inadequate understanding of the cultural significance of literature.

One may argue then *opening the canon* is attainable by changing the syllabus to include works from diverse social identities. In the teaching context, this would mean adding works, for example, from diaspora, world literature and literature translated to English language, which could enrich the syllabi and add to the teaching content. However, Guillory (1993) expresses caution against potential

misreading that could arise from absorbing individual works into the canon's apparent unity. As such works are stripped from historical contexts, they will contribute to accentuating the values of a dominant or a subordinate group (Guillory 1993). How then we may protect selected works from misreading? Emre (2023) suggests two conditions. First, a separation of research in literature, which is the act of generating specialised knowledge about literature, from teaching literature, which is the act of modelling the pleasure and performance of works. The curriculum or the syllabus in such a view does not mean that all works, whether written by minority or non-minority groups, are taught; instead, they should be treated similarly and that the school should offer access to these works because "they are important and significant cultural works" (Guillory 1993, p.52). Such an approach does not mean ignoring historical works. Instead, these works remain important for both minority and non-minority students because the cultures that gave rise to these works are as foreign to contemporary individuals as minority cultures may be to some.

The heart of the debate on *opening the canon* lies in the tension of selecting works for study purposes (syllabus, curriculum, and school choices) and the practical instrument of choosing works in schools. The selection of work, therefore, needs to be balanced and inclusive. Guillory's (1993) arguments seem to suggest that exposing students to different time periods will broaden their understanding of what constitutes *minority cultures* instead of limiting students' exposure to the concept of contemporary minority works. In essence, Guillory (1993) seems to argue for a curriculum that recognises the diversity of cultures across time and space, challenging the bias towards contemporary works and urges for an encompassing approach to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural and the historical context in which different works were generated.

The debate about the literariness of the text and how such texts are canonised, and later on how they are chosen for study purposes, would lead us to question the reasons for using the text in the classroom in the first place. Perhaps we can understand why English language teachers (ELT) and English as foreign language (EFL) implement literary *texts*. Perhaps it is for the range of the language that the texts offer rather than, say, implementing dialogues or leaflets or the experience that the literary text can offer. This issue will be discussed in the following section.

3.3 Purposes Of Using Literary Texts In The Classroom

Regardless of the lack of a unified perception of a literary text, literature can still offer numerous benefits for students; it can target multiple teaching and learning objectives and contribute to different goals and purposes. Some researchers (e.g., Carter & Long, 1991; Collie, Slater, & Swan, 1987; Hall, 2015), for example, talk about the use of literature for the purposes of the *affective argument*, which is the effect that the literary text may have on readers and learners. According to the *affective argument* view, literary texts are used in classrooms to promote pleasure, exploration of human experience and

personal growth of readers. Texts are, therefore, used to engage readers emotionally, through selecting texts that use language and narrative techniques that evoke feelings and create an emotional response. Perhaps this view aligns with the Formalists, in the sense that, as Shklovsky and his colleagues would put it, the purpose of literature is to “de-familiarise” our everyday life through “practical language” and it offers readers a unique social world (Hall, 2015, p.16). Indeed, several studies start from this reasoning to using literary text. (e.g., Gilroy & Parkinson, 1996; Hirvela & Boyle, 1988; Lazar, 1996; San, 1990).

Another more recent development in the purpose of literature teaching emphasises the cultural aspect of what the literary text offers. *Authentic* literary texts promote understanding of cultural knowledge and intercultural experience (Carter & Long, 1991; Collie et al., 1987; Hall, 2015; Kramsch, 1993). The cultural argument depends on cultural awareness, which is fostered through language and literature pedagogies. It perceives the literary text as a lens to reflect the societies of English language users. Such a variety of resources necessitates those teachers, who are considering the study of culture within literature, to establish exploration goals for productive discussions.

The third category for purposes of literature teaching could be termed *language argument*. In this view of literature, literary texts are usually explored to focus on literary forms, its accompanying discourse and processing skills, tolerance of non-literal language and ambiguity. These aspects, combined with persistency, may lead to writing creatively and critically (Carter & Long, 1991; Hall, 2015; Teranishi, Saito, & Wales, 2015). Kauffmann (1996) for example, argues that through recurrent writing assignments in L2 classes, students can foster high-level motivation for self-correction and will be able to overcome their errors. More general claims to use literary texts in the classrooms are related to the expunction of vocabulary, the development of more fluent reading and communicating skills and the linguistically memorable taste of the text (Carter & Long, 1991; Collie et al., 1987; Hall, 2015; Teranishi et al., 2015).

Moreover, at basic levels, literature is said to contribute to vocabulary growth, which may occur due to reading, as well as help develop argumentative (reading for writing) and creative skills (e.g., Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Ellis, 1993; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989, 1990; Kramsch, 1997). Such experimental case studies attempt to determine the effect of intervention protocols of extensive reading schemes within their context. It is assumed that exposure to reading literature in certain protocols will improve the quality of students’ vocabulary.

Literature offers an undeniable and variable teaching resource for all teaching and learning contexts and levels. Rosenblatt (1995), for instance, asserts that literature teaching could contribute to democratic education, yet these democratic potentialities were frustrated by the traditional teaching and criticism of literature (see 3.4). Claims to use literary texts in classrooms are intertwined. It is

undeniably true that literature teaching helps the building of moral, personal and social growth of readers. It also broadens their tolerance skills and helps with a greater understanding of ourselves and others (Procter & Benwell, 2014).

These arguments occurred as an extension to the benefits of teaching literature in the L1 context, with an underlying assumption that the same actions will lead to the same results. Regardless of the claim these arguments make, the challenge is that they are often taken as self-evident, when it can be argued that the L2 context of teaching and learning is different from the L1 context. This is probably because the echo of these arguments came into being as a natural extension to the benefits of teaching literature in the L1 context, with an underlying assumption that the same actions will lead to same results. The nature of the L2 context is complex and has different and multiple intervening factors. For example, in L2 contexts, teachers have more presence and authority and their teaching is often influenced by their philosophy and understanding of what counts as literary texts, the purposes of teaching literature and their ways of implementing texts for study. Hall (2015) for example, calls for qualitative case study research in various educational settings to appreciate these varieties and understand teachers' claims and literature usage. Moreover, the L2 context is underpinned by several challenges and problems that need special attention when educators teach literature by. The L2 contexts bring enormous challenges for the teachers of literature. Before discussing the challenges of the L2 context more, it is worth expanding on the foundations of the challenge surrounding how literature is used in the classroom in L1 contexts.

3.4 A Central Debate on The Teaching of Literature

Literature can be used in multiple and diverse ways. These approaches and ways of using literary texts in educational setting specifically, can be categorised under different pedogeological and methodological orientations. These pedagogical contesting views, I would argue, emerged from debates in literary criticism about how to interpret texts. One of the views, for example, follows the Formalist, New Critics and Structuralist methods of literary criticism, while the other view can be categorised under reader-response theory. Scholars and researchers have explored the subject of approaches to literature teaching and they contributed to building extensive literature around this subject (see, for example, Beach, 1993; Fish, 1970, 1980; Iser, 1974, 1978; Ransom, 1938, 1979; Rosenblatt, 1995; Wimsatt & Beardsley, 1946, 1949). Nonetheless, these contesting views could be revised through the works of Louise Rosenblatt, who was the first to theorise *the Reader-response approach*, of which finds traces are found in most research on teaching literature. It is essential, therefore, to discuss Rosenblatt's ideology of *reader-response*, the different concepts and the central debates and arguments associated with it.

During the first part of the 20th century, literature was dominated by views, such as New Criticism, which exiled the reader and gave no weight to their personal experiences and interpretations of literature. Then, during the second half of the 20th century, scholars, like Rosenblatt, started challenging traditional views of dealing with the literary text. Rosenblatt's story of resistance to traditions of interpretations, which dominated literary studies for decades, is still relevant to literature teachers. Her call for positioning the readers into the *close reading* process - with reservations about this concept - influences several English teachers and educators worldwide (Ali, 1993; Zainal, Termizi, Yahya, & Deni, 2017). While New Criticism, for example, emphasises close reading by focusing on textual analysis, these traditional views of reading had significant issues, especially in teaching and learning contexts. It, for example, sparked a static view towards texts as having a *correct* meaning, which restricted discussions and argumentation in classrooms. Rosenblatt (1995) contested this view by arguing that: "there are only potential millions of individual readers of the potential millions of individual literary works" (p.24). The experience of reading a literary work result from the complex process of infusing the verbal symbols into the reader's intellectual and emotional meanings by challenging his/her thoughts and feelings (ibid). By observing her students' interpretation, Rosenblatt (1995) argues that the teaching of literature becomes a matter of improving the individuals' capacity to reflect critically on the reading process – it is only then that meaning is evoked. It seems legitimate to argue that the teaching of literature centres around empowering students to evoke meaning through their reading experience. Then, the teacher's task is to foster transactions between readers and the literary work.

The term *transaction* refers to the idea that meaning is generated by the interaction of two separate entities: text and reader. This interaction is apparent through the reader's response or his/her literary criticism; in other words, the convergence between the reader and the text (Iser, 1978). Rosenblatt (1995) transcends the act of reader/text interaction by using the metaphor of symbiosis. A process in which the elements (reader, text, and context) "are aspects or phases of a total situation" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 26). Furthermore, a *"*transaction*"* is based "in linguistic and life experiences, in assumptions about the world, and in personal preoccupation*"* (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. xx-xxi). This view of transaction of meaning offers multiple benefits, including broadening the literary experience. Still, this view can be argued to pose challenges to teachers of literature, who, sometimes, seek clearly defined information, such as background information, social, economic and contextual history of a literary work. These elements are more focused and can help readers to better understand the literary work. Therefore, teachers may be tempted to rely on them. Arguably, this traditional preoccupation with literary history and context is "expendable" (ibid, p.27), unless taught for purposes of enriching the reader's literary experience.

The study of literature, either under New Criticism or Reader Response, has always prioritised the literary text as the main object of analyses and called to move away from studying literature in view of

“background information” (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 289). Thus, primarily, New Criticism and Reader Response seem to call for similar principles in the study of literature. Yet, what makes Rosenblatt's ideas pertinent is her departure and rejection of the New Critics' understanding of the nature of the literary work, which considers the later as an autonomous entity that could be objectively analysed.

Therefore, it could be argued that the close reading technique is the dividing line between Rosenblatt's thoughts and the New Critics (Hall, 2015) wherein New Critics follow an approach of “narrow empiricism” valuing words to the degree that even paradoxes and ambiguities were structurally posed and resolved (p.13). Moreover, Rosenblatt (1995 sees that the New Critics' extreme position on the “intentional fallacy” and the “affective fallacy” diminishes the importance of the author, and it completely ignores the reader's role (p.290). Therefore, we can add that Rosenblatt's understanding of the reading event is essentially different. Rosenblatt’s reading strategy is built from her experience with students of literature. The *transaction* in meaning, which is the central element of this reading theory, stresses the designated relationship between mutually conditioned elements (text, reader, and context).

The literary reading process depends on the elements (text, reader, and context) and fundamentally differs from the efferent reading. While the efferent derives from the Latin verb *efferre*, which seems to be similar to the practice put forward by the New Critics, in the sense that readers extract or *take away* information from the text. Reading with this sense is to find an answer to a factual question, which focuses on the public aspect of meaning and excludes the private (personal feelings and ideas) (Rosenblatt, 1995). This is a view of reading that is considered to be traditional and follows a formalist methodology of teaching literature, where the literary work is a body of information, which is transmitted (message of the work), rather than an experience to be reflected on. An aesthetic reading, however, is evocative. In other words, the reading becomes an event and the focus is on the private aspect of meaning. What the reading experience has evoked (i.e., what the reader sensed, felt and intuited). It could be argued, therefore, that teaching literature hinges on the potential continuum from predominately efferent reading towards aesthetic reading. The practice of teaching literature, then, depends on the purpose of teaching literature. For Rosenblatt (1995), for example, the benefit of literature is achieved through aesthetic reading - an emotional and intellectual transaction with the literary work.

The benefits of the aesthetic reading in teaching literature, Rosenblatt (2005) believes, could not be attained unless authority within the classroom is considered. In an “acid test for literature” (Rosenblatt, 2005, p.62), Rosenblatt (2005) recommends that teachers should aim to set up meaningful encounters with books instead of focusing on particular skills. In opposition to the New Critics' teaching practice of designing a curriculum based on learning about literary canon and literary history, the teacher’s job is to select and offer materials that accompany students’ development. Literature

should provide a “living through” not just “knowledge about” a literary work. The purposes of the literature study then should cover “joy” and increased critical judgement (Rosenblatt, 2005, p.113).

This section introduces Rosenblatt's story of resistance to the tradition of teaching literature. A tradition that has influenced teachers and educators around the globe. It presented central debates around practices of teaching and reading literature, including efferent and aesthetic approaches to reading. These concepts are still illuminating English literature teaching contexts and extend to L1 and L2 contexts. These conceptual and theoretical underpinnings are translated to practices and approaches in literature classrooms. These understandings, also, influence teachers’ choices and approaches of teaching literature. Due to the flexible nature of intuitions, practices of teaching literature will vary depending on different variables, such as context, materials and competences. It is, therefore, of particular interest to this research project to explore practices as they occur in L1, L2 and EFL contexts and the challenges that literature teachers face, as well as their purpose and methods of teaching literature. The following section, then, explores the teaching literature as it occurs in the L1 context.

3.5 TEACHING LITERATURE IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Although the focus of this research is the Algerian context of teaching literature, it is, however, essential to explore other teaching contexts, specifically L1 teaching contexts. Exploring these contexts could provide insight into some of the core debates and issues which might be transferrable or comparable to L2 and EFL teaching contexts. For example, Goodwyn (2018), in an English teaching context, questions the place of literature in educational curricula. He connects the study of literature to political agendas and predominant social discourses which, according to him controlled the content of teaching the subject of literature up until the second decade of the 21st century (2010 specifically). Goodwyn (2018) also extends the discussion to other first language teaching contexts, namely, Australia and New Zealand. He brings to light the example of these countries to highlight major debates around teaching literature and national identity. According to Goodwyn (2018) English teachers should be alert to the influence of politics on their choices of materials and literature debates.

Comparably in a recent study, Perry (2022) presented a more focused overview on purposes of teaching literature in the L1 teaching context. Perry (2022) did this by analysing primary data of interviews from ten heads of English schools. Perry (2022) advocated for Margaret Meek Spencer’s 1988 concept and view of reading literature. He revisited Spencer’s 1988 understanding of the contribution of the act of reading to learning for children and young adults; specifically, her views on reading as an act of liberation, which should be taught away from the narrow views of examination

purposes. Perry (2022) compares Spencer's 1988 concept of reading literature as a liberating act to its current position and purposes in selected secondary schools in England.

Perry (2022) acknowledged the limitation of his study being small-scale study involving only ten head teachers and limited to a specific geographical area (East Midlands). Nonetheless, Perry's (2022) study helps to highlight views of head teachers about the subject of literature. According to Perry's (2022) literature, at basic secondary levels, is valued for its knowledge, skills and academic contribution, i.e., what students can take from literature to improve different learning aspects or in Perry's (2022) words "performativity and accountability measures" (p.294). Thus, according to Perry (2022) and in the specific context of his study, teaching and reading literature in England secondary education is underlined by specific examination purposes (GCSE). Henceforth, in Perry's (2022) research context, the current position of the study of literature sits far from Spencer's 1988 views on reading as an act of liberation and this position is attributed to multiple factors, for example, Perry (2022) mentions aspects related to budgets. It is worth mentioning, however, that the participants in Perry's (2022) study acknowledged the importance of literature in developing students' social agency, as well as its ability to promote diversity and cultural and racial equity. Still, these traits and aims of teaching literature are not present in real practice, which Gibbons (2016) confirms when he asserts that teaching literature in England does not allow space for personal, societal, and sociocultural elements in the classroom.

In addition, Prezioso (2023, p.135) points out the current situation of teaching literature, in the United States (US) education context, being "more rigid than responsive," promoting objective standard readings and supressing personal, creative and multiple readings and interpretations. Prezioso (2023) discusses Hamlet's famous soliloquy in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. He points out the multiple and variable meanings that could arise from the statement "To be or not to be," which can be read in and out of its original play context. Using this example, Prezioso (2023) explains that reading in US literature classes, according to instructional curriculum materials, is dependent on adhering to one meaning-direction and is restricted to a specific angle in interpretation (see, for example, McGraw Hill's Hamlet-specific materials about the speech, which is used in US literature classes).

In fact, many voices condemn the way literature teaching is approached in schools (e.g., Pino, 2021; Prezioso 2022). Researchers point out the effect of educational policies on students' performance and appreciation of literature. The structural teaching of literature focuses on language rules and structures, leaving limited space to imaginative or innovative classroom answers and interactions. It could be argued that reading literature moves beyond classrooms' walls. When discussing literary concepts and works, readers engage in a parallel universe that does not answer to contextual, sociological or even political boundaries. Readers can create meanings and interact with the literary text to move beyond their immediate context. Nevertheless, readers can be subjected to external

factors which might abstract the freedom in which meanings and inferences are developed. These factors vary from societal, political, religious and sometimes personal subconscious impediments. Furthermore, readers (students) can be subjected to institutional regulations and teaching approaches and methods that promote standardised and rigid ways of reading and dealing with literature.

Over the years, researchers have attempted to provide suggestions to approaches to teaching literature, which allow more space for imagination and focus on overall meanings and understanding rather than the *typical* focus on structural and formative ways, which is still the norm in literature classes. This research extends from attempts to prioritise students' intuitions (see, for example, Reynolds et al., 2020; Eaglestone 2021) to research that focuses on the effect of reading literature on students (Beers and Probst, 2017). While researchers, such as Prezioso (2023), suggest an approach to teaching literature that is rooted in understanding, as opposed to the knowledge dependent teaching of literature. For example, in her paper, Prezioso (2023) separates the two concepts: knowledge (information) and understanding, contending that understanding moves beyond knowledge; and that understanding allows readers to build and develop meanings and interpretations beyond the text. Prezioso (2023) also contends that acquiring understanding frees students from having to refer to background knowledge or personal experiences every time they attempt to discuss literature.

It could be argued that the concepts of understanding, in its broad sense, is a core element in teaching literature and that it adds attributes and richness to students' meanings and interpretations of literary works. However, it is worth mentioning that the concept of *understanding* is a subjective quality that is hard to measure or evaluate and, in her paper, Prezioso (2023) does not suggest a rubric of assessing her suggested approach of teaching literature, which is rooted in *understanding*; nor does she provide suggestions on ways of instructing her approach in classrooms. Furthermore, Prezioso (2023) delineates information or knowledge opposing it to understanding, while it could be stated that knowledge about the text can add to comprehension and that understanding the text can start from knowing the original context of its writing. Lisenby (2009) for example, presents the idea of using teaching background knowledge when teaching literature. Lisenby (2009) suggests that teachers of literature are bound to refer to background knowledge to cultivate literature *appreciation* in their students, to provide an understanding of the materials and to introduce clarification. However, Lisenby (2009) also argues that the background introduction should be brief and not exceed a "glimpse" (p.349). Therefore, it could be argued that Prezioso's (2023) suggestion could be seen as an addition or a contributor to the learning context; it can work towards amplifying and extending the literature learning outcome. In other words, understanding literature and acquiring knowledge about literature are two integral, non-contradictive elements of teaching literature.

3.6 PURPOSES OF TEACHING LITERATURE IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Among the significant elements that guide the teaching of literature is the aim behind introducing it in classrooms. Literature is a subject that can be deliberated in and outside academia and teaching contexts. It can take place in tertiary classes as well as nursery and primary classes. Furthermore, there are forms of oratory literature which are discussed in non-academic and among lay audiences. These contexts see literature from varied angles, use it for variable reasons and with different approaches and methods. For example, literature read to children for bedtime is different in its aims and purposes from that discussed in university classes. Although the same reading materials can be used in both contexts, bedtime literature aims to create a calm atmosphere of relaxation for children to go to sleep, whereas in the context of university, the same reading material will aim, for instance, to extract meaning and analysing linguistic patterns ... etc.

Due to the vast and broad ways in which literature can be used, it is essential, in any learning context, to set clear aims and purposes of introducing literature. These aims and purposes will, then, serve in detailing the type of textual materials as well as methods and approaches of teaching. Evidently, Resnikoff (2012), for example, states that the aims of literature teachers in teaching the subject are apparent in the way they choose to test their students. Resnikoff (2012), in the context of the United States of America (USA), brings real exam question examples, which he deems to be "embarrassing", due to their focus on rigid memorisation in asking students to cite information about literary works' content, context and bibliography (p.33). Resnikoff (2012) contends that testing students about different information and aspects in the text cannot help them to aspire to develop "understanding, appreciation, and increased critical ability" (p.33). As a solution, Resnikoff (2012), for example suggests that students should be asked questions regarding their interpretation of different concepts and notions in the text. Nonetheless, Resnikoff (2012) also adds that questions about interpretation of the text do not present a credible assessment of students' involvement with the reading process, i.e., it is not an indication of whether students have fully grasped the literary text meanings and engaged with it. Resnikoff (2012) presents Gordon's application of Bloom's analyses of the cognitive domain of testing. Bloom's analyses put forward a conceptualisation of questions that invite students to go beyond merely introducing facts and memorisations and interpret and analyse literary events and concepts.

Resnikoff (2012) points out the incompatibility in English literature teachers' ways and methods of teaching and examining literature and their aim of teaching it. Correspondingly, Yarlott (2006) working in a UK context, summarises the aim of teaching literature as being either cultural or psychological. Yarlott (2006) debates the real effects of literature on children's psychology and he argues that children lack the repertoire needed to have the required understanding and appreciation of literature.

He, for example, gives an example of a child, in an English context, reading '*Saladin*.' Yarlott (2006) explains that the effect of not having exposure to the nature of the Arab Bedouin society will contribute to limiting and deluding children's perception and understanding of this story. It could be argued that Yarlott's (2006) example applies to international students reading English literature. For example, an Algerian student reading Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* would undoubtedly need an introduction to English history during the Victorian era. This information would help us understand the religious constrains forced on the main characters in the story. Otherwise, the text and reader are estranged; therefore, no connection can be built and all conclusions and interpretations readers make will be questionable and possibly not congruent with the textual thematic grounding, which some may accept as a manifestation of the imaginative aspect of literature.

This debate leads us to the question of choosing reading/ teaching materials in schools and universities. With this respect and in a more adult education related context, Hamilton (2016) proclaims that English literature instructors and course designers do not have the correct focus or methods to support students in their journey of literary analyses and criticism. Furthermore, Hamilton (2016) suggests that literary works are presented and studied not for a specific value in them, but because they were *there*. He also proclaims that educationalists do not question reasons and aims of using some literary materials and not others; instead, they use them inherently. Similarly, Yarlott (2006) puts forth the idea of introducing literature to readers, namely children, and the effect of it on their lives. Yarlott (2006) suggests that although there is no concrete evidence that literature - be it *good* or *bad* - influences children, we accept that stories children read and listen to during their formative years can intervene with their character development and life choices. Therefore, it is imperative to choose suitable educative and character-building materials for children. Hamilton (2016), on the other hand, believes that educators should be aiming be to stimulate their students' arguments and curiousness to reasons and values of reading literary works.

This section explores aspects of teaching literature, which are related to first language teaching contexts; it includes challenges, prospects, approaches and methodologies. It is probably reasonable to assume that some of the aspects, which are presented in L1 contexts, could find place in L2 and EFL contexts of teaching literature. This similarity could arise from using comparable teaching materials (literary texts), from EFL teaching contexts adopting L1 teaching methodologies and encountering similar challenges, or simply because both contexts utilise the same target language (English). Nonetheless, it is essential to explore, present and discuss theoretical, methodological and practical aspects of teaching literature in EFL contexts. The following section will, then, discuss some of the major aspects of teaching literature in L2 and EFL contexts, specifically the EFL Algerian context of teaching literature.

3.7 THE CHALLENGES OF THE L2 CONTEXT

The theoretical foundations for teaching literature in L2 and EFL contexts are not adequately represented in the existing literature. Even though there has been research conducted on teaching literature in a second language context, with echoes from research conducted in the L1 context, we find that, for example, most research applied in L2 and EFL contexts are either replicates or copies of research and theories originating from in L1 contexts. Hall (2015, p. 86) for example, observes that "we know less about second language reading', let alone 'second language literature reading and teaching." Hall (2015, p. 86) adds, "It is often assumed … that the findings' of such studies within the L1 context can apply to L2 without issue." The danger of this assumption is ignoring the particularity of the L2 context and the teachers' views on the issue.

We find that, for example, Rosenblatt's (1969) thoughts originated in the L1 context, but they also reflect teachers of English literature in the L2 Context. Several studies in these contexts were based on Rosenblatt's ideology and have designed classroom activities to foster the literary event from her angle. For example, Ali (1993) contests that the teacher's job is no longer to pass the literary work's message to the students. Ali (1993) illustrates how the reader-response approach could be used to teach short stories to students in Malaysia. Additionally, Timucin (2001) designed a teaching approach to foster students' literary responses and assess the validity of his teaching instruction. Liaw (2001), influenced by Rosenblatt's thoughts, reports on an exploratory case study on literature teaching for non-majoring students at a Taiwanese University. Similarly, influenced by the reader-response approach and the stylistic analysis of texts. Dhanapal (2010) designed an approach to teaching literary text in order to cultivate critical and creative thinking skills. Findings from her study show the potential of adopting integrated teaching approaches using literary texts that can be applied for high-level and low-level English proficiency.

Other occasions, where Rosenblatt's (1969) views find place in L2 contexts, are noticed in the usage of the reading logs, which are a task-based activity designed with the view of the reader-response approach (Ochoa Delarriva & Basabe, 2015; Zainal et al., 2017). A log is used to keep a record of the student's stream of consciousness while they read a literary work. These studies (Ochoa Delarriva & Basabe, 2015; Zainal et al., 2017) have experimented with several methods and approaches to teaching literature; their aim is to liberate students from producing the same general responses to the literary work.

Additionally, research has identified problems that obstruct the teaching process, and which find place in L2 contexts of teaching literature. For example, Lazar (1990) identifies some of the difficulties that teachers and students may face when dealing with novels in the literary classroom. These challenges include language complexity, culture and textual ambiguity. Even so, Lazar (1990) provides a rich source of pedagogical activities (length, vocabulary and cultural background). It is worth mentioning

that problems cited by Lazar (1990) can even affect teachers in an L1 context. A literary text's readability can challenge the second language teacher and learner (rhetorical features, language aspects such as vocabulary, syntax and sentence structure) (Schulz, 1981). Furthermore, another challenge that may affect teachers and learners is the cultural factor. An exemplary study is that of Abu-Rabia (1996), where he investigated the relationship between attitudes and cultural backgrounds of 80 Jews and 70 Arabs learning English by reading stories. In this study, Abu-Rabia (1996) concluded that cultural content could interest learners more than the language of the text. Therefore, it could be argued that the linguistic difficulty could be weakened if the cultural aspects of the story resonate with the learners. While the opposite may be exact, that is to say, if learners do not share the same cultural background, the reading experience can be unbearable or even misunderstood. Language, and its connection with teaching, presents a topic of discussion and takes a space, particularly in EFL literature teaching contexts. EFL teaching contexts may use literary texts as a medium to learn English language, which sits far from the aims of teaching literature for literature's sake. Therefore, it is essential to this study to explore distinct aspects and research which investigate, consider and debate language relation to teaching literature in EFL contexts.

3.8 TEACHING ENGLISH LITERATURE OR STUDYING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The discussion concerning language representation in EFL and L2 contexts has multiple implications. Researchers and scholars explore the language/literature connection and divide and they present some areas that counterpart English Language and literature in foreign teaching contexts. Using foreign textual materials, one may argue, essentially brings elements of identity and culture. These elements, then, intervene with the learning and teaching objectives and even interact with the teaching process. In addition, in the context of EFL literature, the discussion extends to aspects related to the use of language itself. In the EFL context, language could be the target of teaching, discarding other elements related to interpretation, meanings or aesthetics, i.e., the focus is on the structure and forms of language and linguistics, such as syntax, grammar and vocabulary.

Using literature to teach English language is not a recent interest in research, nor is it a new practice in educational classes. However, the particularity of using literature to teach language in EFL contexts, one may argue, falls in the possibility of not recognising it as a teaching objective, i.e., in EFL contexts, teaching literature for literature can be easily confused with teaching literature for language learning. Collie and Slater (1990), for example, present four areas where literature can be a valuable teachable resource, and among these four areas, they mention "language enrichment" (p.3). According to Collie and Slater (1990), language enrichment occurs when students develop their vocabulary repertoire, extend their knowledge about the use of language structures and learn how to develop logic in writing.

In addition, some researchers have explored the development of language skills using different forms of literature. Floare (2021), for example, examines the efficacy of authentic contemporary plays to develop L2 English oral and pronunciation accuracy. Floare (2021) confirms that using plays in L2 classes significantly improves students' oral accuracy. Nonetheless, skills and learning outcomes may interact when teaching literature and not be isolated. Thus, students can learn new vocabulary while developing cultural knowledge, exploring argumentation, meanings and interpretations and enhancing their orality. Therefore, it is impossible to claim that one learning aspect occurs in isolation. Thus, the purposes and aims of introducing literature to EFL classes should be set even before the teaching takes place. These aims and purposes will determine the teaching focus, methods and targeted outcomes. The following section focuses more on the EFL Algerian context and explores more profound challenges and issues that may occur while teaching English literature.

3.9 English Literature in the Algerian Context

The EFL teaching and research context provides context-specific research studies that draw on significant aspects of teaching literature. For example, reading materials' culture and cultural significance is another considerable discussion topic in EFL Algerian English literature classes. English is particularly special in the context of Algerian education and teaching (see background chapter). Materials used to teach are often canonical English literary works, bringing many aspects to the learning and teaching situation. Therefore, researchers and teachers contemplated the use and challenges of these teaching materials.

Abdelaziz (2016), for instance, conducted a study on teaching literature in the Algerian context. He administered questionnaires to two Algerian university teachers and students to assess how satisfied teachers and students were with the literature teaching modules. He deduced that students find it exceedingly difficult to keep up with the module requirements, and teachers mostly prefer to avoid engaging with teaching the literature module. Abdelaziz (2016) believes the issue is the absence of a precise methodological implementation. Another observation that Abdelaziz (2016) presents is the language-literature divide and whether the aim is to teach the target language or perhaps the target language literature; such a problem is signalled by teachers and students alike.

Like Abdelaziz (2016), Kuider & Amine (2019) highlight other contextual barriers that hinder the learning and teaching of English literature at Mustapha Stambouli University of Mascara. Kuider & Amine (2019) conducted a survey with 155 students of literature enrolled in the academic year 2015. They held interviews with literature teachers and other staff. Kuider & Amine (2019) report that most students are not motivated enough to engage with literary texts because the language is outdated and obscure. Moreover, students do not see the relevance of the selected literary texts to their aspirations.

On the other hand, the teachers stressed the absence of clear-cut objectives to define the role of literature and the lack of pedagogical materials fitting the context (literary texts).

Benzoukh & Said (2016) echo a similar concern. They investigated Algerian teachers' and students' readiness to manage and deal with English literature teaching. Using a questionnaire for literature teachers at the Kasdi Merbah University of Ouargla, Benzoukh & Said (2016) assessed the situation of a literature course at the university following the LMD syllabi system. They found comparable results to those of Kuider & Amine (2019). They reported that students find it challenging to read English Literature for several reasons, among which they signal unsatisfactory vocabulary, for which they suggest including students in choosing literary texts (Benzoukh and Said, 2016, p. 34). They also reported that although most teachers support using literature, they were not involved in any teacher training for literature. This resulted in a lack of understanding and a clear strategy and framework for analysis.

From a cultural focus, Ghouti & Mohammed (2014) investigated the significance of culturally integrated language teaching as a component in the teaching of literature. These researchers suggest a model for the practical teaching of English literature that draws on literature from intercultural studies. Ghouti & Mohammed (2014) rationalise their call, arguing that knowledge of the cross-cultural discourse is necessary for learning a foreign language and that the absence of awareness of these cultural barriers has obstructed both learners' success and teachers' efforts. They also argue that the framework suggested could provide applications to foster cultural understanding and bridge the cultural barriers.

While previous studies tackled contextual issues and called for adopting new frameworks for implementing literary texts, Nabila (2020) reflects on her teaching practice and her management of the problems arising in the EFL context. She argues for the benefit of literature teaching by reflecting on her teaching journey at the university level, where she outlines some of her techniques to engage students in the reading process. Among these, Nabila (2020) reflects that group discussion has served her well in converging between students around the cultural interaction that the text offers. Through discussing these interactions, she argues that students face horizons for cultural awareness. Nabila's (2020, p.689) practice has helped her change the reading session to what she terms "cultural island." For example, Nabila (2020) provides literary texts she used in class and found to be stimulating for students, such as *The Waves* by Virginia Wolf, for first-year master students to unpack the theme of friendship.

Nabila (2020) justifies choosing these teaching materials because they allow students to reflect on their journeys with friendship and enact discussions in class. She also finds that *The Glass Menagerie* by the American playwright Tennessee Williams is suitable for the Algerian context, especially with

the issue of the mother trying to find a suiter to her daughter. Such a situation finds its place in the Algerian culture; it is a topic open for discussion among Algerian mothers and their daughters. These discussions are often comparable in the Algerian and American cultures, which Nabila (2020) finds stimulating for students' engagement with the topic. Through these examples, Nabila (2020) argues for the benefit of making sound choices for literary texts that can serve as a cultural example for discussions and that the link between language, culture, and literature can only be seen through literary texts. Nabila's (2020) study aligns with Ghouti & Mohammed's (2014) call to focus on cultural instances in teaching literature. These encounters, argues Nabila (2020), can provide linguistic and artistic media for learning whilst allowing students to realise their own personal, social and historical contexts. The benefit of literature teaching is, therefore, immense.

Yasmina (2012), on the other hand, discusses the content of the foreign literature syllabus in the frame of the Algerian university degree of English studies. She questions the policy behind the current design of foreign literature syllabi, more precisely, the choice of canonical texts, even though she claims teachers have resisted such texts' utility in teaching and learning an English degree. To understand the issue more, Yasmina (2012) surveyed Algerian teachers. Results from Yasmina's (2012) investigation suggest a need to rethink the syllabus design, considering students' and teachers' choices of the literature modules. It also calls for a more in-depth look into teachers' and students' roles. Yasmina (2012) concluded with a call for developing a well-structured theoretical framework that could be implemented to reshape the goals of the foreign literature syllabus, which is still controversial.

Despite growing international concerns about teaching literature in L1, L2, and EFL contexts and some local studies on English literature teaching in Algerian universities, there is a notable scarcity of knowledge about this subject in foreign language contexts, specifically within Algerian higher education.

To my knowledge, dedicated qualitative case study research has yet to focus on Algerian higher education institutions to explore teachers' and students' views on what counts as literary text, the purposes behind its use and its implementation. Additionally, there is a lack of focus on readers' interactions with the text in the reviewed research. While some studies discuss the benefits of using literary texts and echo L1 debates and theoretical views, they do not examine how these theoretical views translate into practice. This concern is covered in this study. This study explores how different theories about teaching literature manifest in the EFL Algerian higher educational context and the associated issues and practices.

It is important to note that while the literature review outlines these debates and provides an overview of theoretical perspectives, no definitive conclusions are drawn here. This is intentional, as one of the

aims of this study is to investigate how teachers and students define these key terms and concepts. Therefore, the task of drawing conclusions on these debates is reserved for the findings chapter, where the perspectives of the participants will be presented and analysed.

This study, therefore, aims to generate knowledge and understanding of English literature teaching in the Algerian EFL higher educational context. It seeks to address the urgent need to explore what counts as literary texts in this context, the purposes of literature teaching, and the ways of implementing it from the perspectives of teachers and students in Algerian higher educational institutions.

3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter has focused on some central debates on teaching English language literature. It started by exploring the term *literary texts* and how this term is still debatable, where the boundary between literary and non-literary is still open for exploration. Then, it discussed the purposes of using literary texts in the classroom, highlighting three main arguments: affective (evocative), cultural, and linguistic. Then, it laid a foundation for ways of teaching literary texts, highlighting Rosenblatt's reaction to the traditional model of teaching literature. Moreover, this chapter has drawn attention to some of the struggles of using literary texts in the EFL context. Finally, it concluded with a survey of contextual studies about English literature teaching in Algeria, highlighted a gap in the literature, and set the course for this research.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the procedures to design the current exploratory research study within the interpretivist paradigm. It follows a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach stems from the nature of the methods used. This study used focus groups with students, semi-structured interviews with teachers and observations of the teaching setting. These methods were chosen based on their appropriateness to answer the research questions. This chapter outlines the underlying assumptions that the researcher made while conducting the study. Then, it describes the methodological choice of the research. It then outlines the data generation methods and their strategy and analysis. Subsequently, it explains the quality assurance of data generation and analysis. Lastly, it explores the ethical issues surrounding the study.

4.2 THE PHILOSOPHICAL STANCE OF THE CURRENT STUDY

Research is a journey dedicated to understanding and producing new knowledge. However, this journey is only sometimes straightforward. It is governed by underpinning assumptions that individual researchers presume. These assumptions ultimately lead to different methodological choices and results. I consider these assumptions through the following terms: paradigmatic stances, epistemological stances and methodological choices. Scholars often recommend that researchers dwell on their stances before venturing into their research journey (Grix, 2004; Robson & McCartan, 2016). Such reflections help guide and choose the most suitable methods to achieve the study's aims and influence how the data is interpreted (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Lincoln et al., 2005).

The sum of the previously mentioned assumptions in social science research is termed a research paradigm. A paradigm can be defined as the established set of beliefs and parameters that bind scientific research (Crotty, 1998). It is defined by Grix (2004, p.26) as the “established academic approach” for doing research. These beliefs are shared by several scholars and are believed to have models from which spring a particular coherent tradition of scientific research (Kuhn, 1996). Therefore, it is the set of means by which science should be carried out in a specific field of research. Research can then be distinguished by its ideology concerning the nature of reality, philosophical basis regarding the nature of knowing, and various practical methods of studying phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). Therefore, the assumptions concerning the nature of reality and the nature of *knowing* guide the methodological choices of a particular research study (Hay, 2002).

The present exploratory study appears to align with the interpretivist paradigm and uses appropriate qualitative methods. This is because this study shares some of the core beliefs and underpinning

assumptions of interpretivism. First, drawing on this current study's aims and research questions (1.4), I am leaning towards describing and identifying a phenomenon through shared meanings. I am also seeking to understand English literature teaching in Algerian higher educational institutions, as opposed to explanation (Grix, 2004). Moreover, I am not striving to establish a causality relationship nor intervening with a teaching method to change the purpose of teaching English literature. I am interested in exploring how English literature teachers discern the literariness of literary texts, what they believe the purpose of teaching English literature in universities is and how they perform to achieve their aims. The study then acknowledges that, ontologically, the reality and the knowledge we acquire about it is perceived, understood and interpreted by people in a society instead of imposed from outside (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In other words, I endeavour to understand the phenomenon through the meanings that social actors allocate to it.

The study's context assumes what Pring (2010) terms an *"*idiographic*"* wherein I aim to "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social lifeworld." Moreover, I believe that these English literature teachers cannot be detached from the context itself. Understanding their purposes and aims would depend on my interpretations of the social phenomena as they occur (Grix, 2004). Therefore, this project's entirety is grounded on a "double hermeneutic" (Grix, 2004) to understand the teachers' perceptions of the literariness of works, the purpose of teaching English literature and their actions of seeing these aims work.

In the same context of discussing my underpinning assumptions, epistemology also needs to be addressed. Crotty (1998, p.12) defines epistemology as "a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know." In other words, it could be understood that epistemology is the general philosophical stance regarding the nature of knowledge in research. It also deals with what Grix (2004, p.63) describes as *"*how we come to know what we know." Moreover, epistemology deals with the knowledge permissible to be obtained and its adequacy and legitimacy (Maynard & Purvis, 1994). Crotty (1998) accounts for several epistemologies identified in the research, such as objectivist epistemology, constructionist epistemology and subjectivist epistemology. Such views towards knowledge discuss, in their essence, how meaning is produced throughout the research.

This research study holds in its essence that knowledge is not out there waiting to be discovered. However, it comes into existence *in* and *out* of engagements with realities in the world (Crotty, 1998). In other words, my epistemological stance is that knowledge is constructed, wherein the subject and object have a co-equal relationship in the meaning-making process and knowledge generation. Subsequently, I assume that English literature teaching and learning in Algerian higher educational institutions cannot reach objective truth; I will only report the understandings and the meaning-makings of different actors. I interact with teachers and students about literature and literature teaching views. As it is implicit in my research questions, the participants were asked to speak about

their understanding of the literary text, the purpose of teaching English literature and their point of view on how this teaching is carried out within their institutions. In this research project, the claim of knowledge that I am making is that teachers and students cooperate with me to generate knowledge regarding exploring the aims of this research. This stance goes hand in hand with the claims on interpretative research provided by (Lincoln et al., 2005; Mason, 2017). They emphasise the generation of explanations of people's different views and identify their shared meanings, which is essential to understanding these views. English literature learning and teaching have been explored through participants' generated knowledge of the meanings they allocated to the subject. It differs from one teacher and their teaching context to another in Algerian higher educational institutions. This thesis recognises the multiple realities that English literature teachers and students generated to reflect the usage of plural rather than singular words, such as *meanings* instead of *meaning* and *views* instead of a *view.* In the following section, I will discuss the methodological choices that stem from the research questions and the philosophical assumptions that underpin the current study.

4.3 Methodological Choice: Case Study Research Inquiry

While surveying the literature on qualitative inquiry, we often encounter terms such as methods and methodology, which are either misunderstood or used similarly. Crotty's (1998) demarcation of methods and methodology is quite illuminating. A methodology is an overarching strategy for conducting research or the design that oversees the selection and use of methods. However, a method is a tool or "the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data" (Crotty, 1998).

By incorporating the purpose, focus and philosophical assumptions that underpin this study, it was fitting and logical to adopt a qualitative case study research design. Creswell and Poth (2016) note that qualitative case study research "involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system" (p.73). They stress that a case study as a qualitative methodology can explore single or multiple cases through *"*detailed, in-depth data collection*"* methods, such as (observations, interviews, audio-visual materials, documents, and reports) (Creswell and Poth, 2016, p.76). Following this definition, I believe that a qualitative case study research design is in harmony with the focus of this study since the focus is exploring the purpose of teaching English literature in Algerian higher educational institutions and is also concerned with how this teaching is carried out. Besides, we can take Silverman's (2015) observation that: "in qualitative studies, 'cases' need not be defined as concrete individuals or settings but interactive units or processes." Therefore, by extension, I can focus on the "teaching and learning of English literature" as teachers with students in Algerian higher educational institution classrooms undertake it. This gives way to explore both the realisation of the teachers' beliefs or philosophical views on English literature teaching and the methods used to achieve the teachers' aims. Therefore, the cases are framed on teachers who are considered a central element for teaching and learning.

Following the definition of Creswell and Poth (2016) on qualitative case study research as being an in-depth study of a contemporary phenomenon in its natural setting, I organised multiple case studies in a bounded system to explore the research aims and answer its corresponding questions, wherein I chose four higher educational institutions: one from the south of Algeria, one from the north-west, one from the north and one from the north-east. Each of the English literature teachers and their students, respectively, have their views on the phenomenon under study, the literary text, the purpose and the ways of teaching and learning English literature. Such diversity of institutions has become a tool to deepen the understanding of English Literature teaching in Algerian higher educational institutions using teachers as cases. Moreover, I worked with two to three teachers from each institution and their students to generate data for the previously mentioned aims.

4.3.1 Sampling and Participants

Silverman (2015) notes that most early career qualitative researchers worry about having a small number of cases to be studied to generate enough data to thoroughly explore an issue. This is worrying due to their misunderstanding of linking quantitative sampling procedures to qualitative ones. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) observed that "Many…researchers employ…purposive, not random, sampling methods … they seek out groups, settings and individuals where…the processes being studied are most likely to occur" (p.378). This observation resonates well with my study's directions as I am interested in the teachers' understanding of literary text, the purposes of teaching English literature in Algerian higher educational institutions and their teaching methods.

According to Wieviorka (1992), these characteristic units or distinctive features of the case are now binding to it. Multiple teachers as cases are selected for the study to investigate teaching English literature in Algerian higher educational institutions. Each case will be studied to explore its particularity and complicity (Stake, 1995). Each case is "one among others" (Stake, 1995). As for selecting the cases, Silverman (2015) suggests that following a *snowball sample*, using the social networks of one or two initial informants could encourage their friends to participate in the study. Before going into the field, I contacted potential literature teachers and they agreed to participate in the study. Then, I used their connections to recruit other teachers for the study, which was adequate. Finally, I recruited 13 teachers with their respective students - two to three teachers from each higher educational institution; fortunately, only two withdrew. The COVID-19 pandemic also interrupted me, so I had to stop data generation in the field, resulting in the accumulation of data for ten teachers with their respective student groups. In the following section, there is a detailed description of the participants.

4.3.1.1 TEACHERS

The sample included ten teachers, primarily educated in Algerian institutions and some of whom had studied in Western higher educational institutions. That is to say, they graduated with a degree from an Algerian university. Then, they followed a postgraduate degree/training abroad or were directly assigned as a teacher assistant at their university with different levels of seniority in their fields. As stated earlier, they are from various higher institutions across Algeria, but they all share the same focus: teaching English literature. There were eight female and three male teachers. One participant in the study was an American lecturer working in an exchange programme. The table below describes the teachers.

Table 1. General Information on Participant Teachers

N	Name	Phonemic script	Gender	Higher Institution	Age	Qualification	Teaching experience
1	Siraj	/ˈsɪræj/	Male	Oasis institute	32	Magister*	Three years
2	Fatima	/fætɪmæ/	Female	Oasis institute	35	Magister	Three years
3	Bouthaina	/bʊʃaɪnæ/	Female	Oasis institute	40	PhD	Four years
4	Zainab	/zaɪnæb/	Female	Castle institute	60	PhD	20 years
5	Anas	/ænæs/	Male	Castle institute	38	Masters	Ten years
6	Aisha	/aɪʃæ/	Female	Castle University	32	Masters	Five years
7	Meriem	/merɪəm/	Female	Numidia University	33	Magister	Four years
8	Imane	/ɪmæn/	Female	Numidia University	38	Magister	Eight years
9	Mamoun	/mæˌmu:n/	Male	Timgad University	45	PhD	15 years
10	Rihab	/rɪhˌæb/	Female	Timgad University	63	PhD	20 years
11	Tasnim	/tæsni:m/	Female	Timgad University	32	PhD	Eight years

*A Magister degree is equivalent to a master's degree in the new system

4.3.1.2 STUDENTS

All the students were adults. Following these institutions ' selection criteria, they had been admitted to a university degree or a Higher College of Teachers. They had been learning English in high school and secondary school for a total of 7 years at maximum, meaning they were expected to have an adequate level of reading and writing in English.

The table below assigns anonymised codes to student participants in the focus group discussions.

Table 2 Focus Groups Anonymisation

Focus Group discussions	Codes
Siraj's Group	S1, S2, S3, etc.
Fatima's Group	F1, F2, F3, etc.
Bouthaina's Group	B1, B2, B3, etc.
Zainab's Group	Z1, Z2, Z3, etc.
Anas's Group	A1, A2, A3, etc.
Aisha's Group	Ai1, Ai2, Ai3, etc.
Meriem's Group	M1, M2, M3, etc.
Imene's Group	I1, I2, I3, etc.
Mamoun's Group	K1, K2, K3, etc.
Rihab's Group	R1, R2, R3, etc.

Based on the underpinning assumptions and the methodological choice of this current study, this research uses four qualitative data generation methods, which will be discussed in the following section.

4.4 DATA GENERATION METHODS

Table 3. Research Questions and Associated Methods

Research questions	Associated research methods
1) What could be considered a literary text in the Algerian higher educational context?	Semi-structured interviews Focus group discussions
2) For what purpose is English literature introduced, read, and explored in Algerian universities? a. Teachers' views	Semi-structured interviews
3) How do Algerian university literature teachers use literary text within the classroom?	Observations Semi-structured interviews Focus group discussions

With these research questions, the selected cases align with this study's purpose to explore the purpose and the methods employed to teach English literature in Algerian higher educational institutions. When applicable, I used more than one method for each question (data triangulation) due to the nature of qualitative inquiry being multi-method in nature, allowing for validation of the data collected/generated afterwards (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln et al., 2005). I also thought that using a single method may not lead to rich and resourceful data and would not allow me to fully explore the issue of teaching English in Algerian higher educational institutions from several angles. I outline the methods chosen according to the research questions in the table above. I used semi-structured interviews with teachers to explore their philosophical points of view regarding the aims and methods of teaching English literature and focus group interviews with students - a group of 6 max - to understand their views on the same related issue. Observations were used for the third research question to track the teachers' philosophical views and claims in action/practice. Combining these methods would yield rich data for an in-depth exploration of the issue.

4.4.1 OBSERVATIONS

Observations are a central tool employed in qualitative research (Dörnyei, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2015). They are frequently used in the classroom (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Using observations to generate data about a classroom setting means immersing myself in “systematically observing dimensions of that setting, interactions relationships, actions, events, and so on” (Mason 1996, p.60). Such immersion is accompanied by a “systematic recording of events, interactions, and artefacts (objects) in social setting” (Marshall & Rossman, 2015, p. 143). I used observations to determine how teachers' claims about English literature are put into practice.

A substantial advantage of observation is the richness of the data on the participants’ behaviours, interactions, and others, mainly when observing direct classroom teaching. This procedure leads to having "multi-layered” understandings (Mackey & Gass, 2015, p. 228). However, there are many challenges with observations. As an observer, I will not understand why, for instance, a teacher acted the way he did or why students reacted; this is why it is advisable to combine observation methods with other triangulation methods. Following this, I video-recorded sessions for those who consented and audio recorded for those who did not. Doing this allowed me to review the recordings and scrutinise the teaching and learning context.

The observation method has its challenges. The observer paradox and the Hawthorn effect are mostly prominent ones (Mackey & Gass, 2015). The first of which refers to the influence of the observer on the linguistic behaviour of participants. The second is the degree to which participants will perform better, simply because they feel optimistic about being in a study. Minimising the threat of these effects, I reflected on selecting a suitable type of observation suitable to the aims and the research questions.

Observations vary depending on their degree of structure. In highly structured observations, observers have a checklist of items and a grading scale for what they observe, such as when a teacher introduces a concept and how often a particular activity occurs etc. This checklist is used for several contexts and later will provide a ground for comparing the recurrence of an activity or a phenomenon (Mackey & Gass, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2015). Such an approach would not fit with the purpose of this research. I am interested in the teachers’ methods of using English literature. It would be better to focus on what they are offering rather than having a list of methods in mind and perhaps being frustrated when faced with no or fewer of them applied in the field. In less structured observations, I may rely on audio-visual techniques and field notes to record the contexts' happenings while reflecting on their presence as observers. That is to say, I need to consider my presence and how I can mitigate its effect. That is why I saw it fitting to be a participant-observer, allowed me to be

a group member. By playing a dual rule of observer/participant, I could mitigate the challenges mentioned earlier. Moreover, it is also recommended to have participant observers in an adult learning context (Mackey & Gass, 2015).

Additionally, to mitigate the challenges that participant-observer brings, such as “the researcher is both a participant and an observer” (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). The teaching session was video and audio recorded, arguably allowing me to analyse the language usage in depth later on. I also kept reflective field notes on the teaching settings (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Evidently, for this research, using field notes to keep a detailed record of what is taking place in the sessions and a video/audio recording for later analysis and being a participant-observer has minimised the occurrence of challenges accompanying this method. In some instances, I discovered I could be a participant observer, resulting in the Hawthorn effect (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Their teachers' observations showed that the students were more engaging than usual. In other instances, participating in the classroom discussion was dangerous as I felt it would undermine the teacher's authority. Therefore, I had to adapt based on the nature of the class I was visiting by being a non-participant observer. However, I was fortunate to video record in all Higher College of Teachers Institutes and with one teacher from a university. In other instances, I was only able to the audio record.

My main concern about using recordings as a participant-observer in some instances and a non-participant in others was to record and explore how teachers and students use and interact with literary texts. Additionally, I used the recordings to determine how the teachers introduce a given text in practical terms and aims, see the students respond to such texts, determine what kind of activities are employed in the teaching settings and understand the dynamics of the class altogether.

4.4.2 INTERVIEWS

interviews are commonly to generate data in qualitative research. Scholars have written extensively about a range of topics related to interviews, such as challenges in conducting them, the different types, their strengths and limitations and general guidelines for effective interviewing (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014; Edwards & Holland, 2013; King et al., 2018). Asymmetry of power characterises interviews, wherein the interviewer takes charge of the interview process. Such a feature enables the interviewer to learn about the interviewer's world from their point of view. However, Hannabuss (1996) would argue that a conclusive understanding may not be accessible - even if the interview is conducted in both parties' language, it might lead to disappointing results as words may not mean the same for the interviewer and the interviewee. However, it could be argued that if the interviewer has carefully designed the interview and is aware of the skills that need to be polished, it will lead to rich data. In this regard, Hannabuss (1996) puts forth some guidelines for researchers to be conscious of when conducting an interview. For example, she suggests that the interviewer should have a

prepared talking point and certain aptitudes that will allow for a smooth flow to the interview and ascertain the interviewee's comfort. Such skills are derived from everyday conversations to keep the discussion flowing without rushing to finish the interview. In other words, interviews are a purposeful conversation to learn about the interviewees' worlds and their experiences.

By incorporating the questions that this research stems from, it is essential to stress that I am, as a researcher and an interviewer, leaning towards acting as a traveller interviewer (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). That is to say, knowledge is constructed through the journey during the interview. A reflective story is to be told afterwards from such a journey. The focus of the interviewer, then, is the journey itself. Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) note that the Latin meaning of “conversation” is to “wonder together with” (p.58). As an interviewer, I designed, asked and listened to the participants' stories and experiences about teaching literature, the teachers’ beliefs and the student’s perceptions of the issue. Such an experience gives the potential to construct meaning by appreciating the narratives of the teachers and the students by constructing a story to tell when returning to Aston University. There is also the chance that the interviewing process could lead to a change in me, in addition to constructing new knowledge about English literature in Algerian higher educational institutions. To this end, Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) argue that the interview ignites a reflection process to understand their traveller’s self-better.

Several types of interviews could be employed to generate qualitative data. The typology of interviews differs from one scholar to another, depending on the reasons they use to characterise them. From the purpose of the interview, Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) list five variations: factual, conceptual; focus group interviews; narrative; and discursive interviews. From the structure point of view, Mackey and Gass (2015) list three types: structured; semi-structured; and unstructured interviews. For this research, I designed semi-structured conceptual interviews.

4.4.2.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED CONCEPTUAL TEACHERS’ INTERVIEWS

A semi-structured interview follows a list of questions and themes as a guiding line for the conversation. I did not strictly abide by the guiding line, as there were opportunities for probing questions for more information (Mackey & Gass, 2015). In other instances, the teachers answered some of the questions without asking them. This flexibility also helped exclude some of the themes being covered according to the situational discourse and the participant's interaction (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). In this respect, the conceptual interview served as a tool of inquisitive inquiry to clarify “the conceptual structure of a subject or a group of subjects” on a particular phenomenon (Ibid). In this research case, I interviewed English literature teachers at Algerian higher educational institutions to explore their conception of literature, purpose of teaching English literature, and their conception of the methods of teaching English literature. Through these interviews, the teachers and I reflected on

their taken-for-granted assumptions about these concepts and what is appropriate, typical and normal (Gee, 2005). Questions employed in these interviews were open, leading to descriptions that yield exciting points for analysis (teachers' interview guidelines can be found in appendices).

I developed the interview design to reflect the research questions. Staged in seven sections, the interview opened with questions about the interviewee's background, where the teachers in question took the time to explain how they became literature teachers. I dedicated the following section to questions about the nature of the institution and how teachers of literature see the organisational structure reflected in their teaching and motivation. Indeed, in several instances, the teachers provided detailed descriptions of the institution and how that is reflected in their teaching session preparation. Both previous sections were mostly to prepare teachers for the following ones as they mainly focused on reflecting on the research at hand. Next, I dedicated the following sections to expand on the teachers' view of the literary text, the objectives and methods of adopting texts in class. Indeed, these sections made up the bulk of the interview and were based on the teachers' experiences and reflections on their practices. After, I devoted the following section to the teachers' reflections on their methods and understandings of the teaching activities they carry out in class. Moreover, the interview guide covered the teachers' views on the students' responses and their quality assessment. Indeed, the views varied from appreciative and creative to repetitive and similar. In most cases, teachers reflected on why it was the case. Finally, I committed the last section of the interview guides to closing remarks, where the teachers provided some of their recommendations and, in most cases, their aspirations for literature teaching in the institutions in the future.

4.4.2.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED CONCEPTUAL STUDENTS FOCUS GROUPS DISCUSSIONS

Furthermore, in alignment with my methodological choices for this research project, I strategically employed focus groups discussions to capture the nuanced perspectives of the students on the issue at hand. As clarified by Morgan (1988) focus groups offer a unique platform for interacting within a group setting, allowing for the emergence of collective views rather than individual opinions, as in one-to-one interviews. Therefore, my role was limited to moderating and facilitating discussions, keeping the group focused on the issue discussed (Smithson, 2000; Hydén and Bülow, 2003). Furthermore, Brinkmann & Kvale (2014) and Marshall & Rossman (2015) underscore focus groups for exploratory studies, embracing diverse perspectives within a group setting. Their perspectives perfectly aligned with my overarching aim of capturing students' spontaneous and emotional views, enriching the interpretative process (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2015). This aligns seamlessly with my goal of understanding the literature teaching and learning from the students, emphasising the importance of group dynamics in yielding valuable insights (Morgan, 1988; Denscombe, 2014).

Drawing insights from Chrzanowska (2002) regarding the composition of focus group interviews, which involve six to ten participants led by a moderator (Chrzanowska, 2002), I made the deliberate decision to maintain a group size of a maximum of six students per focus group, a practice informed by my awareness of the delicate balance needed to foster lively interaction and working together on an issue without descending into chaos - a consideration echoed by several scholars (e.g. Morgan, 1988; Krueger, 1988; Bailey, 1994; Robson, 2002; Gibbs, 2012). I ended up having three to six participants per focus group. This ratio helped me when transcribing the data for analysis. It also helped me as a moderator in managing and encouraging various viewpoints on literature teaching and learning by creating a permissible atmosphere for expression. To ensure participant similarity and homogeneity, I selected students who were at the same academic level and had similar educational backgrounds in English literature. This grouping ensured that participants shared comparable experiences with literary texts and coursework while ensuring their contributions remained relevant to the research focus. This also helped to minimise disparities that could detract from the coherence of the discussions (Denscombe, 2021; Morgan, 1988, pp. 41–8; Gibbs, 2012).

Contrasting traditional one-to-one interviews, focus groups present unique advantages and challenges. As Morgan (1988) aptly puts it, focus groups' structured yet somewhat contrived nature serves as both a strength and a weakness. It provides an artificial yet focused environment that fosters open discussion, a departure from the more individualistic nature of interviews (Morgan, 1988; Gibbs, 2012). This shift allowed for a deeper exploration of group dynamics, sparking discussions that might not have surfaced in a one-on-one setting. However, there is a growing concern regarding the potential dominance of a single voice, which may lead to the suppression of dissenting views and create challenges in managing conflicts, as indicated by Smithson (2000). Therefore, it is essential to have a skilled moderator who can establish ground rules, manage group dynamics and strike a balance between direction and openness. In this way, everyone can contribute effectively and feel heard and respected. As Newby (2010) and Gibbs (2012) suggest, skilled facilitation is key to achieving these goals.

Like the teachers' interviews, I designed the focus groups to reflect the research questions, echoing the methodological considerations outlined by Morgan (1988) and Gibbs (2012). Staged into four sections, I dedicated the first one to determining the students' backgrounds and their reasoning for studying for a degree in English literature. Then, I committed the following section to discussing the nature of the literary texts. Then, I shifted the focus to how the students deal with the literary text in their institutions, aiming to foster discussions on the students' ways of responding to literary texts and whether there is an underlying imposed way of thinking about texts. This section pushed the students to reflect on their methods of reading and dealing with literary texts inside and outside their institute. Finally, I devoted the last section to enabling the students to reflect on the difficulties they face while

dealing with literary texts. Overall, I kept the design of the focus group discussions short, predicting that students would have a lot to share on the issues discussed, which they fortunately did.

4.5 Piloting the Data Generation Methods

After I had been granted ethical clearance to generate data, I piloted the semi-structured interview guidelines, the focus group discussions guidelines and the video recording with a teacher from a Higher College of Teachers institute and students from the same institute. As I detected no ambiguity with the interviews' designs, thus no questions were modified. Indeed, the interviewed teachers and the focus group participants showed enthusiasm and understanding of such a study's importance. The interviews went well and the data generated reflects the aims of designing these methods. My only observation was that I needed to ensure they understood these methods' aims clearly. Therefore, I made it a habit of rereading the research's focus and handing over participants' consent forms before starting the interviews/observations, even though I emailed them beforehand. As for the video recordings, I ensured I always had the necessary equipment needed.

4.6 Data Analysis Strategy

The challenge of qualitative research is designing an approach to deal with a large amount of data and provide a framework for analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Several software packages can be used to assist with this complex task. These programmes help store, code, categorise, annotate and comment on the data. I searched for a tool to help with audio files and written texts. I decided to use NVivo's data management and coding software. With the tools of NVivo, I could import the transcripts of the interviews and the observations. This procedure allowed me to have the data stored and categorised in one platform. I transcribed the data manually because I could not use the software initially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although I primarily planned to transcript only the segments related to the research questions, I changed my mind during the transcription phase. Had I have done that, I would have been emphasising segments and ignored others. I wanted the whole experience to be immersed in the data, and then in the coding phase, I could follow the interests of this research study. That is to say, the segments in relation to the following topics: the nature of the literary text, the purpose of using the literary text and the methods of using the literary text. At the same time, I was allowing the data to guide any other emerging themes. The enormous amount of data generated is presented in the table below.

Table 4 Types and Word Count of Generated Data

Type of data		Word count
Teachers Interviews	Interview 1	6926
	Interview 2	5527
	Interview 3	2821
	Interview 4	3614
	Interview 5	4946
	Interview 6	4902
	Interview 7	4098
	Interview 8	6124
	Interview 9	5752
	Interview 10	6801
		51511
Focus group discussions	Focus group 1 (Bouthaina's)	5341
	Focus group 2 (Fatima's)	4771
	Focus group 3 (Siraj's)	5688
	Focus group 1 (Zaineb's)	5537
	Focus group 2 (Anas's)	4406
	Focus group 3 (Aisha's)	4916
	Focus group 1 (Imane's)	4906
	Focus group 2 (Meriem's)	6131
	Focus group 1 (Mamoun's)	10150
	Focus group 2 (Rihab's)	6080
		57926

"Data analysis is not off-the-shelf; rather, it is custom-built, revised, and choreographed" (Huberman and Miles, 1994). The process then is not linear; however, it spirals in the sense that I move in cycles, immerse in textual and visual data and end with a narrative account of representation. In other words, researchers often move in circles between these steps as if in a spiral to generate a specific analytical account. The process starts with preliminary codes guided by the research questions (deductive) while allowing the other codes to emerge from the data (inductive). This spiral movement leads, therefore, to the generation of themes and sub-themes to explore the phenomena at hand. Such a strategy is often described in the literature as thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Dörnyei, 2007). This technique was chosen because the "development of themes depends on the data having been coded already" (Bazeley, 2013, p. 191). Then comes the step of representation and interpretation to make sense of the data.

4.6.1 THEMATISING THE DATA

Having transcribed the data, I uploaded the transcripts to the NVivo software. I anonymised the teachers' names, as clearly stated in table 2. I reread the ethical approval form to refresh my mind about the research's purposes and aims. Then I read each interview separately, with the aims and the questions of the research in mind, trying to find patterns to guide my first cycle of coding. In this instance, I was trying to use what is known as theming the data (Saldana, 2012). This method allows

for coding the data in extended phrases or sentences that identify a unit of this particular piece of data and its meaning. This perfectly fits the purpose of this research, which is finding what meaning teachers and students attribute to the literary text and the purpose of studying the literary texts. Such small phrases to identify the manifested level of the observed information, or at a latent level, underline the phenomenon that could help in decoding the data and then organising it in the clusters/categories manner to try and answer the research questions of this study. In this regard, Saldana (2012) argues that theming the data is appropriate for studies exploring world beliefs, construct identity development and emotional experiences.

I should note, however, that theming the data is not an expedient method of qualitative analysis. It is merely an intensive process that later requires compatible reflection on meanings and outcomes. That is why thematic analysis follows as a way of making sense of and linking the clusters and the categories of the emergent *thematising* (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014) to the research's questions and goals. Such a technique of thematising the data before analysing works in harmony with the planned questioning technique of the interviews, which were carried out to investigate and explore the participant-attributed meanings of particular concepts (literary text, purpose of teaching and methods of using the text). I tried to cluster and code something recurrent within the data through the first coding cycle. However, some other clusters emerged from the data that were not related to the purposes of this study, but it helped me understand the context of teaching and learning as it is (see table 5 below for an example of the generated list of codes).

Table 5 First Cycle of Coding

Name of the Code
The purposes of using the literary texts are ...
The purpose is to empower on a personal level
The purpose is to debate the viewpoints
The purpose is to develop personal readings
The purpose is to enhance language competency
The purpose is to explore the literary terms at work
The purpose is to link texts to literary theories
The purpose is to link text to historical setting
The purpose is to build knowledge about African literary works
The purpose is to build knowledge on US and British Literature
The purpose is to develop new perspectives
The purpose is to build knowledge on the literary language
The purpose is to build knowledge on literary works
The purpose is to link students to African identity
The purpose is to link the context of the text to students lives
The purpose is to be critical
The purpose in earlier initiation of LMD is teaching about literature
Literary text means ...

- Literary language has value
- Literary language is complex
- Literary text is emotionally triggering
- Literary language has a style
- Literary texts cover nonfiction
- Literary language is simple
- Literary text is a treasure
- Literary language is aesthetic
- World literature is not about canons but more on contemporary lit
- Literary texts and graphic novels
- Literary films adaptations
- Literature is non scientific
- World literature is the future of literature

Students of the two systems

- ENS context
  - Context, students' level is high
  - Context, students' number is low
  - Context, ENS students prefer technical modules
  - Context, welcoming environment
  - Context, ENS students prefer teaching not researching
  - Context, ENS teaching is similar to classical system
- LMD system, shift of focus
  - LMD system, students are active
  - LMD system, early implementation difficulties
  - LMD system, students' number is less than classical system
  - LMD system, teachers decide on the content
  - LMD system, teaching time is less than Classical
- Classical system
  - Classical system, student are passive
  - Classical system, teacher is generator of knowledge
  - Classical system, some students were amazing
  - Classical system, students losing confidence
  - Students rely a lot on the teacher

The link between the text and the purpose

- Selecting a literary text means it fits with a planned purpose
- Select a text in accordance with programme guidelines
- Selecting a literary text means it fits certain requirements
- Selecting controversial texts to promote responses
- Selecting a novel as a literary text is sometimes difficult to use
- Selecting a text that is available
- Selecting texts for easy reading
- Selecting non-controversial texts

Methods of using the literary texts

- Method discussion
- Method, paragraph writing
- Group discussions

- Method close reading and dialogues
- Method group work
- Method groupwork roleplay
- Method using the board
- Method feedback at the end from teacher and colleagues
- Method moving in the class
- Method, interdisciplinary
- Method, reading about the book

Students' responses to literary texts

- Response should have an argument
- Response is similar
- Encouraging students to produce different responses
- Responses are focused on details
- Difficulties in writing
- Responses are creative
- Difficulties in producing deeper responses
- Responses should follow a format

Teachers background training

- Teachers influence as learning method
- Business background means goal oriented
- Teacher graduate of Classical system
- Classical graduates, trained in researching literature
- Classical graduates, teaching as a personal initiative
- Different cultural exposure leads to appreciating world literature
- English Fellows programme US
- I come from a business background
- LMD graduated, trained in English Literature teaching
- Teacher training reflected in teaching literature

Teacher motivation

- Motivating teachers, institutionally limited
- Motivating teacher, student's satisfaction
- Motivating teacher, internal personal reward
  - love of literature

Resource

- ENS
  - Resource, teaching materials are limited
  - Resources, teachers' personal libraries
  - Resources, online resources with reservations

Teacher approach to literature

Students' attitudes to literary texts

- Difficulties in cultural references
- Difficulties of reading
- Difficulties on the language level

Context, miscommunications between the institution and teachers

On the second cycle of coding the data, I was keen to see whether some recurrent codes/nodes could be merged or divided if necessary. Such a strategy meant that I was always going back to see whether the structure of the codes worked in harmony and that the coded data represented the same segment of meaning. By adopting a thematic analysis, I benefited from its flexibility. By that, I mean I could use memos to capture emerging themes while rereading the data. I was able to categorise several codes under one theme and the relationship between codes and themes could be tracked with lists to help see if there was an overlap among the codes.

Additionally, thematic analysis allows for capturing of “noteworthy quotes” from the data to inform the development of themes (Bazeley, 2013) and even discussions. Such flexibility allowed me to conceptualise the teachers' and students' views on the nature of literary texts, the purpose of using literary texts and the methods of adapting texts in class, while also being able to listen to the recordings for other emerging themes. This flexibility also allowed for comparing themes from different cases to understand the different angles teachers and students had from different institutions. As the setting for case study research is particularly important (Creswell & Poth, 2016), a cross-case synthesis is recommended when dealing with two or more cases (Yin, 2014). With its flexibility, thematic analysis helped me draw case similarities and differences. I also need to note that some emerging clusters or themes were flagged for later research as I could not account for all generated themes in this study. I kept focusing on the text, the purpose, the way the teaching practice is unfolded in the thesis. (See table 6 below for an example of the generated list of codes.)

Table 6 Second Coding Cycle

Name of the Code
Influence of literary readings on personal life
A comment about being influenced by the reading strategies in the institute on reading outside
A comment about different reading strategies for leisure outside the institute
A comment about new trends of reading using technology in reading
A comment about the benefit of literature in real life
Reasons to study literature
A comment about the benefit of literature on language development
A comment about the benefit of literature to learn about history and civilisation
A comment about the choice to study literature based on interest in art and human experience
A comment about the choice to study literature based on passion
A comment about the choice to study literature in ENS for its seriousness
A comment about the choice to study literature to be a writer
A comment about the choice to study literature to be reflective
A comment about the literary language as being imaginative and creative
A comment about the literary language as making you reflective
I did not have any better
Response
Students’ responses to literary texts
A comment about being free to have your voice in essays
A comment about disagreement on the meaning of literary text
Difficulties in producing deeper responses

- Difficulties in writing
- Encouraging students to produce different responses
- Responses are creative
- Response is similar
- Response should have an argument
- Responses are focused on details
- Responses should follow a format

The Context

- A consensus of teachers to follow
- Absence of motivation for teachers
- Context, miscommunication between the institution and teachers
- Difficulties of reading literary texts
  - A comment about cultural ambiguities
  - A comment about the ambiguities of some jargons
  - A comment about the assumption that the text has a message and the difficulties encountered to find it
  - A comment about the difficult words interrupting the reading flow
  - A comment about the difficulties of long texts
  - A comment about the difficulty of dealing with PDFs
  - A comment about the difficulty of keeping up with characters names
  - A comment about the difficulty of reading classical texts
  - A comment about the difficulties of readers blocks
  - It is boring but we are obliged to deal with it
- Good teaching depends solely on teachers' values and believes
- Lack of official guidance for teachers
- Limitation of teaching materials
- LMD regulations and lack of materials
- Resource
  - Resource, teaching materials are limited
  - Resources, online resources with reservations
  - Resources, teachers' personal libraries
- Students of the two systems
  - Classical system
    - Classical system, some students were amazing
    - Classical system, student are passive
    - Classical system, students losing confidence
    - Classical system, teacher is generator of knowledge
    - Students rely a lot on the teacher
  - ENS context
    - Context, ENS students prefer teaching not researching
    - Context, ENS students prefer technical modules
    - Context, ENS teaching is similar to classical system
    - Context, students' level is high
    - Context, students' number is low
    - Context, welcoming environment
  - LMD system, shift of focus
    - LMD system, early implementation difficulties
    - LMD system, students are active
    - LMD system, students' number is less than classical system
    - LMD system, teachers decide on the content
    - LMD system, teaching time is less than Classical
  - Student number is high
- Teacher motivation
  - Motivating teacher, internal personal reward
    - love of literature
  - Motivating teacher, students' satisfaction
  - Motivating teachers, institutionally limited

- Teachers background training
  - Business background means goal oriented
  - Classical graduates, trained in researching literature
  - Classical graduate, teaching as a personal initiative
  - Different cultural exposure leads to appreciating world literature
  - English Fellows programme US
  - I come from a business background
  - LMD Graduate trained abroad
  - LMD graduated, trained in English Literature teaching
  - Teacher graduate of Classical system
  - Teacher training reflected in teaching literature
  - Teachers influence as learning method
- Teaching and researching are tough
- Teaching different modules

The Literary Text

- Literary text means ...
  - Literary films adaptations
  - Literary language has a style
  - Literary language is aesthetic
  - Literary language is complex
  - Literary language is simple
  - Literary language has value
  - Literary text is a treasure
  - Literary text is emotionally triggering
  - Literary texts and graphic novels
  - Literary texts cover nonfiction
  - Literature is non scientific
  - World literature is not about canons but more on contemporary lit
  - World literature is the future of literature
- Students' attitudes to literary texts
  - Difficulties in cultural references
  - Difficulties of reading
  - Difficulties on the language level
- What is a literary text for students
  - A comment about the literary language as being open to interpretation
  - A comment about the literary language as being stylistic
  - A comment about the literary text as being attributed to a school of thought
  - A comment about the literary text as having a value
  - A comment about the literary text as personal and intimate
  - A comment about the untenability to have set of features to define a literary text
  - A comment about the literary language as offering different life experiences

The Purpose

- The link between the text and the purpose
  - A comment about the lack of students' voice in choosing the literary works
  - Select a text in accordance with programme guidelines
  - Selecting a literary text means it fits with a planned purpose
  - Selecting a literary text means it fits certain requirements
  - Selecting a novel as a literary text is sometimes difficult to use
  - Selecting a text that is available
  - Selecting controversial texts to promote responses
  - Selecting non-controversial texts
  - Selecting texts for easy reading
- The purposes of using the literary texts are ...
  - The purpose is to link students to African identity
  - The purpose in early initiation of LMD is teaching about literature
  - The purpose is to be critical
  - The purpose is to build knowledge on literary works

- The purpose is to build knowledge about African literary works
- The purpose is to build knowledge on US and British Literature
- The purpose is to build knowledge on the literary language
- The purpose is to debate the viewpoints
- The purpose is to develop new perspectives
- The purpose is to develop personal readings
- The purpose is to empower on a personal level
- The purpose is to enhance language competency
- The purpose is to explore the literary terms at work
- The purpose is to link texts to literary theories
- The purpose is to link the context of the text to students lives
- The purpose is to link text to historical setting

The Way

- Appreciation of guided literary reading
  - A comment about appreciating reading the classics
  - A comment about appreciating being forced to read with a special lens
  - A comment about being forced to follow a certain step to produce responses
  - A comment about being forced to reading the literary text with a special lens
  - A comment about students' appreciation to be forced to read literary works
  - A comment about the purpose of study literature
- Methods of using the literary texts
  - Group discussions
  - Method close reading and dialogues
  - Method discussion
  - Method feedback at the end from teacher and colleagues
  - Method group work
  - Method groupwork roleplay
  - Method moving in the class
  - Method using the board
  - Method, interdisciplinary
  - Method, paragraph writing
  - Method, reading about the book
- Resistance of guided literary strategies
  - A comment about appreciating reading the text without prerequisite
  - A comment about being forced to read classical texts
  - A comment about being forced to study literature
  - A comment about resisting reading literary works as a homework
  - A comment about the specific reading and interpreting structure for students to follow
- Strategies to overcome difficulties of reading literary texts
  - A comment about adaptations as a way to overcome the difficulties of reading classical texts
  - A comment about audiobooks as a way to focus and read the literary text
  - A comment about being forced to read is a way to overcome difficulties
  - A comment about diagrams as a way to overcome difficulties in reading
  - A comment about re-reading as a strategy to overcome the difficulties of the text
  - A comment about re-reading as useful to explore new interpretations
- Teacher approach to literature

After the second phase of coding, I created a thematic map to visualise how the themes related to the research questions. Generating the themes involved linking different codes that addressed the same research question. Initially, the themes were phrased differently, but they were adjusted to reflect the final analysis, ensuring each research question was addressed separately. See the figures below for more details:

Figure 1 RQ1 - Views of Literary Texts

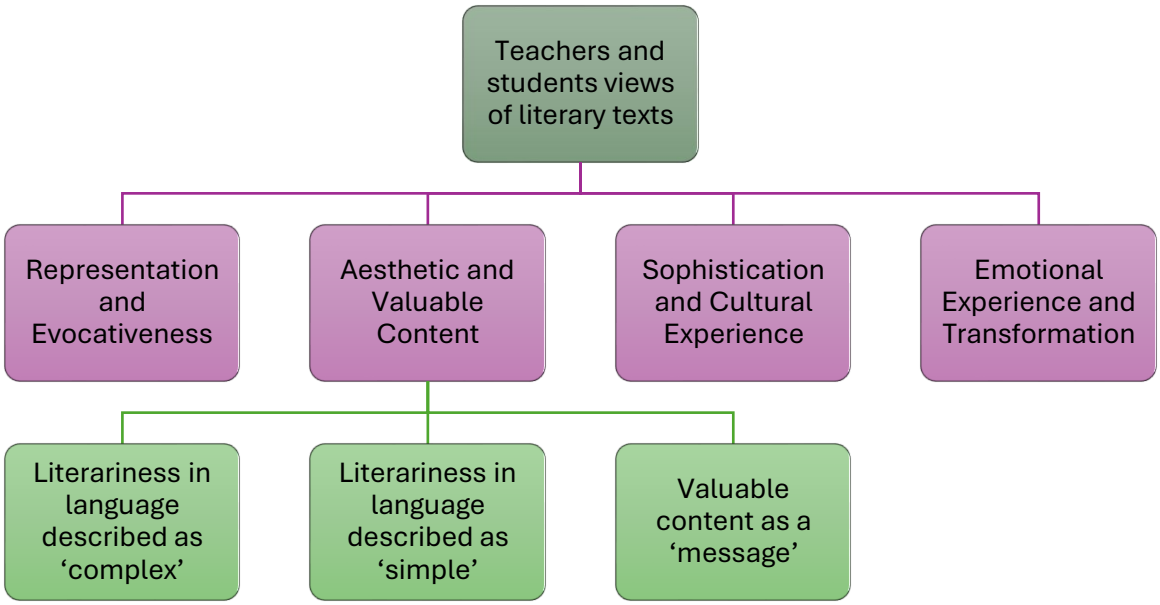


Figure 2 RQ2 - Purposes of Introducing Literary Texts.

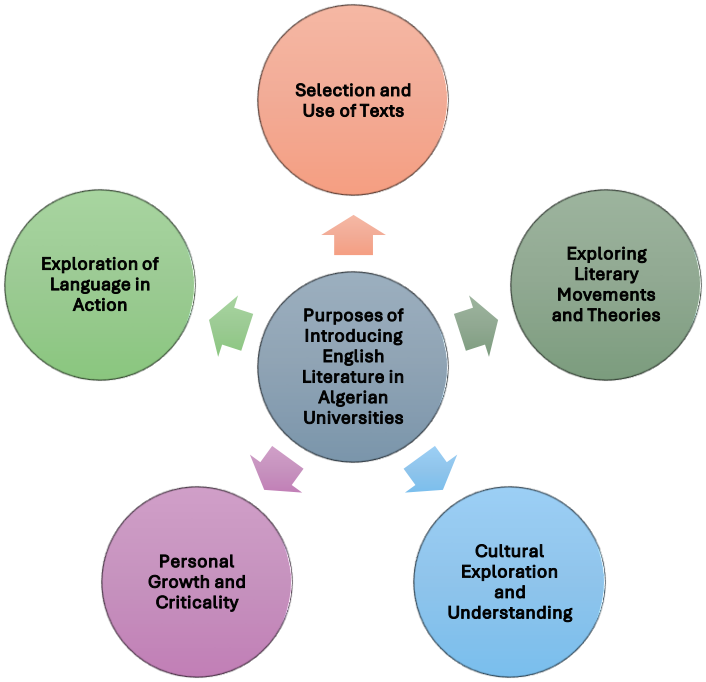
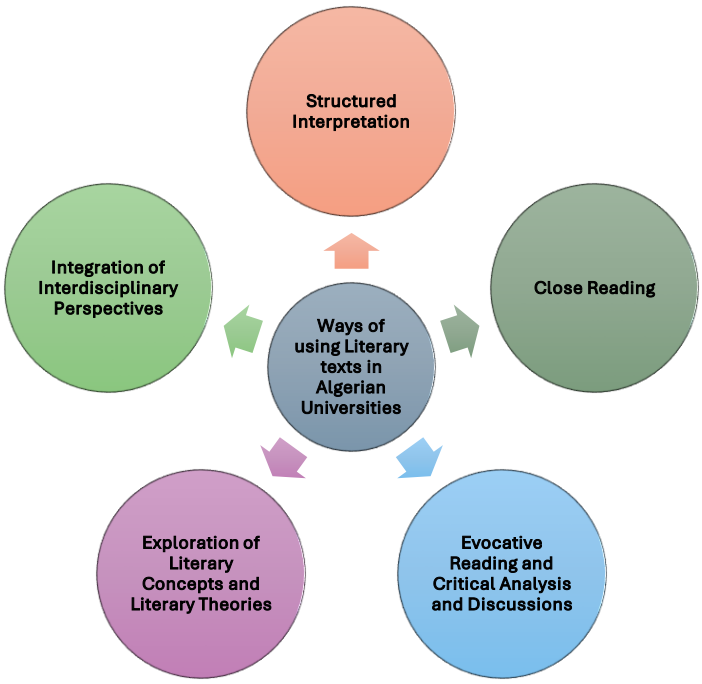


Figure 3 RQ3 - Ways of Using Literary Texts



4.7 Quality Assurance

Several perspectives in the qualitative research literature exist regarding the issue of credibility and validation to ensure quality and rigour in conducting research and that the research outcomes are reliable (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Lincoln et al., 2005; Mackey & Gass, 2015; Robson & McCartan, 2016). However, scholars may not have an encompassing term to describe these measures. Lincoln et al. (2005) advocate for credibility, transferability and conformability in qualitative research. Creswell and Poth (2016) argue that validating the research involves a combination of qualitative research strategies, such as ample field time, detailed descriptions and the researcher's closeness to the participants. I used a combination of these measures in this study, which are addressed below.

This study's trustworthiness relates to how this research was carried out and how the data were analysed. Lincoln et al. (2005) proposed a quality assurance strategy that suits interpretivist researchers. Following their guidance, the data generation methods were explicitly described in this study's design to enable readers to assess the credibility of their usage and implementation. Triangulating the data sets was also established through the analysis to provide thick descriptions; such measures are essential for transferable results (Cohen et al., 2018). To this end, I used the four data generation methods to elicit how each data set contributes to understanding the issues in each case and cross-cases. Moreover, I spent a prolonged period of engagement in the field with the

participants to ensure the data generated held maximum value. Finally, all participants were informed about the aims of the research and what their participation would entail.

Another measure was considered to ensure quality assurance, which was conformability. By this process, I mean that the claims made in this study conform to the data generated and are justified by my interpretation (Cohen et al., 2018). To this end, abundant examples from the data are provided in the data analysis chapters to support the emergent themes identified throughout the analysis. Such findings could be correlated to similar studies to consolidate the interpretation and check the consistency of results. As an interpretivist researcher, I acknowledge that my positionality and insider knowledge of the topic inherently shape my interpretation of the data. Rather than seeking to eliminate my influence, where constructivist and interpretivist approaches deem neither possible nor desirable, I reflected on my positionality and reflexivity in a dedicated section (4.9) to ensure that my background and perspectives are transparent and can inform the interpretation process responsibly. Even though the participants' recruitment was purposeful, I was neither personal nor familiar with the participants and the context being studied, apart from two teachers who worked as gatekeepers to help me recruit other teachers and students.

The transferability of the research results was a final measure that was considered to ensure quality assurance and rigour. Lincoln et al. (2005) described the appropriate measures to be considered. If the findings are transferable, there must be similarity between the original situation/context and the target situation/context for which the results are transferred. To this end, a detailed description of the cases at hand, along with the complexities of the working parties and the context, could help transfer these understandings to similar EFL contexts. For instance, there is a good reason to recognise this thesis's findings as transferable to similar higher educational institutions in Algerian and abroad – the EFL context. Such transferability is conditioned with the particular case context to be used as a shield against assuming the results could be understood as evident in different settings. Therefore, in this study, I aim for transferability rather than generalisability (Cohen et al., 2018).

These previous quality assurances and research design and analysis measures were considered in parallel with the following ethical considerations to ensure the study met the code of conduct for qualitative research.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are an integral part of social science research. They could be perceived as the guiding rules or code of conduct that the researcher has to reflect on before venturing into research (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Lincoln et al., 2005; Mackey & Gass, 2015; Robson & McCartan, 2016; Silverman, 2015). Such ethical guidelines cover several elements thoroughly explored by the British

Research Ethics Association (BERA) (BERA, 2011). These principles constitute the ethical stance that researchers demonstrate while conducting research. It involves making decisions and taking actions that prioritise the well-being and rights of the participants involved in the study. Among these, we can stress the following as they strongly relate to this project: anonymity, informed consent of participants' data security and protection, and the right of withdrawal for the participants at any time. The quality of social science research depends on transparency and carefully considering these ethical issues. In this regard, several research scholars urge researchers to consider these issues early in the research process and while conducting the research (Lincoln et al., 2005; Robson & McCartan, 2016; Silverman, 2015).

By incorporating the aims and scope of this study, this research adheres to the ethical procedures laid down by Aston University for research students and the general practice provided by the BERA. Before venturing into the field and starting the data generation process, I had to reflect on some issues related to data generation tools and the participants' rights. I applied for and received ethical approval from Aston University; at the same time, I requested permission from the Ministry of Higher Education in Algeria to conduct the research. Simultaneously, I communicated with potential teachers and their students by extension to participate in the study through emails. This email communication included a detailed overview of the study's purposes and an explanation of participants' rights. Having been permitted the preliminary approvals, I was ethically aware of going into the field and meeting the participants in person. I ensured that I always followed the ethical code: I re-provided participants with sufficient information about the study, its aims, scope and contact details, should they wish to follow up with questions. This procedure goes hand in hand with the BERA guidelines that participants "understand and agree to their participation without any duress, prior to the research getting underway" (BERA, 2011). I emailed this information and asked their teachers to share it with them. I also made sure to have printed copies with me so I could hand them over to the students before the beginning of the classes and interviews so they could discuss any concerns with me. I also ensured that the signed consent forms were collected before data generation. In some class observational instances, collecting all of the signed consent forms was impossible, but it was essential to me that the participants agreed to participate in the research without being penalised should they not have wished to attend the observed teaching session. This was agreed upon beforehand with the teachers and during the interviews. Although such issues occurred when the class was full, I ensured the students and teachers understood their participation scope by reading the information sheets out loud and handing out the printed consent forms. These issues were not present while conducting the interviews because I could collect the signed consent forms from all participants. I also stressed that the participants had the right to "withdraw from the research for any or no reason, and at any time" (BERA, 2011). Fortunately, this did not happen with any of the classes I observed nor with any of the interviews after the consent forms were agreed and signed. Moreover, the participants kept a copy of the information sheet outlining all the necessary research information. The consent forms were

collected after the session took place. Copies of relevant permissions and forms can be found in the appendices.

Another reassurance I made explicit through the information sheet and consent forms while communicating with teachers and students was the issue of confidentiality and anonymity. I informed the participants about these matters after introducing the aims and the scope of the study; this was done before the observation sessions and the interviews. They signed the consent forms, ensuring they would be granted anonymity and confidentiality. I also explained how I handle video and audio data recording in the same form. At the end of the observation sessions and the interviews, I thanked the participants and ensured they knew they could contact me concerning any ethical issues. My contact information was provided within the information sheet, which they kept. Finally, I ensured their participation was safe throughout the study by negotiating a safe place before the interviews. The sessions were mainly conducted at the premises of the higher educational institutions. However, some interviews took place in a restaurant, coffee shop or private premises.

Additionally, the teachers and students may have had serious concerns about sharing their comments and views regarding English literature teaching and learning in higher educational institutions and whether such views could endanger them. Reassurance was given via a description of the data management. I explained that the interview and observation recordings would be saved on my personal laptop, which can only be accessed using a password and a fingerprint. I also explained how each participant would be assigned a pseudonym, and any identifying markers would also be assigned a different pseudonym. Furthermore, I provided a detailed description of the research aims and aspirations, emphasising its importance in better understanding the teaching and learning of English literature for the future development of education in Algerian and EFL contexts. It was also beneficial to inform the participants that their views and voices could be heard and echoed through scientific research. Knowing this, I believe, helped the participants to share their views without hesitation and enabled them to realise that their comments would be heard and that there were no risks in taking part in the research.

Another credible guideline worth reflecting on to assess the researcher's ethical stance was the responsibility towards the sponsors of this research. The research is fully funded by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, a government body. It is essential to stress that the ministry did not interfere with the researcher's choices on the topic, the methods, the data generation or the reporting of findings. This means that even though the researcher was committed to providing an annual report to the ministry, the research is transparent and openly accessible to the public community of researchers and practitioners.

4.9 REFLEXIVITY AND POSITIONALITY

Reflexivity is a cornerstone in qualitative research methodologies, signifying the researcher's acute awareness of their role in the research journey and the nuanced dynamics at play with participants. The concept, defined by Naples and Sachs (2000) encompasses an ongoing internal dialogue - a critical self-evaluation that moulds the researcher throughout the investigative process. As Pillow (2003) asserts, this self-awareness triggers a transformative impact on the researcher, a sentiment echoed by Mauthner and Doucet (2003). In writing, reflexivity involves purposeful positioning, as highlighted by Creswell and Poth (2016). This positioning features openly acknowledging biases, values and experiences that shape the continuous engagement with the study. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) advocate for explicit positioning, contending that it enhances the qualitative study's overall quality. They propose a two-fold approach to reflexivity, wherein researchers initially articulate their past experiences linked to the phenomenon under study, followed by reflective consideration of how these experiences influence their interpretations. Walsh (2003) further demarcates four dimensions of reflexivity: personal; interpersonal; methodological; and contextual. These dimensions offer a comprehensive framework for researchers to navigate their positionality and engage in critical self-reflection. In the following discussion, I delve into these dimensions, clarifying instances where I strategically integrated reflexivity and positionality into my research process.

Firstly, as outlined by Walsh (2003), the personal dimension of reflexivity encourages researchers to explore their subjectivities introspectively. My research actively embraced this personal dimension in alignment with Pelias' (2011) characterisation of reflexive writers as ethically and politically self-aware. I thoroughly examined my encounters with the phenomenon under investigation throughout the thesis, ensuring I acknowledged and placed my biases into context. To articulate this aspect, I uncovered the personal origins of my interest in section 1.2 Rationale, recognising the profound impact of my unique background and experiences on the research trajectory. Specifically, I highlighted the influence of literary classes I attended and the lively discussions on meanings, responses and interpretations, as well as the underlying factors that could contribute to such debates and how that forged a personal view and motivation to study the issue at hand. On the one hand, I was considered an insider researcher at the Algerian universities and a previous student with a particular view on teaching and learning literature is carried out. On the other hand, I could also be considered an outsider for I do not have any work experience as a teacher at Algerian universities. For such reasons, it could be argued that the data generation phase was an opportunity to reflect on the teaching and learning of English literature from the viewpoints of both the teachers and students as opposed to my previously held simplistic views.

Secondly, interpersonal reflexivity, as Walsh (2003) notes, involves the recognition of the researcher's impact on the relationships formed during the research process and how such relationship dynamics influence the research process (Finlay, 2002). This dimension, therefore, recognises the participants'

knowledge influence on the research process, such as how their understanding of interview questions or perhaps their views on observations could influence the generated data. In this regard, I remained attuned to the interpersonal dynamics, making explicit references throughout the methodology chapter whenever there had been contact with participant where my presence influenced their interactions, or the other way around. Such interplay is reflected throughout certain sections, e.g. section 4.4 Data Generation Methods, 4.5. Piloting the Data Generation methods and 4.8 ethical considerations. By doing so, I demonstrated a commitment to ethical and transparent research practices.

Thirdly, Walsh's (2003) methodological dimension of reflexivity prompts researchers to confront and navigate challenges encountered during the research process and the choices made. In other words, methodological reflectivity is concerned with how the researcher's positionality affects the methodological choices (Walsh 2003). For example, in section 4.2, I explained the adopted paradigmatic stance and how such a stance reflects my views on reality and knowledge production. Moreover, I was reflexive in explaining my choices and reasons throughout the following sections. Throughout my methodology chapter, I have conscientiously addressed instances of reflexivity, discussing my efforts and coping mechanisms in response to challenges. Whether detailing my experiences with the research participants or clarifying how such encounters shaped my interpretations, I made a deliberate effort to position myself transparently within the narrative.

Finally, the contextual dimension of reflexivity requires researchers to consider their work within broader social, cultural and historical contexts that influence the research (Walsh, 2003). Following this, I dedicated a contextual chapter, wherein I situated the study in its broader historical and political contexts. By connecting the study to larger societal narratives, I am deliberately and consciously acknowledging the external influences that shaped the research process.

4.10 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I accounted for the ontological and epistemological interpretivist assumptions that underpin this study. I also described, in depth, the chosen data generation methods that meet this study's scope and aims. Additionally, I described the data analysis strategy and its accompanying procedures. Moreover, I accounted for the quality assurance and the ethical considerations to meet a sound methodological choice for the study.

The following chapter presents the data generated following the data strategy analysis provided above.

CHAPTER 5: VIEWS ON LITERARY TEXTS IN ALGERIA UNIVERSITIES

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis has set out to explore the teaching and learning of English literature in higher educational institutions in Algeria. The first research question was intended to define what is considered a literary text in Algerian universities. The second research question sought to investigate the purpose of English literature teaching in the same context. The third aimed to explain how English literature teachers use literary texts within the classroom. By answering these three research questions it is believed that it will help understand the teaching and learning of English literature in Algerian universities based on the exploration of teachers' and students' views of what lies beyond the debate on literary texts in practice.

The following three chapters report the findings of this study. This chapter explains how the participants define and view English literary texts. It draws on data from teachers' interviews and student focus groups. It seeks to explain how teachers view and prioritise texts for study purposes, the clash emerging from their personal choices with the institutional practices/policies and the students' reception of such choices and text in the classroom. Chapter 6 is dedicated to answering the second research question; it explains the purposes of introducing English literature in Algerian universities. It draws on data from interviews with teachers and focus groups with students. Chapter 7 focuses on how literary texts are used in the classroom. It draws on data from teachers' interviews, student focus groups and recorded observations of teaching practices.

The findings addressing the first research question, presented in this chapter, reveal a diverse and multifaceted understanding of what constitutes a literary text among participants. The participants (teachers and students) demonstrated varied views based on their personal experiences, studies and exposure to literature. However, these views coalesce around five key themes:

1. **Evocative** Nature: Literary language is often understood as evocative, capable of stirring emotions and serving as a vehicle to represent a society or period of literary history.
2. **Linguistic** Features: Divergent perspectives emerged regarding the role of language, with some participants emphasising simplicity and clarity as defining characteristics, while others highlighted the use of complex vocabulary and intricate grammatical structures as hallmarks of literariness.
3. **Valuable** Content: A shared theme emerged that literariness hinges on texts conveying meaningful content or moral values, offering readers with an opportunity for reflection and insight.
4. **Cultural** Representation: Literary texts are seen as vehicles for capturing and representing cultural contexts, often through sophisticated language structures.

Additionally, a more minor yet significant fifth theme highlighted the **transformative and emotional impact** of literary texts, particularly noted by students who described profound emotional experiences during and after reading. These overarching themes highlight the complexity and diversity of the participants' perspectives, forming a foundation for the detailed exploration in this chapter.

The following sections of the chapter delve into these themes in greater detail. Section 5.2 discusses how teachers and students define literary texts as *evocative* and *representational*, drawing on McRae's (1991) distinction between referential and representational texts. Section 5.3 examines the role of content (value) and aesthetics (linguistic features) in defining literary texts, juxtaposing views of simplicity and complexity. Section 5.4 discusses the idea of literary texts as sophisticated masterpieces offering cultural experiences. Section 5.5 addresses the transformative and emotional effects of literary texts. Together, these sections provide a comprehensive answer to RQ1:
RQ1: What could be considered a literary text in the Algerian higher educational context?
Finally, the chapter concludes by synthesising these findings and providing a cohesive understanding of the participants' perspectives, setting the stage for the discussion of the purposes of teaching English literature in Chapter 6.

5.2. REPRESENTATION AND EVOCATIVENESS

Analysing the generated data shows that participants have multiple views on what could be considered a literary text. These views are constructed from their personal experiences, studies and exposure to relevant literature. When asked about literary texts during the interviews, the students and teachers alike talked about the texts from different perspectives, sometimes linking it to the institutional practices and at other times to their close relation to literature and texts. Teachers and students of the same level and class often have differing views on what could be considered a literary text.

During the interview, Bouthaina considered literariness based on her various roles. Bouthaina, who has a business background and is now a doctor of English literature, distinguished between her view of the text as a reader and her view as a teacher. She stated:

> "As the[a] reader is it's that piece of writing that would have many folds and multiple layers and that would trigger curiosity and sympathy and a [total unleash] of all kinds of emotions that would be a literary text to me personally."

Her view changed when she considered herself as a teacher because of the role, responsibility and the purpose she needs to present. She said:

> “Now as a teacher, when I select a literary text, I have to think literary context, literary theories, how my learners are going to grasp the text? Am I going to focus on literary language? ... The reason is that I need to teach them something about multiple points of view about Mikhail Bakhtin about politically in the novel about history glaucia of a fragmented narrative.”

Although teachers in her institution enjoy some degree of freedom in selecting texts, Bouthaina explained that they still aim to align with the general objectives of the course. For instance, she mentioned drawing up a programme that considers other courses students are taking, particularly in civilisation, where students study periods of American history. She said: “These are novice students to literature and they need something to relate to, so I try to bring the programme closer to civilisation.”

The idea that literary texts are representative and tied to historical contexts is evident in Bouthaina's discussions about analysing texts in the classroom. In her narrative, Bouthaina strived to align with the broader objectives of the institution by selecting representational fictional texts that resonate with the historical setting. Simultaneously, these texts must possess an evocative nature to engage students effectively. The evocativeness and the representational nature are echoed in Aisha’s views on literary texts. Aisha said:

> “A literary text for me or for all the readers of literature would be a description maybe of the feeling of the situation of society the self the culture it would be a recounting of the story or an event but in a beautiful way.”

For Aisha, literariness serves as an account of emotions that confront readers and stimulates their minds to explore “a situation.” It embodies a “society”, a “self” that could be envisioned through reading.

These views were also shared during the interview with Fatima. She said:

> “… I don’t know ... it is something you enjoy reading makes you think I don't know…it is the language ... it is the story … the way you feel when you are reading it ... this text makes you think and so on.”

For Fatima, literariness revolves around her emotional responses while reading a text. She contended that a literary work comprises elements that enhance the pleasure of reading and prompt contemplation. Expanding on this, Fatima emphasised that the primary concern is how a text evokes feeling during reading rather than solely stimulating intellectual thoughts. She stressed: “No ... it is about how I feel about the text…either I like [it] or I don’t.” The idea of evocativeness was also apparent in Bouthaina’s student focus group. B1 shared that: “I would say it is personal. it's more of sort of intimate. it's not academic, it is intimate.” The idea of intimacy here relates to the triggered feelings while reading. B1 continued to explain: “The literary language is different because it is personal, or it has something to do with the writers, emotions and feelings.”

Similarly, B2 argued that the essence of literary is capturing the human experience. He said: “It's like the human experience of a human being condensed maybe his old life experiences, or a part of his life in that in that book, it's a sanctuary you know.” As such, it seems clear that some students have certain views on what could be considered literary because their arguments focused on literary language as a vehicle for emotions and feelings that the writer uses to evoke such experiences for the readers.

Moreover, a student (Z2) from Zainab’s focus group suggested a similar definition. A literary text must evoke feelings in the readers while they are reading: “I think the most important thing is that when you feel that touch and the relation with what is already said.” What Z2 seemed to imply is that a literary text elicits a spectrum of emotions, accompanied by reflection on personal experiences. Likewise, one of Imane's students reflected this insightfully: “When you say literature, it's about feeling, right?” (I3)

These remarks demonstrate a shared view on the centrality of the emotional aspect of literature. It further suggests that evocativeness is an essence of literature as a medium of eliciting and exploring human emotions. The idea that literary language is representational was also present in Bouthaina’s focus group. B3 concentrated on the capacity to delineate the literary language according to the era of the text and the writing style employed. B3 explained: “Yes, it is the way how it was written, the way of uttering the whole novel as a cultural story.”

A representational language that not only evokes feelings in the reader’s mind but also accounts for “a cultural story” in a certain period. Similarly, B4 added:

> “A literally text is for me would be attributed to some literary schools of thought and literary theories and [are] based on some of the characteristics that these literary thoughts have. We can then attribute a text to literally text.”

What B4 appeared to contribute to the discussion is the notion that a literary text not only serves as a representation of “a cultural story” but also employs a writing style that can be associated with a particular literary school. The only problem with this view was articulated by B5 who reasoned that we might not be fair in our judgement in considering literary works. She explained:

> “I'd like to say something, for example, modernist writers, they have been criticised a lot, they have been seen as complete absurdist, but their works art are still considered literary art. And years ago, it was still considered and appreciated as legit masterpieces. At the beginning, they were not even considered as literary works, they were strange and different.”

What B5 seems to suggest is that our perceptions of what qualifies as literary undergo changes over time. She concluded: “We cannot put fixed features of what you can include or exclude in the realm of literary.”

The key agreement, however, between the small debate that emerged was that literary language is particular is unique because it evokes meanings in readers' minds beyond the written words. There is always something more that emerges from the reading.

This section introduced examples of multiple understandings that participants shared while describing their views on literary texts being evocative and representational. The following section will explore another layer of views on the language of literary texts, starting with what they consider as aesthetic and how that meaning moves from simple to difficult language spectrum and the value of the literary language.

5.3. AESTHETIC AND VALUABLE CONTENT

In the following two sections, I will examine some of the quite complicated, complexed and nuanced ways in which the participants spoke about literariness and language. Some participants considered that complexity of language is a defining feature of a literary text. In these views, texts with dense vocabulary and complicated structures are considered literary. On the other hand, some participants had a more inclusive view of literariness which did not rely on complicated language; they instead consider simple and easy language to be literary. In these views, texts with simple vocabulary and grammar structure can still be literary. These two sections are followed, then, by examples from the data showcasing the value of literary language often having a *message*, which can be understood as an ethical value.

5.3.1. LITERARINESS IN LANGUAGE DESCRIBED AS 'COMPLEX'.

One of the most prominent ideas in the data is the notion that the participants described literary texts as having an aesthetic quality - a language that is beautifully written, which is sometimes linked to value. As an illustration of this view, Siraj used phrases and sentences such as:

> "One of them is the aesthetic value of the literary texts and other values…maybe social … political ... religious ... anything that the students may learn from."

> "… I said those values as the aesthetic ones and language because we don't teach literary text … I think it must have what the students learn from the text…it can be the language itself ... the form ... and it can also the content and the values."

Siraj emphasised that texts serve as valuable resources for students to learn language, styles and other significant values. He highlighted the importance of students learning from both the content and the inherent values within texts. Additionally, Siraj asserted that literary language varies greatly among writers, emphasising the stylistic arrangement of terms and vocabularies that foster reader

appreciation. Notably, Siraj advocated for the inclusion of non-fiction texts in study materials. He argued that texts need not necessarily adhere to a canonical standard, however, the texts he teaches, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay, *Self-Reliance,* often hold canonical status despite being non-fiction.

Siraj's students seem to favour the choice of nonfiction literary texts as a medium of studying literature (the module). However, not all nonfiction texts are appropriate for such a study. S1 described literary language as complicated, saying: "The language it used, it is complicated and you can interpret it in many different ways."

S1 suggested that literary language is often characterised by complex vocabulary and structure which allows for diverse interpretation. S1 further elaborated: "Because I think it because it's open to interpretation, there are lots of meanings behind each sentence, depend on each one's point of view and his way of thinking."

Another student stressed the quality that literary language holds:

> "I think what makes a literary text, is the quality it has, from any way you look at, it always makes sense, psychological reading, historical reading, or whatever, it always makes sense it always can be interpreted." (S2)

S2 implied that literary language offers additional quality that can be appreciated and interpreted. Additionally, difficulty was appreciated by S4, who stressed that the text must have a set of symbolic features. She said:

> "The use of these samples in the certain way is kind of like a feature, for example I've read the short Story of *Rip Van Winkle* by Eric Washington. He uses symbolism as a literary technique to convey the message, as if you read the story it may sound like a personal reflection, a wakes up [sic] and find people doing different things, but when you analyse it refers to something else that refers to the wars in America, for example his rise symbolises England, he symbolises America, many stuff."

What S4 was highlighting is that literary language frequently employs symbolic features, prompting readers to engage in interpretation. For instance, in discussing the story of Rip Van Winkle, the student views it as a personal reflection. However, the incorporation of symbolic elements encourages the exploration of deeper meanings within the narrative. An appreciation of dense symbolic features in literary language was also shared by S5:

> "I quite enjoy the literary text that has symbols in it because it pushes you to think what the writer, what is he trying to, who is that person is trying to give an image of all what he's trying to get to, so it's really fun it's like you're trying to do something of solving a puzzle or something."

S5's comments imply that literary language is enjoyable because it "push[es] you to think what the writer is trying to say." The experience is akin to "*solving a puzzle*," emphasised the student.

Another compelling illustration of participants perceiving literary language as aesthetically challenging was exemplified by Zainab's perspective, which suggests avenues for added value. She elaborated:

> "I see the literary text as a treasure for foreign language learners. Why? Because it starts first as an experience of reading for pleasure and in this experience of reading a novel or poem…it as an exercise for you to read how much vocabulary you can understand how much how much ideas you can grasp…there may be a difference between the way they used to read before being instructed in class and the way they do it after in the sense in the class they start discovering the theories and tools. It means how the text could be turned on from reading for pleasure reading academically."

Zainab described literary texts as an essential resource for foreign language learners. They are a *"treasure"* because, as she argued, it is the first experience of reading for pleasure, to which students are entertained and challenged to learn new vocabularies and ideas. Zainab stressed that reading for pleasure is an essential step for learners. Following that, literary classes provide students with the theories and the tools to read the text "*academically*". Reading for pleasure is therefore shifted to a more "*specialised"* reading. The text for Zainab is an unparalleled resource for students, not only to challenge them by reflecting on their personal lives and the values of that, but also to absorb aesthetics - the language in action.

Resembling Zainab's views, her students shared their interpretations of what counts as literary for them. Z1 highlighted: "Literary texts are more artistic than the other pieces of writing." Z2 shared that: "Studying the language doesn't necessarily mean that you need to focus on grammar and academic writing only and to understand language you should have a look at literature." This implies that literary language offers avenues for exploring language in action as opposed to the traditional way of learning grammar rules in isolation from context. This view was further supported by Z3 who highlighted the depth and appreciation of complexity that literary language offers:

> "For me to be able to think in a critical way and should be able to read behind the lines instead of just studying those grammar rules and academic writing, I am interested in studying literature because it offers more than it is shown."

In this sense, the language of literary texts does not resemble academic language but a challenging one, where perhaps grammar is sometimes not followed. Moreover, Z4 argued that the nature of literature is reflected in its: "wide and large reflection of ideas and perspectives of writers' where readers are "invited to the environment of the literary work."

The benefit of exposure to such complex texts is reflected in the readers' writing and reading skills and learning from the characters' experiences. Literature, in general, concluded Z5, provides the chance to learn how different people are, how they view the world and how people paradoxically learn about themselves.

Evidently, Zainab's focus group shared interesting views about their perception of literariness. However, they agreed on the view that literary language is challenging and has a value reflected in the readers' minds. Additionally, they had a more focused definition of what counts as being literary. In its broader definition, Z1 shared a view which was received positively by the group - that all the written forms could be considered literary. Yet, a narrower and specialised definition constitutes only texts that use literary devices and distinctive linguistic features - a "kind of elevated kind of writing." Such a kind of writing therefore can be perceived as literary, where writers make use of literary devices and features to add a layer of aesthetic appreciation. The literary devices, argued Z5: "are just a tool to express and bring better experience."

In this sense, these tools are used creatively by writers to express felt experiences, which makes the product literary. The distinctive nature of literariness is therefore linguistic. The language that literary texts offer, argued Z2, is a: "special language, a figurative language, because literary texts has [sic] a specificities such as the ambiguity while you are reading, the use of symbolism helps in that too [sic] figures of speech, personifications and metaphors."

Where each reader can bring meaning into the text from a different angle, t, this implies that literariness is also linked to the linguistic interpretative nature of literary texts. "Perhaps the term canon best describes the sum of literary texts," said Z2.

This argument resonates well with the group as they agreed with this student's view. Z5 added that:

> "Pragmatic function it is like for example when we have a recipient to inform, like it has a purpose, make a timetable to inform students the times of the sessions, but for literary text it is mostly to entertain, to educate, but at the time of writing, it was just a mode of inspiration of emotions."

What Z5 seemed to denote is that the quality of being literary transcends informing practical needs such as scheduling; however, it aims to entertain, evoke and inspire readers to delve into a deeper level of meaning. Literariness, here, is linked to stimulating imagination, emotions and thoughts beyond the written words.

Arguments highlighting the complexity of language and its abundant use of linguistic devices to be a defining feature of a literary text were also apparent in other student focus groups. For example, B3 put forward the following claim: "I think a literally work can be differentiated from another work through style, form, structure, the choice of words." B3 acknowledged several factors contributing to literariness, such as style, structure and the choice of words. These elements, intertwined, emphasise the complexity and the richness inherited in what B3 considers literary. B6 highlighted the particularity of word choice and sentence structures that can evoke meanings and capture experiences different from everyday language: "The sentence in literary language is packed with meanings; there is always

something beyond the text. Language offers too many horizons for explorations - that's it." Similarly, I5 stressed that the: "literary text is a text full of classical words, difficult words, old English, words that have no practical usage nowadays."

I3 seemed to reference texts that they usually deal with in class where a perception on what counts as literary has been shaped to reflect these texts because I5 continued to cite *Jane Eyre* to be a literary text. This observation was shared by I2 as well, who stated: "High level words," in reference to the type of complex vocabulary that they have dealt with in-classroom study, which are described by students as *canon* works. I1 stressed that literary texts concern "the style and the subject talked about." It seems that I1 considers texts to be literary when they unpack certain realities like "political history."

Similar to Bouthaina's and Zainab's students' views, a key feature of literary language for Imane's students is the type of vocabulary used in the text. "Difficult words" and "classical writing" are recurring terms that students link to literariness. Moreover, some students hinted that the language of literary text provokes "imagining skills" (I1) while they are reading: "[I]enter a new reality' (I2), "Some be like an escape from reality" (I2). I3 added: "[I] map the real world and understand other people and their messages."

The participants' quotations explored in this section demonstrate a particular view about what counts as literary. The participants spoke about literary language as being complex. The complexity here refers not only to the choice of words, but also to the structure of narrative of literary texts. The data shows, for the most part, that literary texts, even though they have a difficult and challenging side, serve as a vehicle for *values*. The term values here covers the literary skills and appreciation that students learn through exposure to these texts. The following section explores a different view towards literary language as being *simple,* yet at the same time it has an aesthetic side to it.

5.3.2. LITERARINESS IN LANGUAGE DESCRIBED AS 'SIMPLE'

In contrast to how the participants view literariness as employing dense vocabulary and complex grammatical structures (a specialised language, which differs from academic writing), another segment of the data reveals that such views were not held by all the participants. Instead, a view that literariness depends on using simple vocabulary and easy grammatical structures was also apparent.

The theme of literary language as being simple vocabulary and having easy grammatical structures came up in discussions with the teachers and in the small debates that emerged in the focus groups. Some teachers explicitly explained that literariness does not mean relying on obscure vocabularies and old-fashioned diction. For example, Bouthaina stated that Hemingway's style of writing – the

iceberg writing style – uses simple language. Simplicity could be considered very literary. Aisha, on the other hand, described literariness in language as "a dance on a paper to produce content worthy of exploration." Herein, it seems that the way words are structured is what gives it a literary aesthetic pleasure in this view. Aisha said:

> "A literary text for me is not only a text which provides pleasure I think it is as serious as mathematics…it is the construction of the ideas in the construction of the words like an architect would do would build some building in a certain shape like the writer does."

Aisha emphasised the seriousness and depth attributed to literariness. She compared the craft of writing words to that of architectural endeavours, which entail strategy and imagination of the product. Aisha took this further by referring to such art as serious as mathematics, which entails precision. Literariness, therefore, is not about the density of vocabulary and complex structures but more of a deliberate choice that reflects simplicity and depth. Moreover, Fatima's view of African literary language as using easy diction furthered this view. Describing the language of *Things Fall Apart*, Fatima said:

> "I noticed that from the beginning of the year, I told them to read *Things Fall Apart* … it is very easy…I told them that it is not very long…it is an easy language and so on and you will enjoy the story."

Fatima stated that African literary texts do not have very complex language and that was one of her reasons to like them in the first place, yet she enjoys reading and teaching them because they are also very accessible to students. She argued that the pleasure of the reading process will not be broken by consistently checking the dictionary for the meaning of a particular word. She said:

> "I don't like a very complex language ... like easy language …a little bit complex ... I don't like very complex novels that that I need to go to dictionaries all the time because I think it is a waste of pleasure because you are reading with interruption you have to stop and check or reading without making sense … I don't like that."

While Fatima contended that African texts are literary, even though they employ simple vocabulary and straightforward grammatical structures, she tries to stress to students that African literature is not only about old texts, such as Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* or Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* but also: "contemporary works that they are worthy of study."

She tries to stress this namely to 5th-year students who are about to graduate and start teaching in college. Her reasoning follows that those teachers in such positions may not have the luxury of reading new literary works outside of their scope of the study, which is limited to canonical works, but the necessity to be aware of the existence of such a significant body of works is essential. Therefore, she always suggests contemporary works and writers to her students, which she considers equally literary.

Such views were also echoed by Anas, who considered texts that are more straightforward, using simple vocabulary and non-fiction materials as literary as well. Anas explained:

> "I see it is quite over from quite an [extensive] kind of point of view. I was just telling students in my last class this morning in my 5th year class that I feel like nonfiction really should be explored more in literature classes that great speeches or essays ... memoirs ... there are so many other things besides the novel that need to be considered in the literary spheres. You know how I feel, I think there are just as many compositional techniques that are applied to the art of persuasion, persuasive writing more effective speaking you know … there orators that are that are phenomenal you know and so reading transcripts of their speeches I think really exactly."

Anas strongly believed that the current teaching practice and its narrow consideration of literary are somewhat restrictive. Like Siraj, Anas had an affluent view of what could be considered literary, feeling like nonfiction should also be considered more in literary classes such as great speeches, essays, or memoirs, stressing that "there are so many other things besides the novel that needs to be considered in the literary sphere." Perhaps, with such an argument in mind, Anas highlighted the benefits that could be reaped from broadening the category of what could be considered literary, believing that many compositional techniques applied in persuasive writing are much more needed for exploring and unpacking with students. *Orators,* for example, provide learning transcripts, which Anas considered literary. For him, a literary is not about "the typical narrative features of rising conflicts and denouements*"* but more about the literary power of expression through language. By extension, Anas argued that students exposed to this type of literary text will benefit most from writing essays and expressing through language. Anas even claimed that the study of such texts is appreciated by teachers and students alike, better than the literary canon, which often needs exploration of movements and contexts to investigate the text more efficiently.

The language the text offers, whether it is considered canonical or non-canonical, must reflect a certain level of aesthetic pleasure, even if the choice of words is leaning towards *simple* language. It also must benefit the student. Such a view was shared among the previously mentioned teachers. The diction or the density of vocabulary may not be a critical factor for these teachers to consider a text as literary.

The theme of literary language being simple was also apparent in the student focus groups. During the focus group with Aisha's students. A1 shared: "I would describe [it as] everyday language. It's quite understandable. If I, if I ever seem to encounter some difficulties, I would drop it." A1 seemed to consider texts that are accessible to her to be literary, where words are described as everyday language and are understandable without the need to check dictionaries all of the time. A1 forwent this view because she stated she believes that certain texts which are considered literary in the class uses "old" and "difficult" terms. She said:

> “I notice that like it is like it contains difficult terms and words like for example Shakespeare's sonnets and the writing as has a little bit strange, old English word. But, with the curiosity you have to like, learn them.”

While A1 considered these “*old”* texts to be literary, she seemed to prefer literary language that is straightforward and simple. She further exemplified: “I really don't know how to say some books that contains contain adventures, that speaking about nature, erotica one. There [are] also romantic ones.”

For A1, these categories further broadened her views about what counts as literary - books that are written in simple English, with several themes, ranging from nature to romance and even erotica. Similarly, A2 also had an interesting view about what counts as literary with a focus on simplicity and modern English. He said: “Uh, it depends on the book you're reading. For example, when you read the comic book like I once I, I read the Joker book comic book it contains like a modern English language.”

For A2, comic books that contain modern English language are as literary as the books they are exposed to in classroom. He, however, prefers texts that use simple modern English. He explained: *“*But when you read ancient writers like yeah literature. You find it like you find difficulty terms which are not often used nowadays.”

He seemed to link between not only accessibility and simplicity for considering texts to be literary, but also utility. A preference that means students appreciate literary language that is modern, as opposed to “old” and “difficult terms” (A1) which are also considered literary for the students. However, A1 stated they do not enjoy it and see it as *“*mysterious.” For example, she shared that the terms used in these sonnets, such as “thy, thou, thee”, are no longer used nowadays, and she does not know enough English to use in her expressions by learning these. She instead appreciated what she terms as texts that use everyday language. It seems that the students want texts to help them gain vocabulary and enhance their language skills. Therefore, based on the students’ views, the realm of literary is no longer restricted to fictive stories written by English (American and British) people at a particular historical period; it encompasses other works written in modern English. A3 seemed to agree with this argument and stressed that modern texts should be considered literary because their vocabulary is easily understood from the context. He stated: “Reading English books, it's the first time for me … Like this *Game of Thrones*, *Sherlock Holmes* like yeah, you know yeah, I found them easy to understand not like Shakespeare.”

A3 appeared to emphasise the importance of accessibility when considering texts as literary. In his view, understanding the vocabulary used while reading is crucial. For instance, he regards Sherlock Holmes’ books as literary, even if he may have been referring to modern rewritten versions because

he could comprehend the language easily. Similarly, he stated that he sees accessibility as a factor in considering works like *Game of Thrones* as literary, suggesting that texts need to be contemporary to be considered as such. This consideration of what counts as literary, added A3, stems from his appreciation of Arabic texts, where the language is easily understood. He enjoys reading English literary texts that follow a similar pattern but are written in English, such as *Game of Thrones*, instead of Shakespearean English.

A3 compared his experience of reading literary texts in Arabic with that of reading them in English, highlighting how his perception was influenced by his initial exposure to Arabic literature. He mentioned that reading literary Arabic motivated him to read English literature. When reading literary texts in Arabic, he stated that he finds the sentences clear; probably because it is his first language. However, when reading in English, while he could understand the overall meaning, he shared that sometimes he struggles with the wording, indicating difficulty in fully grasping the nuances of the language. Therefore, for him, his readings in English are challenging. Instead of old literary texts, A1 and A3, for example, both shared that Paulo Coelho's *Brida* can be considered an exceptionally clear literary text. A1 stated: "It was very like clarified." Moreover, A3 said: "It was clear so there was no difficulties, just some."

The clarification that the students seemed to be referring to was not only about the usage of straightforward *diction;* it also offers space for understanding any emergent meaning of complex vocabulary while reading by relying on its simple usage of grammatical structures. Indeed, A1 appreciated a little complexity offered by the usage of figures of speech, which gives her the ambition and curiosity to fetch their meaning. She said: "It gives you the ambition and the curiosity to search and learn new words and new terms."

This group of students seemed to consider texts as literary when simple words are used and when they employ straightforward grammatical structures, which enhances clarity and readability for them. Here, literary appears to encompass the fusion of effortless style with precision and modern vocabulary, resulting in an appreciated reception due to its clarity and accessibility. Interestingly, A2 referred to movies and series more often than traditional literary texts in his argument, stating:

> "I think literature like entertains the reader like, even when you don't read a book or a literature book or novel and you watch a movie, a famous movie such as *Fight Club* or *The Godfather* or *Harry Potter* and they tell you that this is this was a book before. It was realised as a movie you will. You will be fascinated and amazed because you would think that the movie was amazing, the movie is like animated exactly."

For A1, titles like *Fight Club*, *The Godfather* and even *Harry Potter* would be considered literary. These movies are literary because they entertain and are easy to follow, contain elements of fiction such as "fantasy" and "imagination" and most importantly, they have "suspense", according to A2.

However, this view was not shared by A3 and A1 respectively who picked up on the quality of these movies, claiming that they are different from traditional literature: “They're not literature…, The quality is different.”

This suggests that their view of literary seems to hold resonance with a particular view. A3 compared *The Godfather* to Shakespeare. *The Godfather*'s content is seen, from a linguistic level, as being simpler than Shakespeare's, but *The Godfather's* language is more common and perhaps even more beneficial than reading *Shakespeare*. A3 shared: “But comparing to ancient books like Shakespeare's and stuff, I think there are simpler and are and they are more standard.”

The linguistic side seemed to always be prioritised by the student. This student's argument was similar to A1’s, as she stressed that reading contemporary fiction is better than dealing with old English texts because: “It motivates [me], [I] want to know what happened after.”
And, most importantly, she reads without unnecessary stops to check for the meaning of words. Difficulty could indeed affect the reading experience.

For this group, prioritising clarity and readability is crucial. However, it appeared that determining literariness often poses a complex challenge, with there being no clear boundary between quality and clarity. A similar idea emerged in Rihab’s focus group, with one student also agreeing on such a view. Literary texts can only be appreciated if the text is linguistically distinctive: “It is more about the combination of words, the right combination that transmits emotions, the style of language gives the text depth,” noted R3.

The language, therefore, of a literary text is a specialised one. It provides avenues for *“fascinating interpretations”* to occur, as stated by R3. Also, R3 suggested that the right selection of words is essential for conveying emotions effectively while also emphasising that the style of the language adds depth to the text. Such attributes essentially constitute literariness. Here, clarity and quality intersect. Clarity ensures that the chosen words effectively communicate the intended emotion, while quality refers to the depth and richness of the text’s expressions. Ultimately, clarity and quality of the language, R3 contended, contribute to the text’s ability to invite fascinating interpretations.

The participants’ quotations explored in this section demonstrate a particular view about literariness. The teachers expressed a perspective that literariness hinges on employing simple vocabulary and straightforward grammatical structures. They emphasised the importance of simplicity and precision in word choice, aiming for accessibility and readability, especially for foreign students. Furthermore, some teachers held a broader view, considering literary language as encompassing various genres beyond traditional novels, as long as they effectively convey the power of expression through language.

Similar sentiments were echoed in the student focus group discussions. The students also valued simplicity and modern English as literary attributes. They emphasised accessibility, readability, clarity and quality in literary texts. This unified focus on clarity and quality indicates a shared understanding among the teachers and students regarding the characteristics of literary language.

The following section will explore another layer of views on the value of literary language as a vehicle for a *message* and what that means for participants, starting with what they consider as valuable content: a vehicle for virtues (ethics and morals) and for language skills.

5.3.3. VALUABLE CONTENT AS A 'MESSAGE'

The participants shared seemingly different views on literariness, indicating that it is not solely determined using simple vocabularies and straightforward grammatical structures, as discussed in 5.3.2. Rather, literariness also encompasses instances where complex vocabularies and difficult grammatical structures are employed, as discussed in 5.3.1. However, another theme emerged during the interviews, emphasising the significance of the *message* conveyed by literary language. This theme became apparent as the participants explored their perspectives on the literariness of texts. The following section presents examples from the data, illustrating how literary language often conveys a *message* and the various interpretations participants attribute to this message.

During the interview with Siraj, he shared an observation that literary works are generally very complicated, perhaps due to the time of their production and teachers should be aware of this fact while trying to teach these works. As Siraj continued, some literary texts use archaic words and expressions which are no longer in use, leading to difficulties when adopting them. For Siraj, so many things can constitute literary texts, but more importantly, what is the added *value* to students? Siraj stressed: "I said that there are many things that make up a literary text ... and the problem is the importance or the value of such work."

For the most part, the value for Siraj means that the text has to offer a "moral*"* and a sounding "message*"* to the readers as if the writer has a message and they want it delivered.

Siraj exemplified this by referring to his experience in teaching *The Great Gatsby,* saying:

> "… if they can relate to the stories to their lives to the morals of the story ... for example with last year we were studying *The Great Gatsby* ... we were studying themes and symbols and other stuff … then I told how can we [sic] relate this story to our life ... for example materialism in the story … is it good or is it bad ... so so on …"

This quote highlights the importance of students being able to relate to the stories they encounter, particularly in terms of the moral lessons they convey. Siraj suggested that students relate the

narratives to their own lives and through that they can understand and internalise the morals embedded in the story. For example, Siraj referenced his experience in teaching *The Great Gatsby* and encouraging students to reflect on the theme of materialism. Such a reflection is guided by questioning whether materialism is good or bad, which prompts reflections on the moral implications of the story, encouraging students to consider the ethical lessons presented and relate them to their own lives. Literary, therefore, holds the power of representing values that can be reflected on and transmitted to the readers/students.

Siraj's students seem also to appreciate texts that deal with valuable content. S1shared:

> "I was introduced to it firstly in the [institute], but actually in the second year we were told that in the third year we will be having the literature module, we were very scared about that because we were having very negative feedback for my colleagues on the module and then when I started to start it was actually enjoyable."

S1 expressed her preconceived fear of dealing with the module of literature in general, which started earlier in her second year, where literature was not enlisted in the programme yet. Such a fear spread due to the negative feedback she accumulated talking to her friends. However, the same student expressed her relief and how her views changed. S2 appreciated the discussion in the TD sessions (seminars) and dealing with non-fiction texts like acclaimed essays about great values of self-reliance. She said:

> "In the TD we think out of the box we discuss we speak about the text, as you have just attended with us in the last session, we were like speaking about what we were thinking. Emerson was presenting something everywhere discussing it, so it's really fun this way for me I really enjoy discussion of Emerson's essays."

The statements mentioned by S2 appeared to centre around the *message* or *moral* of the work. This can be understood as the underlying lesson or takeaway from the essay. S5 elaborated on this by stating:

> "I think the English of Emerson essay, we focused on the message on the author, we were trying to think outside the box and interpret the values of text, the moral of the text, we did not focus on the surface meaning, there is something inside that the author wants to convey and he wants us to get and by studying the language and symbols we can find that."

What S5 seemed to suggest is that the focus of discussing Emerson's essay is on delving deeper into the text to undercover its underlying messages or moral values. The practice suggests that works offer something beyond what they explicitly state and the task is to discern and understand this deeper meaning, which is encapsulated in the moral of the text. Works that provide valuable content of this nature are, therefore, considered literary.

Moreover, during the interview with Fatima, she reiterated her belief that for a work to be deemed literary, it needs to include valuable content - specifically moral elements. In other words,

the curiosity to find how the story will unfold and how that may be reflected in her students' reading process. Fatima elaborated:

> "Once I started a novel and I didn't like it was in French and although it had good reviews I didn't like it … and I didn't finish it. I don't enjoy reading it, it is not literary … I don't find the purpose of a message ... sometimes it is just for the pleasure of reading…and even if the message is not clear ... every literary work has something to offer."

While reflecting on her personal experience, Fatima seemed to believe that reviews of novels do not give justice to texts, and this exemplified that she had a terrible experience where she picked a novel based on a "good review", but when she read it, there was no purpose or message and the text had nothing to offer the reader. Fatima attributed her lack of enjoyment to the absence of a clear purpose of a message – a moral dimension that the text offers - suggesting that for a work to be considered literary, it should serve a purpose beyond mere pleasure, such as conveying a moral value. Hence, for Fatima, texts must provide a moral value to be regarded as literary. Aisha also shared this view on literary texts – that they have a moral perspective - while she described the text as a unique building, where each shape, corner and design is not there randomly, but it holds a certain meaning and intention. She continued to stress:

> "As I do teach my students, I say always to my students that remember this is a text written by a writer. It may be a bestseller or a famous writer so any word which is written on intention…there is a certain meaning to be sent there is an intention to choose the term that term and not another."

Aisha emphasised the significance of this aspect to her students, highlighting that the choice and structure of words carry specific meanings and intentions. This reflects her belief that for a text to be considered literary, it must have a clear intention and value. By acknowledging these attributes, texts are closely examined to discern deliberate choices and linguistic expressions. These intentions or meanings could be seen as the valuable content and moral perspectives that students extract from the text.

Such views were also apparent in Bouthaina's student focus group. During a heated debate on literariness, an argument emerged on literary language, a particular type of language that could evoke meanings and capture experiences - a different language from everyday use: "The sentence in literary language is packed with meanings, there is always something beyond the text, Language offers too many horizons for explorations that's it." (B6)

B6 suggested that literary language has more to offer than the lateral meaning and related that to several horizons of expectations - a term that reflects the multifaceted imaginative meanings that texts triggers. This argument was contested by another student who highlighted the importance of a value, of the work *"*message*":* "the idea that a message needs to be delivered beyond the language itself and novel itself, the question is probably what would be the point of reading a very difficult and sophisticated work?" (B4)

B4 argued that literature should transcend mere language and plot, emphasising the importance of conveying valuable content and moral values. B4 further raised the question of the purpose behind engaging with complex works if they do not offer such meaningful exploration. B4 suggested that texts are deemed literary and appreciated not solely based on their difficulty, but rather on their ability to provide avenues for exploring moral values, B4 elaborated: “Literature is introducing a message to be explored and found, literature or even literally texts has [sic] a message to be conveyed of the end, yes the message it is moral and conveyed by a lot.”

A similar argument, but with a different meaning to what the *message* is rather than a moral value but an opportunity to reflect, was put forward by another student from Anas’s students focus group. A3 shared:

> “I completely disagree I don't think that there is always a message behind literary text - it's not always, sometimes it is there sometimes it is not, but I think there's always a goal. Let's take, for example, the Heart of Darkness the goal is to pursue and think for yourself. As for the message it's very ambiguous, there is no clear-cut line for what the message is exactly so each reader makes his own. So, there's not always a specific message.”

A3 contested the idea that literary texts must necessarily possess or communicate a distinct message, whether moral or otherwise. Instead, A3 proposed considering a goal for texts as an alternative concept. A3 cited *Heart of Darkness* as an example, suggesting that its aim is to encourage critical engagement and independent thinking. A3 acknowledged the ambiguity and subjectivity of the messages conveyed in such texts, allowing for diverse interpretations by individual readers. Hence, texts that count as literary are characterised by their capacity to invite interpretation of their messages, whether moral or otherwise.

Quotations from the participants explored in this section revealed a distinct perspective on literariness, diverging from previous themes. Both teachers and students articulated the idea that literariness is contingent upon texts providing valuable content or a message, which could be interpreted as embodying moral values. These moral values are perceived as not being fixed but rather are subject to interpretation. This suggests that the unique qualities of literary language afford readers the opportunity to reflect on such dimensions of meaning. The following section delves deeper to seek to understand another pertinent view on literary language, which was apparent in how participants view text as offering cultural experiences.

5.4. Sophistication and Cultural Experience

Section 5.2 delved into the participants' perspectives on literary language, highlighting its capacity to evoke emotions and portrayal of historical settings. Section 5.3 emphasised diverse views on literariness, extending beyond simplistic vocabularies and grammatical structures (as discussed in

Section 5.3.2) to encompass instances of linguistic complexity (as explored in Section 5.3.1). However, section 5.3.3 examined another facet of literariness, where the participants asserted that texts should convey valuable content or a message, potentially embodying moral values. This current section will explore a recurring theme across interviews and focus groups: the appreciation of sophisticated language structures for capturing cultural experiences, which is perceived as a defining characteristic of literary language.

During the interview with Imane, an argument was made to define literary language as an opportunity to enlighten students' minds. The enlightenment happens, Imane continued to argue, because each text brings new opportunities to encounter cultures and supposedly widens students' horizons. Such cultural encounters are written in the best prose and sophistication and are open to interpretations and discussions. Imane hinted at the linguistic side of the text, whereby it must reflect the *"*best" literary form. She said:

> "I see it as an opportunity to enlighten their minds. I see it as well as I do this by the beginning of the year I tell them about all the advantages the benefits of literature the day today will improve their writing and reading skills but they will learn a lot about different cultures this supposed … this will widen their Horizons …so it all about this …trying to make them read with sophistication better than just superficially telling them that text is always lent always itself to multiple interpretations this is very, very [sic] important."

Imane continued to argue that these texts help students appreciate and understand the difference in cultures and people and correct already established stereotypes – this needs to happen to mitigate the culture of judgement and blame that students may have cultivated, she said:

> "For example, a novel like *Jane Eyre* tells them a lot about ... because they might have believed that Christians are bad, or I do not know ... so they learn about Christians and they just … they are human beings although they have different religion. And some of them have great values … so, they end up a little bit less may be biased then what they are … this is for me is a very, very [sic] important and accepting people who are different of different religion different values."

Simply put, Imane considered literary texts as having the potential to break out stereotypes. Imane referenced *Jane Eyre* and its ability to challenge readers' perspectives, particularly regarding religious beliefs and cultural differences. Depicting Christian characters in a nuanced and humanised way is an exemplary attribute of what she considers literary language. Apart from these *"*traits," Imane stressed that literary language has to have *"*deeper layers of meaning.*"* The literary language for Imane is a "specialised one" that evokes in the readers' minds meaning. Imane elaborated:

> "It is *Rip Van Winkle* by Washington Irving…they struggle a little bit at the beginning with irony. I don't know why because you know it's not ... everything is implicit by the end they realised it because on the surface this short story if you have time to read it…it is like an innocent folktale from first reading. But they will discover deeper layers of meanings and they were like kind of… you can see it as oooh, we couldn't imagine that madam so I was very glad of it … so I was telling them you must learn to read between the lines and always."

The language is specialised and sophisticated, because it offers figures of speech and elements of fiction. For example, the short story *Rip Van Winkle,* by Washington Irving offers irony and satire - figurative devices common in literary texts. However, the beauty of this short story lies in the fact that meaning is implicit throughout. By reading this innocent folktale and then critically discussing the story, students, argued Imane, unpacked such layers and were glad to have read it.

Similar to how Imane sees the text as a repertoire of culture and sophisticated language, Meriem stated that her studentship years have forged these persistent ideas in her. At first, she cultivated a belief that literary studies show the complexity of humans as not evolving as it may seem but going into cycles through their experiences. She said:

> "We have been going in cycles over and over again. And how something as old as Shakespeare's writings can be relevant today really is something that students do not really see at the beginning."

She went even further to claim that literary language helps students not only understand the language but: "Understand the people of the country whose language they are learning."

Literary texts, in their foundations, for Meriem, are cultural texts exploring the human condition, which are arguably repeated through the reproduction of texts in different eras. The additional benefit for Meriem is not only understanding the cultures of other societies whose literary texts are explored and read but also, she said they understand their own societies through analysing literary texts."

Such a conviction stems from her studentship years which instilled in her the belief that literary studies help understand "the self," "the societies," and "the human condition." Meriem declared that she wants to transmit this passion for literary text studies to her students, similar to that of her teachers.

Meriem argued that such understandings of cultural complexities cannot be explored if the students are not motivated enough to navigate the difficulties of the literature module. It is different in its design and deals with difficult texts in a foreign language.

> "It contains different aspects. First there is the problem of language because it is not there first, it is not their second language. So, they are learning English, and, in the process, there are learning literature as well of a country which is foreign, whose traditions they don't."

The texts, therefore, offer sophistication and are difficult and challenging for students. Meriem observed that such sophistication stems from the tendency of choosing literary canon to be considered literary and worthy of study. She said: "Try to make them read the canon…try to include

them at least in the syllabus, so that they would have to read about." Canonical works, for Meriem, are the construct of what she considers literary. During the interview, she cited examples several examples such as Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights,* Stephen Crane's *Maggie a Girl of Street* and the works of Edgar Allan Poe.

Meriem's students shared similar views on what they consider to be literary. The notion that the text offers cultural experience and sophistication was apparent through the focus group. One student commented on literary texts as focusing on being accurate to reality, which depicts actual events that happened in life, even if the writer uses alias names. For example, she claims that the stories written by Agatha Christie use deduction and an investigative approach. M1 and M2 spoke about this:

> "Like I said, I like real events, the things that I like to read a lot has to do with crime you know Agatha Christy." (M1)
> "Well Christy doesn't write real events more of fiction crime.' M2 [Her friend interfering again]."
> "Not exactly. Actually, have to happen in real life." (M1)
> "But OK I didn't get you." (M2)
> "No, but it's about but you know when I'm reading stories about investigating. They're using deduction and it's somehow closer scientific, so that's how that's what I like that." (M1)

Such a view of literary texts as being "closer to reality" offering cultural avenues was a specific condition for M1 to consider a text *"*literary.*"* In her view*,* texts that deal with "superheroes" are difficult to identify with and are not considered literary.

> "Well, reading and talking about his superhero that can go back to his planet because he's banned from it and he needs his super stone to go back to these people. I don't like it. It's just it's not something I can relate to, but I like it when you tell me a story about something that could happen to me like I can think about it, I can put myself in their shoes and look what I do in when that happens to me or if that happens."

M1 seemed to prefer relatable and realistic literature over supernatural. They value literary texts that offer familiar and everyday contexts that allow them to envision themselves in the characters' situations. This perspective emphasises the value of cultural exploration through literature. For M1, this kind of writing constitutes what she considers literary. And by engaging with these writings, which resonate with personal experiences, M1 is encouraged to explore her own cultural identity and considers how might she navigate various scenarios within her cultural context.

M3 also emphasised the sophistication that the text offers. The text's structure and the writer's linguistic choice are paramount parameters to decern literary texts. He said:

> "Well, [literary] text, sometimes well. I found a little bit of complexity." (M3)
> "So, it has to be difficult for you?" (interviewer)
> "Oh, absolutely." (M3)
> …
> "It's more than it's just having to have challenges." (M2)

…
"I like this how things work throughout the story and thing imaginative side of it. The application language. The linguistic slide of it." (M1)

On the language level, the students seemed to agree that the text must have a certain level of difficulty, but not to the extent of using archaic language and the language must have an "imaginative side" to it.

Similar to Imane and Meriem, Mamoun argued that literary texts are "the best texts written in a language." It reflects the written representation of peer-recognised authors dealing with particular themes. Such a claim means that Mamoun, like Meriem and Imane, considers Canon's works to be the best prose forms. When students are exposed to such types of literary texts, Mamoun wants to have them to: "bridge the distance between what they know and what best there is."

This is in order to appreciate the literary language. Furthermore, literary texts for Mamoun function as a storage of culture. He said:

> "The literary text is, how can I say a store of culture, a storage of culture. You can now understand a society, the mentality, the spirit of a population from the imagination of the written text. And we can compare between our culture, attitudes, reactions towards a typical if you want a member of that culture American or British or whatever depending on whatever the situation is. We can make this cultural comparison."

Through reading literary texts, Mamoun wants his students to explore and understand the social, mental, and spiritual aspects of the population of the fictive text. Such explorations lead the students to compare cultures, attitudes and reactions towards a typical member of the targeted culture exposed in the text. Mamoun continued to explain:

> "Because cultures are not the same, you may be seen as very blunt in England when you approach people in a way to be selective in words, so that in Algeria is alright but in other cultures is not the same."

For Mamoun, a literary text is, therefore, a gate towards other people's cultures written in the best form of the English language, fostering cultural experience and understanding. When students are exposed to such texts, Mamoun claimed, it will lead them to learn through the dialogues, scenes and the style of writing, not only language and syntax but other people's lived experiences as portrayed in the text.

Additionally, the storytelling aspect of literary texts captivates students, making them curious, attentive, and eager to discover how the story progresses and unfolds. Despite this, the primary focus of their studies remains the language used in the text, as Mamoun emphasised. The focus is to

consider texts for their accompanying discourse, language and ambiguity, which can lead to writing creatively and critically.

Therefore, for Mamoun, a literary text is a medium for learning English. The text pushes students to engage in discussions stemming from their reading of the story while, at the same time, they attempt to study the symbolic representations of specific historical and contextual issues alongside figurative language. The focus is then on the craftsman of the written words, which can only be seen in the best prose written there is, a sophisticated prose – a canonical work.

Similar views were shared by Mamoun's students but with a particular focus on seeing literary texts as an *event* and an emphasis on cultural experiences. The students shared that they enjoy this course's choices of literary texts. For example, *The Lord of The Flies* was described as mind-blowing: "*Lord of the Flies* just blew my mind, I'm in love with that book it is spot on it is so good. Yeah." (K1).

Another student referred to *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison and how many interpretations he could deduce, even though the class discussion covered two themes only - racism and social equality. K4 said: "About the Invisible Man and yeah, everybody talks about racism and all that and we talked about Malcolm X." K4 seemed to attribute the book to many other cultural references that are worthy of exploration. Even though such a description was somehow shared between the students, they seemed to stress the *"*greatness*"* of such a text. The students seemed to believe these texts to be of great literary importance. These texts are literary because they were challenging to read and offer defiant cultural account. Some of the students shared that they enjoyed reading it and it was a pleasurable experience.

Like Mamoun, Imane and Meriem, Fatima had a similar view on what counts as literary having a cultural significance, especially that she deals with African literature. She believes that the purpose of studying African literature at the institute is to make students exposed to and aware of the African situation and its culture; even if she may not be able to cover all of this, she insisted that she wants her students to gain some knowledge about that. She said: "They relate to African literature better than then do with the other types because we are African after all." She also believes that by exposing students to African literature written in English, they can get over the stereotype of perceiving this particular literature as inferior and less attractive compared to British and American literature. On such a stereotype, she reflected on seeing this while she was a student doing her master's degree in Commonwealth literature, where she dealt with African literature and decided to pursue her research in this field. Perhaps the critical incentive for Fatima is *"*to make students read African literature" since she considered that *"*we are also African" who have produced literary works worthy of study that are not only related to the theme of colonialism and old themes. Even if the programme

covers specific themes, Fatima said she tries to bring some contemporary African writers as suggestions for students to explore the great avenues these texts could offer readers.

Similar to Fatima, Meriem, too, tried to dismantle the stereotype against African literature and its cultural significance. She said:

> "Yes, some of them ask me the question directly and they say: miss, why should we waste time on African writers where we can American or English writers. And why I say that it is anglophone lit literature and these are writers are very worth of studying like Chinua Achebe or even Wole Soyinka who won the Nobel Prize in 1986, they're very surprised because they have this prejudice. And then when we deal with the text, they like it because it is very relevant to the context. For example, one we had a short story: *Marriage is a Private Affair* by Chinua Achebe in one of my first year's groups, they liked it because it was very relevant to them, in that it shows a story of a couple who wants to get married and the woman was not from the same tribe as the man, so the family was against the community was against."

Meriem illustrated that exploring literature from diverse literary and culturally backgrounds, particularly African literature alleviates initial students' scepticism about such works. Certain African texts are considered literary for Meriem because they engage students with cultural themes that they can relate to. In her example, *Marriage is a Private Affair* was received as relevant and compelling by her students. It resonated with them. Meriem argued this was because it portrays a theme of cultural conflict and identity, reflecting experiences that may mirror their own. Texts that offer such avenues are, hence, considered literary. Students across the focus groups also considered the cultural dimension to have significance in considering literary texts. For example, Z1 stressed that literary texts: "make you in contact with other cultures."

Another student (B3) from Bouthaina's focus group highlighted the ability to describe the literary language based on the era of the text and the style of writing: "The way of uttering the whole novel as a cultural story." (B3)

B3 suggested that the novel as a whole represents a cultural narrative, implying a border cultural context embedded within its pages. Such a view reflects an attribute to what counts as literary ought to offer readers an opportunity to delve beyond the plot and characters by exploring the cultural dimensions in which the story unfolds. The focus of this emerging perspective is perhaps linked to how texts are discussed in class, where relationships are drawn and linked to context. Similarly, B4 shared this view. In other words, where the argument was the ability to attribute literary texts to a specific school of thought and theories:

> "A literally text is for me would be attributed to some literary schools of thought and literary theories and based on some of the characteristics that these literary thoughts have we can then attribute a text to literally text."

Although this view was discussed in 5.2, where literary texts are regarded as representational texts, this implies that texts are deemed literary based on specific characteristics associated with these literary theories. It also reflects a tendency of teaching texts for specific purposes. This will be examined in section 6.3 purposes.

Although the participants did not share the same background and were from different institutions and levels of education, they all shared a view on the sophistication of literary language, linked to how literary texts are canonical and are avenues for cultural experience for the target culture. The next section will examine another view of literary texts as being defined as transformational and emotional events, which occur in the reader after the reading experience. Such a view was mostly apparent in the students' accounts compared to that of the teachers, although it was still apparent.

5.5. EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE AND TRANSFORMATION

Although section 5.2 touched upon views on literary texts as being evocative and representational, this current section will focus on a similar understanding from the readers' perspectives, which was apparent in one focus group in terms of them defining what counts as literary by its effect: a transformational and emotional event.
This view was debated during Rihab's focus group. Rihab's students had an unparalleled view of what counts as literary. R3, for example, shared:

> "Whether fiction or nonfiction, both of them. They transmit knowledge and when [you] read a book, when [you] start reading a book. You will know that you acquired something and by the end, you recognise that you are no longer the same, like from the beginning, you are someone at the end you are someone else. You gain some knowledge; you have raised some awareness in your head. This is why I like literature and still liking it and will probably fall in love with it in the future because I don't have time nowadays to read more because you know formulation of staff and works."

R3 considered both fiction and nonfiction texts to be literary if the text has *"*knowledge*"* to offer. Such knowledge is conditioned by the impact that reading a literary text can have on readers. R3 suggested that such literary works enable individuals to acquire knowledge and undergo personal growth – it must be *"*transformative", argued R3. Texts, therefore, are considered literary by the impact they leave on the readers. R3 reflected on how reading a book initiates a journey of self-discovery, leading to a change in perspectives and understanding by the end of the reading experience. Readers, explained R3, feel they have changed and gained some awareness of specific issues. The reading event, as expressed by R3, therefore, aligns with the idea that literature through its ability to provoke reflection. It also promotes personal transformation and exploration of human experience, making it a vital aspect of what is considered literary.

This view was further elaborated by another student in the same group who believes that for a text to be considered literary, it has to offer the reader an emotional experience while reading. R6 shared:

> "I think when you are dealing with the text, it is more about the combination of words. The combination of the right words that transmit emotions because the style of language makes the text deeper. It gives it a depth and when there is a depth to the text, it is usually fascinated [sic] because the interpretation would be different and the point of view and the critics will emerge."

R6 emphasised the significance of arranging the "right" words that evoke and "transmit" emotions, which adds depth and complexity. Such depth and complexity of capturing emotions allows for various interpretations, perspectives and critical analysis to occur. The reading event has to be evocative, focusing on the private aspect of meaning. Literary texts are then appreciated through the emotional impact they leave on the readers. R2 stressed "Yeah right, it is about the emotions that gives you through the reading."

Similar views were shared in section 5.2, but what is particular about these students' accounts is the transformational impact readers are left with after reading literary texts. Such an evocative experience was also apparent in other students' discussions. For example, R5 argued that the cultural dimension of a text can evoke feelings of empathy and sympathy with characters unfamiliar to us as readers. She said: "Sometimes when I relate to a character, I feel yes, I can understand myself a little bit."

R5 highlighted a powerful connection she feels with characters while reading certain texts. She often experiences a sense of understanding identification, where she sees aspects of herself reflected in the characters' experiences and emotions. This process reflects that what the student considers literary ought to foster empathy as she would feel the characters' struggles, joy and growth through literary texts. Ultimately, this engagement with literary characters led R5 to develop an understanding about themselves. This student has developed this view, she explained, due to her close companionship with her father, who has recommended certain books for reading and her foreign friends with whom she enjoyed discussing them. R5 shared:

> "Yeah, from my father basically, and when I started the high school that was the I had two friends from foreign countries from London and they were like amazing, they had like that British accent and they were reading a lot. I wanted to learn from them, to have their accent, I wanted to be reading a lot just like them, so we can discuss books."

However, such a transformational event can only happen in literary texts that offer a particular type of language, which is evocative, and this depends on the writer's skills. A skill that merges simple

vocabulary and sentence structure with difficult ones, as explored in 5.3. For example, R3 argued that the work of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is considered to be masterfully crafted because:

> "The writer is so clever to be objective in a subjective way like in the book of Joseph Conrad, till nowadays. They don't know if he's racist or not there is and there is a lot of critics that emerged. From both sides to say that." (R3)

R3 described the language of Conrad as evocative and open to multiple interpretations, stating: "The language is so deep and so, so, so literary the text will be beautiful and it will have more meaning and more things to explore."

Such literary language offers readers an opportunity to be immersed in several meanings and feelings that the text offers. The masterful creation of the work keeps readers feeling strongly about such issues. Such a treat is due to the style of literary texts, which reflect depth and beauty, argued R2:

> "What makes a text literary is the combination rather than simple word, like when you take a text. You could interpret a single word. You can enter a single chapter. You can also interpret the whole text and each one of them. Has a different interpretation. This is what fascinates me."

R5's statement highlights the complexity of literariness in texts, wherein such an attribute is about a degree of combination that often does not rely on difficult and archaic words but rather a: "combination that sometimes it is so simple, but it is so deep."

R5 emphasised the richness of interpretation that can occur when a reader meets a text, whether it is analysing a single word, a single sentence or the entire work. Each level of analysis offers unique insights and evocative experiences. B4 added: "When you read it, you will open your mind will be enlightened about a lot of ideas that come in your mind."

This emphasises the state of internal discussion that accompanies the reading experience. Therefore, the degree of literariness of the text does not rely on using difficult words, but rather on choosing the words in a context. However, the most important aspect for these students to define what counts as literary was the emotional and transformational events they experience while reading. For this reason, the students did not appreciate certain works, even though they are arguably considered literary. For example, they argued that the certain choices of books were challenging for them because they were mostly archaic canonical works. R2 shared mixed feelings about her experience when she was obliged to read *To the Light House* because the successful completion of the course depended on that, even though the reading experience was dreadful. She stated:

> “I have to read but I'm never disappointed because as soon as I started the books, I rushed to finish them because I really like them and it happens to when I was reading *To the Light House*, but the experience of reading it was really (stops talking) …” (R2)

> “ .. I ready don’t have [sic] [like] the work. There is a stream of consciousness and sometimes it is really hard to follow and juxtaposing and jumping forth and back.” (R2)

R2 expressed she had contrasting feelings while reading *To the Light House.* While she enjoyed the work and rushed to finish it, perhaps because of how the work has made her feel about certain characters, she mentioned difficulties and challenges which gave her mixed feelings at times, such as stream of consciousness and the frequent juxtapositions and shifts in perspectives. This highlights that literary language is often appreciated. Even though it uses certain literary styles, as long as it ignites enjoyment and comprehension, the readers enjoy it.

However, some students mentioned other works they have dealt with that evoked similar feelings as *The Invisible Man*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Catcher in the Rye*. R6 claimed that such techniques are used in movies as well: “You know, these techniques reminds me of movies, it is the same as there were used within the books.” They continued to reference the *Invisible Man* as an example as well: “and also the one we have in American literature, *The Invisible Man”* (R3). To which R1 replied by describing the catcher in the Rye as the best book he read following such patterning: “Yeah, for me it *The Catcher in Rye* like it was the best book I read in 2019.”

The student quotes highlight the utility of certain literary devices in capturing and igniting particular feelings in their reading experiences. Even though such works are challenging to read, the students have found that such an evocative reading experience is appreciated because it transforms them afterwards. Even though this particular group of students shared certain views with other groups and teachers, they portrayed a distinctive view of what counts as literary. For them, it is all about the emotional and transformational impact that the text has on them as readers, regardless of linguistic choices and the simple or complex use of vocabulary and sentence structures.

5.6. SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how the participants (teachers and students) in higher educational Algerian institutions define what counts as literary. The data show that the participants have multiple views on what could be considered literary texts. These views are constructed, as I have demonstrated, from their personal experiences, studies and exposure to literature in the broader sense. However, four main themes emerged from the analysis.

The first section introduced examples from the data, showcasing an understanding of literary language as being evocative in its nature – this understanding was shared by the students and

teachers. It also highlighted how such an evocative nature is used as a vehicle to represent a society - a period of literary history.

The second section explored a major theme that was apparent in the data – the kind of language that makes texts literary. The views about literariness revealed two different sub-themes: one emphasised the literary language hinges on employing simple vocabulary and straightforward grammatical structures, and the other highlighted that literariness encompasses instances where complex vocabularies and complicated grammatical structures are employed.
Despite this divergence, a common thread on another shared theme emerged in the third section, where literariness was seen as contingent upon texts, providing valuable content or a message, which could be interpreted as embodying moral values. This suggests that the unique qualities of literary language afford readers the opportunity to reflect on such dimensions of meaning, recognising the value of literary texts as a vehicle for conveying a *message*. Despite differing interpretations of what constitutes this message, the participants acknowledged its significance in constituting what counts as literary.

The fourth section explored an additional view on what counts as literary shared by the participants. There was a view that texts consistently highlight and capture particular cultural events, which are then experienced by the readers. Literary texts were viewed as vehicles for capturing and representing a specific cultural context through the sophistication of language structures of said texts.

The fifth section explored a relatively minor theme compared to the previous ones, albeit it is important. The participants emphasised the transformative and emotional impact of literary texts, particularly from the readers' perspective. The students, in particular, highlighted the profound emotional and transformative experienced during and after the reading event.

In conclusion, the analysis underscores the complexity and diversity of the participants' views on what counts as a literary text, encompassing evocative nature, linguistic choices, moral values, cultural experiences and transformative impacts. While differing perspectives exist, a common thread unites the participants - in recognising the multifaceted value of literary language, emphasising their role in fostering linguistic skills, cultural awareness and emotional engagement. The following chapter is dedicated to answering the second research question and will focus on explaining the purposes of introducing English literature in Algerian higher educational institutions.

CHAPTER 6: PURPOSE OF INTRODUCING ENGLISH LITERATURE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the generated data in response to the second research question:

RQ2: For what purpose is English literature introduced, read and explored in Algerian universities?

This chapter presents the results of the analysis, organised as follows. The opening section, 6.2, sets the stage for addressing the selection of literary texts in higher educational institutions by highlighting the tension that teachers face from their personal choices and the institutional drive. The following section, 6.3, highlights how literary texts are used to exemplify literary movements and theories in the history of English literature. The subsequent section, 6.4, looks at how literary texts are used to promote cultural exploration and understanding. The following section, 6.5, focuses on fostering personal growth and criticality for students. The last section, 6.6, expands on another purpose that was apparent in the data, which is exploring the English language in action. Finally, a summary of chapter 6 is provided in section 6.7.

6.2 SELECTION AND USE OF TEXTS:

A considerable amount of the generated data showcases a clash between teachers' personal preferences and choices of what they consider literary, as opposed to the institutional drive, to cover certain texts.

Bouthaina explained that teachers negotiate planning the programme/curriculum with each other as the ministry guidelines do not provide sufficient information. She stressed: "The guidelines do not provide details about the matter." Bouthaina further elaborated on the canvas, a document describing the topics that are to be covered for each level, including the "titles of the courses." "See, there are no details and then they will tell you to teach American and British literature in second year and that is all."

The choice of literary texts is then negotiated among the teachers and decided upon. As there is an absence of consensus on what literary text to teach, Bouthaina and her colleagues had to design the whole programme. In Bouthaina's defence, she does not have another choice. She asserted: "I am the one who made the programme and I am the one who dispatches the programme to the school and the university because we did not have any." The programme is based on ministry guidance (canvas), a document describing the general aims and the topics that must be covered for each level. Unfortunately, I could not obtain a copy of the document. However, I have learned that literary text selection is entirely up to the teacher as long as they follow the general guidelines of the canvas.

In Bouthaina's case, the selection of texts goes through a research process. Bouthaina considers the students' levels and the course's general aims while choosing the texts. She said: "I select a literary text; I have to think literary context, literary theories and how my learners are going to grasp the text." Bouthaina described her text selections to reflect the canvas's general aims. For example, as she is required to teach literary genres (novel and the elements of fiction) and the movements (romanticism, naturalism, realism, modernism), she then had to look for what she considered: "The most appropriate text that would have [her] discuss all these features and techniques."

Similarly, realising such a consensus on text selection and clarity of purpose for Aisha was not easy. On her first arrival at the university, Aisha explained that the university context offers many obstacles and an unclear vision of the purpose of teaching English literature. Aisha said: "I have never been given an official programme or specially guidance, guidance from the department, like whether to follow book as basic coursebook or something out, so my own teaching experience relies on my personal research and my experience." Aisha explicitly stressed the absence of guidance from the department regarding what to teach (e.g., coursebooks) and how to teach. She was only introduced to a broad paper covering the "titles of the courses" called "canvas" without explaining what is expected and samples of the overarching design. It was only after several meetings with teacher staff that they came to terms with what the purpose of teaching should be, Aisha elaborated:

> "Fortunately, to the help and collaboration of the teaching community here of literature we could arrive at the common programme for first-year students, second and third-year students. We did that through successive session and workshops among the teachers of literature and so we arrived agreeing on a certain content with subtitles that can be covered on those sessions."

The course content and the purpose were, therefore, set after Aisha's collaboration with like-minded university teachers, who outlined what they must cover each year. These meetings and discussions are entirely the product of teachers' initiatives as some others, Aisha stressed, tend to work alone.

Aisha also explained that she does not select texts haphazardly. Instead, she includes her students in choosing what to read. She explained that, although she agrees with other teachers about what to cover in the syllabus, she gives the students two to three texts to choose from and allows curious students to explore other texts outside the classroom. Aisha elaborated:

> "I don't choose texts haphazardly of course. Generally, I give students within the syllabus, I give a primary text that I underline and say this is the text that we are going to study in the classroom, however, I give other texts for curious students who want to read more about the movement to read more about other interests within the same movement. I don't escape famous texts. Like a student of literature must know Shakespeare, for example."

Unlike Bouthaina and Aisha, Fatima remains committed to adhering to the ministry guidelines. However, she acknowledged a struggle she grapples with, as she personally prefers showcasing

contemporary works rather than strictly adhering to what the prescribed programme covers. She said: “Then they know that African literature is not about *Things Fall Apart* ... *A Grain of Wheat* ... they know that it is just the classics of African literature ... yeah … we have contemporary works ... they are worthy of study ...”

This suggests a struggle between Fatima's personal preferences for selecting texts that meet outlined purposes and the conventional choices typically studied in this class. She grapples with finding and selecting works deemed suitable for study without compromising her purpose. She elaborated:

> “We have some guidelines…for example, in the fourth year we deal with the notion of orality and then colonial literature and then you have to deal with *Things Fall Apart* and they only were studied for one semester… In the second semester, we have African civilisation.”

While Fatima adheres to the ministry's prescribed guidelines, which include specific topics, such as orality in African literature, colonial literature and African history to raise awareness of African culture, she finds it challenging to identify works suitable for classroom study that meet such a purpose. Fatima believes that many available works, such as *Things Fall Apart,* have already been extensively analysed online and elsewhere. She described a situation with her students:

> “I noticed that from the beginning of the year I told them to read Things Fall Apart… it is very easy…I told them that it is not very long…it is an easy language and so on and you will enjoy the story, but I noticed that when I started working on the novel last Monday…I’ve noticed that not all of them have read the work ... they just read about the work …”

This suggests that students are not interested in reading the novel because it has been extensively analysed online. It appears that Fatima does indeed prefer contemporary or lesser-known works over celebrated ones. She reflected on her past experiences with a previous teacher who used to bring literary works from abroad, providing students with fresh and authentic materials for discussion. However, as a teacher herself, Fatima feels constrained by the limited selection of texts available in the library or online, which significantly restricts her options.

While also trying to follow the programme, Fatima gave an example of trying to choose between four poems, but she eventually opted for one named *Africa* because it was the only available option. She explained:

> “For me, I always try to find a text because, for example, including poems so we have the four or five names of poets and we have select one of them, for example, *Africa* was not the first choice … I did not find the other available ... so this is why I had to do with what I have.”

The selection of texts in this example is based on availability. Another strategy that Fatima uses when selecting texts is involving students in the process. She gave an example of a 5th-year class where she provided students with the course requirement, which was studying a play and there were two

options available for this. The first option was *The Lion and The Jewel*, a play by Wole Soyinka and the second one was *I Will Marry When I Want* by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. Fatima said:

> "So ... I try to involve them while choosing the literary text… for example, I told them we have to study a play, so we have the choice between two plays and we are to choose between them ... so ... the first one was *The Lion and the Jewel* is a play by Wole Soyinka and the second one was by Ngugi …"

Most students, at first pick the play by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, as Fatima explained that it is related to the predominantly female class and it is about marriage. Fatima then proposed that they first research both plays and in the next session, they will decide together what to study. Fatima explained: "So, when they came next time they said we want to study *The Lion and the Jewel* … because the story also involves marriage and love and so on …" It turns out that Fatima's intuition was correct as all the girls decided to pick the plays *The Lion and The Jewel,* because Fatima elaborated: "… *I Will Marry When I Want* is very long comparing to *The Lion and the Jewel* because it is short and easier and even acted by the BBC."

These examples illustrate how Fatima navigates the process of selecting texts for her classroom. She balances what students are interested in exploring with the texts that are available, all whilst adhering to the guidelines agreed upon by teachers. The availability of literary texts, their length and the simplicity of their language are crucial factors in Fatima's text selection process.

The participants' quotations explored in this section demonstrate a conflict of interest and tensions between teachers' personal choices of what literary texts ought to be explored in the class and an institutional drive to guide selecting texts from a particular pool of available ones. It showcases teachers' endeavours to navigate through this; they mostly have to choose texts against their will, while also attempting to include students in the process, when available. The following section will discuss the first purpose of selecting and teaching literary texts in Algerian higher educational institutions.

6.3 Exploring Literary Movements and Theories:

While the preceding section underscored the inherent conflict in selecting texts to align with the general drive outlined by the ministry and delves into how, in practice, text selection relies on a consensus among teachers within their respective institutions. This conflict emerged prominently in the interviews with Bouthaina, Aisha and Fatima. In this section, I expand on a predominant purpose of exploring literary movements and theories that the interview data consistently reveals, signalling a transition from reading for pleasure to a more academic and specialised one.

The pertinent idea of teaching literary text to promote the skill of relating texts to literary theories was unpacked during the interview with Bouthaina. From her account, in her institution's literature course, students must be introduced to literary theories alongside reading the texts. For example, Bouthaina said: “In third-year, students start discovering Romanticism. In the fourth year, they start dealing with [real literature] that's reading literary works and analysing them, in the fifth year we usually study Modernism.” This outlines how students are introduced to literary texts and theories during their course and links literary texts - *real literature* - to a specific literary period.

Acknowledging the challenges of this practice, Bouthaina shared that she must be flexible with choosing the texts following students’ “linguistic competence” and even using short stories rather than novels. Indeed, Bouthaina believes that the students know their task after reading the text – linking and relating the text to literary movements and discussing *'stylistic'* features. It is also assumed, from Bouthaina’s account, that texts should not be challenging, thus, short stories should be chosen rather than novels, as much as possible, and have elements of storytelling embedded in them. She said:

> “So, the only way to make them I was teaching naturalism ... alright ... I was explaining naturalism and then gave them the text of a girl from the street to have an idea to read it. Next, I select another one … short stories … naturalism and I kept looking and then I found To Build a Fire by Jack London and then I started reading. It was twelve pages and reading each line was there…I could see aspects of naturalism.”

In this example, referencing the naturalist movement, Bouthaina experimented with two short stories, *To Build a Fire* by Jack London and *Maggie: A Girl From The Street*. The first choice was ideal for her because it fits with her aims, which is exemplifying the naturalist movements. The second choice was contested by the students. She reported that the students did not appreciate *Maggie* and were uninterested in it. Perhaps it has to do with the idea of *“*prostitution*”* in the story, which Bouthaina sees as a taboo for some groups. Sometimes, Bouthaina appreciates taboo topics because they bring out vivid discussions and debates in the group. She said: “I find a shocking element to shake them.” In practice, Bouthaina said that she first introduces the movement/theory to students and then she selects the text and reads it to the students to point out the features and the theories. She said: “Oh yeah ... here we have Hobbes … here we have Darwin's theory … see we have the struggle of the society ...”

By exposing students to literary texts, Bouthaina seems to approach the analysis of literary text to a level of free play with theoretical concepts and features of literary movements. Such a specialised practice of reading literary texts through a structured interpretation/lens is called for to meet predetermined purposes of exploring a literary movement at hand. The same idea of teaching literary texts to promote the skill of linking texts to literary theories was further explained during the interview with Aisha. The purpose, Aisha shared:

> “Yes, it is for the sake of exemplifying the movement and exemplifying how writers thought at that time and how is the style of their thoughts and what shaped their thought at each period. What are the changes that happened from a period to another. I generally want my students to have a global vision to come outside the movements and see what are the changes that happen from a movement to another, the facts that changed each mind.”

For Aisha, the purpose is to follow a chronological exploration of movements in English literature. This practice is similar to that of Bouthaina. Selecting what text to implement depends on its thematic concerns and the movement explored in the designed/agreed upon programme. For example, Aisha explained that she selects Shakespearean sonnets when she starts with the Renaissance. She reasoned that the text fits the movements thematically and offers a practical artistic exemplification. Moreover, it is easier to implement with the students. She said:

> “So, if I am teaching for example the movement in literature since the beginning of English literature like in the Renaissance for example, I would select Shakespeare because the thematically and even in times of a text in itself as sonnet, for example, the artistic side of the text it is really interesting because it exemplifies the movement it exemplified the renaissance.”

The text then is used to exemplify a “movement” after Aisha introduces its main features. The student’s job is to identify the features of the movement in the text. Aisha shared another example of selecting TS Eliot's texts while dealing with modernist literature. She said:

> “For example, in a modernist literature, I would select TS Eliot because he describes, he gives, an anatomic of his society, Western society after the world war, and he describes the symptoms of that society and the loss of values, the loss of ethics, the many problems of the modern society, which are put in text but in a beautiful way.”

Aisha argued that the choice of this text gives students an anatomic description of Western society after the First World War and the symptoms of the loss of values and ethics governing the modern world, which are beautifully crafted in a literary text. Such quality in the texts offers avenues for the students to understand modernist writings.

Similar to Bouthaina and Aisha, one primary purpose for Siraj's use of literary text is to link the text to literary theories and criticism. Siraj said: “How is this linked to the movement we are studying ... for example, how self-reliance essay is linked to the transcendentalist movement ... why the writer is writing this ... why is he saying this …” In so doing, Siraj tries to select texts relevant to the era of study and movements in literary theories. For example, Siraj's choice of the nonfiction essay of Ralf Waldo Emerson’s *Self Reliance* is arguably based on its association with the transcendentalist movement. Siraj treats literary texts, like Bouthaina and Fatima, as specialised subjects, where the text is a starting point for discussing the context of periods.

Such practices, Siraj argues, are also used to link the text to its historical setting. It seemed evident to Siraj that a text cannot be isolated from its historical contexts and that: “These aspects must be taken

into consideration when teaching a literary text." Siraj stressed that: "Link the text to its historical context ... in order for them to make sense ... why are we dealing with this …?" This suggests that authentic literary texts are used as a starting point to discuss theories and context. Selecting texts based on their lineage to certain features and movements in Western literature seems quite common across these teachers.

Unlike Siraj, Anas sees that complex texts are generally explored in his institution as a requirement. He said:

> "Difficult ... too difficult texts or maybe text changed that kind of Defies current Norms or something stylistic Norms or you know the things that were more innovative, I guess innovative counts more for me then accessibility ... a lot of a lot of people can get enjoyment maybe."

Although Anas concurred that selecting difficult texts may give rise to issues of accessibility for his learners, he believes that by studying such a text that "*defies*" current norms can bring about a challenging and enjoyable experience. Anas claimed that by teaching texts such as *Heart of Darkness,* he expects to achieve the objectives of unpacking the representations in the story and discussing with the group what topics and themes the text offers. He said:

> "For example, we are studying *Heart of Darkness*. I don't expect any of my students to have gone home and picked up *Heart of Darkness* on her own and really loved it but I can see what's happening when we are together as a group and talking about some of the representations in the story and I can see that we're getting we're taking it to some really interesting places and we're having interesting conversations."

Therefore, the purpose for Anas, is to unpack difficult texts and converse about their topics and representations. Admittedly, Anas knows that students would not pick up the novel and read it from cover to cover. However, he aims to choose excerpts that might allow for "interesting conversations" to occur, leading the discussion to reflect on movements, literary theories and context. The text is used as a starting point to discuss contexts and periods. Anas elaborated:

> "That is why I choose literature that I think might allow for those kinds of conversations to happen and so it is sometimes the literature that wouldn't be seem as enjoyable or as accessible but through guidance, the students can pull out those deeper meanings or more controversial aspects…"

Anas concurred that discussing "representations in the story" may not often happen unless guidance is provided to get into *"the deeper meanings or more controversial aspects*." Anas shared that such aims are difficult to achieve. However, by properly equipping students with ways to examine the text, they will:

> "Take away this kind of love of finding new their own ways to look at it at a text that even a text that may have seemed kind of opiec [archaic] or maybe again little more complex than what they're used."

Anas hopes that his students will foster the ability to interact with old texts and unpack their ideas. He said: “To have been presented with a 100-year-old text with very kind of archaic, like maybe a vocabulary and language, and to have been able to really interact with it in the ideas presented in it and bring their own thoughts…” The purpose for Anas, therefore, is to exemplify literary movements but also to go beyond that to foster an empowering practice of intellectual inquiry and forming new perspectives through reading: “Yes, I think so and even New Perspectives on their own intellectual inquiry.” Similarly, Meriem reflected that she was not observant about the salient ideas that could be unpacked from studying literary texts. She said:

> “I have been a reader my whole life. I started with fairy tales when I was a small girl, and then literature. The books I used to read were for entertainment as a teenager and then as a young adult, but coming to university I saw that as a form of art, it could really have a large-scale impact on society's way of thinking, societies evolution, especially at certain points of history like the renaissance, for example, although the visual arts were more important, literature contributed also to the development of human thinking.”

Meriem explained that her interest in literary studies was initially based on a hobby of reading that evolved from her teenage years. When she enrolled at university to study literature academically, she learned that literary text studies *“could have a large-scale impact on societies”* ways of thinking and evolution. Moreover, that historically, literature contributed to the development of human thinking. As a teacher, Meriem wants to make her students see the importance of literature. She, however, is governed by a programme for teachers and students to follow throughout the degree. She said:

> “Depending also on the purpose of the module because in first year at this university, they deal with literary genres - introduction to literature and the difference in genres and then in 2nd year is really the literary movement and the historical evolution of literature…In 3rd year they deal with modernism and aspects of modernism.”

Meriem outlined the structure of the literature module at the university, highlighting a progression from an introductory course of literary genres in the first year to a more in-depth exploration of literary movement and the historical evolution of literary production in the second year. Meriem further suggested that the third year focuses on modernism and its various aspects. Meriem exemplified this further:

> “For example, the gothic movement could be Illustrated with a different text, I mean, Shelley's Frankenstein or Dracula by Bram Stoker or even aspects of the gothic movement in Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* or in Emily Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights*. But I personally prefer Poe.”

Here, Meriem highlighted texts that could be used to study The Gothic literary movement. The aim of using these texts or excepts from them is to exemplify aspects of the movement, leading students to learn about aspects of literary writing per movement. She further claimed that studying particular texts helps students relate to their context and have a sense of their society at a certain period of time. She

elaborated: “For example, if we are reading a Victorian novel they're going to learn about, it is also a source of knowledge concerning a certain period of time, or if they are reading a naturalistic text.” Meriem clarified that Victorian novels not only provide students with an understanding of English society during that era but also exemplify the literary technique of naturalism.

The participants’ quotations explored in this section demonstrate a common understanding of why literary texts are taught in higher education. Teachers highlighted the importance of using literary texts as a springboard for discussing their broader contexts. Additionally, they tended to use texts to delve into various literary movements and periods within English literary history. The following section will discuss another purpose of selecting and teaching literary texts in Algerian higher educational institutions.

6.4 Cultural Exploration and Understanding:

The interview data highlight a significant emphasis on using literary texts to delve into different cultures and promote understanding through language. Both Mamoun, Fatima and Imane, among others, underscored the importance of using literary texts for exploring people and cultivating cultural awareness. With a distinctive perspective on the nature of literary text emerging during the interview with Mamoun: *“*The literary text is how can I say a store of culture, a storage of culture.” It was clear that the purpose for Mamoun could not be further away from the cultural aspect. Mamoun believes that teaching these texts is to foster cultural understanding. He explained:

> “We can compare between our culture, attitudes, reactions towards a typical if you want a member of that culture American or British or whatever depending on whatever the situation is. we can make this cultural comparison.” Mamoun
>
> ‘So, are you saying that literary text is like a gate towards other people culture?’ Interviewer.
>
> “Exactly, and at the same time compare and identify how to use better English…because cultures are not the same, you may be seen as very blunt in England when you approach people in a way to be selective in words, so that in Algerian is alright but in other cultures is not the same.” Mamoun

Mamoun highlighted that literary texts are a gateway to understanding different cultures. By exploring characters and situations offered through reading literary texts, students can compare cultural attitudes and behaviours and gain insights into the nuances of various societies. Mamoun also touched upon the importance of language and communication, noting that cultural differences can affect how language is perceived and used. For example, what may be acceptable in one culture could be considered inappropriate or blunt in another. Therefore, studying literary texts can help bridge this gap of misunderstanding. This cultural understanding depends on students’ ability to

compare between their culture and the target culture. Mamoun further elaborated on the purpose, saying:

> "To make students aware about the target culture they cannot really go all the time to visit America [or] England to meet and talk to American people [and] English people how they think how they behave and their reaction to things okay but through the literary text they are offered the experience this is what you may call passive experience of the culture and the language."

For such a purpose to be achieved, Mamoun adapts specific "segments of the text" in his teaching of American literature. Due to the audience being different from "native language speakers', Mamoun argued that his university's purposes seem to differ too. "Segments of the literary texts" are used for exploring cultural perspectives. Mamoun explained that the usage of these segments is "to make students aware about the target culture", for not all students can travel and experience the nuances of cultural communications first-hand. Literary texts can be seen here as a gateway to experience behaviours, thinking patterns and reactions. However, such an experience, Mamoun argued, is passive as the students are not fully engaged with people but with characters. He said: "This is what you may call passive experience of the culture and the language."

Even though such a process allows the students to learn how certain groups speak and behave in different contexts without the troubles of travelling, it also explores possibilities of identifying with characters and experiences. As such, the purpose is to foster an understanding of the self and the other. Although Mamoun argued that identification is farfetched because the culture of the students and that offered by the text is different, what seems to be normal in American society could be perceived as taboo for the students. He said: "What may seem normal at a different society it could be considered a taboo in this society. It is very hard if you wanted to find a character in a novel in a foreign text represents if you want our values."

However, there are certain instances where Mamoun observed students sympathising with certain characters but not to the extent they could really identify with them.

> "We can understand the motivation. We can probably judge the person/ the character, but we cannot identify…For instance, if you want *The Catcher in the Rye*, the way the American people identify with the character Holden at the period it was really was really interesting that cannot really happen in Algeria."

Mamoun suggested that literary texts are used to foster cultural understanding. It can lead to students understanding characters, their actions and intentions and sometimes evokes emotions like sympathy, but it is difficult to "identify fully" with what the text offers.

Similar to Mamoun, during the interview with Fatima, the notion of using literary texts to cultivate cultural understanding was evident. As a teacher specialising in African literature, Fatima views the

purpose of teaching African literary works written in English as a means to nurture cultural awareness of the African experience. She explained:

> "Well, there is a programme that you have to follow ... but the purpose is that students become aware of the African situation, culture and even if ... but we don't have enough time to deal with all that … I really want my students to know about it …"

Elevating awareness of this dimension is, thus, a paramount objective in teaching African literature - a purpose that resonates with Fatima's personal inclinations. She remarked: "My purpose is to make them read African literature." In pursuing this objective, Fatima emphasised the necessity of adhering to the ministry guidelines (canvas), which mandate the exploration of topics encompassing African civilisations and the "the history of the African people" through literature. She further elaborated: "It is to raise awareness in students that not only American and British literature…we also, as Africans, have literary works and not only old literary works dealing with colonialism and the traditional themes, if I may say ..."

Fatima underscored the importance of broadening students' awareness beyond American and British literature to include African literary works. Fatima highlighted the significance of recognising and celebrating the African literary heritage, encompassing not only works addressing colonialism and traditional themes but also literature that reflects diverse perspectives and experiences of the African culture. Fatima, therefore, aims to foster an appreciation for the cultural identity and diversity of Africans and its contribution to the global literary landscape.

Moreover, Fatima believes that students enjoy African writing because it is written in an accessible language that is easy to read and understand. Moreover, she argued that students relate to the African experience and identity not just because of linguistic accessibility, but because "we are African after all." She remarked: "The African literature is very simple in language and clear sometimes they add proverbs ... African words ... yeah, and they relate to African literature better than then do with the other types because we are African after all."

However, the identity dimension was contested by the students first, Fatima said. It has become a tradition for her to open the first teaching session by questioning whether the students consider themselves African, which most of them do not. She stated:

> "In the first lecture I always ask them ... do you consider yourself African or not? so some of them say yes and the others say I don't know, African … they start questioning that … because we Algerians tend to not consider ourselves as African ..."

Fatima explained this by referring to students' consideration that Africa is underdeveloped: "They don't consider themselves African … because they have these views that Africa is underdeveloped to the others and so on…" A perspective that is changed when students are exposed to African

literature, stressed Fatima: "… but when they start reading it, they start to discover new things about it and new perspectives ... their perceptions about Africa will change."

The idea that literary texts are used to exemplify cultural differences and to foster exploration and understanding was also present as the interview with Imane progressed. Imane linked her definition of what counts as literary to its cultural impact. She said: "I see it as an opportunity to enlighten their minds…they will learn a lot about different cultures this supposed…this will widen their horizons." Imane sees the purpose of her teaching literature as a means of broadening understanding and perspectives. She views teaching literature as an opportunity to educate and enlighten students about different cultures, thereby expanding their horizons. It is through engaging with diverse literary texts and the experiences they offer that students can gain insights into unfamiliar cultures and ways of life. This underscores the potential transformative purpose of teaching literature – which is fostering empathy, tolerance and cross-cultural understanding. Imane further insisted that she uses texts to examine these cultural differences to promote understanding. She said: "Yeah, to open up their minds and show…yes…to understand different cultures different opinions, mainly this, I insist on this…"

Here, Imane stressed the significance of encouraging open-mindedness to appreciate the richness and the complexity of different cultures and opinions. This view could be interpreted as promoting inclusivity and empathy by recognising the values of embracing diversity and cultural sensitivity. Moreover, Imane views the purpose of teaching literature as an opportunity to expand experiences and learn from characters to solve their day-to-day problems, she explained:

> "Culture as well … a kind of therapy because escaping their harsh reality through reading expanding their you know because we all have limited experience of life but then they expand. I show them how they are expanding their experiences through reading and it will help them solve some problems because they will be maybe they might be inspired by characters."

While cultural understanding is underscored through what Imane considers as a paramount purpose for teaching literature, she further underlined the therapeutic aspect of cultural exploration, particularly through reading. Students can escape from harsh realities and gain insights that may help them navigate challenges they face in their own lives. It is through this exposure to diverse characters and stories that such reflections can occur, providing students with different perspectives and alternative solutions they may not consider otherwise. This further emphasises the transformative effect of reading cultural texts on broadening students' horizons and offering solace amidst difficult life circumstances. Imane exemplified this by sharing her experience with teaching the novel *Jane Eyre*. For Imane, this novel is an excellent prose to mitigate the stereotypes about Christians and how they might be perceived in a Muslim community. She said:

> "For example, at the beginning, *Jane Eyre* is a love story … it is not only a live story … but it is a love story…I can see how students feel a little bit but then I tell them okay it's about ... so

> there are some passages ... it is a love story and there is no problem with that but then there are other aspects of the novel as well which are interesting." Imane
>
> "So, they do have prejudice against the text?" Interviewer.
>
> "Yeah, they do…" Imane.

Imane noted that students initially approach *Jane Eyre* with preconceived ideas, as being solely a love story, which is resisted. However, Imane emphasised that there is more to the novel than just a mere love story, emphasising other themes and aspects. Indeed, as the reading goes Imane noted that students' views and stereotypes change:

> "I think that the selection of *Jane Eyre*, for example, is quite appropriate for our context. There is the main theme is religion…so they learn about Christianity. They can see how someone like *Jane Eyre* ... I mean Charlotte Bronte, through *Jane Eyre*, criticises the clergy of the religious establishment… kind of they learn that you can be critical about anything there is no … at the beginning they are kind of surprised."

Imane noted that the central theme of the novel, which is religion, provides valuable opportunities for students to learn about Christians and correct their biases. She considers Charlotte Bronte's critique of the clergy and religious establishments, through the character of *Jane Eyre*, to be a resonating example that fosters criticality and questions established norms and beliefs. Imane, then, sees the novel as an opportunity not only to learn about cultural differences and gain a deep understanding of its characters and the representations it offers, but also that it encourages students to challenge and question their societal stereotypes. The purpose of teaching literature, therefore, for Imane, lies in the values that texts offer through their cultural explorations and fostering understanding and correcting one's biases. The text, therefore, is used to broaden tolerance skills.

The participants' quotations explored in this section demonstrate a purpose that resonates with elevating cultural understanding of the self and others. Texts are used as a means to discuss issues that may be perceived differently by students, and through reading and examining segments of texts, such stereotypes are corrected. The following section focuses on exploring another purpose that was evident through the generated data.

6.5 Personal Growth and Criticality

A considerable amount of the generated data also reveals another important theme that was apparent across the interviews, focusing on using literary texts to foster criticality and personal growth. This theme was apparent mainly through the interviews with Fatima, Siraj, Anas, Imane and Meriem. During the interview with Fatima, the idea of using literary texts as a means to develop criticality and to foster different viewpoints through reading African literature was highlighted. Fatima said:

> "Yeah…even the thinking process ... for example, I gave them a quote. I told them that Césaire said it … the idea of the quote is that Africa is what it is today because the Europeans came to Africa … and if the Europeans did not come to Africa. Africa would be something else because before the arrival of the Europeans Africans had such great civilisations and so on ... so I told them do you agree with this idea? They said yes and they start to argue and one student told me it would change because if Europeans did not come to Africa so they would not sell slaves. We will [not] have slave trade meaning that no agricultural in America meaning no materials for industrial revolution meaning even Europeans ... they won't be as developed as they are now yeah ... you see how they …"

Through this quotation, Fatima illustrated a thought-provoking discussion that was memorable to her, which emerged as she presented a quote from Aimé Césaire about the impact of European colonisation on Africa. The quote, Fatima noted, prompts students to engage with complex historical and socio-economic issues by considering the implications of historical events on the present-day world. For example, in regard to this quote, a student argued that Africa today is a by-product of European colonisation. If they (Europeans) did not colonise Africa, it would have been something else because Africans had such a great civilisation before the colonisation. The student argued that if the Europeans did not colonise Africa, they would not have had the chance to enslave people and that it would have been reflected in the slave trade and agriculture in the New World. Therefore, they may not have had the resources to have the Industrial Revolution and possibly the West would have been different from the one we know today. Fatima believes that exposing students to literary texts serves a specific purpose: to cultivate criticality. Through analysing various perspectives and crafting arguments based on their own reasoning and observed evidence, students develop this crucial skill. Moreover, this exercise highlights the potential for personal growth as students engage with challenging concepts and lines of arguments, which expands their perspectives and develops their analytical skills through dialogue and debate.

Similar to Fatima, Siraj, too, believes that the purpose of using literary texts in his classroom is to foster criticality and personal growth. Siraj argued that the text is only used as a medium for critical discussion and reflection. He said: "There is something else which is how are they going to learn the text on a personal level." Siraj suggested that a deeper level of engagement with the text can only occur when students connect with the story on a personal level. This connection fosters criticality and personal growth as readers grapple with the text's themes, characters and messages in relation to their own lived experiences and perspectives. Siraj underscored further this dimension, elaborating:

> "Yeah…like learning from the content rather than the form ... and the author writing the text ... he has a purpose and a message in mind ... what is it? What do you think of it? And by doing that we are encouraging them to think critically…"

While the text offers linguistic avenues that students can learn from its "form", for Siraj, the consideration of authors' purpose, texts' messages and morals prompts students to think critically and encourage deeper reflections, interpretations and analysis. Therefore, the purpose for Siraj is to empower students to develop their critical thinking skills as they question, evaluate and draw their own conclusions from the text. Siraj insisted on this while prompting his students:

> “What do you think of the content, I mean ... do you think is relevant… why do you think the author said this or that ... so they are going not to just read but question what are they reading and that is the thing I focus on … critical mind.”

Moreover, most importantly, Siraj furthered his argument by linking the text to the lived experiences of the students. In doing so, Siraj argued that students can draw many similarities between the texts they study and their lived experiences. Siraj gave an example of last year's students when they were together studying *The Great Gatsby*. After unpacking the themes and the symbols, the discussion moved towards linking the story to students' lives and notions of materialism in the story and whether it is good or bad, which intensified the discussion, Siraj elaborated:

> “For example, with last year we were studying *The Great Gatsby* ... we were studying themes and symbols and other stuff … then I told how can we relate this story to our life ... for example, materialism in the story … is it good or is it bad ... so so on…”

Through this example, Siraj tries to examine the text through discussion and encourages students to link its themes to their lived experiences, which furthers their critical thinking skills and contributes to their personal growth. Siraj emphasised: “Yeah…to get them to speak and express themselves ... this way they learn the language and how to think…how to benefit from other people’s experiences.” Siraj believes that encouraging students to think deeply about the characters’ experiences benefits them in multiple ways. It enhances their language skills and their ability to communicate effectively, while also fostering personal growth by exposing them to diverse perspectives. This interaction, with various viewpoints, cultivates critical thinking and allows students to learn from others' experiences. Siraj sees this active engagement and collaboration as going beyond just learning vocabulary and grammar; it enriches the entire learning experience for his students.

Anas, on the other hand, believes that the purpose of teaching literature is not only to foster criticality and personal growth but also to be democratic in its essence. He explained: “I think literature is there for people and should be democratising kind of in a way.” Anas suggested that teaching literature serves as a tool for empowerment and equality among people. By describing literature as “democratising”, Siraj implied that it ought to break down barriers and empower individuals to voice their views. Anas elaborated: “…and they could have that kind of discourse with the text is empowering for them I think.”

Anas suggested that through engaging in meaningful discourse with the text and the class, students are actively discussing themes, ideas and interpretations. This act is empowering because it instils in them a sense of confidence and agency. The purpose, then, for Anas, in exposing students to opportunities for engagement with literary texts is not only to deepen their understanding of the text but to develop critical thinking skills and the ability to communicate their thoughts clearly to their counterparts, underscoring empowerment and intellectual growth. Such purpose is hopefully achieved through guidance, Anas further explained:

> "…maybe give them help them by giving them the guiding questions to start asking other questions are bigger questions and so I am I do like to have them you know I like to have them read outside of class come in and be able to really discuss."

Anas suggested providing guiding questions to prompt students to generate their own. Such a practice is enforced through encouraging students to read outside the class and facilitate meaningful questions upon their return, which will hopefully lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the literary text. Overall, Anas's purpose is to promote critical thinking and active engagement within the class to foster personal growth of his students.

Similar to Siraj and Anas, Imane argued that the purpose of exposing students to literary texts is to help them solve real-life problems inspired by characters. For Imane, a literary text is not only a repertoire of great linguistic prose, but it also goes even further to help the students in their personal growth. For example, when reading *Jane Eyre*, Imane shared that the students felt awkward reading a love story in class and unpacking the layers of meaning the text can offer in groups. She said:

> "For example, at the beginning *Jane Eyre* is a love story…it is not only a love story…but it is a love story ... I can see how students feel a little bit but then I tell them okay it's about ... so there are some passages ... it is a love story and there is no problem with that but then there are other aspects of the novel is well which are interesting so trying to kind of make thing…"
>
> "So, they do have prejudice against the text?" Interviewer
>
> "Yeah, they do…" Imane.

Imane recognised that many initially view *Jane Eyre* as simply a love story, which often leads students to have a biased perspective. However, she stressed that the novel offers deeper themes and lessons beyond just romance that students can explore and learn from. She, however, noted that her role was to highlight the interesting aspects and the passages in the novel in order to mitigate students' prejudices and foster criticality. She elaborated:

> "… there is the main theme is religion, so they learn about Christianity and they can see how someone like *Jane Eyre*, I mean Charlotte Bronte, through *Jane Eyre* criticises the clergy of the religious establishment, kind of they learn that you can be critical about anything there is no ... at the beginning they are kind of surprised."

Jane Eyre, Imane argued, is entirely appropriate because the central theme is religion (Christianity) and Charlotte Bronte criticises the clergy of the religious establishment, which was portrayed to be very corruptive. If the students can take anything from this reading experience, Imane hopes that it would be the ability to build a critical view towards the taken-for-granted social norms. However, such high expectations are not always fully met. Imane indeed saw some traits of surprise when the students were engaging with the text in class. She explained:

> “I see that they are surprised to learn new things because when I asked them to read a passage, for example, they have a superficial understanding ... generally … because they are first year students ... and the when I troll their attention to some elements they are kind of oh we I haven't seen that how…so this make them interested to know more…”

As first-year students, Imane saw that they mostly read the story to know the plot – a superficial understanding of the story. However, when the unpacking of meaning and other elements of fiction takes place in class, they are much more interested to learn more about the text. Unlike Imane and other teachers, Meriem thinks that the purpose is not only limited to students’ cultivating a sense of understanding of other people’s lives but also to foster criticality and the ability to relate to their contexts. Meriem shared the following example to highlight this claim. She said:

> “Yeah, and Stephen Crane’s Maggie a Girl of Street and I have a young man tell me oh madam, this really looks like my neighbourhood and then it means that my purpose for showing them the literature is relevant to their contexts, their lives, to them and in the present time has been reached, this big objective has been reached. When they see this parallel between a slam in New York City in the beginning of the 19th century and the Algerian context. Haha.”

The example that Meriem shared illustrates the power of resonating with literary texts on a personal level and the ability to critically link the attributes of characters to a contextual environment. The students in Meriem’s example had recognised similarities between their own neighbourhood and the setting depicted in Stephen Crane’s *Maggi: A Girl of the Street*. By drawing parallels between the struggles depicted in the novel and their own lives, the student evidenced a deep level of engagement with the text. For Meriem, the student critically examined the story, drew parallels to his context, interpreted the characters' actions, and related their experiences to his own. This means, for Meriem that her purpose was achieved because the reading experience influenced the students’ ability to critically relate to the text and affected his personal growth by extension. She stressed:

> “The capacity for critical thinking … literature is really about a very subtle interpretation of the text, sometimes what is obvious is not what is important in the text. What is obvious is there, but you have to read between the lines and this capacity for analysis and for critical thinking is built a very, very slowly within students through reading and exposure to literary texts.”

Meriem shared another example that demonstrates the purpose of her teaching, although not directly influenced by classroom engagement, but as an output of introducing students to the reading act and appreciating literary texts. She said:

> “I hope they learn from the experience of the characters. Last year, a student told me that, for example, when he read Crime and Punishment by Dostoevsky. He learned a lot about human nature and the nature of guilt, the nature of a crime without he would have learned by talking to a criminal in real life, but the character was so real so vivid that he considered him as a real person. This is one example, then there is also the identification with a character with a context that might show the students that they can live a different life, and I think this is also the purpose of literature in general and some authors in particular when women write about what women face in their everyday life and how they should fight discrimination, fight for the

> freedom. It is something that really gives girls, even here in Algeria, alternative visions about women, even if they live in a very conservative family that has told them that their value was only in being a 'good girl' between inverted commas that's meaning being silent being obedient being a passive. When they see female characters that are empowered in literature, they see this as a possible path to follow. Same thing for men, I suppose."

Meriem's statement illustrates the transformative power of literature in fostering criticality and personal growth, underscoring her views on the purpose of her teaching. The reading act is assumed to immerse students in the experience of literary characters, leading them to gain insights about complex aspects of human nature and societal issues. For example, reading *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoevsky led a student to deeply contemplate themes of guilt and crime, providing a nuanced understanding of human nature that transcends mere theoretical knowledge, even though the novel is not included in the syllabus. Moreover, it is evident that this reading act led the student to empathise with the characters from different backgrounds and contexts. This exposure to literary texts serves as a challenge to ingrained beliefs and inspires students to question taken for granted social norms, as further seen in the second example shared by Meriem. By reading texts that depict female characters who confront discrimination and advocate for freedom, students are exposed to alternative visions about women, even if they come from conservative settings like Algeria. Reading is empowering. The exposure to such characters, noted Meriem, inspires girls to question traditional gender roles and envision new possibilities for themselves through relating and reflection. Even male readers, said Meriem, can benefit from encountering diverse portrayals of characters. Reading literature is, therefore, an act of empowerment which is reflected in criticality and personal growth.

The participants' quotations explored in this section demonstrate another purpose of using literary texts to foster criticality and personal growth. Teachers use texts as a means to push students to reflect critically about what the text offers, leading them to enhance their thinking skills and this is reflected in their personal growth. The following section will focus on exploring another purpose that was evident through the generated data – exploring language in action.

6.6 Exploration of Language in Action:

A considerable amount of the generated data also reveals another important theme that was apparent across the interviews focusing on using literary texts to foster linguistic competency and explore language in action. This theme was apparent mainly through the interviews with Siraj, Fatima, Aisha, Meriem, Mamoun and Zainab.

During the interview with Siraj, he emphasised various reasons for teaching literature. One key purpose is his expectation that students will benefit from the exceptional language usage found in literary works. Siraj stated:

> “I think there are many purposes for that ... one is the language…because they are foreign to the language, not native speakers. And so, when they are reading a text, they are learning new words new vocabulary ... new phrases ... that help them to improve their language level ...”

Siraj highlighted the multifaceted role of exploring literary texts on language proficiency. By considering that his students are non-native speakers, Siraj observed that one purpose of reading serves as a valuable opportunity to expand their linguistic competence. Through reading, Siraj expects his students to encounter new words, vocabulary and phrases within the text that they may not be familiar with. This encounter serves as a medium to engage with language in action, leading to improvement. The process is deemed to enhance their writing skills. Moreover, Siraj added: *“*Yeah…to get them to speak and express themselves ... this way they learn the language and how to think …”

Siraj suggested that discussions about the language that the text offers can also enhance students’ linguistic competence. By engaging in oral communication, students improve their language proficiency and enhance their ability to articulate thoughts effectively. One of the purposes, therefore, is using the literary text as a medium for language learning, through exploring practical applications of the language. The underlying aim, Siraj argued, is to enhance students' language by being exposed to worthy literary texts that are well-written and constructed and by being able to unpack these readings orally and critically examine the text. “We are reading a text and we come on a phrase or something … I ask what does it mean? And we focus on the phrase … explain it ... how can we use it ... this in on the language level …”

Siraj reflected on his approach, in which he described engaging students by prompting them to analyse specific phrases or elements within the text. By asking questions like “What does it mean?” and encouraging students to elaborate and explore the phrases’ usage, Siraj endeavours to facilitate a deep comprehension of phrase functions within the broader context of language usage.

Unlike Siraj, Fatima sees the body of African literature to incorporate simple language structures, but they are worthy of exploring the language in action. She said: “Not language competency because usually the African literature is very simple in language and clear sometimes, they add proverbs ... African words ... yeah and they relate to African literature.” While Fatima considers that African literary texts often use simple and clear language, incorporating proverbs and native words, this does not diminish the value of exploring the language in action. The use of proverbs and native words adds depth to the text and invites students to examine the particularities of merging native language and English language in one literary work. Exploring the language in action further allows students to appreciate the nuances and complexities of communicating meaning this way, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of African literature.

On the other hand, Aisha argued that her way of incorporating literary texts depends on its “beauty.” She said:

> “Yeah, definitely when I say beautiful text it means, for example, if we read T.S. Eliot, we find ourselves always decoding symbols and that's beautiful to decode the symbols and to the receiver. The word the Latin words and the words from Eastern sometimes Eastern philosophy and Eastern religions as well.”

Aisha sees beauty as the intrinsic linguistic capacity and competence of using symbols and literary devices in a way that when readers are decoding them, they are challenged to bring about meanings. For example, students can decipher Latin words, philosophy, religions and much more. By giving the example of T.S. Eliot and exploring its language in action, Aisha suggested that it leads to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the text. The inclusion of Latin words and terms from Eastern philosophy adds layers of complexity and richness that are worth exploring how language works. Aisha stressed: “... this is it so learning the language is very important and the beautiful language as described by writers.”

The purpose, Aisha emphasised, is learning the language, “beautiful” language in action as it is written by writers. This can only happen through immersing students in the literary work and examining how language works closely. Students, then, are expected to gain a deeper understanding of language nuances, stylistic elements and cultural expressions. Aisha further exemplified this by sharing the following:

> “If we take first-year students into consideration, the first thing I can say is that it's a good way to learn English and they can learn English in the beautiful. I mean in this sense that is how can I say how can I shape I'm [sic] order my word. They learn English, like for example, it was introduced in early modern English like it's good that a first-year student learns that thee is you, for example it was at certain point in history thy is your for example.”

Aisha highlighted the importance of literary texts in language learning through sharing an example of first year students. She suggested that studying early modern English texts can still be beneficial, as it exposes students to historical forms of the language. Students are not just learning the language in action; they are also exploring how it evolves. Aisha emphasised the value of learning archaic pronouns like “thee” and “thy”, which were used in early modern English but have since fallen out of common usage. The purpose, therefore, transcends enriching students’ understanding of English and its usage now to deepen their appreciation for the evolution of language and expressions over time. Examining literary works in such a way further expands students’ interpretations and understanding of how language works. Aisha elaborated:

> “I asked them whether they comprehend a sentence in it in a different way because all of the literary texts about interpretation I forgot to mention this in earlier. For me. a text has many

> interpretations, infinite interpretation and maybe his student will illuminate us in the classroom and say he can see from the text."

Aisha highlighted her inquiry into students' interpretations of sentences within the text. While she acknowledged that literary texts are open to interpretations, she expressed a willingness to explore how language is perceived by the students, suggesting that the exploration of language in action leads students to bring about new dimensions of the text to the classroom discussion. Aisha underscored a dynamic and collaborative nature that accompanies how language works through its receptions and its diverse interpretations and understanding of literary texts.

While the previous teachers concurred that exploring language in action is one of their purposes, teachers like Meriem, Mamoun and Zainab shared that this purpose is achieved implicitly since they are incorporating literary texts as a medium of discussion.
Meriem, for example, shared the following while commenting on the assumed purposes of students before starting a degree in English literature:

> "They don't understand is that they are learning the language, but it's going to take more time because they're not going to learn just general English for everyday life or in other fields of economics or anything, but they are learning the language with the culture with the functioning of the language in linguistics. The potential of this that it may have on their teaching because we have also modules of didactics, applied linguistics, so students don't really realise that."

Meriem shared her frustration about how students think less of English literature as a module. She suggested that language learning extends beyond simply acquiring general English for everyday skills. She emphasised that learners are also absorbing the language while dealing with literary texts and discussing their contexts, culture and linguistic functions. Meriem believes that teaching literature is a holistic approach to language learning, enhancing communication skills and providing insights into the broader aspect of linguistics. She further noted: "They are learning English, and, in the process, there are learning literature as well of a country which is foreign, whose traditions they don't understand…" Meriem highlighted that students experience a dual learning process while studying English literature as a foreign language learner. By immersing students in literary texts of a different language and different culture, they are exposed to an enriching experience of exploring language in action where linguistic skills and cultural understanding are intertwined. Meriem explains this to her students:

> "The most interesting thing is to create parallels for them, to show them that literature is still relevant today, how literature can help them learn the language, understand the people of the country whose language they are learning but also can help you understand themselves, understand their own societies through analysing literary text."

Meriem noticed that students are less encouraged to explore literary texts at first. However, she emphasised that the purpose of exploring language in action is pertinent while dealing with literary

text. By drawing parallels between literary works and contemporary relevance and demonstrating the ongoing relevance of literature, Meriem aims to help students see the benefit of literary studies in language learning. The dual benefit that the text offers of linguistic competency and cultural understanding for the target societies and students can be achieved only through the exploration of literary texts, Meriem stressed. Exploring literary texts, therefore, has several purposes for Meriem: studying the language in action and encouraging students to self-discovery through exposure to cultural accounts. While Meriem contended that there are several purposes for teaching literature, she stressed: “As I said before, the literary text has a number of benefits, first, the acquisition and the Improvement of the language itself.” It is clear, therefore, that one key purpose of exploring literary texts is enhancing learners' language skills. By engaging with the literary works, students are indirectly improving their language skills. Whether through exposure to new vocabulary, grammatical structures, or stylistic techniques, literary texts are used to offer opportunities for exploring the language in action and linguistic growth. Meriem reiterated: “Yeah, so from the purpose, we see that there is an impact on students’ language competence on the students’ understandings.” The impact of such a purpose is seen on students’ linguistic competence, which in turn affects their understanding. The better students develop their linguistic competence, the more their interpretive and understanding skills improve.

Mamoun’s view also closely aligns with Meriem’s. He believes that literary texts are used as a medium of learning English. He explained:

> “Literature is, it is just if you want even if I like teaching it for its sake, but it is very instrumentative [sic] in the Department because basically the students that are here are interested in language, so literature and history are there to give them some additional elements to better use the language.”

Mamoun sees literary texts as an “instrument” in the English department. The purpose of this usage is to enhance language skills in particular. While Mamoun shared that he enjoys teaching literature for its own sake, which is explored in other purposes outlined earlier, he acknowledged its practical value in supporting language education for students whose primary interest is language learning. Literature, along with history and literary theory, is seen as providing an additional context for in-depth language learning, offering students a broader understanding and exploring language in action. Mamoun further elaborated: “Exactly, through dialogues and scenes and themes and the way people talk about things. The literary text offers, if you want, teaches simply the language and grammar and phonetic as a whole and that's my opinion.”

While the nature of literature teaching offers multifaceted avenues of exploration, students, in particular, learn from examining dialogues, scenes and themes insights into language usage, grammar and even phonetics as a cohesive whole. Mamoun underscored the effectiveness of literary texts as tools for language learning, providing rich and immersive experiences alongside linguistic

explorations. This does not diminish attempts towards literary studies, Mamoun further explained: Even though we do try and make some of the basic literary studies, but we are more concerned with the language symbolism and figurative language."

Mamoun suggested that there is a tendency to prioritise the examination of language, symbolism and figurative language over delving into broader literary studies and theories. He implied that he intentionally involves students in detailed textual analysis of literary techniques, aiming for a nuanced understanding and interpretation of texts. Mamoun argued that this is suitable for the students because their intentions are to learn the language: "They are, if you want, they want to know okay and even though it is just one part of the study because they are here for the English language not the story." Mamoun suggested that students are interested in examining literary texts for linguistic purposes, even though they may be curious about other aspects that the text offers. The focus remains on studying the English language rather than delving deeper into the story itself. This does not dimmish the practicality of exploring cultural texts because they offer exemplary usage of the language, elaborated Mamoun:

> "They can adjust when they are in context of English behaviour if you want okay, and also, if you want way of speaking in accordance to the culture, it seemed it works and this is all for the sake of language. What is there better than a literary text?"

Mamoun suggested that students learn ways of speaking and behaving offered by the text, which adds nuances of English usage in different contexts. He implied that this exploration serves the purpose of language learning with the rhetorical question posed at the end – "what is there better than a literary text?" Mamoun suggested that the text offers valuable insights and opportunities for students to immerse themselves in a nuanced cultural and linguistic expressions. These sentiments were further echoed by Zainab who said: "I see the literary text as a treasure for foreign language learners…but take it as an exercise for you to read how much vocabulary you can understand how much how much ideas you can grasp."

Zainab highlighted the value of literary texts for foreign language learners, viewing them as a "treasure" - a valuable resource. She suggested that reading literary works can serve as an opportunity for learners to expand their vocabularies by exploring the language in action and grasp new ideas. By engaging with texts, learners enhance their language skills, while also gaining valuable insights into cultural nuances and literary themes. Zainab further explained: "Yeah, basic knowledge about what is literature? What is figurative language? What are the figures of speech? The study of genre ... what are the main genres in literature? Short stories … novel … poetry … and evolving through time." Zainab believes that the foundation aspect of literary study, such as understanding what constitutes literary language, recognising figurative language and identifying different figures of speech, serves as a core element for language learners to explore the target language in action. She

also acknowledged that learning about main genres like short stories, novels and poetry and how these genres evolved through time, further helps with engaging with and analysing literary language effectively. Such a process is reflected in students' learning of the target language.

The participants' quotations explored in this section demonstrate another purpose of using literary texts to enhance linguistic skills and explore language in action. Teachers use texts as a tool to examine how language works, how it has evolved and how it is used in different literary contexts.

6.7 SUMMARY:

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the multifaceted purposes behind teaching English literature in Algerian higher educational institutions, as evidenced by the perspectives of participants.
The chapter began by examining the tensions between teachers' personal choices of texts and institutional drives, highlighting their efforts to navigate this conflict while involving students in the selection process. This section sets the stage for understanding the dynamics surrounding text selection to meet purposes.

Moving forward, the next section explored the overarching goals of teaching literary texts in Algerian higher educational institutions, as perceived by teachers. It emphasised the importance of using literary texts as a platform for broader contextual discussions and for exploring various literary movements and periods within English literary history. This section laid the foundation for comprehending the pedagogical intentions behind particular text selection.

Furthermore, the next section examined how literary texts serve as tools for fostering cultural understanding among students. Teachers use the texts as a means to explore diverse issues and perspectives embedded within the texts, wherein stereotypes are challenged and corrected, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of self and others.

Another key purpose highlighted in the following section is the role of literary texts in fostering critical thinking and personal growth. Teachers use texts to encourage students to engage critically with the material, thus enhancing their cognitive skills and fostering their personal growth.

Lastly, the last section addressed how teachers view the role of literary texts in language acquisition and exploration. Teachers utilise these texts as a means to enhance linguistic skills and explore the intricacies of language in various literary contexts, thereby deepening students' understanding of language in action.

In summary, this chapter illuminated the diverse and interconnected purposes behind teaching English literature in Algerian higher educational institutions, ranging from linking texts to literary movement and theories, to fostering cultural understanding, critical thinking and personal growth and exploration of language in action with students.

CHAPTER 7: WAYS OF USING LITERARY TEXTS IN ALGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

7.1 INTRODUCTION:

This chapter reports the main findings from the generated data in response to the third research question:

RQ3: How do Algerian University Literature Teachers use Literary Texts Within the Classroom?

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part reports on the interview data in response to the research question by identifying how teachers view their ways of using literary texts in the classroom. It examines three main themes that emerged from coding the data: section 7.2.1 tackles teachers' views of using literary texts to guide structured interpretations. Then, section 7.2.2 discusses teachers' views on close reading of literary texts. Section 7.2.3 reports on the teachers' views of using literary texts to foster evocative readings and critical discussions. The second part of this chapter reports on the data from the observed teaching setting by identifying how teachers use literary texts in the classroom. It examines three main themes that emerged: section 7.3.1 explores how literary texts are used to exemplify literary and theoretical concepts; section 7.3.2 explores how texts are used as a point of reference for critical analysis and interpretations; and section 7.3.3 explores how literary texts are used to integrate interdisciplinary perspectives.

7.2 WAYS OF USING LITERARY TEXTS AS REPORTED IN THE INTERVIEWS

7.2.1 STRUCTURED INTERPRETATION

Much of the data generated through the interviews highlights a theme related to using literary texts to help students generate structured interpretations. Such a process is assumed to happen after students are exposed to knowledge about and awareness of literary language and frameworks of analysis. Therefore, literary texts serve as a tool to facilitate structured interpretations based on literary knowledge they are exposed to in the classroom. This was highlighted in several interviews.

During the interview with Zainab, the *"knowledge about literature"* was highlighted. She elaborated:

> "I [saw it] appropriate for students to first get initiated to literature to what is literature and started to conceive in lectures ..."
>
> "Basic knowledge?" interviewer.
>
> "Yeah, basic knowledge about what is literature? What is figurative language? What are the figures of speech? The study of genre ... what are the main genres in literature? Short stories ... novel ... poetry … and evolving through time ..." Zainab.

Zainab suggested that her way of teaching literature goes through a process of laying down a foundation for students to understand literary language and raising awareness about its specialised effects through structured teaching methods. By initiating students with fundamental concepts, such as what literature entails, figurative language, figures of speech and literary genres, Zainab is providing a solid base of knowledge. Through this method, Zainab ensures that the students are equipped with the necessary tools to navigate and analyse literary texts effectively. This facilitates a systematic way of teaching that progresses from basic concepts to more advanced analysis. Zainab stressed this as: *"*In the sense that not reading the story only for pleasure but rather submitting the analysis to scientific methodological way of dealing with literary texts."

Zainab suggests a methodological approach to teaching literature where she emphasises analysing texts using what she terms as a scientific technique. In the sense that literary texts are treated in a specialised manner where a guided interpretation process takes place, ranging from identifying linguistic literary features to more advanced ways of submitting texts to literary theories and examination through lenses of analysis. Zainab further elaborated on her method:

> "So, ways of dealing with a literary text through different lenses, for example, sometimes initiating some approaches like biographical approach were used to check the kind of information about the writer's date of birth and other information like what he did in his life."

Zainab highlighted the use of different lenses or perspectives to approach literary texts. For instance, she cited the biographical approach where information about the writer's background and life events can allow students to contextualise their analysis. This way, explained Zainab, aligns with the learning objectives to initiate students to deal with literary texts through different reading lenses. Zainab's job, then, is to introduce students to different ways of seeing through the text. These ways, Zainab stressed, are systematic: "I mean a systematic and consistent ways of learning, not just like taking a poem and reading a novel and having this personal touch on reading. To show them that it is institutionalised."

Zainab emphasised that the study of literary texts in university settings follows a structured process. This process, facilitated by the literature module, involves using specific analytical frameworks, or lenses, to interpret texts. By adopting this structured approach, students are guided away from personal interpretations or random methods and are equipped with analytical frameworks to analyse texts effectively. This process of immersing students to have knowledge about and awareness of literary language and frameworks of analysis was echoed in the interview with Bouthaina. Bouthaina believes such a phenomenon could not occur without attaining a certain level of knowledge about literary terms and theories. For example, she expressed during the interview that she wants to make sure students acquire a certain level of knowledge about books and terms before even reading the text. She said: *"*I want them to know … what is a novel? ... what is the feature of the novel ... what is an author ... what is a biographical novel ... what is a semi-biographical novel ..." Such an idea builds

on the basis that students need to have a certain level of knowledge about literary terms and theories with textual examples, to which Bouthaina stated: “I want them to know what an allegory first because they are not familiar with figurative language.” Bouthaina, therefore, suggested that teaching literature goes through a process of prioritising and raising students’ awareness of foundational concepts before reading literary texts. By ensuring students understand fundamental literary terms and devices like “biographical novel” and “allegory”, for example, Bouthaina sets a solid groundwork for a more nuanced understanding of figurative language. This strategy fosters a structured learning process, where students first build up essential knowledge, ultimately leading their reading and analysis of literary texts. For example, Bouthaina shared the following:

> “I need to show them a road map or a way to work … I knew that giving them just a question about myth and allowed them to go and do that research it is going to take them a lot of time to understand and grasp … I knew that understanding grand narratives it will not be very easy for them. These are new concepts to them…But I also knew by giving them example… it will be easy because they will be bringing the examples to the theory plus those examples there are the example are familiar with except that they read those books from a different angle.”

Bouthaina highlighted a strategic approach to teaching, where she emphasised the need for a “road map”, giving students a clear framework or model to guide their interpretation. Bouthaina recognises that if students are left alone to do their research they will be lost in the literature about the subject. Instead, she helps them understand complex concepts like “*grand narrative*” by offering concrete examples, allowing them to connect theory with familiar literary experiences. Bouthaina does that by providing examples of the usage of the terms in the literary text.

Bouthaina gave another example to explain her method of introducing aspects of myth before guiding her students to find textual examples in the novel. When dealing with the concept of myth in *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, Bouthaina stressed that she tries to push students to question its usefulness. She said:

> “So, you were saying about the purpose of teaching myths and the aspects of myths within The Portrait of the Artist as a young man is for them to be prepared for tackling the modernist aspects?” interviewer.
> Yes, modernist aspects and developing a way of analysis. It is a new way to analyse. there is a myth there what is the myth there? What is the purpose of that myth? Why did the author use that?” Bouthaina.

Bouthaina stated that she encourages students to question the author’s uses of myth for them to explore deeper meanings and themes. In so doing, she prompts students to develop analytical views and enhance comprehension of the specific literary text. Indeed, some of Bouthaina’s students seemed to appreciate the structured interpretation approach, acknowledging the difference between reading for pleasure and studying literary texts. B5 said, and B6 agreed: “I used to read a novel for

the sake of reading a novel, but now we read a novel and we have something to accomplish behind the process of just reading the text. “Yes, exactly.” (B6)

Similarly, B3 argued that she would not have had the chance to encounter great literary texts had it not been for the teacher to force her to read. Instead, she described her experience of being choked at first and then appreciated the depth of the text's lived experiences through the story world. She said:

> “On a very personal way, usually I hate to be forced to do anything even if it is about something that I love if you tell me to do it, I don't I just block. But for literature, I have been forced to read some books at first, I was like I felt choked and then it's like I am diving in in them, I was living them, I imagined myself as being one of the characters and at the end of the book I felt like I am saying goodbyes to some of my family members. And this is based on the suggestions that out teachers gave us and I mean best suggestions that we could have, they are the best books that we could ever encounter.”

B3 suggested that studying literature was a transformative journey. At first, she described being coerced to read certain books in a certain way. Yet, over time, she became immersed in the story world and now appreciates the reading experience as it unfolded. B2 further elaborated on the coercion to read with a lens on their eyes:

> “We have some kind of prerequisites and some kind of instructions to follow in order to answer, but this is usually the case. For example, we are studying this specific school of thought and we are building on it; we are analysing literary materials following the characteristic that we have dealt with.”

B2 explained that studying literary texts follows a structured approach, where students are provided with prerequisites and instructions to guide their reading and interpretation process. B2 suggested that the teacher outlines the characteristics of a specific school of thought. Then, students analyse literary texts based on the characteristics covered. Similarly, B6 noted that she would not have read certain books had it not been for teacher guidance. She said: “I enjoy being pushed to read books and discover them, because otherwise voluntarily I won't read voluntary like *Ulysses,* for example, and *Hearts of Darkness* actually I was a bit intimidated.” The guidance not only helps students to read certain books but also paves the way for interesting discussions to take place in class. B6 elaborated:

> “I mean, just the title *Heart of Darkness,* I thought it's going to be like very depressing …,and then I was like reading… it's very like faster like suspense… for me I enjoyed it, surprisingly, so being pushed to read books, it helps to analyse them later and then you will be discovering some very interesting things and then you'll be grateful for that chance, because normally they give you books which are considered to be masterpieces…so I'm very glad I was pushed into this reading experience.”

The appreciation of the reading experience is due to its uniqueness because students are guided to look at texts and interpret them in a certain way. B6 further explained:

> "While reading I start to see the work, for example from a modernist point of view…I changed my whole perspective, now I feel more specialised in a way, I am not now just a normal reader, okay I am reading for a purpose I am entertained as well but at the same time it is for a purpose."

B6 reflected on her engagement with literary texts in the classroom. She described the teaching as specialised, equipping her with certain perspectives such as a modernist lens to investigate the text. This suggests a positive reception of the guided interpretative way of exploring texts through different lenses. B6's newfound sense of purpose while reading demonstrates how guided interpretative methods enhance the learning experience, encouraging readers to go beyond surface reading to more meaningful ways of engagement. Similar ideas also emerged during the focus group discussion with Fatima's students. F1 shared the following:

> "Actually, at first, I was lost, there are so many ideas, so many terms, so he had to know about the writer, the era he was writing in…Because you are reading certain texts for the purpose of analysis and later you will be examined on those texts, what we doing this year in fourth year would be reading and preparing for the 5th year…"

F1 reflected on the initial challenges she encountered when examining literary texts for analytical purposes. She expressed a sense of feeling overwhelmed by the abundance of ideas and terminology around the text that she needs to be aware of before analysing the text. This suggests a guided interpretative method of teaching that encourages students to approach texts with a particular lens, preparing them for exams. F2 further emphasised this: "Well [we] need to follow before analysis otherwise [we] cannot really do that." F2's comment underscores the importance of following a specific approach or method before engaging with textual analysis. Adhering to a structured interpretative process will foster a specialised interpretation of the text. Some students, therefore, seem to appreciate the process of immersion in knowledge about and awareness of literary language followed by an initiation into frameworks of analysis that are used to interpret texts. Indeed, Imane, too, shared a similar sentiment when she tackles her way of teaching literature to her students in her institution. She elaborated:

> "I try to equip them with the necessary tools that will help them interpret and respond to any text actually…because the text is just a pretext…the text we selected are just samples but then they will deal with any texts once they have the necessary equipment…all the techniques, the strategies, figures of speech…elements of fiction."

Imane suggested that she follows a proactive approach to teaching, emphasising the importance of equipping students with knowledge about and awareness of literary language. Imane considers that this knowledge is a prerequisite to interpret and respond to any literary text. Further, Imane hinted that texts are merely a pretext, highlighting the broader goal of interpretation. Imane proposed that for students to understand the underlying meaning of texts, they must become familiar with the strategies

and techniques used in literary language. Overall, the emphasis is on students navigating and deriving meaning from texts through comprehensive knowledge about literary language and framework of analysis. Similarly, Meriem explained that the teaching of literature in her institution is governed by policies that focus on building students' knowledge about and awareness of literary language. It then moves into a more advanced way following frameworks of analysis. She elaborated:

> "In first year at this university, they deal with literary genres - introduction to literature and the difference in genres and then in 2nd year is really the literary movement and the historical evolution of literature…In 3rd year they deal with modernism and aspects of modernism."

Meriem outlined the process of teaching literature in three main stages, each with its own distinct focus. The first stage is geared towards familiarising students with literary language and genres. The second stage introduces students to various literary theories and movements. Finally, the third stage encourages students to analyse texts through specific lenses, such as the modernist perspective. In a practical sense, Meriem gives the students texts beforehand and assumes that they have read them and when in class, they start examining the literary text together. She explained:

> "First, they have to read it for the text in general and then they would have to read about the author to read about the period during which the text was published or sat so they would put themselves in context…Then together in class we would work on the elements that are part of the syllabus that we need to touch… In order to be able to interpret. If we say, for example, that this symbol shows that the author wants to say and that which is easier when you know about the background of the author."

Meriem suggested that her way of teaching literary texts is structured. It begins with students reading the text to grasp its overall content, followed by research into the author and the historical contexts, which are used to examine the literary text. Meriem then guides the in-class session to focus on key elements from the text in relation to the period or movement. The structured approach leads students to focus not only on the text but also on other information surrounding the publication of the text, which furthers their understanding and contextualises es the work's analysis. Meriem emphasised:

> "I try to remind the students that the text, although it can sometimes stand-alone, there are other things as well, it needs to be contextualised yes. The period and the life of the author can have an impact. It is also difficult because they are only starting to grasp the meaning of literature and then the teacher wants them to understand that literary texts can be read from different perspectives or according to different theories."

Meriem highlighted her commitment to guiding students towards a deeper appreciation of literary texts through underscoring the importance of understanding literary texts within their historical and authorial contexts, while also introducing them to concepts of multiple perspectives and theories in literary analysis. In such a structured way of looking at texts, students are encouraged to hold the text to a free play with meanings and use complex theoretical concepts to examine the text, which is used as the reference point.

The quotations explored in this section highlight a tendency of teachers to expose students to knowledge about and awareness of literary language and frameworks of analysis. Following that, students are guided to follow the structured lenses of analysis on the literary text under study. Texts are then a point of reference to generate structured interpretations. The following section explores teachers' views on close reading of literary texts as a way of teaching literature.

7.2.2 CLOSE READING

The interview data also highlight a theme related to using close reading practices to study literary texts. The practice of close reading differs from one teacher to another but remains apparent in the data. Close reading is used to exemplify the knowledge about literary language and aspects of literary movements under study. Literary texts are scrutinised through close reading practices to outline relevant examples.

During the interview with Zainab, she reflected on her experience of teaching a reading comprehension module which has informed her practice of teaching literature. She said:

> "My first two first years at university was teaching the module of reading comprehension later on I realised that just module at the time was very helpful for me because in reading comprehension instruction is well designed in the sense that I sat students to read texts to read through the skimming objectives and others are scanning objective in the scanning objective going beyond the study of vocabulary study of context we dealt with into ideas related to the text itself … and being at that time a magister literature students per se ... It's helped me a lot to delve. I mean maybe deeper as was expected with students at that time … students appreciated that and they were all running after me on how to become a student of literature."

Zainab noted that her experience of teaching the reading comprehension module during her first two years at university provided a structured instruction of close reading practices. By guiding students through skimming and scanning techniques, Zainab noticed that such a practice encouraged students to engage with literary texts on multiple levels, from understanding vocabulary and context, to exploring deeper ideas inherited in the text itself. Indeed, Zainab suggested that literary reading and analysis goes first into a process of linguistic analysis (reading comprehension – vocabulary – sentence structure – modes of writing) and then moves to examining the ideas by unpacking and "delving deeper" within the text to explore the silent *"ideas"* that the text offers. As a literature student and a teacher, Zainab finds that close reading practices deepen understanding of literary texts and underscores her views of seeing such practices in fostering a deep appreciation of literature. Equally, Bouthaina clarified that she employs a comparable approach. Initially, students engage with literary terms, and subsequently, they delve into their application within the text through close readings to generate examples. She said:

> "…like bring you books…bring copies of this novel…open the first page read the first line…does it say? And from that first example ... this morning with the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. And we were discussing what is the reliable and unreliable narrator. They started questioning the reliability of the narrators. Some of them believe that he is truly reliable because he's telling the truth even about the author himself s. Some believe that he is not reliable…"

Bouthaina reflected on a moment in class where she initiated a close reading practice for students to engage directly with the text. By bringing copies of the novel and examining specific lines, Bouthaina prompts students to analyse the text closely. In this instance, Bouthaina initiates a discussion on the terms of a "reliable" and "unreliable narrator." She asks students to closely examine the passage and evaluate the narrator's reliability, pushing students to provide textual examples to support their views on the issue.

In a similar way, Siraj employs close reading practices to prompt students' reflections on selected literary passages. He said:

> "If you want … interdisciplinary method … using many ... not just relying on the language but linking several things ... for example, we are reading a text and we come on a phrase or something … I ask what does it mean? And we focus on the phrase … explain it ... How can we use it ... this in on the language level …"

Siraj suggested that he employs several methods to read a text, with a primary focus on meticulous close reading practice to uncover deeper meanings. Siraj emphasised that close reading practices also rely on drawing on historical elements and cultural references, where students are encouraged to examine specific phrases and explore their implications and meanings. This focus on language itself is a fundamental aspect of close reading practices. Siraj further explained that he leads the close reading by prompting students, such as: "Why is the writer saying this?' "What about the background of that time?" "What do you think about the content?" and 'Why do you think the author said this or that?" These questions reflect a close reading practice where Siraj prompts students to analyse various aspects of the text deeply. The questions not only push students to engage with authorial intentions and contextual factors but also encourage them to critically evaluate literary texts. Siraj argued: "Of course, they have to provide evidence ... from the text itself." Siraj suggested that students learn to use textual evidence to voice their views and interpretations about a particular passage. By referencing specific phrases within the text, students can substantiate their claims and enhance the credibility of their arguments. This practice grounds the interpretation and analysis of the text being studied.

Likewise, Imane employs close reading practices to extract information from the text. For example, she shared the following:

> “So, [I] try to use the text all the time within the classroom [I] read the text and then [I] comment on it whether it is language, characters, styles…depending on the passage the focus is going to be on one aspect ... one of the literary elements ...”

Imane outlined a close reading strategy where she incorporates passages of literary texts into the classroom activities. Imane explained that she reads the text aloud and engages with its various aspects, such as language, characters and style. Depending on the passage being discussed, she shifts the close reading practice to meet a specific literary element. Imane further elaborated that she requires students to be familiar with the text before the class takes place. For example:

> “Ahhm … prepared ... reading the chapter ... so for the second chapter, for example, the focus is going to be on the gothic aspect, so the question was ... What makes this passage Gothic? What are the gothic features? … So [I am] expecting the students to have read about the gothic features and the text and then …”

It seems that Imane anticipates that students have read about gothic aspects and the text itself to prepare for the forthcoming close reading session. In class, Imane prompts students to closely examine the text for relevant features.

In a different way, Fatima reflected on using close reading practices as a phase in learning for students to perform texts. For example, when dealing with African oral literature, Fatima shared the following: “[I]brought four oral stories from the folklore and divided the class into four groups where each group gets a story.” Fatima explained that the students' assignment is to closely read and comprehend the story, and then select classmates to retell it verbally. She aims to emphasise the importance of the readers in the 'close reading' process. She further elaborated:

> “Yeah ... so they are given the text of the story … they read it and then they present it to the other class including me ... I told them they don’t know the story ... you have to tell them the story like the African did earlier … I was ... because each one of them reacted differently to the text ... one of them just one and present and told the story to the others another group divided into sections and another group. For example, they had two characters in that story so they choose three from the group once the narrator and the first character and the second character … it is like a role play.”

Fatima suggested that students work in groups to engage deeply with different stories and understand their nuances and themes. Then, students are encouraged to convey it to the class in their own way, just as the African storytellers did earlier. Each group, following their close reading, decides on the way of retelling the story, where they dedicate one per group to retell the story and the others take roles playing each character. This practice underscores a different way of using close reading practices as a prerequisite to performing stories in class.

The quotations explored in this section highlight a tendency of teachers to expose students to close reading practices while examining literary texts. The close reading practices vary in their methods of application, from using it as a medium to generate examples, to fostering understanding and

unpacking silent meanings in the text. Students are encouraged to draw on textual evidence to voice their views. The following section explores another method of using literary texts, which focuses on fostering critical discussion through evocative readings.

7.2.3 Evocative Reading and Critical Discussions

While the previous sections outlined teachers' tendencies to foster structured interpretation and various applications to close reading practices, this section draws on interview data to highlight another theme related to teachers' ways of using literary texts in their classrooms - a practice of immersing students into evocative readings and initiating critical discussions. This theme was apparent throughout the teacher interviews, with some interesting views from the students.

During the interview with Anas, Anas highlighted a high expectation of getting into: "The deeper meanings or more controversial aspects." He elaborated:

> "I like to I like to my classrooms to be pretty dynamic I prefer that I prefer that I prefer teaching to be more of a conversation then a more of a lecture yes more of a direct instruction yes exactly I'm not I've always been little weary of Sage on the stage kind of attitude I know there are some of the brilliant professors I could listen to for a long time and that's great but in the high school age that age where you like it's more important to foster inquiry and get them in the process of investigating and exploring things themselves and not so much telling them about what I've explored in…"

Anas suggested that getting into deeper meanings and controversial aspects of the text can only be achieved through working with students. Anas prefers to host a dynamic classroom environment characterised by conversations rather than stepping into the "*sage of the stage*" model of lecturing, which he deems to be more suited to high school teaching than university level. Anas's way of promoting critical discussion and evocative reading of literary texts serves his intentions of getting into deeper meanings and controversial aspects of the text. Anas further expanded:

> "Sometimes it is just a lot of group discussion small group discussion, maybe I try to do kind of more ancillary materials like bring in other articles written on the topic or kind of to supplement the topic or even articles written about the booking sell for critical any kind of like critical essays or about the book so they can see that it has kind of they can see what kind of affected it may be as had on scholars or things like that…"

Anas suggested that most of his teaching relies on initiating group discussions. He underscores the use of supplementary materials to the literary text being studied, such as critical essays and scholarly articles. By providing students with additional context and perspectives, Anas aims to encourage a deep understanding of the literary text's impact and relevance within academic discourse. This takes the practice of critical discussion to another level of relating the text to scholarly work receptions and interpretations.

In a similar way, Bouthaina reflected on having discussions about novels in a debate format. She claimed to say to her students often: "… see you have this debate and this is discussion and this disagreement from just the first paragraph of the book. Imagine if you read the whole book." Bouthaina highlighted holding an intense and deep debate on a particular aspect about an opening paragraph in a novel. She underscored the potentiality of fostering diverse perspectives as a result of a single evocative reading, suggesting that the richness of perspectives and contentious issues outlined in the opening paragraph will likely be further expanded upon throughout the text. She further elaborated on her way of holding these critical discussions and evocative readings:

> "I transformed my class into a reading session of a group. I structured them into groups of four and each one will discuss the story. I printed the story, divided the story and told them you are going to read the story now in the class and tell me ... and then discussing naturalism within the story. They started first discussing the story ... the story is about … this guy is crazy madam. He is completely mad ... he wants to kill the dog and put his fingers in the dog ... and I was like yeah ... what is that? That is the survival of the fittest. Good, and who said that? Oh my God, I understand now! I love that sentence when they say I understand now."

Bouthaina described a classroom activity where she transforms the class into a reading session with smaller groups. Each group is tasked to discuss a part of the story, as she divides its printed copies among the groups. Bouthaina then guides the discussion towards features of naturalism within the story. As students share their views, they start to realise how textual evidence is used to support a particular viewpoint, which Bouthaina highlighted. These critical discussions around the evocative reading of a text illustrate an engaging and interactive way of teaching to explore literary concepts within Bouthaina's classroom. Evocative readings and critical discussions are encouraged by Bouthaina because she stressed: "Students will be having their own theories to apply in those novels, they will be having their own analyses and they will be having their own reading ..." Students, therefore, are led to develop their own ways of seeing literary texts and provide evidence for their interpretations through critical discussions.

In a similar way, Mamoun reflected on initiating literary discussion on students' evocative readings. He said:

> "Generally, I want to have my students prepare if you want before coming to class… I would love to have light open discussions and debate about the novel their reading … I was expecting that is to come prepared and to share in the discussion and the debate, that they read and they know the text not just waiting for me to talk about text, to interact with me, to give their opinions, to stop me and contribute, to ask questions…what I want is from them in the classroom to know the story and in the plot line and perhaps the meanings and this symbolism we do it together in class, through discussions to improve and explore the understandings of the text. Sometimes the historical and cultural background of the text are absent, so we deal with that in the class, they very often misread some parts of the text and here often the background helps in the classroom to give them these…"

Mamoun outlined his expectations for an exemplary session, wherein students come prepared to the class by reading the novel and *around* the novel to initiate class discussions and debate about the text. Mamoun stressed the importance of active participation. He encourages students to share their opinion, ask questions and contribute to the discussion. While the plotline and the surface meaning of the text are expected to be understood prior to the class, Mamoun aims to guide these critical discussions to examine elements like symbolism, historical context and cultural connotations to foster a deep understanding of the literary text under study. However, such expectations are not always met, Mamoun further explained: “Apart from all that you just have, like as I said, 4 or 5 that they are really debating. This discussion enriches the classroom okay and that's what I was looking for.”

Mamoun reflected on the challenge of fostering critical discussions, especially when students have not read the novel. This is reflected in the limited engagement of students, with only a small number participating in the discussion. However, he noticed that: “Even though the rest don't participate you feel that they are really attentive and really following what [we] are saying.” Mamoun suggested that despite some students showing less verbal engagement, they still appear attentive and engaged, indicating that they are closely following the critical discussion. This suggests that even silent observation can still be engaging in the session.

While teachers generally applaud the idea of initiating critical discussions as a method for engaging with literary texts. However, students had varying perspectives on the matter. During a focus group discussion with Anas’s students, there was a clear distinction between reading and studying literature. A2 argued that while reading literary texts is mostly for fun and enjoyment, studying literary texts at the institute is challenging. She said: *“*We are not encouraged, we are coerced.” *[students laugh unanimously]*

A2 suggested that studying literary texts at university is challenging because of the way engagement with the text is controlled to read specific texts in specific ways. She further elaborated: “There is this like high expectations of analysing and engaging with the work.”

A2 stressed that teachers often have anticipation for a thorough analysis and active engagement, which she finds very challenging due to the type of texts they deal with. She explained:

> “…Maybe if the choice was a bit more suitable it would have been a bit better experience…I mean if you would like to encourage your students to be engaging with the text, I mean you would be more willing to choose something they are they feel like they're connected to you know.”

A2 claimed that the literary texts they deal with are often archaic and difficult to engage with, leaving them with a bitter experience. Furthermore, A3 stressed the following: “Actually, we most of the time disagree with the interpretation provided for us.”

A3 reflected on a common occurrence of disagreement when critically discussing literary texts and the interpretations provided by the teacher. This reflects an attitude of leading the discussion to a particular interpretation that is favoured by the teacher. A6 further stressed this idea, sharing:

> "I just interpreted the way I like it and most of the time we get different interpretation and we are in disagreement with the teacher. Because you see they considered odd or weird interpretations …yes, the teacher mentioned that if you want to put in interpretation, you need to we put it into a background like social background cultural background."

A6 reflected on how they interpret texts and discuss them in class, often finding their views differ from their teacher's. This shows that while critical discussion happens, the teacher's guided interpretative method restricts their responses, making the experience feel constrained. The student feels frustrated by being seen as unusual or eccentric when sharing their interpretations. Additionally, the teacher's emphasis on considering social, cultural and other backgrounds when interpreting texts contradicts A6's personal interpretative approach and expectations, revealing the difficulty of navigating diverse perspectives in literary response. This idea was further reinforced by A5 who shared the following:

> "You know what actually we were told not to pay attention to certain interpretation because we would understand that not all interpretation would be accepted so you had to follow certain way, at the end of the day you find yourself trying to follow the guiding lines because it might be considered a taboo to have a different interpretation and we are specifically told not to put something different."

A5 shared her concerns about the limitation on discussions and interpretations, where certain viewpoints are discouraged and deemed not worthy. A5 suggested feeling pressured to conform to particular guidelines, even if they personally disagree or have alternative insights. This highlights the challenge of leading critical discussions and analysing literary texts following a particular perspective, which may contribute to restricting students' intellectual exploration and divergent perspectives.

The quotations explored in this section highlight a tendency of teachers to immerse students in evocative readings and initiating critical discussions. These critical discussions are led to encourage students' reflections on the literary text being studied and get into deeper meanings and controversial aspects of the text. However, leading these discussions is sometimes challenging for teachers when students have not prepared for the class and have not read the literary text. Moreover, some students find it challenging to follow through with discussions when there is a guideline that they need to follow, allowing for some opinions to be voiced and others repressed. The following section explores the ways of teaching literature as reported from the observations.

7.3 Ways of Using Literary Texts as Reported from the Observations

This second part of the chapter reports on the data from the observed teaching setting in response to the third research question by identifying how teachers *use* literary texts in the classroom. This part of the chapter reports on the data by presenting examples from the lessons as observed/recorded in the teaching setting, providing evidence throughout. It examines three main themes that emerged, namely: section 7.3.1 explores how literary texts are used to exemplify literary and theoretical concepts; section 7.3.2 explores how literary texts are used as a point of reference for critical analysis and interpretations; and section 7.3.3 explores how literary texts are used to integrate interdisciplinary perspectives.

7.3.1 Exploration of Literary Concepts and Literary Theories

Several segments from the observational data showcase that teachers use literary texts as a vehicle to explore abstracts concepts such as *context*, *modernism*, and other literary devices, such as *metaphor*, *personifications*, and others. Teachers, by sharing segments of literary texts, encourage students to examine these concepts. This can be seen through the following instances from the observed lessons.

In Siraj's observation, students were assigned to read a paragraph from the *Self-Reliance* essay of the American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson. Having waited for a while, Siraj then re-read the paragraph, sentence per sentence, while at the same time initiating questions around terms like *foolish consistency* and *hobgoblins,* which he then explained in the *context* of the sentence and how they are related to little-minded people. The idea that even lay people may fall into this trap of not being flexible enough to learn and change their ideas is linked to these terms. Siraj often links the terms and what they mean to the contextual situations in which the text is produced. Literary text, in this instance, is read and explained in relation to what the terms means from a contextual point of view and not from a lateral meaning point of view.

In Rihab's observation, the students were led to a more in-depth abstract discussion of the term *context*. Rihab initiated a discussion on the term *context*, claiming that it could be seen from a reception theory lens. In literature, Rihab mentioned that *context* can be born in an instance of a stream of consciousness. She further explained that such a *context* is generated and does not inherently exist in the character's thinking process. The students commented on the term with R1 relating *context* to flashbacks. She explained that if a narrator is tackling an issue and then moves on to narrate something else using quotes, the change of pace creates a new context. Similarly, R2 mentioned that the framework of a story within a story (frame narrative) also creates new contexts. For example, in the story of Shahrazad's famous *One Thousand and One Nights*, the narrator is at

the same time the protagonist, leading the readers to have different points of view that bring about different *contexts.*

Following this, Rihab led the discussion by providing textual evidence. Rihab shared a scene from *Hamlet* when he proceeds the coming of Fortinbras from a distance to regain a piece of land, looking at him with admiration and envy and trying to build himself as a foil to his own and to ridicule his constant hesitation. Rihab read what he said:

> “Witness this army of such mass and charge Led by a delicate and tender prince,
> Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd
> Makes mouths at the invisible event,”

Rihab continued explaining how the description of regaining the piece of land constitutes a large amount of *hyperbole,* which affects the reader, making *us* see and feel like Hamlet is exaggerating in his reflection to give legitimacy to his actions. This setting, argued Rihab, makes us feel comfortable when Hamlet announces:

> “O, from this time forth,
> My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!”

Hamlet’s decision is then grounded in such context. Similarly, Hamlet’s earlier description of the afterlife as an undiscovered country also serves as context building, added Rihab, because the idea of undiscovered countries was familiar to readers as it is the purpose of many nations at that time. The context building is not haphazardly foregrounded but serves to project the context of the afterlife within the context of *Terra nullius* – virgin land. Such projections, Rihab argued, serve to decontextualise the present context and enrich it with further layers. This depends on the readers' knowledge of literary implications, intertextuality and competence to understand these new contexts.

Literary texts are also used to explore the usage of other literary devices. For instance, in Fatima’s observation, the students studied the poem *Africa* by David Piop. Having read the poem aloud a couple of times by volunteering students, Fatima suggested that the students comment on literary devices such as personifications and metaphors. Fatima wrote an example on the board and asked the students to follow her lead to find other literary devices. The first example was *anadiplosis*. Writing the term on the board, Fatima explained that it referred to the repetition of the last expression of a sentence at the beginning of the following one. She then asked the students to find examples in the poem. F1 pointed out the lines beginning from number 9:

> “The sweat of your work,”
> “The work of your slavery,”
> “The slavery of your children,”

Fatima then asked students to extract other literary devices that they could find in the poem. F2 mentioned personification, exemplified in the poem, is *"*beautiful black blood*."* In the same way, other students shared other examples from the poem, such as: *"*Is this your back that is bent*."* It was clear to Fatima that the students were aware of these two literary devices. She suggested that they find other literary devices. F3 advised that there was also an *exaggeration* in "beautiful black blood", as we usually have red blood, and the term black denotes the blackness of the skin. In the same sentence, F4 noted that it can also act as an *alliteration* due to the repetition of the first consonants in succession. Fatima also kept writing the students' suggestions on the board with their examples for reference.

While literary texts are used to exemplify literary devices, there are also instances in the observations where texts are used to exemplify aspects of literary theories and movements. For instance, in Meriem's observation, the students covered realism as a movement, explaining its main aspects, referring to the writing of Mark Twain as exemplifying its developments. Meriem stated that the sessions focus on surveying the movement's characteristics through students' research and examples from literary texts. Meriem explained that the text selected for this task is usually Charles Dickens, but for this activity, she distributed a copy of *The Return of a Private* by Hamlin Garland. The students read the short story and the activity in class and had to unpack their readings and link them to the realist features discussed in class.

Meriem asked for a volunteer to summarise the short story before reading it together. M1 then shared that the story was about a private named Smith and his companion who fought in the Civil War and is going back home. Meriem followed while the students engaged in discussing the story as they were following its prose on paper copies. The story follows Private Smith's journey back home and depicts scenes and emotions he encounters, said M1. M2 added that those veterans show their feelings of missing their homes and are not sure about their future. There is also a detailed depiction of Smith meeting his wife Emma, as she initially could not recognise him, suggesting M3. Meriem then recapitulated the information shared by the students and added that the central theme is soldiers returning home to their agrarian life. Life in Wisconsin is a recurrent theme for Hamlin Garland, who usually focuses on life's difficulties. In this story, Meriem argued that Hamlin does not depict the horrors of wars for a solid reason: the difficulty of everyday life for veterans returning home. The first scene depicts the veterans returning in the middle of the night and sleeping on a bench because they could not afford a hotel room. They are also in a very terrible condition physically and mentally. Private Smith, for example, is injured, feverish, thin and partly deaf. Even though the war is over, the soldiers find it difficult to maintain a normal day-to-day agrarian living. While Meriem was leading the discussion and the students were following through the text, she then concluded that the event depicted in the text exemplified the realist features: "This is an excellent example of a realist literary text where it has been described in a very detailed way."

In the last activity, Meriem asked the students to re-read the first segments from the short story and list some characteristics of realism they could identify. The students took some time to go through the story again and share their findings. M4 noted that the detailed character description from the beginning of the short story with specific adjectives informs readers about their physical and mental state, which is a characteristic of realist work. M2 added that the characters' description gives the feeling of uncertainty they are experiencing and that they are mentally exhausted. Meriem agreed and commented with excerpts from the texts, which indeed showed the mixed feelings between the excitement of the return as a sense of hope and the bewilderment they were paradoxically feeling. Such a depiction of a complex mixture of feelings is common in realistic writings because the human experience is indeed complex. This short story can be seen as an example of realist work where the writer focuses on a *detailed depiction* of a setting and characters who face the reality of the war and go back home without being awarded as heroes, nor are they welcomed as such, concluded Meriem; they only face the harsh situation of day-to-day living.

These segments from the observational data demonstrate how literary texts are used for exploring abstract concepts such as *context* and literary devices such as *metaphor*, *personification*, and aspects of literary movements within the classroom. Through close examination of expectations of textual evidence and discussion, students, through this practice, develop the ability to recognise these concepts and their application in literary language. The following section elaborates on other instances from the observational data where literary texts are used as a point of reference for critical analysis and interpretations.

7.3.2 Critical Analysis and Interpretation

Several segments from the observational data showcase that teachers use literary texts as a vehicle to encourage students to critically analyse and examine themes and characters. Teachers, by sharing segments of literary texts, prompt students to engage in critical discussions and interpretations of texts. This can be seen through the instances below.

In Mamoun’s observation, he engaged the students in a discussion about the portrayal of character Mr Norton in the novel *Invisible Man* by Ralph Elision and how Mr Norton represents a typical white man. The students shared their views about the character, with K1 highlighting that she understood that Mr Norton was more afraid than anything else. To which Mamoun highlighted the need to analyse Mr Norton's character and his role within the novel through linking him to other characters, namely brother Jack, Thomas Jefferson and even Ralph Waldo Emerson. Further, Mamoun elaborated that as readers, we learn at the end of the story and through the meeting of the three white characters that they symbolise what we could term as a philanthropist- Mr Norton belongs to this category of white

people who at the time of slavery spent time in prison. According to the narrator, it was to help black people. Still, indeed, they are not interested in the condition of the black community but a personal, ideological or any other interest. For example, when Mr Norton is one of the donators of the college, a white man who gives money to a black college wants to see the fruits of his deeds solely to explore how black people live. Mamoun argued such an act reflects the mentality of slaveholders, to see how these poor inferior blacks live from their money and show superiority to justify their privileges.

In another segment of the observation, Mamoun led the session to explore themes within the novel, referring to textual evidence, while the students took notes and commented or asked questions. For Mamoun, the novel has two major themes: race and identity. While other minor themes can also be identified, such as history and memory, it could be argued that they are all related to the major ones – race and identity. Textual evidence for this can be elicited from the title of the novel, claimed Mamoun, where the character has no name and no identity. Race and identity are also linked to invisibility because the narrator sees himself as different and does not belong. Such a problem stems from his colour and the racism accompanying his profile. The blackness tragedy for Mamoun could be elicited from the novel's beginning when we read, “what did I do – to be so black – and blue?” We understand, Mamoun said, referring to readers, the tragedy of the narrator and the meaning of the namelessness that reflects the problem of the narrator and the whole community that they are not identified as people and are nameless.

While the students seemed to agree with the analysis offered by Mamoun, in another instance they had different critical views about other theme. For example, Mamoun examined the theme memory within the novel, claiming that it could be regraded from the author's apparent uneasiness towards enslaved people when dealing with generational gaps. It is as if the new generation is approaching the fact that they are still considered enslaved people. Moreover, the memory passed through the generation makes them ashamed of such a legacy, Mamoun stressed. At this point, K2 challenged Mamoun’s argument by bringing forth the idea that was apparent to her during her reading of the prologue, where the writer, K2, provided a recollection of an incident that happened to him where he was cursed by someone telling him to apologise, but it was futile. This incident, continued K2, led to a fight that almost led to a tragedy. The same incident was reported in the news. It was portrayed by the writer as a black robber man, which is not the case, as we have learned. K2 wanted to stress the portrayal of the stereotypical image of a black man being a robber. Mamoun agreed with K2’s analysis and stressed that it shows the image embedded in the society of black men being violent. Mamoun mentioned that the black community suffered from victimisation and alienation in an American supremacist society.

K3 contributed to the discussion, highlighting that this memory, this image, this stereotypical portrayal, read in the prologue, explains the state of America in the fifties. The rest of the novel only expands on

these themes with examples of how things were in the fifties, stressed K4. Mamoun agreed that the novel follows the historical steps through the narrator's life, where we, as readers, could probably understand why the situation was as it was and through the narrative, we will see how he chooses to be alienated and how such alienation was also imposed on him. Mamoun stressed that the narrator became invisible to the white supremacist society and oddly enough, comfort and the passage of time were coming from such isolation, which helped the narrator to decide what to do with his life. K3 jokingly commented that: "Being invisible is somehow a privilege because when you are not there, you won't be accountable for anything." Mamoun replied that truly the narrator mentioned at the end that he enjoys the fact that no one seems to recognise him and he could do whatever he liked. This segment highlights the critical discussion and interpretation of themes as perceived by Mamoun and the students as it continued during the observation. This fostered a lively discussion where the students shared diverse perspectives on themes and societal expectations reflected in the text.

Similarly, Rihab encouraged the students to participate in critical discussions about the use of metaphor or perhaps irony and other figures of speech in literary works to generate new context. R3 gave an example based on her reading of Franz Kafka's *The Trial*. For her, the work can be seen as a prediction of the holocaust, as the main character wakes up to find himself under arrest. The novel, according to R3, is a metaphor predicting the case of the Jewish minority during the Second World War, where they are all prosecuted, not knowing why. Rihab valued the student for the excellent example and elaborated that a kind of projection advances the context forward. Rihab then put forward the following scenario: sometimes, we, as readers, struggle with the title of a work or an epigraph and struggle to see the relationship to the work, especially when the title of the epigraph has a reflective drive to it: "Isn't that also an instance where a new context is generated in writing?" asked Rihab.

R4 reflected that *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* by T.S. Eliot gives her the impression that it is a song about love emerging between two people, but in fact, it speaks about the lack of it and the insecurity that such actions bring about. R5 followed up with the instance when the character misunderstood the song's lyrics and, in the end, we [readers] understand why he misunderstood it because, for R5, his wants prevented him from becoming an adult. This shift of perspective gave birth to differing contexts. Rihab then claimed that any literature decontextualising the work itself can be a good example. This claim gives students another boost to share their thoughts. R6 stated that the work of G.R.R Martin, *A Song of Ice and Fire,* talks about mythical creatures and stories about kings and queens' quest for domination, control and power and has nothing to do with a song. The title itself is a metaphor that brings the reader layers of possibilities that change while reading. Similarly, R7 argued that the novel *Invisible Man* gives the impression that it is about being invisible when it is a metaphor about identity being invisible and how people ignore the existence of a person according to his colour.

While Rihab was leading these critical discussions and interpretations in relation to the term context, the students kept sharing examples from their readings to showcase how context shifts based on the title itself in certain novels. For example, R8 claimed that *Breakfast of Champions* by Kurt Vonnegut tackles a man mistakenly considering everybody as a machine where he is the only human being left, reflecting a capitalist action where the title has no relation to the novel at all. Rihab hesitantly said it can be the case and elaborated that there exist certain instances where metaphors decontextualise the context itself and other cases where other figures of speech, such as irony, hyperbole and statements, decontextualise contexts.

These segments from the observational data highlight how literary texts serve as catalysts for critical discussions and interpretations within the classroom. By encouraging students to share their interpretations, engage in debates and consider alternative perspectives, teachers create dynamic learning environments where literary texts are foundational for critical thinking to flourish. The following section elaborates on using literary texts as a vehicle to integrate interdisciplinary perspectives in interpretation.

7.3.3 Integration of Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Several segments from the observational data showcase that teachers use literary texts as platforms for integrating interdisciplinary perspectives in interpretation. Teachers prompt students to explore connections between literature and other fields, such as history, psychology and cultural studies. This multidisciplinary approach enriches students' understanding of the texts and their broader implications.

Anas encourages students to brainstorm key events and topics that constitute *Heart of Darkness's* context of publication and the happenings in Congo, such as the Birling conference of 1884, the kingdom of Congo and Congo as a free state. This activity aims to lay ground on what was happening *when* the story was written. Anas proceeded to write the topics on the board while encouraging volunteering students to share their thoughts about these topics and provide information about the historical context. The purpose of this activity is to help students see that *Heart of Darkness* can serve as an example of how we can use literary criticism to approach the text. The information shared by students about the context and the history can serve as a foundation to approach the text.

Anas proceeded to outline several ways to approach the work: a social point of view, starting from the context and biography; a modernist point of view, investigating the work by considering the modernist features in the text, such as the ambiguity and the symbolic representation and the phycological exploration of characters, making it more modern than what was familiar at that time. Another

approach Anas suggested is working on this novel can stem from the body of works that Joseph Conrad has produced, as evidenced by his writing about people of little power creating dominant power in a different place. Anas continued explaining other ways to investigate the text, such as comparing the work to Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, which critics consider a response to this work. Such an approach could also be appropriate to have a critical analysis for this work.

In another segment of the observation, by way of example, Anas suggested that they can investigate the work from a social viewpoint of analysis. Anas elaborated that such an approach began with a French critic believing that works of literature are a product of time, a place, a culture and an individual who can affect and change the world into which such works are introduced. In this social view, as Hippolyte Taine suggests, we can rely on three factors to determine the work character: race, view and moment. A2 could not understand how race could be a factor in ascertaining the *character* of a work of art. To answer this, Anas played a song from his phone and enquired about the type of this music, to which A4 stated that it could be of African origin. Anas then stated that we could agree that it is not Russian, for example, and that it is not Irish. The song is from the reggae genre. This example fed into ascertaining the race of a work of art. Another example Anas used was playing another jazz song, which the students identify as such, which was American. The underlying principle of this exercise was to make students aware of the possibility of identifying any type of art based on a particular agreed characteristic related to it. This is how the *race* factor is used for analysis. Such an underlying perspective can help readers ascertain the *race* of a work of art such as *Heart of Darkness*. The second factor is *"*view", continued Anas - the artist's environment. This factor, Anas explained, can encompass the writer's experience and cover aspects of the writer's background, such as education, travel, marital status and relationships. Anas stressed that the *"*view*"* factor includes the forces that create the unique experience of the human being. By way of example, Anas elaborated that Conrad, being Polish and having a father who speaks English and worked on translating Shakespeare made him British and affects some aspects of his writings. The last point by which a social viewpoint of analysis is carried out, Anas expanded, is the *"*moment" which could relate to the slightest personal things concerning the artist, but what is common in the artistic world when the writing of the novel was carried out. In the example of Conrad, it could be the other artists experimenting with modernist styles and structures influencing the production of artists.

While Anas was explaining the social viewpoint of analysis, by drawing on its main concepts, students were then invited to think of the work through this framework of analysis. Anas asked the students to refer to textual evidence from the novel, such as the instance where cannibals are portrayed, and discuss how the relationship between them and the main character progresses. The idea of constraints emerged in the discussion by A3, and how i is that the Europeans initially thought that these men could easily kill them, but instead, they grew to know them. The idea that these men were

not as barbaric as they may seem was offered by A1 when referencing another event in the story. A4 reinforced this idea by arguing that throughout this book, it is established that:

> "Africa is a world of savages and that [your] basic instincts are awake again.' However, [you] find these cannibal men resisting their instincts, whereas [we] find the white colonialists cannot."

The text suggests, A4 continued, that it is not just Africa's influence, but it relates to how people are. This discussion-based activity, facilitated by Anas, expanded on how Kurtz represents the European male instinct to dominate, where his instincts lead him to become no better than the barbaric, as he described them, whereas even they can constrain themselves. This interesting perspective pushed A5 to quote Nietzsche's:

> "When you gaze long into the abyss, the abyss gazes also into you" – that is, explained A5, "[you] cannot have much control over [yourself] when [you] put yourself in a particular environment because [you] become influenced by the abyss."

This is indeed what happened to Kurtz', commented A6. Anas led the discussion back to track inductively, referring to the writer and how he emphasises at the beginning that the truth of the story is *"*haze abound the kernel.*"* He asked the students to remember the special event when the main character gets closer to Kurtz as the ship is surrounded by fog and the confusion accompanying it. Following this, Anas read an excepts about "hunger and how they deal with it: to the class:

> "It takes a man all his inborn strength to fight hunger properly. It's really easier to face bereavement, dishonour and the perdition of one's soul--than this kind of prolonged hunger. Sad, but true. And these chaps too had no earthly reason for any kind of scruple. Restraint! I would just as soon have expected restraint from a hyena prowling amongst the corpses of a battlefield." – *Heart of Darkness*

Anas commented on the excerpts, claiming that this is one of the *moments* where the main character dehumanises people and complements the crew as they show restraint. However, he was saying that they are just a bit higher than a wild hyena on a battlefield. Then, A3 suggested that: "If we [readers] approach the saying literally, we could argue that hyenas show no self-restraint around their bodies, so [I] think he is not giving them credit."

A2 observed that the comparison to a wild animal means that the Europeans did not think much of them. The idea that both students agreed on, which fits with the social viewpoint of analysis stemming from the writers' *race* is that Europeans write an account about Africans and compare them to animals. This reflects an example of how the "theoretical view", that Anas explained earlier, is used to critically discuss and interpret the work.

Similar to drawing on other fields of inquiry to interpret literary texts, in Fatima's observation, she initiated a discussion about the last verse of the poem under study "the bitter taste of liberty." F3 drew on psychology and argued that liberty is an ongoing struggle that a person may not fully attain, which is why we can say it has a bitter taste. F2, drawing on historical events, suggested that Africa today is somewhat free from their historical colonial powers; however, the bitterns of the post-colonial reality still exist – we can then consider that the liberty of Africa has a bitter taste. Correspondingly, F4 drew on history and mentioned that we still suffer from colonial history, hence bitter liberty. The student's oral responses seem to link other fields of inquiry to interpret the verse. While students scrutinised the text for examples, they were too engaged in the experience of reading and its evocative nature while also drawing on contextual and historical events. Fatima then commented that it could be seen in different ways, such as if we investigate the former slaves and how they acquired their liberty, they still struggled to be accepted as equals (she was referring to the black community in America). From this we can see that the liberty is bitter. The meaning of these lines could be attributed not only to contextual information about the text but also to the readers' experiences through reading and linking it to other fields of inquiry. This instance, too, highlights how interdisciplinary perspectives are used to interpret literary texts.

In Bouthaina's observation, there are also instances where students are encouraged to draw on other fields of studies to interpret and make sense of literary texts, for instance: Greek Mythology. Bouthaina started the session by reminding the students of the last discussion on *the Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and how they agree it could be considered a modernist work. The main feature used for such classification is based on the novel's usage of *mythical allusion/mythical structure.* The students then took turns explaining both terms based on their research while also sharing their thoughts. B1's argument follows the naming of the characters and how they are based on mythical references, the protagonist of the story, Stephen Dedalus, argued B1, is based on the Greek mythology figure Daedalus. Having outlined his story in Greek Mythology, B1 tried to explore how this is linked to Stephen Dedalus's *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Bouthaina proceeded to question the morals of Icarus's mythical story and its relationship to the story of the *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: "Why the author chooses this myth as a reference? What is his purpose?" B2 commented: a new representation of the myth*."* B3 added: "Because they are similar stories."

B4 suggested the presence of similarities between the two stories, describing how the characters share the same incentive: Dedalus, as Icarus, presents a conflict between desire and ambition. B6 commented that readers need to be aware of the story of Icarus should they wish to read and appreciate *A Portrait of Artist as a Young Man.* This instance demonstrates how students relate to the literary texts from another field of references, Greek Mythology, to interpret the textual choices of the writer.

In another segment of Bouthaina's observation, the students engaged in a discussion about the similarities between the second work on the writer *Ulysses* with the *Odyssey* to establish mythical features and Greek mythology references within the *Ulysses*. For example, B1 argued that if we refer to the second work of the writer, *Ulysses*; by comparing the use of myth in both works, we can find the differences and frame each usage accordingly. She elaborated that *Ulysses* is based on the *Odyssey* – following a mythical hero adventure in the modern time; the adventure is limited to 24 hours! The parallel can be seen in the structure of the chapters, wherein each is based on a title from the *Odyssey*: Ithaca, Penelope, Hades, etc. It is then clearly parallelism. Bouthaina agreed and expanded on this by giving similar examples from the main story of the *Odyssey*. The students agreed that this type of narration, which is built on a myth, could be termed a mythical structure. Here, Bouthaina encouraged the students to read more about these terms and related fields of inquiry to the subject to write and analyse the novels critically through these instances of discussion. The more students read about the subject, Bouthaina suggests, the more they can argue and expand on such notions and topics.

These segments from the observational data highlight how literary texts serve as a platform for integrating interdisciplinary perspectives as a means to interpret literary texts within the classroom. By prompting students to consider other fields of inquiry, such as history and sociocultural contexts, to examine literary texts under study, they interrogate narrative techniques, symbols and authorial choices. The students are empowered to engage through different lenses of inquiry to critically develop their interpretive skills.

7.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the various methodologies for using literary texts in Algeria higher educational institutions, as evidenced by the data from interviews and classroom observations.

The chapter began by examining teachers' views on using literary texts to guide structured interpretations. It was revealed that teachers view these texts as essential tools for helping students develop structured interpretations, emphasising the importance of exposing students to literary language and analytical frameworks.

The next section explored teachers' use of close reading practices. It highlights how teachers employ close reading to scrutinise texts and emphasise specific literary features. These practices, which vary among teachers, involve detailed textual analysis to exemplify literary language and movements, helping students unpack implicit meanings within the texts.

Furthermore, this chapter examined how teachers use literary texts to initiate evocative readings and critical discussions. Teachers encourage deeper reflections on the texts, uncover controversial aspects and engage students in meaningful dialogues. However, challenges arise when students are unprepared or when discussion guidelines limit the expression of diverse opinions.

The next part of the chapter addressed how teachers implement literary texts in classroom lessons based on observational data. It began by showcasing how teachers use literary texts to exemplify literary and theoretical concepts. By examining text segments, students are encouraged to understand and apply abstract concepts such as context, modernism and other literary devices.

Another key focus is on using literary texts as reference points for critical analysis and interpretations. Teachers prompt students to engage in discussions about themes and characters, fostering an environment where students critically interpret and debate various textual elements.

Lastly, the chapter explored how teachers adopt interdisciplinary approaches, linking literature with fields such as history, psychology and cultural studies. This multidisciplinary strategy enriches students' understanding and encourages them to explore literary texts through various lenses, thereby enhancing their interpretive skills.

In summary, this chapter discussed the comprehensive approaches of teachers' usage of literary texts in Algerian higher educational institutions to facilitate structured interpretations, close reading, critical discussions and interdisciplinary analyses, thereby deepening students' engagement and analytical abilities with literary texts.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out to discuss this study's findings as presented and analysed in chapters 5, 6 and 7. This chapter is organised according to the three research questions: What could be considered a literary text in the Algerian higher educational context? (RQ1) in section 8.2; For what purpose is English literature introduced, read, and explored in Algerian universities? (RQ2) in section 8.3; and How do Algerian university literature teachers use literary texts within the classroom? (RQ3) in section 8.4. Lastly, section 8.5 summarises the key findings and provides the answers to the research questions. The main findings from each research question are restated and discussed in every section in relation to the reviewed literature and theoretical and international literature guiding the study, where appropriate.

This study contributes to knowledge by addressing the scarcity in understanding of English literature teaching in second language contexts, particularly in foreign language settings, and more specifically within the Algerian higher education system. By exploring the perspectives of teachers and students on literary texts, this research offers valuable insights into the criteria that define what is considered literary in Algerian higher educational institutions. Furthermore, no dedicated qualitative research study has focused on the purposes of using literary texts in Algerian higher educational institutions and their accompanying ways of implementation. Additionally, the study examines how real readers interact with literary texts in practice, reflecting the perspectives of theoretical frameworks such as New Criticism, Rosenblatt's theory of reading, and other related literature. Therefore, this thesis contributes to the literature by examining the experiences of teachers and students alike at Algerian higher educational institutions by seeking to understand the process of selecting literary texts and the tension that may arise from this, the interplay of purposes and their applications through teachers' ways in classrooms.

8.2 THE WAY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS VIEW LITERARY TEXTS IN ALGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

The findings of this section explore the answer to the first research question of what could be considered a literary text in the Algerian higher education context. Exploring how teachers and students define and view the literariness of texts will provide a solid foundation for understanding the use of literary texts in the Algerian higher educational setting.

As highlighted in the literature review, a literary text is one of the grounding elements of teaching literature. It is the medium by which literary language is presented for study. However, research has

failed to clarify the tension that arises from questioning the literariness of language and its principles; is it the characteristic of the language that is different (Eagleton, 2011)? Is there a binary distinction between literary and non-literary language as it is deeply rooted in New Critics' thoughts, which renders it an "identifiable linguistic phenomenon" (Hall, 2015, p. 11), or perhaps literary language exists along a cline of graduation (Carter and Nash, 1983)? Or probably is it a representational language that "opens up, call upon, stimulate, and uses areas of the mind, from imagination to emotion, from pleasure to pain" (McRae, 1991, p. 3). While these arguments and those of others resonate with the L1 context, very little research was found about how English foreign language learners view this issue. For this reason, the initial objective of this study was to examine this through teachers' and students' views on what lies in practice behind this debate in the Algerian higher educational setting. The study found that participants have multiple levels of understanding and reasoning while considering literary texts. This understanding can be seen through their ways of considering the nature of literary texts as being representational and evocative (section 5.2), the language of literary texts as encompassing simple and complex words and grammatical structures with an inherited message (section 5.3), a literary text as a vehicle to cultural experience (5.4), and the emotional impact of literary texts on readers (5.5). The following section, 8.2.1, discusses teachers' and students' views on the nature of literary texts as being representational and evocative. Then, section 8.2.2 discusses teachers' and students' views on the language of literary texts. Following that, section 8.2.3 discusses literary texts as vehicles of culture. Finally, section 8.2.4 discusses the transformational effects of literary texts on students.

8.2.1 Representation and Evocativeness

The study shows that teachers and students alike construct their views on what could be considered a literary text based on their personal experiences, studies, and exposure to literature in the broader sense. The first theme that emerged through the analysis showcases an understanding of literary language as being evocative in its nature, while such a nature reflects the literary language as being used to represent a society or a period of literary history. These views resonate in the literature on the debate about literary language (e.g., Eagleton, 2011; Hall, 2015; Carter and Nash, 1983; McRae, 1991).

Participants consistently viewed literary language as inherently evocative, a sentiment shared by both students and teachers, who see literary language as a vehicle for eliciting a strong emotional response. For instance, Fatima's emphasis on the emotional responses evoked during reading underscores the centrality of feeling in defining literariness. This perspective was supported by B2's argument that the essence of literary texts lies in capturing human experience, which inherently involves evoking emotions. This perspective aligns with McRae's (1991) assertion that literary language stimulates various mental faculties, invoking imagination and emotions. McRae (1991)

asserted that literary language “opens up, call upon, stimulate, and uses areas of the mind, from imagination to emotion, from pleasure to pain” (p.3).

Similarly, Aisha reflected on literariness as an account of emotions that confront readers and stimulate their minds to explore “a situation”, a “society”, a “self.” This view was echoed by Zainab's focus group, whereas Z2 defined a literary text by its ability to evoke feelings in readers. These views further emphasise the nature of literary texts in confronting and stimulating readers' minds. These views resonate with Carter and Nash's (1983) notion of literariness as a dynamic interplay of linguistic features that operate on multiple levels to evoke meanings beyond the written words. Literariness, in this account, is seen through its impact on readers, not on an inherited characteristic in the language itself. This idea that literary language is evocative and serves as a vehicle for emotions aligns with Eagleton’s (2011) and Hall’s (2015) observations about the distinctiveness of literary language, where its different aspects and identifiable linguistics phenomenon could be interpreted as evocativeness.

The participants also shared a strong view that literary texts serve as representational tools. For Bouthaina, for example, literary texts represent specific societies and a period in literary history. In her account, literary texts are fictional texts reflecting historical contexts by demonstrating the representational capacity of literary language. Aisha’s narrative that literary texts embody a “society” and a “self” through reading further supports this view. Also, Bouthaina’s focus group highlighted the capacity of literary language to delineate literary eras and writing styles, thereby representing cultural stories. This perspective aligns with McRae’s (1991) views on representational language. A language that is particular in the sense that it evokes in the readers' minds meanings that is something behind the language; it is not the written words, but there is always something that emerges from the reading (McRae, 1991). In a simpler word, a language that involves readers. This representational aspect is particularly significant in the Algerian educational context, where students reportedly often struggle with the cultural and historical relevance of the texts they study (Benzoukh & Said, 2016). Yet, by considering the representational capacity of literary texts, teachers can bridge the gap between the unfamiliar contexts of English literary works and the student's own experiences and cultural backgrounds. This perspective is reported by Ghouti and Mohammed (2014), who emphasise the importance of culturally integrated language teaching to enhance students' engagement and understanding.

The study demonstrates that participants view literary texts as both evocative and representational. These perspectives align with some scholarly discussions on the dynamic, nuanced nature of literary language, challenging a fixed distinction between literary and non-literary texts. The emergent theme underscores the multifaceted nature of literariness, reflecting not only the richness of representations but also the evocativeness dimension of literariness as equally important in considering literary texts for studies in the Algerian higher educational context. Moreover, this discussion contributes to

knowledge by providing insights into how literary texts are considered for analysis in Algerian higher education. It highlights the dual role of literary texts in evoking emotions and representing contexts, thereby offering a framework for selecting and teaching literary works that resonate with Algerian students' experiences and aspirations. These findings can potentially address the issues of student engagement and relevance, as identified by previous studies (e.g., Nabila, 2020; Yasmina, 2012) and contribute to the development of a more effective and contextually appropriate literature teaching and curriculum design in Algerian universities.

The next part of the discussion will explore participants' views on the aesthetic nature of literary texts and their inclusion of simple and complex forms of language.

8.2.2 Aesthetic and Valuable Content

The study shows that teachers and students showcase quite complicated and nuanced ways in which they consider literariness in language. Some participants highlighted the complexity of language as a defining feature of literary texts. In these views, text with dense vocabulary and complicated structures are considered literary. Other participants had a more inclusive view of literariness. In these views, texts with simple vocabulary and grammar structure can still be considered literary. These differing views echo the ongoing debate on literariness in language. For instance, early formalists focused on the linguistic side of the text to define literariness (Carter 2012), while New Critics identified specific linguistic features that render texts literary (Hall, 2015). Additionally, Carter and Nash (1983) proposed a different view on literariness as existing along a cline of graduation. These views will be discussed alongside the findings of the study.

8.2.2.1 Complexity as a Defining Feature for Literariness

The study reveals a diverse and nuanced perspective on literariness in language, highlighting a complex interplay of aesthetic appreciation, linguistic features, and reader engagement. This section discusses these views with key ideas from the literature, exploring the multifaceted ways in which participants view what constitutes literary language.

The study findings show that participants often describe complexity as a defining feature of literary texts, while often possessing an aesthetic quality. This aligns with Eagleton's (2011) notion that literary language is often specialised, complex or different. Literariness can be identified through characteristics that differentiate literary language from everyday language. Siraj, for instance, emphasised the stylistic arrangement of terms and vocabulary, which varies greatly among writers and extends to non-canonical works, suggesting that the beauty of literary language lies in its ability to foster reader attention and appreciation. This echoes McRae's (1991) view that literary language

stimulates areas of the mind from imagination to emotion. It is a type of language that involves readers. Complexity is seen not merely as a barrier but as an invitation to engage more deeply with the text, uncovering multiple layers of meaning.

These views were also shared among Siraj's focus groups, wherein S1 suggested that literary language is often characterised by complex vocabulary and structure which allows for diverse interpretation, furthering support to the idea that complexity is integral to literariness. This view resonates with the early formalists' focus on the linguistic elements of literary texts (Carter, 2012). The appreciation of dense symbolic features by participants such as S4 and S5 further supports the notion that literary language often employs symbolic features, prompting readers to engage deeply with the text. S4's appreciation for the interpretative challenge posed by symbolic features and S5's comparison of the reading experience to solving a puzzle illustrate how complexity enhances the aesthetic and intellectual engagement of the reader. This view resonates with McRae's (1991) argument that literary language stimulates various cognitive and emotional areas of the mind. It could be argued that the range of vocabulary that literary texts often hold makes participants think that literary texts have a language of their own (Hall 2015), in this case, complex vocabulary and sentence structures.

Indeed, the study findings also highlight the role of symbolism in considering what counts as literary. Participants like Zainab and her focus group consider literary texts as treasures for foreign language learners that challenge and entertain. Such conditions are believed to contribute to the idea of vocabulary development. The symbolic and figurative language, as noted by Z5 and Z2, is seen as a tool to express and evoke deeper experiences, making the language special and distinctively literary. This view does not seem to align with Carter and Nash's (1983) argument that literariness exists along a cline of graduation rather than a fixed set of linguistic elements. It seems though that it holds a view leaning towards a type of language that relies on dense vocabulary and grammatical structures that express and evoke deeper experiences. However, these findings do not seem to align with studies on the Algerian context of teaching English literature, which presents unique challenges to these perceptions. Abdelaziz (2016) and Kuider and Amine (2019) reported that students often struggle with the complexity and outdated nature of selected texts, which does not seem to align with the participants' views on the necessity of engaging with complex vocabulary and structure. Moreover, teachers, like those in this study, have reportedly emphasised the need for a precise methodological implementation and selection of relevant pedagogical materials, which arguably is often lacking in Algerian institutions (Abdelaziz, 2016; Benzoukh & Said, 2016).

The debate over what constitutes literary language also touches on the concept of the canon. Z2's reference to canonical works and I2's mention of classical words and difficult vocabulary reflect a traditional view that associates literariness with specific linguistic features and celebrated texts. This

perspective was noted by Carter (2007), who suggests that the canon is often perceived as the sum of literary works that exemplify complex qualities. Literariness for these students seems to reflect the view that complexity offered by literary canon is a defining criterion. However, the broader definition suggested by Z1, which includes all written forms, challenges this narrow perspective, suggesting that complexity is not the sole criterion for literariness. Carter and Nash (1983) argue against the idea of a strict binary distinction between literary and non-literary language, proposing instead that literariness exists along a cline of graduation. This means that aspects of literariness can be found in any text, regardless of its classification. Indeed, studies conducted within the Algerian educational context have signalled this tension between canonical and non-canonical texts. Yasmina (2012) and Nabila (2020) argued for a re-evaluation of the literature syllabus to include more culturally relevant and engaging texts. The study findings, however, suggest a need for complexity in literary language and a more inclusive view that incorporates diverse and symbolically rich texts, which arguably can enhance students' engagement and cognitive skills.

The study highlights that complex vocabulary and challenging sentence structures are key attributes that some participants associate with literariness. This complexity is evident in the use of dense vocabulary, intricate grammatical structures, figurative and symbolic features that invite deeper interpretative engagement. These findings align with some of the theoretical perspectives in the literature that emphasise linguistic sophistication and canonical works as distinguishing literary features.

The contribution to knowledge that this discussion brings is multifaceted. It provides qualitative evidence from the Algerian context, highlighting the perceptions of literariness among Algerian higher education students and teachers. The study underscores the importance of complexity in literary texts as a means to foster deep engagement and intellectual development. Additionally, it calls for a contextualised view of literature teaching in Algeria, suggesting that a careful selection of texts that balances complexity with relevance can enhance both student motivation and learning outcomes. This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on the role of literary education in non-native contexts and offers practical insights for curriculum development in Algerian universities.

The next section of this chapter explores the participants' views on literary texts and the inclusion of simple forms of language.

8.2.2.2 SIMPLICITY AS A DEFINING FEATURE FOR LITERARINESS

The study reveals a nuanced perspective on the concept of literariness in language, challenging traditional views of literary language as inherently dense and complex. Instead, a significant number of the participants, including teachers and students, view literary texts as using simple, more

accessible vocabulary, and grammatical structures. This perspective aligns with the notion that literariness can be attained through simplicity and clarity, contradicting the idea that literary language must be marked by its complexity and difficulty. This section discusses these views with key ideas from the literature, exploring the multifaceted ways in which participants view what constitutes literary language.

In the context of Algerian higher educational institutions, this finding is particularly relevant. Abdelaziz (2016) highlights that students often struggle with the complex language of literary texts, and teachers are reluctant to engage with literature modules due to a lack of clear frameworks. The preference for simplicity highlighted in this part aligns with the need for more accessible texts in the Algerian educational context, as they can enhance student engagement and comprehension. The study findings show that participants often describe simplicity as a defining feature for literary texts, while often possessing an aesthetic quality. Teachers like Bouthaina and Aisha emphasised that literariness does not necessarily depend on obscure vocabulary or complex grammatical structures. Bouthaina's reference to Hemingway's Iceberg style of writing highlights that literary language values simplicity, where what is omitted is as significant as what is included, thus creating depth through minimalist expression. Similarly, Aisha's metaphor of writing as "a dance on a paper" underscores the aesthetic pleasure derived from the deliberate and strategic use of simple language. This view suggests that literary quality can emerge from the careful and precise arrangement of words, akin to the precision seen in mathematical endeavours. This view aligns with Hall (2015, p. 44), who asserts that "literary language is often surprisingly ordinary, just as ordinary language is often surprisingly poetic."

Fatima's appreciation for African literary texts, due to their straightforward language, further supports this view. She argued that the accessibility of these texts enhances the reading experience of students by reducing the need for constant reference to a dictionary. This view aligns with Carter and Nash's (1983) argument that literariness exists along a cline of graduation rather than being a distinct and fixed set of linguistic elements. By considering simple and accessible texts as literary, these teachers promote a broader and more inclusive understanding of what constitutes literary texts. In the context of Algerian higher educational institutions, this finding is specifically relevant. Kuider and Amine (2019) similarly reported that Algerian students find the language of many literary texts outdated and irrelevant to their aspirations. The preference for simpler texts can address this issue by making literature more relatable and engaging for students. Furthermore, Benzoukh and Said (2016) highlighted the need for student involvement in selecting literary texts, suggesting that texts with simpler language can better match students' proficiency levels and interests.

The study further shows that the notion of what constitutes literary texts is expandable. Anas's viewpoint of considering non-fiction materials such as speeches, essays, and memoirs stresses this. He argued that the compositional techniques used in these texts possess literary qualities and should

be explored in the literary realm and education. This inclusive approach resonates with Carter and Nash's (1983) challenge to the idea of a strict binary distinction between literary and non-literary language. By recognising the literary potential in various forms of writing, Anas advocates for a more expansive literary canon that values expression and clarity over traditional celebrated texts. This view further aligns with McRae's (1991) views of considering literary language as a representational language that "opens up, call upon, stimulate, and uses areas of the mind, from imagination to emotion, from pleasure to pain" (p.3), promoting a more inclusive view of literary language beyond complex and dense vocabulary structures. The adaptability of literary texts to include various forms, such as non-fiction, is especially pertinent in the Algerian context, where Ghouti and Mohammed (2014) advocate for culturally integrated language teaching. By incorporating diverse and accessible texts, teachers can minimise cultural gaps and enhance students' understanding of both language and literature.

The study also shows that students' focus group discussions further highlighted the preference for simplicity and modern English as a defining feature of literariness. Students like A1 and A2 expressed a preference for texts that are accessible and use everyday language, emphasising the importance of readability and clarity. This preference extends to modern rewritings of classic texts and contemporary works, which are considered literary due to their clear and straightforward language. The inclusion of comic books and modern English texts in students' views of literariness reflects a broader and more inclusive understanding of literary language. Indeed, McRae (1991) noted that learners and teachers in EFL settings prioritise accessibility and story elements in considering literary texts for studies.

Additionally, R3's view introduced the idea that clarity and quality are not mutually exclusive but rather intersect to create literariness. The selection of words that effectively convey emotions and the style of language that adds depth are seen as essential attributes of literary texts. These views align with McRae's (1991) that literary language stimulates the mind and evokes meanings beyond the written words. By emphasising the importance of both clarity and depth, R3's view bridges the gap between accessibility and the richness of literary expression.

These evolving views of literariness can be situated within a broader theoretical discussion. Eagleton (2011) posed the question of whether it is the characteristic of the language that is different that makes it literary. The study's findings here suggest that what makes language literary is not its complexity but its ability to convey profound meaning through simplicity. This further challenges the New Critics' stance, which positioned literary language as an "identifiable linguistic phenomenon" marked by its complexity and deviation from the norm (Hall, 2015, p. 11). On the other hand, Carter and Nash (1983) argued against a binary distinction between literary and non-literary language, suggesting instead a cline of graduation where literariness is a dynamic interplay of various linguistic

features which aligns with the participants who recognise literariness in simple and clear language. The teachers' and the students' views suggest that simplicity can be very literary as opposed to the early formalist assertion that literariness is a by-product of complex linguistic structures, as observed by Carter (2012), who highlighted how early formalists focused on the linguistic elements of texts.

The study findings also suggest that literariness is linked to representational language (McRae, 1991), which stimulates the mind and evokes a range of emotions. The study reveals that the emotional and imaginative engagement evoked by simple and clear language can be as profound as that elicited by complex language and structures. Indeed, Carter's (2006) observation that ordinary language is often surprisingly poetic suggests that literary quality is not exclusive to complex texts but can also be found in everyday language. Considering the contextual challenges identified by Nabila (2020), such as the need for cultural relevance, and the choice of literary texts based on their suitability and student engagement, the findings of this study offer significant contributions to the knowledge on the view of literariness in the Algerian context. By advocating for simplicity and accessibility in literary texts, teachers can better address the needs of Algerian students, making literature more engaging and relevant to the students' experiences.

The next part of the discussion will explore participants' views on literary texts and their inherited *message* as a defining feature of literariness.

8.2.2.3 VALUABLE CONTENT OR A 'MESSAGE' AS A DEFINING FEATURE FOR LITERARINESS

While the study shows that participants have focused on literariness in language from a linguistic perspective, focusing on the type of vocabulary used and the grammatical structures, it also reveals another prevailing theme that was shared by teachers and students alike on what counts as a literary text; that is the ability to convey deeper messages as moral values. This section explores the multifaceted ways in which participants spoke about the *message* in relation to literary texts.

The study findings show that participants often associate *messages* with the literariness of texts. Teachers like Siraj and Fatima emphasised that literariness is closely related to what type of message the text conveys. Siraj's approach to teaching *The Great Gatsby,* underscoring the importance of engaging students in moral reflection on themes such as materialism to promote considering the ethical implications and its relation to their own lives, highlights this. This finding is particularly relevant in the Algerian context, where Abdelaziz (2016) noted the absence of a precise methodological implementation in literature teaching modules. Siraj's method provides a particular method to engage students with the messages that literary texts can offer. This method aligns with Rosenblatt's (1995) distinction between efferent and aesthetic reading. Efferent reading focuses on

extracting information, while aesthetic reading, as Rosenblatt posits, is about an evocative experience where the reader's personal feelings and ideas are central. Siraj's method clearly leans towards aesthetic reading, facilitating a deeper, more personal engagement with the text. This aesthetic reading can only take place as long as texts can offer these underlying messages, which for Siraj, is what makes texts literary. Similarly, Fatima's disappointment with novels that lack a clear message underscores her belief that literary texts must offer more than mere entertainment. For her, a text without a discernible moral or message is unfulfilling and fails to be literary. Fatima's viewpoint reflects the sentiments found in Benzoukh and Said's (2016) study, which indicates challenges to reading English literature due to the unsatisfactory vocabulary that texts offer, making it even harder to discern literary messages (p. 34). Therefore, the literariness of texts does not only arise from a nuanced interplay of linguistic features rather than a fixed set of elements as Carter and Nash (1983) would argue, but, as Fatima's experiences suggest, a text to be considered literary, must engage the reader on a deeper level, prompting reflection on significant moral or ethical themes.

The students' focus group discussions further highlight this view. The analysis reveals that S2's appreciation of engagement with non-fiction texts, such as the essays on self-reliance, underscores the view of underlying messages and moral values in their understanding of literariness. This perspective aligns with McRae's (1991) concept of referential language, where a text's significance transcends its literal words. For S2, the value of these texts lies in their capacity to provoke broader, often moral reflections, suggesting that the essence of literariness is not in the explicit content or the linguistic features but in the messages and values that readers uncover.

Similarly, the debate among Bouthaina's students about the nature of literary language and its ability to convey messages highlights the intricate relationship between language and meaning. B4's stance that literature should provide valuable content and moral insights rather than merely complex language echoes Rosenblatt's (1969) view that readers are active participants in constructing meaning. Literariness is not a construct of texts only but transcends it to context (readers). This interaction with the text is crucial for appreciating its literariness, as readers engage in interpreting and reinterpreting the text to reveal deeper meanings and moral values. The message is for the reader to decide, although A3's view that texts like *Heart of Darkness* encourage critical engagement and independent thinking rather than conveying a specific moral message supports this notion. The student views suggest that literary texts are characterised by their capacity to invite diverse interpretations and reflections, whether moral or otherwise, and that these texts exist on a continuum of literariness.

The emerging theme of a *message* as a defining feature of literariness reflects a broader understanding of what counts as literary for teachers and students based on a text's ability to convey messages and moral values. This perspective aligns with theoretical views that emphasise the active

role of the reader, the dynamic nature of literary language, and the nature of aesthetic reading. By considering texts based on their moral and reflective dimensions as literary, students and teachers expand their views of what counts as literary and include the values and the messages embedded within these works as a defining feature.

The study's findings contribute to knowledge by providing a nuanced understanding of how Algerian teachers and students perceive literariness. It highlights the importance of messages and moral values in literary texts, thereby offering a suggestive framework for literature teaching in Algerian higher educational institutions to consider literary messages while selecting texts for study. This perspective not only addresses the pedagogical challenges identified by previous studies but also enriches the theoretical discourse on the dynamic nature of literary language and the active role of the reader. By emphasising the moral and reflective dimensions of texts, this study expands the criteria for what counts as literary, thus offering valuable insights for both literature teachers and curriculum developers in Algeria.

8.2.3 Sophistication and Cultural Experience

The study revealed another recurring theme across the interviews and focus groups which is the appreciation of sophisticated language in capturing cultural experiences perceived as a defining feature towards what counts as literary. While the literature shows that teaching literary works fosters cultural understanding, this theme highlights that sophistication in capturing cultural experiences is a defining feature of literariness in language.

The findings indicate that participants frequently associate culture with literary texts. Teachers like Imane, Meriem, and Fatima emphasised that literariness is closely tied to cultural exploration. For instance, Imane considers literary texts as an opportunity to enlighten students' minds by exposing them to diverse cultures, thereby broadening their horizons and challenging stereotypes. A suggestion that literary texts are essentially cultural texts. This indeed aligns with McRae's (1991) concept of referential language, where the significance of literary texts lies in their ability to stimulate imagination and emotion, a language that transcends the literal words. Imane believes that texts like *Jane Eyre* do just that. It challenges readers' perspectives of religious beliefs and cultural differences, exemplifying how literary language promotes deeper reflections and cultural understanding. While Abdelaziz's (2016) study in Algeria highlighted several methodological challenges in the educational context, noting their impact on both teacher engagement and student performance, Imane's response advocates for the use of sophisticated texts to address these challenges and promote cultural understanding, emphasising their importance in the educational process.

Similarly, Meriem extended Imane's view by suggesting that literary texts help students understand the people of the countries whose languages they are learning and the complexities of human experiences across different cultures. This reflects the argument by Carter and Long (1991) and Collie et al. (1987) that authentic literary texts promote cultural knowledge and intercultural experiences. Meriem's emphasis on canonical works like Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Brontë's *Jane Eyre* further supports the notion that these texts represent sophisticated, culturally rich texts for exploration. Meriem's conviction that literary studies help understand "the self", "the societies", and "the human condition" aligns with Procter & Benwell's (2014) argument that literary texts broaden tolerance skills and a greater understanding of ourselves and others. This perspective aligns with the findings of Ghouti and Mohammed (2014), who called for culturally integrated language teaching in the teaching of literature. By selecting texts that are culturally rich yet accessible, Meriem addresses these contextual challenges and enhances students' engagement and understanding.

The study findings also highlight how thinking of texts as cultural artifacts can have dual benefits for students to explore the language and the culture. Mamoun's view that literary texts should be considered for their discourse, language, and ambiguity supports the idea that literariness exists along a cline of graduation, as argued by Carter and Nash (1983). Mamoun's belief that literary texts serve as a medium for learning English through cultural exploration reflects Kramsch's (1993) argument that literary texts broaden tolerance and understanding of ourselves and others. Similarly, Fatima's emphasis on the cultural significance of African literature further supports the notion that literary texts should offer profound cultural insights. Her goal to expose students to African culture and dismantle stereotypes aligns with the views of Carter and Long (1991) and Collie et al. (1987) on the role of literature in promoting intercultural understanding. Fatima's view of including students in text selection also responds to Benzoukh and Said's (2016) findings, which emphasise the need for including students in choosing literary texts to enhance their vocabulary and cultural engagement. By focusing on African literature, Fatima is directly addressing these pedagogical gaps. Also, Meriem's example of *Marriage is a Private Affair,* resonating with students due to its themes of cultural conflict and identity, illustrates how literary texts can mirror students' experiences and foster deeper cultural engagement. Meriem's efforts to dismantle stereotypes against African literature further underscore the view that literary texts offer diverse cultural representations in literary studies. This view echoes Ghouti and Mohammed's (2014) recommendation for culturally integrated language teaching, which they argue is essential for overcoming cultural barriers and enhancing both learner and teacher engagement.

The focus group discussions among students further highlight the view of a shared understanding regarding the cultural dimension of literary texts as a defining feature of its literariness. For instance, M1 values literary texts that offer familiar, everyday contexts over supernatural ones, emphasising the importance of relatable and realistic literary texts for its importance of cultural exploration. This

preference aligns with Hall's (2015) argument that literature uses ordinary language in extraordinary ways, making cultural experiences more accessible and engaging for readers. M3 and Mamoun also stressed the sophistication of literary texts, viewing canonical works as the best prose to bridge students' existing knowledge with new cultural insights.

The participants' views align with the literature in recognising literary language as a sophisticated medium, a cline of graduation, and highlights the view that it captures and conveys cultural experiences. This sophistication is not merely a matter of linguistic features but involves a dynamic interplay of language, culture, and reader engagement. Literary texts seen through this lens offer students opportunities to not only to improve their language skills but also to gain deeper insights into different cultures, fostering a more nuanced and empathetic understanding of the world. In the context of Algerian higher education, these findings contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge by highlighting the practical benefits of integrating sophisticated and culturally relevant literary texts. This integration addresses the methodological and engagement challenges identified by Abdelaziz (2016), Kuider and Amine (2019), and Benzoukh and Said (2016), demonstrating that a focus on cultural sophistication in literary texts can enhance both teaching and learning experiences.

In conclusion, this study's findings emphasise the necessity of literary texts in literature and language learning as powerful tools for cultural exploration and personal growth. By aligning teaching practices with the contextual needs and challenges of Algerian higher educational institutions, as highlighted by the included literature, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how considering sophisticated literary texts can be effectively utilised to bridge cultural gaps and enhance educational outcomes.

8.2.4 Emotional Experience and Transformation

The study revealed another recurring theme across a focus group interview: the consideration of an emotional and transformative experience as a defining feature of literariness in language. While the literature shows that literary works evoke emotions and provoke reflections, this theme emphasises that the emotional and transformational impact on readers is a crucial aspect of what counts as literary. The following discussion elaborates on these connections and draws upon relevant literature to contextualise the students' views.

The study findings indicate that participants frequently associate emotional and transformative experiences with the literariness of texts. The focus group data from Rihab's students illustrate a shared belief that literariness is not merely defined by textual elements but also by the profound impact the text has on the readers. Students like R3, R6, and R5 emphasised that literariness is closely tied to the emotional journey and personal growth elicited by reading. For instance, R3's

assertion that both fiction and nonfiction texts can be considered literary if they offer transformative knowledge highlights a crucial aspect of literariness: the reader's journey of self-discovery and personal growth. R3's view aligns with McRae's (1991) concept of referential language, where the meaning extends beyond the written words to evoke deeper reflections and transformations in readers. Similarly, R6 extended this view by suggesting that literary texts must evoke and transmit emotions to be considered literary. This view also resonates with representational language that engages various aspects of the mind, from imagination to emotions, creating a profound impact on readers. The evocative nature of literary texts is also echoed in the works of Rosenblatt and Booth (2016), who argue that the intimacy and humane sentiment diffused through literature contribute to its emotional impact. In the context of Algerian higher educational institutions, the challenges in teaching and learning English literature are well-documented. For instance, Abdelaziz (2016) highlights the dissatisfaction among both teachers and students regarding literature modules. This dissatisfaction could be altered if we consider the participants' emphasis on emotional and transformative experiences, suggesting a need for considering literary texts that prioritise these aspects to enhance student engagement.

The study findings also highlight how the emotional connections with characters and the empathy evoked by literary texts contribute to their literariness. R5's account of feeling empathy and sympathy with characters and understanding herself better through reading exemplifies the idea that literary texts offer a deep emotional connection and self-awareness. This view is supported by Rosenblatt and Booth's (2016) perspective, which suggests that literature provides a sense of intimacy and human sentiment and emotions. Indeed, R5's experience of seeing aspects of herself in literary characters underscores the idea that literary texts foster empathy and self-awareness: essential elements of literariness.

Moreover, the focus group discussions reveal that the evocative nature of literary language of canonical works is crucial for its impact. R3's admiration for Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and R2's mixed feelings about Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* illustrate the complex relationship between literary language and the reader's emotional and intellectual engagement. R3 and R2's comments highlight the evocative and interpretative richness of these texts, which challenge readers while also providing profound insights and enjoyment. This complexity is captured in Hall's (2015) argument that literature does not possess a unique language but rather a range of usages that evoke such depth and interpretation. Contextually, Kuider and Amine (2019) note that many students at Mustapha Stambouli University of Mascara struggle with the type of obscure language of selected literary texts, which hinders their motivation and engagement. This view aligns with the focus group findings, suggesting that a more accessible and emotionally resonant consideration of texts could enhance student involvement and appreciation of their literariness.

Furthermore, the focus group's discussion on the simplicity and depth of literary language aligns with Carter (2006) and Hall (2001), who suggest that ordinary language can often be surprisingly poetic. This view is supported by the students' appreciation of literary devices in texts and movies, indicating that literariness can be found across different forms and genres, further reinforcing the idea of a cline of graduation, as proposed by Carter and Nash (1983). However, the students' mixed feelings towards certain canonical works due to their challenging language styles highlight the importance of readability and comprehension in defining literariness. Despite the difficulties, the students acknowledge the transformative and emotional impact these works have, suggesting that the literary value is retained as long as the text engages the reader emotionally and provides a transformative experience.

Indeed, contextually, teachers like Nabila (2020), who have incorporated relevant texts and facilitated group discussions, have reported increased student engagement and deeper interaction. This approach, aligning with the focus group's emphasis on emotional and transformative experiences, suggests that contextualising literature teaching by considering literary texts relevant to Algerian students' experiences can significantly enhance their learning experience.

Therefore, the study findings reveal that a defining feature of literariness for these students is deeply rooted in the emotional and transformative experiences evoked by the text. This perspective is supported by the literature, which emphasises the evocative, representational, and dynamic nature of literary language. However, the students' views challenge the notion of a rigid distinction between literary and non-literary language, advocating for a more nuanced understanding of literariness as a continuum that encompasses various textual and emotional effects.

In conclusion, this study contributes to knowledge by highlighting the crucial role of emotional and transformative experiences in defining literariness among Algerian university students. It underscores the need for a pedagogical shift that incorporates these elements to address the contextual challenges identified in the Algerian higher education system. By aligning literature teaching with students' views on literariness that encompass emotional and transformative effects, teachers can foster deeper engagement and appreciation of literary texts, ultimately enhancing the overall educational experience.

8.3 Purposes of Introducing English Literature in Algerian Universities

This section's findings explore the answer to the second research question: For what purpose is English literature introduced, read, and explored in Algerian universities? By exploring how teachers view the purposes of English literature teaching in the higher educational context and the tension that arises from selecting particular texts for study purposes, the thesis examines these understandings of

what lies beyond the purposes of teaching in real practice through contextual and international literature on the subject.

As highlighted in the literature review, sections 3.4 and 3.6, literature teaching can be used for multiple purposes. These purposes are first constructed on the level of the school and teachers (Guillory 1993), regardless of what is considered a literary text canon and how schools arguably participate in the canonisation process. However, as indicated in the literature, these arguments often originated in the L1 context of teaching literature, and very little is known about how these debates echo in higher educational institutions in Algeria, an EFL context. This section will discuss the key findings in relation to these debates in the literature around text selection and purposes of teaching.

8.3.1 Selection and Use of Texts

The study findings reveal a recurrent tension between teachers' personal preferences for text selections and the institutional drive to adhere to particular guidelines. This tension is a recurring theme in the broader discourse on literary canon and educational curricula, as explored by Guillory (1993) and later by Emre (2023). The crux of the argument relates to the complexities of canonisation and the role of educational institutions in regulating literary content. This theme highlights the challenges and negotiations teachers face in balancing their professional judgment with institutional drives. This section discusses these connections and draws upon relevant literature to contextualise teachers' experiences.

The study findings indicate that teachers frequently grapple with the tension between their individual choices of literary texts and the institution-established norms. This is particularly evident in the context of Algerian higher educational institutions, as highlighted by Abdelaziz (2016) and Kuider and Amine (2019), where there is an absence of clear guidelines and a tendency to focus on outdated selected texts, which confirm this significant tension. The interview data in relation to this theme from Bouthaina, Aisha, and Fatima illustrate a shared struggle where teachers must navigate between their preferences and the unclear guidelines provided by their institutions, which is emblematic of the broader issues surrounding canon formation. For instance, Bouthaina explained that the absence of detailed ministry guidelines forces teachers to negotiate and design the curriculum themselves, highlighting a significant reliance on their professional judgement. Guillory's (1993) critique of canon formation elucidates this by stressing that the institutional protocols of the school play a critical role in shaping what is considered canonical. This mirrors the institutional drive seen in the analysis where teachers like Bouthaina must align their text choices with broader educational goals, even as they strive to cater to their pedagogical beliefs.

The context of Algerian universities, as described by Yasmina (2012), shows a need for rethinking the syllabus design, considering teachers' and students' choices, reflecting a fragmented and contested nature of canon formation within these institutions. Indeed, Aisha's experience at her university reflects the need for collaboration and consensus among teachers to establish the purpose and content of their courses. Aisha's emphasis on the lack of guidance from the department and the subsequent reliance on teacher-initiated meetings highlights the fragmented and contested nature of canon formation within educational institutions. This resonates with Emre's (2023) view that individual evaluations, influenced by social and institutional conditions, are pivotal in shaping what is included in the curriculum. Aisha's collaborative approach illustrates how teachers collectively navigate these challenges to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and purposeful. Fatima's situation further illustrates the constraints teachers face in text selection. While she adheres to ministry guidelines, Fatima expresses a preference for contemporary works over traditional ones, revealing a struggle to balance her personal preferences with institutional expectations. Fatima's preference answers a contextual challenge reported in the findings of Kuider and Amine (2019), who noted that Algerian students find selected texts outdated and irrelevant, thus impacting their motivation and engagement. This tension mirrors Guillory's (1993) critique of the regulatory function of schools, which can perpetuate social inequalities by limiting the diversity of texts available for study. Fatima's reliance on the availability of texts, often dictated by the limited resources in the library or online, exemplifies the practical challenges teachers face in introducing diverse literary works.

Adding to these contextual challenges is the language-literature divide identified by Abdelaziz (2016), which complicates the selection and teaching of texts in Algerian higher education. Abdelaziz (2016) highlights that teachers and students question whether the aim of teaching and learning is to focus on the target language itself or on the literature of the target language. The study findings emphasise the role of student involvement in the text selection process, as practised by both Aisha and Fatima. This participatory approach introduces a dynamic element to the otherwise rigid curriculum design process. By involving students in choosing what to read, teachers strive to make literature more engaging and relevant, challenging the traditional top-down approach to canon formation and the institutional limiting effect. However, the study highlights that teachers must strike a delicate balance between adhering to institutional goals and fulfilling their pedagogical objectives. Fatima's example of involving students in the selection of plays highlights the effort to balance students' interests with curriculum requirements. This balancing act is crucial for ensuring that the syllabus remains inclusive and representative of diverse cultures and historical periods, as advocated by Guillory (1993).

The study findings demonstrate a complex interplay of tension between teachers' personal preferences, collaborative and negotiation processes, and institutional drives in relation to text selections for study purposes. This interplay reflects broader debates in literary studies about canon formation, as articulated by Guillory (1993) and Emre (2023), who emphasised the complex interplay

between evaluative judgements, institutional protocols, and social conditions in shaping the literary canon. In the Algerian context, the LMD system (Saidani and Khecheni, 2018) highlights a tendency towards a top-down policy that encounters practical challenges. Indeed, Yasmina's (2012) call for a well-structured framework that includes the perspectives of both teachers and students, which is very relevant to the teaching and learning of English literature at Algerian higher institutions. By navigating these tensions, teachers and institutions can ensure a more inclusive and representative literary curriculum that balances historical significance with contemporary relevance and pushes the boundaries of the institutional norms. This navigation not only enriches students' learning experience but also aligns with the evolving nature of the literary canon in educational settings.

The contribution to knowledge that this discussion brings about is multifaceted. First, it contextualises the theoretical debates on canon formation within the specific challenges faced by Algerian higher educational institutions, highlighting the unique constraints and opportunities within this context. Second, it underscores the importance of teacher autonomy and collaborative processes in curriculum design, advocating for a more participatory and inclusive approach. Third, it demonstrates the practical implications of involving students in text selection, providing a model for balancing institutional guidelines with pedagogical goals. Lastly, it contributes to the ongoing discourse on the need for a more dynamic and culturally relevant curriculum that reflects the diverse experiences and aspirations of students in Algerian universities.

8.3.2 Exploring Literary Movements and Theories

The study findings show that teachers like Bouthaina, Aisha, Siraj, Anas, and Meriem share the idea of using literary texts to explore literary movement and theories, transitioning students from reading for pleasure to a more academic and specialised engagement with texts. This purpose aligns with McRae's (1991) observations that literature is treated as a specialised subject, where the text serves as a starting point for broader discussions about the context of literary periods. The teachers' purpose demonstrates a structured method of teaching that introduces students to literary theories and movements through carefully selected texts, aiming to foster a deeper understanding of the literary work in its historical and theoretical context.

The participants consistently viewed their use of literary texts in higher educational contexts as a means to deepen their understanding of literary movements and theories. In the Algerian context, this practice faces unique challenges. According to Abdelaziz (2016), the lack of precise methodological guidance and the language-literature divide complicate the teaching process. Despite these obstacles, teachers like Bouthaina, emphasised introducing students to movements such as Romanticism and Modernism before engaging them with relevant texts, ensuring that they can identify and relate the features of these movements within the studied text. This practice supports

Rosenblatt's (1995) view that background information can enrich the readers' literary experience, although she cautions against letting it overshadow the aesthetic engagement with the text. This practice, however, seems to align with McRae's (1991) notion that literature is treated as a specialised subject, where texts serve as starting points for discussing broader contexts. Similarly, Aisha follows a chronological exploration of literary movements, using texts like Shakespearean sonnets and TS Eliot's works to exemplify the Renaissance and Modernism, respectively. This practice not only aligns with McRae's (1991) idea of using texts to illustrate movements but also highlights the purpose of teaching literature: to help students identify thematic and stylistic features representative of specific literary periods. Aisha's approach underscores the importance of choosing texts that are both thematically appropriate and accessible to students, facilitating a practical and artistic exemplification of literary movements.

Siraj's focus on linking texts to their historical contexts reinforces the idea that the purpose of teaching literature is to link it to its production time and setting. Siraj underscored the significance of understanding the historical and cultural background of the literary works. This idea is supported by Rosenblatt's (1995) argument that formal aspects of literature alone do not ensure aesthetic sensitivity; instead, understanding the broader context is essential. Siraj's practice aligns with McRae's (1991) concept of using literary texts as a starting point for discussing the context of periods, enriching students' literary experiences.

While participants like Anas contended that his purpose is to exemplify literary movements, he takes this further by challenging students with complex texts like *Heart of Darkness* to foster intellectual inquiry, aiming to inspire students to engage deeply with texts and develop their own interpretations and perspectives. This aligns with McRae's (1991) idea that holistic discussions of literary texts can lead to new ways of seeing. It also aligns with the aesthetic reading perspective, where the reading experience is seen as an event that evokes personal responses and deeper engagement (Rosenblatt, 1995). Anas's purpose aligns with Prezioso's (2022) argument that teaching literature should promote understanding and personal interpretation rather than rigid, objective readings. This practice responds to Benzoukh and Said’s (2016) view who highlighted that Algerian teachers often lack training in literature teaching methodologies. This shows that Anas’s initiative fosters an in-depth intellectual engagement with texts.

Meriem's reflections on the progression of literature teaching from introductory courses on genres to in-depth exploration of movements highlight the practical link to literary theories in teaching. Her emphasis on using texts to illustrate movements like Gothic literature with works by Shelley or Poe demonstrates how literature is used to help students relate to different historical periods and societal contexts, enriching their understanding of both the text and the time it represents. This practice further

echoes Rosenblatt's (1995) view that background information enriches the literary experience but should not overshadow the aesthetic engagement.

The common understanding among these teachers is that literary texts are used as a starting point for discussing broader contexts, movements, and periods within English literary history. This approach aligns with the formalist notion of defamiliarisation, where literature offers readers a unique perspective on everyday life through practical language (Hall, 2015). However, the emphasis on extracting information from texts aligns more with efferent reading, as described by Rosenblatt (1995), where the focus is on taking away information rather than experiencing the text aesthetically. Despite the systemic challenges and contextual barriers identified in Algerian higher educational institutions, including difficult and irrelevant texts, lack of clear-cut objectives, and insufficient pedagogical materials (Kuider and Amine, 2019; Abdelaziz, 2016), the study findings demonstrate that teachers share pedagogical purposes. The teachers in this study emphasise the use of literary texts to explore movements and theories while considering students' needs and contexts. This practice aligns with theoretical perspectives from the literature, suggesting a balanced approach that incorporates both efferent and aesthetic reading to enrich students' literary experiences and critical abilities. Moreover, several studies from the international context of teaching literature highlight debates around national identity, politics, and how the purposes of literary education dictate teaching practices. While Goodwyn (2018) and Perry (2022) discussed the importance of literature in developing social agency and promoting diversity, Prezioso (2023) and Resnikoff (2012) advocated for an approach that emphasises understanding and personal engagement with texts over rigid and objective interpretations. While the study findings suggest a shared pedagogical purpose, they highlight the need for more efforts to be made to reflect international perspectives on contextual challenges.

The contribution to knowledge this discussion brings about is multifaceted. It not only reflects existing theories and practices in literature teaching in Algeria but also underscores the unique challenges faced by Algerian teachers of literature. By highlighting these contextual issues and integrating them into the broader discussion of pedagogical strategies, this study provides a nuanced understanding of literature teaching in Algerian higher educational institutions. It demonstrates that teachers share a pedagogical purpose. This enriched perspective can inform future research and policymaking aimed at optimising literature education in the context.

8.3.3 Cultural Exploration and Understanding

The study findings show that teachers like Mamoun, Fatima, and Imane shared the idea of using literary texts to explore different cultures, promoting understanding through language and fostering cultural awareness. This purpose aligns with various scholarly perspectives highlighted in the

literature review. Teachers emphasise the importance of literary texts in promoting cultural awareness, reflecting the views of Carter and Long (1991), Collie, Slater, and Swan (1987), and Hall (2015), who assert that literature enhances personal growth and broadens human experiences. The teachers' purpose demonstrates a view of treating texts as starting points for broader discussions about human experience and cultural contexts, to deepen students' understanding of cultural differences and similarities, aiming to foster empathy and cross-cultural understanding.

The participants consistently viewed their use of literary texts in higher educational contexts as a means to deepen cultural understanding and promote intercultural experience. Mamoun, for instance, emphasised the use of literary texts as "a store of culture," underscoring the concept of authentic texts as cultural repositories (Kramsch, 1993). He aims to help students compare cultural attitudes and behaviours, ensuring they can identify and relate to the cultural features within the studied text. This practice aligns with the cultural argument proposed by Carter and Long (1991) and others, suggesting that literary texts serve as lenses that reflect the societies of English language users, thereby fostering intercultural understanding. It is also supported by Procter and Benwell's (2014) view that literature can broaden tolerance and understanding of ourselves and others, although Mamoun cautioned that such an engagement is often passive. Mamoun's view is rooted in the idea that literary texts can help students experience cultural nuances indirectly, supporting the claim that literature promotes exploration and personal growth (Collie et al., 1987; Hall, 2015).

Similarly, Fatima's purpose of using African literary texts to cultivate cultural awareness aligns with the literature's emphasis on promoting cultural knowledge through authentic texts (Carter & Long, 1991; Hall, 2015). Fatima's strategy of challenging students' perceptions about Africa through literature echoes the transformative purpose of teaching literature - to foster empathy, tolerance, and cross-cultural understanding (Kramsch, 1993). Fatima's attempts to engage students with accessible language and relatable experiences reinforce the affective argument, which posits that literature evokes emotional responses and promotes personal growth (Carter & Long, 1991). Fatima's purpose underscores the importance of choosing texts that are both culturally relevant and accessible to students, facilitating a practical exemplification of cultural diversity.

Likewise, Imane's emphasis on broadening students' horizons and encouraging open-mindedness through diverse literary texts resonates with the formalist perspective of defamiliarisation. By introducing students to different cultural contexts and challenging their preconceived notions, Imane leverages literature's ability to offer unique social worlds, as suggested by Hall (2015). Her use of *Jane Eyre* to correct stereotypes about Christians in a Muslim community illustrates literature's potential to foster critical thinking and questioning of established norms and beliefs. This idea is supported by Rosenblatt's (1995) argument that literature can foster empathy and critical thinking by

exposing students to diverse characters and stories. It also aligns with Procter and Benwell's (2014) assertion of literature's role in understanding the self and the other.

The study findings suggest that teachers share the view of Ghouti and Mohammed (2014), where they call for culturally integrated language teaching, which they argue is essential for overcoming cultural barriers and enhancing learner and teacher engagement. The shared understanding among these teachers is that literary texts are used as starting points for discussing broader cultural contexts and promoting cultural awareness and empathy. This approach aligns with the formalist notion of defamiliarisation, where literature offers readers a unique perspective on everyday life through practical language (Hall, 2015). The study findings demonstrate that participants share pedagogical purposes, emphasising using literary texts to explore cultures and foster understanding while considering students' needs and contexts. This practice aligns with theoretical perspectives from the literature, suggesting that literature teaching fosters cultural awareness and diversity (Kramsch, 1993; Benwell, 2014).

The contributions to knowledge this discussion brings about are significant in several ways. Firstly, they provide a nuanced understanding of how teachers in Algerian higher educational contexts view the purpose of literature teaching, emphasising the importance of culturally relevant and accessible literary texts in fostering intercultural understanding and empathy. By aligning these findings with broader theoretical perspectives, this study underscores the potential of literature to serve as a bridge between cultures, promoting personal growth, cultural integration, and understanding to enhance the educational experience for teachers and students.

8.3.4 Personal Growth and Criticality

The study findings show that teachers like Fatima, Siraj, Anas, Imane, and Meriem shared the idea of using literary texts to foster personal growth and criticality. This purpose aligns with various scholarly perspectives highlighted in the literature review. Teachers emphasise the importance of literary texts in promoting critical thinking and personal growth, reflecting the views of Carter and Long (1991), Collie, Slater and Swan (1987), and Hall (2015), who assert that authentic literary texts promote personal growth and exploration of human experiences. The teachers' purpose demonstrates a view of treating texts as starting points for broader discussions about human experience and societal issues, aiming to deepen students' understanding of themselves and the world, fostering empathy and critical engagement. In the Algerian higher education context, this purpose is particularly significant given the challenges highlighted by Abdelaziz (2016), Kuider and Amine (2019), and Benzoukh and Said (2016), while these studies indicate that both students and teachers often struggle with the literary curriculum due to materials and a lack of methodological clarity. The study

findings suggest a shared focus on personal growth and criticality. The teachers in this study addressed some issues by highlighting the purpose of literature teaching.

The participants regularly viewed their use of literary texts in higher educational contexts as a means to foster criticality and personal growth. Fatima, for instance, emphasised the use of African literary texts to develop criticality and different viewpoints. Her discussion on Aimé Césaire's quote about European colonisation's impact on Africa exemplifies this. The text is used to prompt students to engage with complex historical and socio-economic issues, leading to thought-provoking discussions that enhance their critical skills. This practice aligns with Rosenblatt's (2005) notion that literature should set up meaningful encounters with books, a living through experience, encouraging students to think deeply and critically about the text. By analysing perspectives and crafting arguments, students develop critical thinking skills, which also contribute to their personal growth as they engage with challenging concepts. Similarly, Siraj believes that the purpose of using literary texts in his classroom is to foster criticality and personal growth. He emphasised the importance of personal connections to the text, which facilitates deeper engagement and critical discussions. This mirrors Carter and Long's (1991) idea that literature promotes the exploration of human experience and personal growth. Siraj's practice of linking texts like *The Great Gatsby* to students' lived experiences further enhances their critical thinking skills and personal growth. This practice is supported by Procter and Benwell (2014), who argue that literature broadens tolerance and understanding of others and selves, fostering a more empathetic and reflective mindset in students. Likewise, Imane highlighted the role of literature in helping students solve real-life problems. Her practice of using texts like *Jane Eyre* to challenge students' biases and foster critical thinking aligns with Rosenblatt's (2005) view that literature should provide a living through experience, not just knowledge about the text. By unpacking deeper themes beyond the love story, Imane helps students build a critical view towards social norms and religion, which contributes to their personal growth and criticality. The relevance of these findings is underscored by Nabila (2020), who reflected on her teaching practice in Algerian universities and advocates for the use of culturally relevant texts to engage students. Nabila's use of texts like *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf to explore themes of friendship and *The Glass Menagerie* to discuss family dynamics resonates with the teachers' practices in this study, emphasising the importance of connecting literature to students' personal growth and criticality.

While these teachers have emphasised the use of literary texts as a means to foster criticality and personal growth, participants like Anas and Meriem extended this. Anas, for instance, views literary texts as a democratising tool. He suggested that literature should empower students, giving them a sense of confidence and agency through meaningful encounters and critical discussions. This view aligns with Rosenblatt's (1995) belief that literature can contribute to democratic education. Anas's view of encouraging students to generate their own questions and engage in discussions fosters critical thinking and personal growth, underscoring the empowering nature of literary education.

Similarly, Meriem highlights the importance of relating literary texts to students' own contexts. Her example of a student drawing parallels between characters from *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and their own neighbourhood illustrates this. This practice reflects students' criticality and demonstrates the transformative power of literature.

The study findings demonstrate that teachers use literary texts to push students to reflect critically on the text, enhancing their thinking skills and personal growth. This aligns with the literature review findings, which suggest that literary texts promote pleasure, exploration of human experience, and personal growth (Carter & Long, 1991; Collie, Slater, & Swan, 1987; Hall, 2015). Moreover, the study findings reflect Rosenblatt's (1995) emphasis on the democratic potential of literature, which can be realised through meaningful encounters with texts. Some of the participants' purposes align with this view, aiming to provide students with a living through experience that fosters joy and increased criticality.

The contribution to the existing body of knowledge this discussion brings about is highlighting how Algerian teachers use literary texts to foster personal growth and criticality. It provides qualitative evidence supporting the use of culturally relevant and contextually appropriate literary texts for enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. Furthermore, it underscores the transformative potential of literature in promoting democratic values and personal growth in higher education settings, aligning with and extending the theoretical frameworks of Rosenblatt (1995) and Carter and Long (1991). This research adds a nuanced understanding of another pedagogical purpose that can bridge the gap between students' lived experiences and the literary curriculum in Algerian higher education.

8.3.5 Exploration of Language in Action

The study findings reveal a prominent theme across the interviews with teachers like Siraj, Fatima, Aisha, Meriem, Mamoun, and Zainab: the use of literary texts to foster linguistic competency and explore language in action. This theme aligns with several perspectives highlighted in the literature review, demonstrating the multifaceted role of literature in language learning and development, reflecting the views of Carter and Long (1991), Kramsch (1997), Collie and Slater (1990), Floare (2021), who asserted that literary texts promote vocabulary growth, argumentation (reading for writing), language enrichment, and oral accuracy.

The participants regularly viewed their use of literary texts in higher educational contexts as a means to enhance linguistic competence and explore language in action. Siraj, for instance, emphasised the multifaceted role of literary texts in improving language proficiency, particularly for non-native speakers. His expectation that students benefit from the exceptional language usage found in literary

works exemplifies this. Siraj's practice of engaging students with well-written texts, prompting them to analyse specific phrases, and encouraging oral discussions aligns with the views of Carter and Long (1991) and Hall (2015), who highlighted the role of literature in developing fluent reading and communication skills. Siraj believes that by encountering new vocabulary and engaging in discussions, students enhance their writing and oral skills. This aligns with the views of several scholarly works (e.g., Carter & Long, 1991; Collie et al., 1987; Hall, 2015; Teranishi et al., 2015), who highlighted the role of literature in developing fluent reading, communication skills, and expunction of vocabulary. However, in the context of higher education in Algeria, this practice encounters several challenges, as highlighted by Abdelaziz (2016), Kuider and Amine (2019), and Benzoukh and Said (2016). These challenges include obscure language in selected text, insufficient materials, and a lack of motivation.

Similarly, Fatima highlighted the value of African literary texts, which often use simple yet meaningful language structures. The inclusion of proverbs and native words invites students to appreciate the nuances and complexities of merging native languages with English. This practice aligns with several scholars' assertion that exposure to literary texts contributes to vocabulary growth, which may occur due to reading, as well as developing argumentative (reading for writing) and creative skills (e.g., Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Ellis, 1993; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989, 1990; Kramsch, 1997). Fatima's focus on proverbs and native words in African literature helps students understand the complexities of communication, enhancing their linguistic and cultural appreciation. Indeed, in the Algerian context, Nabila (2020) emphasises the importance of selecting culturally relevant texts that resonate with students' experiences and backgrounds, thus facilitating better engagement and learning outcomes. Likewise, Aisha's focus on exploring the "beauty" of literary texts emphasises the intrinsic linguistic capacity and competence involved in using symbols and literary devices. Her approach to exploring the language in action, such as analysing TS Eliot's use of Latin words and Eastern philosophy, challenges students to decipher complex linguistic elements. This view aligns with Teranishi, Saito, and Wales (2015), who highlight the benefit of focusing on literary form and discourse processing skills, tolerance of non-literal language and ambiguity in writing creatively and critically. Aisha's example of teaching early modern English texts further underlines the value of historical language forms in enriching students' understanding of language evolution and usage over time. However, findings from Yasmina (2012) revealed challenges encountered by students regarding the nature of canonical texts in Algerian universities, which suggests a need for reflection on curriculum redesign to better align with students' linguistic and cultural contexts.

While these teachers have emphasised the use of literary texts to explore language in action, participants like Meriem, Zainab, and Mamoun highlighted that this exploration often occurs implicitly. Meriem, for instance, argued that students experience a dual learning process, gaining both linguistic competence and cultural understanding. By immersing in literary texts of different languages and

cultures, students enhance communication skills and gain broader linguistic and cultural insights. She asserts that the primary benefit of literary texts is the learning and improvement of language skills, echoing Teranishi et al.'s (2015) and Hall's (2015) views on the multifaceted benefits of literature teaching. By engaging with literary works, students indirectly improve their language skills through exposure to new vocabulary, grammatical structures, and stylistic techniques. This is particularly relevant in the Algerian higher education context, where calls for integrating cultural elements, as suggested by Ghouti and Mohammed (2014), can help bridge cultural barriers and enhance both learners' success and teachers' efforts.

Likewise, Zainab's view of literary texts as a treasure for foreign language learners echoes the sentiment of Carter and Long (1991) and Floare (2021), who emphasised the significance of literature in developing language skills and cultural knowledge. By engaging with literary texts, students not only expand their vocabularies but also gain insights into cultural nuances and literary themes, enhancing their overall language learning experience. Similarly, while Mamoun views literary texts as "storage for culture," he also emphasised that they play a crucial role in improving language skills, especially for students focused on language learning. His emphasis on detailed textual analysis of literary techniques aligns with the perspectives of Collie and Slater (1990), who highlighted the role of literature in language enrichment, vocabulary growth, and developing logic in writing. Mamoun's view underscores the value of literary texts in providing a rich and immersive linguistic experience, supporting Kramsch's (1997) view that extensive reading schemes improve the quality of students' vocabulary. However, these practices must be contextualised within the Algerian higher education framework, where teaching methods often rely on lectures and there is a need for more interactive and relevant pedagogical approaches, as identified by Miliani (2012) and Saidani and Khecheni (2018).

The study findings demonstrate that teachers use literary texts as tools to explore language in action, enhancing students' linguistic competence and providing a deeper understanding of language usage in different contexts. This is particularly significant in the Algerian higher educational context, where the adaptation of the LMD system and the unique challenges faced by teachers and students necessitate innovative and responsive teaching practices. This purpose is consistent with various scholarly perspectives, demonstrating the multifaceted benefits of literary texts in language learning. By engaging with well-written literary works and analysing specific linguistic elements, students develop critical language skills and a richer appreciation of the complexities of language and literature.

8.4 The Way of Using Literary Texts in Algerian Universities

This section's findings explore the answer to the third research question: How do Algerian university literature teachers use literary texts within the classroom? By exploring how teachers view their ways of using literary texts in the classroom through the themes emerging from the interviews and their ways of using it through the observed teaching setting, this section discusses these findings in relation to contextual and international literature around the subject and links them to theories, explaining how literary texts are used in real practice.

As highlighted in the literature review (see section 3.5), literature teaching can be used in multiple ways. However, these approaches and ways of using literary texts in educational settings can be categorised as originating from two contesting pedagogical views. These views emerged from debates in literary criticism and literary theory. One view follows the Formalist, New Critics, and structuralist methods of literary criticism, while the other can be categorised under reader response theories. The crux of the debate centres around their views towards the author, the text, the reader, and the context. The teaching of literature hinges on the potential continuum form, predominately efferent readings towards aesthetic readings, while also considering the degree to which "background information" and "knowledge about" a literary work (Rosenblatt 2005, p.113). These theoretical and pedagogical ideas, although having originated in the L1 context of teaching literature, have echoed in literature teaching in L1, L2 and EFL contexts (see sections 3.7, 3.8, and 3.10). The following discussion is informed by these views to examine the ways in which literary texts are studied in higher educational institutions in Algeria, an EFL context. This section will discuss the key findings in relation to these debates in the literature around teaching literature contextually.

8.4.1 Structured Interpretation

The findings from the interviews reveal a dominant theme of using literary texts to generate structured interpretations and responses among students. This way, articulated by teachers like Zainab and Bouthaina, involves equipping students with foundational literary knowledge and analytical frameworks before engaging them in the interpretation of the text, which aligns with more traditional pedagogical approaches such as those advocated by the New Critics and Formalist schools of literary criticism. In the context of Algerian higher education, this structured approach is particularly significant given the reported challenges and barriers highlighted by previous studies (Abdelaziz, 2016; Kuider & Amine, 2019). These include a lack of methodological implementation, the use of obscure literary texts, and the absence of clear objectives in literature teaching. The findings of this study suggest otherwise.

Zainab and Bouthaina's teaching methods align closely with what Rosenblatt (1995) describes as efferent reading, where the focus is on extracting information from the text rather than experiencing it. Zainab's systematic way or what she terms as "scientific technique", which progresses from basic concepts to advanced analysis, mirrors the New Critics' view of literary texts as an autonomous entity that can be objectively analysed. This way is characterised by its emphasis on literary language, figures of speech, genres, and the application of various critical lenses, such as the biographical approach. This method discourages personal interpretations in favour of a more formal analysis based on established literary frameworks and theories. Similarly, Bouthaina prioritises foundational literary terms and theories, ensuring students have a "road map" to guide their interpretations, thereby reducing the risk of students feeling overwhelmed by the text's complexity. Both Zainab and Bouthaina's ways underscore the role of the teacher in guiding students through a structured interpretative process. This structured way is beneficial in that it provides students with clear and defined frameworks, which can enhance their critical and analytical skills. This can also be an indication of the systemic implementation of the LMD system in Algerian universities, where it emphasises clear and structured module requirements (Saidani & Khecheni, 2018). However, it can also lead to a rigid interpretation process, as noted by Prezioso (2023), who criticises the US education context for promoting objective standard readings at the expense of personal, creative interpretations. The structured way, as seen through Zainab and Bouthaina's views, could potentially suppress the students' personal engagement with the text, a view that aligns with Rosenblatt's (1995) concern that such an approach neglects the reader's experience and the evocation of personal meaning.

The study findings also highlight the use of background and contextual information in guiding the literary response. Both Zainab and Bouthaina incorporate biographical and historical contexts to enrich students' understanding of literary texts. This practice is somewhat at odds with Rosenblatt's (1995) assertion that such background information should only be considered valuable if it enriches the reader's evocative literary experience. Rosenblatt's perspective suggests a more balanced approach, where the reader's personal engagement with the text is as important as the formal analysis. Indeed, Meriem's way of examining texts within their historical and authorial contexts helps students contextualise their analyses, leading to a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of the text. This way is particularly relevant in the Algerian context, given the cultural and linguistic barriers that students face (Kuider & Amine, 2019; Ghouti & Mohammed, 2014). This way supports a more nuanced interpretation, as advocated by Prezioso (2023), who differentiates between mere knowledge and deeper understanding. Moreover, Meriem encourages students to use high theoretical concepts and multiple perspectives, which could potentially bridge the gap between efferent and aesthetic readings, as suggested by Rosenblatt (1995).

The study findings from the focus group discussions highlight a mixed reception to the structured interpretation process. Students like B5 and B6 responded positively to the guidance and structure by acknowledging that it transforms their reading experience from passive to active; a purpose-driven process. Moreover, B3's description of the transformative journey from feeling coerced to appreciating the depth of the text highlights the potential of a structured process to facilitate deeper engagement. Similarly, B6's appreciation of specialised teaching methods, such as using a modernist lens, underscores the benefits of guided interpretations in fostering a meaningful reading experience. While these receptions can be seen as a positive indication of the structured educational system in Algeria, clarity and guidance are necessary to tackle the absence of a precise methodological implementation, as noted by Abdelaziz (2016). However, the initial resistance and feelings of being overwhelmed, as described by students like F1, highlight the potential drawbacks of a highly structured method. This aligns with Perry's (2022) critique of the rigid and exam-focused nature of literature teaching in the UK, which can stifle personal engagement and the liberating potential of reading.

The study findings reveal a strong inclination towards structured interpretative approaches in teaching literature grounded in formalist and New Critical traditions. While these methods provide essential analytical skills and foundational knowledge, they also risk overshadowing the personal, experiential aspects of reading. This is echoed in McRae's (1991) concern that such a process often focuses on extracting information rather than engaging with the text on a deeper and more personal level. The challenge for teachers, therefore, is to balance these structured ways with opportunities for aesthetic reading, where students can reflect on their personal responses and the emotional and experiential aspects of reading. Rosenblatt's (1995) transactional theory of reading advocates for such a balance, where the reading experience is seen as a transaction between the reader and the text, evoking meaning through personal engagement. While the study findings suggest that structured methods provide a solid foundation for literary analysis and are generally favoured by the students, they ought to be complemented by methods that allow students to explore and reflect on their personal responses as well. As Resnikoff (2012) suggests, assessing students' interpretations can be complex, and it is essential to encourage questions that foster understanding rather than merely testing knowledge. This balance is crucial for developing critical thinking and appreciation, as Perry (2022) advocates for reading as an act of liberation, moving beyond narrow examination purposes.

This discussion contributes to the understanding of literature teaching in Algerian higher education by contextualising structured interpretation methods within the LMD system and highlighting the unique opportunities and challenges faced by Algerian students and teachers. It underscores the need for a balanced approach that integrates both formal analysis and personal reflection, which can enhance the educational experience and address the specific contextual barriers identified in previous contextual studies (Abdelaziz, 2016; Kuider & Amine, 2019). This contribution is significant as it not

only aligns with but also extends the existing literature on pedagogical practices in Algeria, offering insights that can inform future curriculum development and teaching strategies.

8.4.2 Close Reading

The study findings from the interviews also highlight another strong theme among different teachers of using close reading practices in studying literary texts. The variations in their ways reflect a spectrum of approaches from formalist/New critics to more reader-response-oriented methodologies, as discussed in the literature review. The following discussion explores these practices in relation to theoretical perspectives on teaching literature, emphasising the contrast and alignment between these approaches' views towards close readings.

The study findings suggest that teachers like Zainab and Bouthaina employ close reading practices that align with formalist approaches. For instance, Zainab's way of guiding students through skimming and scanning techniques to build a structured understanding of vocabulary and sentence structure mirrors the formalist emphasis on textual analysis. This approach resonates with the New Critics' focus on efferent reading, where the goal is to extract concrete information from the text (Rosenblatt, 1995). Similarly, Bouthaina's way of having students identify literary terms first and find examples within the text exemplifies the formalist methodology of dissecting the text to understand its components and the author's techniques. Likewise, Siraj's close reading method reflects a similar approach, particularly in his reliance on historical and cultural references to uncover deeper meanings within the text. By prompting students to consider questions about the author's intentions and the historical information, Siraj emphasises a New Critics' belief in the autonomy of the literary work and the importance of digging deeper for objective analysis. This method aligns with the formalist perspective that considers background information and authorial intent as tools to enrich the reader's understanding (Rosenblatt, 1995).

In contrast, the study findings suggest that teachers like Imane and Fatima employ close reading practices that incorporate elements of the reader-response theory, which emphasise the reader's role in creating meaning. For instance, Imane's way of reading texts aloud and focusing on different literary elements based on the passage suggests a more holistic and flexible approach. This practice aligns with Rosenblatt's (1995) view that reading should be an evocative experience where meaning is constructed through the reader's interaction with the text. Imane's anticipation that students will have pre-read the texts and familiarised themselves with relevant themes indicates an emphasis on the reader's engagement and prior knowledge, which are crucial in the reader-response framework. Creatively, Fatima's use of close reading practices as a preliminary step for students to retell texts from the point of view of characters reflects an innovative application of reader-response theory. By encouraging students to internalise the story and retell it in their own words, Fatima fosters a

transactional relationship between the reader and the text. This way underscores Rosenblatt's (1995) argument that the teaching of literature should empower students to evoke and reflect on meanings through their reading experiences. The performative aspect of Fatima's way also introduces a dynamic and interactive element that contrasts with the static interpretation often associated with formalist readings.

The study's findings suggest that teachers employ a range of close reading practices, which can be placed on a continuum from efferent to aesthetic readings, as described by Rosenblatt (2005). On the one hand, Zainab and Bouthaina's practices represent a more efferent approach, focusing on extracting specific information and understanding the text's formal elements. On the other hand, Imane and Fatima's methods lean towards aesthetic readings, where the reader's personal engagement and interpretation are as important as the text.

A critical point of convergence and divergence observed in these teachers' ways is the role of background information and its impact on the close reading practices. Both the New Critics and Rosenblatt (1995) acknowledge the value of historical and contextual knowledge but caution against allowing it to overshadow the literary reading experience. Siraj, Zainab, and Bouthaina's integrations of historical and contextual elements aim to deepen the textual analysis, while Imane and Fatima focus more on enriching the reader's personal connection with the text. A balance between providing background information and fostering an evocative reading experience is essential for developing students' critical and reflective skills (McRae, 1991; Rosenblatt, 1995), which seems to be varied throughout the teachers' practices. It could be argued that the close reading practices associated with formalist approaches provide a structural framework that can help Algerian EFL learners to develop a foundational understanding of literary texts. However, integrating close reading practices, leaning towards reader-response approaches, can enhance students' engagement and foster a deeper appreciation of literature, encouraging them to draw on their own experiences and perspectives (Ali, 1993; McRae, 1991; Zainal et al., 2017). It is, therefore, essential to strike a balance and a blend of different pedagogical approaches to enhance students' literary understanding and appreciation.

In the context of Algerian higher educational institutions, this study's findings respond to the challenges identified by Abdelaziz (2016), Kuider and Amine (2019), and Benzoukh and Said (2016). The difficulties faced by students in engaging with literary texts due to language barriers, and reported lack of clear methodological frameworks, underscore the importance of diversified close reading practices. These practices, as employed by the teachers in this study, offer potential solutions to these challenges. For instance, Zainab and Bouthaina's formalist approaches provide a structured methodology that can help students overcome language difficulties by focusing on textual elements. On the other hand, Imane and Fatima's reader-response approaches can address motivational issues by making literature more relatable and engaging for students. Moreover, this study's findings address

challenges in implementing cultural texts, as highlighted by Ghouti and Mohammed (2014) and Nabila (2020), through the varied close reading practices observed in this study. By incorporating historical references, teachers like Siraj enhance students' understanding and bridge the gap between Algerian students' experiences and literary texts.

The contribution to knowledge this discussion brings about is multifaceted. Firstly, it provides qualitative evidence of how different close reading practices can be effectively employed in the Algerian context to address specific challenges in teaching literature. Secondly, it underscores the importance of balancing formalist and reader-response approaches to cater to diverse student needs and enhance their engagement with literary texts. Finally, it highlights the potential of integrating culturally relevant texts and contextual knowledge to enrich the literary learning experience in Algerian higher educational institutions. This study not only aligns with existing literature but also extends it by offering practical insights for improving literature teaching practices in Algerian contexts and similar EFL contexts.

8.4.3 Evocative Reading and Critical Discussions/ Critical Analysis and Interpretation

The study findings from the interviews and the classroom observations reveal a shared theme of using literary texts to immerse students in evocative readings and to foster critical discussions. The study findings align with various theoretical perspectives and reflect both the potential benefits and inherent challenges in engaging students deeply with studying literary texts in classrooms. The study findings provide a nuanced understanding of how the intentions and the practices manifest in a real classroom setting and their implications for teaching and learning.

The study findings from the interviews and observations consistently highlight the importance of creating dynamic and interactive learning spaces where students are encouraged to deeply examine literary texts. Teachers like Anas, Bouthaina, Mamoun, and Rihab emphasised group discussions, debates, and personal interpretations, aligning with Rosenblatt's (1995) notion that literature teaching provides a living through experience. For instance, Anas's preference for group discussions and relying on supplementary materials and "background information", as noted in the interviews, resonates with Mamoun's classroom practice of linking characters and themes to broader societal contexts. Anas explained his usage of group activities to explore themes in novels, allowing students to share their personal interpretations and build on each other's ideas. Similarly, in the classroom observations, Mamoun engaged students with the character of Mr. Norton in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, prompting a discussion on themes of race, identity, and societal roles. When a student, K1, highlighted that Mr. Norton seemed more afraid than anything else, Mamoun encouraged the class to draw connections between Mr. Norton and other figures like Brother Jack and Ralph Waldo Emerson

to deepen the analysis. In another instance, a student, K2, challenged Mamoun's interpretation of the theme of memory in *Invisible Man*, arguing that the prologue's portrayal of a stereotypical black robber reflects societal stereotypes rather than generational uneasiness. This aligns with McRae's (1991) assertion that literary analysis should encourage free play with meanings and foster high theoretical exposition. By encouraging students to connect characters and themes to broader societal and contextual information, Anas's intentions and Mamoun's practice support McRae's (1991) notion that holistic discussions can lead to new ways of seeing and understanding literary texts. This practice also fosters students' capacity to reflect critically on their reading process, aligning with Rosenblatt's (2005) belief that the teacher's role is to facilitate these interactions and help students evoke meaning through their reading experiences. This practice also aligns with Prezioso's (2022) advocacy for an understanding-based approach to teaching literature, where students move beyond merely acquiring knowledge to developing deeper meanings and interpretations. This is particularly relevant in the Algerian context, where the LMD system has been adopted to enhance the quality of higher education (Saidani & Khecheni, 2018). The emphasis on interactive and reflective learning aligns with the overarching design of the LMD reform, which aims to be inclusive and participatory.

Similarly, Bouthaina's method of using debate formats to discuss novels and her emphasis on diverse perspectives parallels Rihab's encouragement of students to share their personal interpretations and emotional reactions to the texts. Bouthaina highlighted in the interview how she organises debates on controversial topics within novels to stimulate critical thinking and diverse viewpoints. This aligns with the classroom observations of Rihab, who prompts students to express their emotional responses to Franz Kafka's *The Trial*. For instance, R3 interprets the novel as a metaphor predicting the Holocaust. In another instance, R4 reflected on the irony in T.S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. These examples promote personal and creative interpretations, contrasting with the rigid, knowledge-based teaching critiqued by Prezioso (2023) and supporting the idea that understanding literature involves building and developing meanings beyond the text (Perry 2022). These discussions facilitate a deeper personal engagement with the texts, highlighting the role of personal responses in literary analysis, thus enhancing students' critical judgement and appreciation of literature (Rosenblatt, 1995).

Despite the shared emphasis on critical discussions, both the interviews and observations reveal significant challenges, a tension between teachers' intentions and students' experiences. In the observations, while students engage deeply with the texts, the question arises of how to assess this engagement effectively. This was highlighted when Rihab hesitantly agreed with R8's interpretation of the title *Breakfast of Champions* as reflecting a capitalist action rather than directly relating to the novel's content, indicating the difficulty of balancing open-ended interpretations and assessing them, a challenge observed by Resnikoff (2012), who critiqued the traditional assessment methods that focus on factual knowledge rather than students' interpretative engagement. Moreover, A2's comments about feeling coerced into analysing texts in specific ways suggest a disconnect between

the teachers' efforts to encourage critical discussions and the students' experience of these discussions as restrictive. This reflects Prezioso's (2022) critique of the current state of literature teaching, which he describes as "more rigid than responsive," promoting objective readings while suppressing personal and creative interpretations. Similarly, A3 and A6's experiences of disagreeing with teacher-led interpretations and feeling constrained in their responses highlight the difficulty of balancing guided discussions with the encouragement of diverse perspectives. This challenge was also noted by Perry (2022), who advocated for teaching literature as an act of liberation that promotes social agency and cultural diversity. However, as Gibbons (2016) pointed out, the real practice often falls short of these ideals, failing to provide space for personal engagement in the classroom. These emerging tensions indicate the difficulty of balancing open-ended engagement with the assessment of students' interpretations. These findings reveal that in the Algerian context, there is a need for more reflective and balanced approaches to teaching literature, as highlighted by Abdelaziz (2016) and Yasmina (2012). There is a noticeable gap between international purposes, methodological implementation, and syllabus design that needs to be addressed to better align with students' needs and contextual challenges.

The contrasting views between teachers and students underscore the complexity of teaching literature in a way that both engages and empowers students. While teachers aim to facilitate evocative readings and critical discussions, students sometimes find these efforts to limit their intellectual exploration. This discrepancy suggests a need for a more reflective and balanced way that accommodates both guided interpretations and individual responses.

The study contributes to the existing knowledge by providing a detailed examination of the practical implementation of literary teaching methods within Algerian higher educational institutions. It highlights the alignment of these practices with theoretical frameworks and identifies contextual challenges unique to the Algerian educational context. Moreover, it underscores the importance of interactive teaching methods in enhancing student engagement and critical thinking. The findings call for a re-evaluation of assessment methods and a more flexible syllabus design that accommodates diverse interpretations, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and effective literature teaching in Algerian universities.

8.4.4 Exploration of Literary Concepts and Literary Theories

The findings from the observational data showcase a multifaceted use of literary texts to explore various abstract concepts and literary theories. The following discussion highlights these observed teaching practices and draws on the literature to compare and contrast elements of theoretical debates on literature teaching, highlighting the potential continuum from efferent to aesthetic readings.

In the Algerian higher educational context, teaching practices are influenced by several factors, including the recent adaptation of the LMD system and observed challenges in syllabus design and methodological approaches (Abdelaziz, 2016; Kuider & Amine, 2019). The study findings suggest that teachers like Siraj and Fatima explore literary concepts through an efferent reading practice, arguably influenced by the structured nature of the system. In Siraj's classroom, the exploration of literary concepts like *context* and specific terms from Emerson's *Self-Reliance* reveals an approach closely aligned with efferent reading practices, as defined by Rosenblatt (1995). Siraj's focus on understanding terms within their context rather than their literal meaning demonstrates a New Critical approach, emphasising the extraction of information and objective analysis of the text. A practice that resonates with the New Critics' view of the literary work as an autonomous entity, highlighting the public aspect of meaning and minimising personal interpretation.

Similarly, Fatima's way of teaching literary devices in Piop's *Africa* aligns with McRae's (1991) idea of putting a name to an effect, which can be seen as an efferent reading practice. The identification and labelling of devices such as anadiplosis, personification, and metaphor focus on extracting information from the text. While this way helps students recognise and understand literary techniques, it risks reducing the reading experience to a technical exercise, as critiqued by Rosenblatt (1995). However, Fatima's practice of encouraging students to find and discuss examples of these devices can be seen as a step towards aesthetic reading, where the recognition of these elements enhances the overall reading experience and personal engagement with the text. This practice aligns with Nabila's (2020) findings on the benefits of group discussions in enhancing personal engagement with literature.

Meriem's observation, however, is a clear example of teaching literary texts through the lens of the literary movement of realism. The detailed examination of Hamlin Garland's *The Return of a Private* and its realist features illustrates the traditional preoccupation with literary studies, which aligns with McRae's (1991) idea of putting a name to an effect, echoing the efferent reading practices. By focusing on the characteristics of realism and the socio-economic context of the story, Meriem's teaching aligns with the New Critics' emphasis on the objective analysis of texts. However, her way also incorporates elements of aesthetic reading by encouraging students to reflect on the complex human experiences depicted in the story, which enriches their literary experience. This dual approach of integrating both efferent and aesthetic elements of reading is crucial in the Algerian context, as it addresses the challenges identified by Benzoukh and Said (2016) regarding the absence of clear analytical strategies.

Contrastingly, Rihab's observation exemplifies a more nuanced approach to examining the concept of *context*. Rihab's discussion on the creation of *context* through narrative techniques and literary devices reflects a departure from a purely efferent reading. This aligns with Rosenblatt's (1995)

emphasis on the transactional nature of reading, where the reader's engagement and views are important. By encouraging students to interpret the changing contexts within *Hamlet,* Rihab fosters a more evocative and interpretive reading experience, enriching students' literary understanding beyond mere factual extraction.

The findings from the observed teaching practices reflect a dynamic interplay between efferent and aesthetic readings. Siraj's and Meriem's ways predominantly align with the formalist and New Critical methodologies, focusing on extracting and analysing information from and in relation to the text. In contrast, Rihab's, and, to some extent, Fatima's methods incorporate elements of reader response theory, emphasising personal interpretation and the evocative reading experiences of literary texts. The study findings underscore a needed balance for a holistic literary education, as suggested by Rosenblatt (1995) and McRae (1991). While efferent readings provide a foundational understanding of literary concepts and historical contexts, aesthetic readings foster personal engagement and critical reflection, allowing students to develop new ways of seeing and interpreting literature. This balanced integration of efferent and aesthetic readings in teaching literature can help address the challenges highlighted by Resnikoff (2012) and Prezioso (2023), who criticise the rigid and knowledge-dependent approaches prevalent in some educational contexts (USA and UK). Moreover, such a balanced way as observed in Rihab's and, to some extent, in Meriem's classes, resonates with Perry's (2022) advocacy for reading literature as a liberating act that promotes diversity and social agency, thereby encouraging students to connect their reading experiences to broader cultural and social issues, thus fostering a more comprehensive and empathetic understanding of literary texts. In the context of Algerian higher education, the findings contribute significantly to existing knowledge by responding to Abdelaziz's (2016) and Yasmina's (2012) calls for methodological clarity. It highlights how the integration of both efferent and aesthetic readings can address local pedagogical challenges of literature teaching in Algerian universities, thereby offering a groundwork that can potentially enhance literature teaching in Algerian universities.

8.4.5 Integration of Interdisciplinary Perspectives

The findings from the observational data highlight another way of teachers using literary texts as platforms for integrating interdisciplinary perspectives. This practice aligns with McRae's (1991) view that analysing literary texts can lead to free play with meanings and high theoretical exposition, facilitating new ways of seeing. The following discussion highlights how these practices lead to a more engaging reading experience.

The study findings from the observed teaching setting suggest that teachers engage students in a reading practice that merges efferent and aesthetic readings while also inviting "a free play with meanings and of high theoretical exposition". In the Algerian context, this study finding is particularly

significant given the reported challenges in literature teaching, such as the one highlighted by Abdelaziz (2016), who believes that there is an absence of a precise methodological implementation for English literature teaching in Algerian universities**.** Anas's teaching ways, as described in the observational data, exemplify how literary texts like *Heart of Darkness* can be examined through multiple lenses: historical; social; modernist; and psychological. By prompting students to explore the context of the Congo and historical events like the Berlin Conference of 1884, Anas encourages an efferent reading where students use factual information and link it to the text being studied. This practice is akin to the New Critics' approach, which views literary work as a body of information to be objectively analysed (Rosenblatt, 1995). However, Anas's way goes beyond the traditional efferent reading by incorporating elements that align with aesthetic reading. When Anas encourages students to draw comparisons between *Heart of Darkness* and Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* or to interpret characters' psychological motivations, he fosters a more evocative reading experience. This practice resonates with Rosenblatt's (1995) view that literature should provide a living through experience rather than merely knowledge about a work. Anas's interdisciplinary way enriches the literary experience, demonstrating that background information is valuable when it enhances readers' engagement with the text (Rosenblatt, 1995). Moreover, the study findings from the observations show instances where literature discussions address social and cultural contexts, empowering students to develop their critical interpretive skills. For instance, Anas's discussion on the portrayal of cannibals in *Heart of Darkness* challenges students to think critically about racial and cultural representations, reflecting on contemporary social issues. This practice aligns with Perry's (2022) advocacy for reading as a liberating act that fosters social agency. Prezioso (2023) and Perry (2022) highlight the need for teaching literature as an act of liberation, promoting diversity, cultural, and racial equity.

Similarly, In Fatima's observation, students interpret a poem's line, *"*the bitter taste of liberty*,"* by drawing on psychological and historical perspectives. This discussion not only highlights the contextual and historical aspects but also allows students to reflect on their experiences and feelings. Such a way aligns with Rosenblatt's (1995) assertion that teaching literature should improve individuals' capacity to reflect critically on the reading process, thereby evoking meaning. Likewise, in Bouthaina's observation, students use Greek mythology references to interpret *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses.* By linking characters to mythical figures and comparing structural elements, students engage in a holistic reading that combines efferent and aesthetic elements while also engaging in free play with theoretical concepts. This encourages students to see beyond the text, fostering deeper understanding and appreciation, which is crucial for developing critical judgement and joy in literature study (Rosenblatt, 2005).

Given the context of Algerian higher education, these interdisciplinary methods are pivotal in responding to issues highlighted by Yasmina (2012), who called for developing a well-structured

theoretical framework that could be implemented to reshape the goals of the foreign literature syllabus to include teachers' and students' choices**.** The study findings from the observational data underscore teachers' ways of integrating interdisciplinary perspectives in literature teaching, aligning with the broader debates in literary criticism and theory. By balancing efferent and aesthetic readings, teachers enrich students' literary experiences, fostering critical interpretation and deeper understanding. This way aligns with the views of McRae (1991) and Rosenblatt (1995), emphasising the need for literature to be both informative and evocative. Furthermore, Nabila's (2020) practical example of group discussions for enhancing interactions and stimulating engagement aligns well with the interdisciplinary approach observed in this study. Ultimately, teaching literature through interdisciplinary lenses empowers students to engage critically and creatively with texts, promoting a holistic understanding that extends beyond the classroom.

The study findings contribute to the understanding of literature teaching in Algerian higher education by highlighting the integration of interdisciplinary perspectives despite existing challenges observed contextually (Kuider & Amine, 2019; Abdelaziz, 2016). By demonstrating how teachers like Anas, Fatima, and Bouthaina navigate these challenges through innovative teaching practices, this research underscores the potential for interdisciplinary approaches to enhance literary engagement and critical thinking among students. Moreover, it emphasises the need to reflect on methodological frameworks tailored to the Algerian context, echoing the calls of Benzoukh & Said (2016) and Yasmina (2012) for improved teacher preparation and curriculum design. This study, therefore, not only aligns with but also extends the existing literature by providing concrete examples of effective teaching strategies in Algerian specific cultural and educational settings.

8.5 SUMMARY

This chapter set to discuss the key findings presented in the analysis chapters, with each section dedicated to addressing specific research questions.

The first section focused on the initial research question, revealing that both teachers and students in Algerian higher education institutions have various levels of understanding and reasoning when considering what counts as a literary text. These insights are evident in how they view literary texts as representational and evocative, their views of the language in literary texts as containing both simple and complex words and grammatical structures, and their emphasis on the moral and ethical messages embedded within these texts. Additionally, they recognise the significance of literary texts as a means of cultural experience and their emotional impact on readers.

The following part focused on the second research question, revealing that there is a complex interplay of tension between teachers' personal preferences and institutional drives in relation to text

selections for study purposes. Then, it set out to discuss teachers' educational purposes for incorporating literary texts into teaching. These purposes include using literary texts to explore literary movements and theories, guiding students away from reading for pleasure to academic and specialised reading, examining literary works to understand diverse cultures and promote language comprehension and cultural awareness, encouraging personal growth and critical thinking through literature, and developing linguistic proficiency by studying language in action.

The final section examined the third research question, demonstrating how teachers employ literary texts in diverse ways in the classroom: from guiding students through structured interpretations and responses to employing various close reading techniques, from immersing students in evocative readings and encouraging critical discussions to exploring abstract concepts and literary theories; and finally, using literary texts as platforms to integrate interdisciplinary perspectives. The following chapter will serve as the study's conclusion, highlighting key contributions and recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This study has set out to explore the teaching and learning of English literature in Higher educational institutions in Algeria in four Algerian institutions (two universities and two Higher Colleges for Teachers). This concluding chapter summarises the study's key findings and answers the research questions. Then, it highlights the research's original contribution to knowledge on the methodological and theoretical levels. After that, it follows by highlighting some limitations, recommendations for teachers, for future research, and practical steps for policymakers to better the teaching and learning experience of English literature teaching in the context. Finally, a reflection on how this research has changed my perspective on the issue is shared.

9.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY AND ITS KEY FINDINGS

This research has aimed to explore the teaching and learning of English literature in the Algerian higher educational context. It sought to answer the following questions:

- What could be considered a literary text in the Algerian higher educational context?
- For what purpose is English literature introduced, read, and explored in Algerian universities?
- How do Algerian university literature teachers use literary texts within the classroom?

To answer these questions, this study has generated a considerable amount of in-depth data, which was then coded and organised according to the research questions guiding the study.

Answering the initial research question has revealed that both teachers and students in Algerian higher education institutions have various levels of understanding and reasoning when considering what counts as a literary text. Such views are different within the same institute. These insights are evident in how they view literary texts as representational and evocative, their views of the language in literary texts as containing both simple and complex words and grammatical structures, and their emphasis on the moral and ethical messages embedded within these texts. Additionally, they recognise the significance of literary texts as a means of cultural experience and their emotional impact on readers.

While discussing these findings, the thesis has highlighted how teachers' and students' views resonate with the debates in literature around the subject. For example, discussing question one has revealed that teachers and students view literary language as evocative and representational. A view that confirms McRae's (1991) assertion that literary language inherently involves evoking emotions.

The discussion has also highlighted how teachers and students view literariness in language through a cline of linguistic graduation, a view that confirms Carter and Nash's (1983) argument on the issue, although some students and teachers were leaning towards one spectrum of the cline than the other. That is, viewing literary language as involving dense vocabulary and complex grammatical structures or simple vocabulary and grammatical structures. However, the teachers and students agree on literary language as having the ability to convey deeper messages as moral values. Literariness is not a mere construct of texts only but transcends, and it is defined by the context (readers – learners). In this case, literariness is linked to moral values and messages. The discussion has also revealed that teachers and students view sophistication in capturing cultural experiences as a defining feature of literariness in language, a view that is highlighted by Carter and Long who see authentic literary texts as promoting cultural knowledge and intercultural experiences. Most importantly, students consider an emotional and transformative experience as a defining feature of literariness in language. A view that arguably aligns with McRae's (1991) concept of representational language.

Answering the second research question has revealed that there is a complex interplay of tension between teachers' personal preferences and institutional drives in relation to text selections for study purposes. Moreover, teachers' educational purposes for incorporating literary texts into teaching varies. These purposes include using literary texts to explore literary movements and theories, guiding students away from reading for pleasure to academic and specialised reading, examining literary works to understand diverse cultures and promote language comprehension and cultural awareness, encouraging personal growth and critical thinking through literature, and developing linguistic proficiency by studying language in action.

Discussing the findings from the second research question has revealed that the purposes of teaching and learning of English literature is challenged by a complex interplay between teachers' preferences of literary texts and institutional drives for text selection. This tension reflects a broader discourse on literary canon and educational curricula, as explored by Guillory (1993) and later highlighted by Emre (2023). Moreover, the purposes for incorporating literary texts into teaching practices varies and sometimes echoes the purposes of teaching in international contexts. These purposes include using literary texts to explore literary movements and theories, guiding students away from reading for pleasure to academic and specialised reading. A view that is observed by McRae (1991) on how literature teaching is considered a specialised subject and serves as a starting point to discuss literary context and literary periods, leading to new ways of seeing. The discussion has also revealed that teachers incorporate literary works to explore diverse cultures. Such a view is highly celebrated in international literature on the subject, where teaching literature is conceptualised to enhance personal growth and broadens human experiences (e.g. Hall 2015). That is, exploring texts in the classroom is believed to promote language comprehension and cultural awareness, encouraging personal growth and critical thinking through literature. Another salient purpose discussed is teachers' views of using

literary texts to develop linguistic proficiency by studying language in action, reflecting the views of Carter and Long (1991), Kramsch (1997), Collie and Slater (1990) and Floare (2021) who assert that literary texts promote vocabulary growth, argumentation (reading for writing), language enrichment, and oral accuracy.

Answering the third research question has revealed that teachers employ literary texts in diverse ways in the classroom: from guiding students through structured interpretations and responses, to employing various close reading techniques; from immersing students in evocative readings and encouraging critical discussions, to exploring abstract concepts and literary theories; and finally, using literary texts as platforms to integrate interdisciplinary perspectives.

Discussing the findings from the third research question has revealed that teachers tend to employ diverse ways of using these texts in classrooms. These ways are arguably originated from two contesting pedagogical views, which emerged from debates in literary criticism and literary theory. Generally, the discussion highlights that teachers' ways differ; they tend to employ several ways from these theories in practice. First, the findings suggest that teachers guide students through structured interpretations and responses, a practice that could be arguably beneficial in that it provides students with clear, defined frameworks, which can enhance their critical and analytical skills. However, it can also lead to a rigid interpretation process, as noted by Prezioso (2023), who criticises the US education context for promoting objective standard readings at the expense of personal and creative interpretations. Second, the findings suggest that teachers use close reading practices in studying literary texts in several ways; a practice that varies in its application and reflects a spectrum of approaches from formalist/New critics to a more reader-response-oriented methodologies. Third, the findings highlight a shared theme from the interviews and observations of immersing students in evocative readings and encouraging critical discussions. However, there is tension between teachers' intentions and students' experiences, especially when the question arises on how to assess students' critical engagements. Students' experiences reveal a feeling of being coerced into analysing texts in specific ways. Such a view reflects the dispensary between intentions and practice and reveals a state of teaching literature that is a similar "more rigid than responsive", a critique observed by Prezioso (2023, p.135). Forth, the findings reveal that teachers use literary texts to explore various abstract concepts and literary theories. A practice that also varies in its application from one teacher to another, where some teachers prefer identifying literary concepts and then extracting extorting examples from texts, a practice critiqued by Rosenblatt (1995) to reduce the literary reading experience to a technical exercise, to discussing concepts from the students' reading experience and narrative devices, highlighting the reader's engagement with the text. Lasty, the findings reveal that teachers use literary texts as a platform to engage students with integrating interdisciplinary perspectives in discussions. A practice that could be seen as an intense activity of free play with meaning and of high theoretical exposition. Such a practice of teaching literature through

interdisciplinary lenses empowers students to engage critically and creatively with texts, promoting a holistic understanding that extends beyond the classroom.

9.3 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

Prior to this study, we had little knowledge about English literature teaching in second language contexts, let alone the foreign language context (Hall, 2015) and the Algerian higher educational context per se. The study findings make an original contribution to knowledge on the following levels. First, it is believed that this research is the first of its kind to attempt and explore teaching and learning English literature in higher educational institutions through a purely qualitative research design. The views shared by teachers and students alike seek to address a significant methodological gap in the literature; the Algerian higher educational EFL context. As indicated throughout the literature review, there are no prior qualitative studies, to the researcher's knowledge, that have explored teachers' and students' views in Algerian higher educational context in depth. Most of the Algerian literature that was reviewed employed surveys as their main data collection tool, which do not provide deep insights into the teaching and learning of English literature. This research has voiced teachers' and students' views and will serve as a foundational support for further research in Algeria and in the EFL context.

Second, by exploring teachers' and students' views of literary texts, the study makes two theoretical contributions on the level of literariness as seen in the Algerian EFL context. First, while the findings suggest that literariness is a linguistic construct, as evidenced by Nash and Carter (1983), the findings suggests that literariness can be reflected in the ability to convey deeper messages interpreted as moral values. Second, while the study findings suggests that literary texts can be used to explore culture, they also suggest that literariness is linked to the text's ability to represent culture through sophistication. This new knowledge is an important element in understanding what counts as literary is the Algerian EFL context.

Third, using Rosenblatt's (1969) transactional theory of reading as a main theoretical lens in this study to examine using literary texts in practice has provided richer insights one the issue. The researcher does not claim that using these lenses for discussion is the only way to examine the practice of teaching and learning literature in an EFL context. However, understanding the practicalities of teaching through these lenses has helped to understand what it is like to teach and learn literature in the Algerian context. This study appears to be one of the first attempts to theoretically examine the teaching and learning of English literature through these contesting theoretical views, making it an original contribution to knowledge on efferent and aesthetic reading methods in Algerian literature teaching and learning. Further research on English literature teaching in Algeria could build on and extend this.

Fourth, the study has enhanced our understanding of the institutional impact on text selection, an impact of Algerian higher education ministry policies on teachers and their choices. It is hoped that these findings will inspire policymakers to include teachers and ensure their views are heard in the process and move away from top-down policies. If considered, this process of inclusion could ameliorate the teaching and learning experiences and minimise challenges.

9.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is worth acknowledging that there are limitations of this study. Firstly, similar to other qualitative research, this study is constrained by its inability to generalise findings about teaching and learning English literature in Algerian higher educational institutions due to its small-scale nature, involving only ten teachers and their respective students. While qualitative research aims to provide in-depth insights rather than broad generalisations, the findings can still hold broader relevance. Despite the participants being dispersed across various regions of Algeria, including the south, north, east, and west, the data generation process faced constraints due to COVID-19 limitations. Nevertheless, the sample was diverse, encompassing participants of different levels, academic backgrounds, training, specialisations, lengths of experience, and ranks. Moreover, the centralised higher education system ensures a degree of uniformity. Therefore, the findings could offer a broad understanding of the experiences of Algerian literature teachers across the country, potentially having wider relevance.

Secondly, a significant limitation is that interviews and observations can only capture a snapshot of ongoing teaching practices and the contemporary understanding of literariness, purposes, and ways of teaching. However, these methods reflect the regulation processes of the institutions and the personal, professional, and political circumstances at a particular point in time. Consequently, while replicating the study might yield findings similar to the current study, it could also uncover new insights.

Moreover, the researcher’s positionality as an international student in the UK, sponsored by the Algerian Higher Education Ministry, could have influenced the participants' willingness to express their opinions freely during the interviews and observations due to the Hawthorne effect. To mitigate this, considerable efforts were made to establish trust and ensure the confidentiality of participants' data, including providing an information sheet detailing how their data would be handled.

In summary, while these limitations are inherent in qualitative research, they do not undermine the value of the study's findings. Despite the constraints, the study provides meaningful insights into the teaching and learning of English literature in Algerian higher educational institutions, with potential relevance beyond the immediate context.

9.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

The findings suggest that there seemed to be guidelines for literature teachers to follow. As described by literature teachers, these guidelines are not precise and only refer to topics for teachers to explore in their classrooms. This canvas needs to be updated based on the teachers' feedback on their learning practices. Therefore, an annual feedback form issued by the relevant committee at the Ministry of Higher Education could help ensure that teachers' voices on the subject are listened to. Moreover, there were several instances where students were not sure what was expected from them during their learning on the subject because there was an absence of a learning agreement between teachers and students explaining the purpose of the course and the relevant learning materials and even assessment criteria. Therefore, it is high time for relevant policymakers to ensure that teachers of literature are aware of the importance of such written communication between teachers and learners, to establish that all parties in the learning environments are working towards the same purpose and are aware of the requirements to fulfil such aims from the learning activities, reading materials to cover, assessments etc. The findings also suggest that teachers' practices differ from one institution to another, even within the same institution. This means there is no consensus on how teaching and learning should occur. Therefore, a national annual conference for literature teachers to share practices and feedback, supervised by relevant ministry policymakers, could help create a ground for nurturing a communal practice based on the teachers' shared knowledge. Moreover, similar quarterly workshops could be set up at each institute's level to ensure that literature teachers share their teaching practices and reflect on them. More importantly, policymakers need to establish a feedback cycle from the bottom up, that is, anonymised feedback forms from students to teachers and, based on the results, another feedback cycle from teachers to officials at the institutions until it reaches the relevant committee at the ministry. Such a feedback cycle could be an invaluable tool to assess and ensure that the teaching and learning instructions are balanced across the institutions and can inform the adaptation of new policies.

9.5.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings revealed a potential mismatch between how teachers discuss their teaching practices, their intentions in selecting and adopting literary texts, and the reality of their teaching practices as perceived by their students. While this inconsistency was implicit in Chapter 7, it was not thoroughly analysed. Nevertheless, this observation calls for deeper exploration, as it raises critical questions about the alignment between teaching intentions and student experiences.

This thesis provides literature teachers with reflective opportunities to consider their views of literary texts, their purposes, teaching methods, and their students' responses. Although the findings do not represent reality, they emphasise the importance of fostering reflection on teaching practices to bridge this apparent gap. For instance, establishing regular peer observation sessions, where teachers are

observed by colleagues and provided with reflective feedback, could enhance their teaching practices. Likewise, creating an anonymised feedback cycle for students after each session could offer teachers valuable insights to refine and innovate their methods.

This present study has aimed to explore the teaching and learning of English literature in higher educational institutions. Yet, there is still significant scope for further research to improve teaching practices. For example, a longitudinal study could investigate newly assigned teachers' views on literature teaching and how their perspectives evolve. Such research could provide valuable insights into the professional development of teachers and inform strategies to support them in aligning their teaching practices with their evolving understanding of literature.

Future research could also explore the role of assessment in teaching and learning English literature in higher education. Studies might focus on how assessment criteria influence students' written responses and how these relate to their oral contributions in class. This could shed light on the interaction between classroom engagement and students' written production, providing a deeper understanding of how assessment shapes learning outcomes.

Additionally, studies might examine how teachers' intentions align with their actual classroom practices and explore the role of students' perceptions in shaping their engagement with literary texts. Employing qualitative methods, such as classroom observations and interviews, could provide a nuanced understanding of this dynamic. Such studies could further track teaching practices and identify patterns and shifts in alignment.

Research could also investigate strategies for fostering reflective practices among literature teachers, such as structured feedback mechanisms and peer mentoring programs. By examining these areas, future studies would not only enhance our understanding of the interplay between teaching intentions and practices but would also contribute to developing innovative strategies for improving the teaching and learning of literature in higher education.

9.6 General Reflections

Reaching this stage of my research project feels overwhelming yet incredibly fulfilling. Completing this project signifies not just the peak of one journey, but also the exciting onset of a new one. Throughout this experience, I have been able to delve deeply into a topic I am passionate about, honing my research skills and gaining invaluable insights along the way.

Working on this research project has been an enlightening journey. It has given me the opportunity to explore, learn, and practice research methodologies that are critical to understanding a topic I deeply

care about. One of the most profound realisations I had during this journey is that teaching and learning literature are multifaceted processes that mean different things to different people. This diversity of perspectives became particularly evident as I immersed myself in the data.

The enthusiasm of both students and teachers as they shared their experiences was profound and inspiring. However, this enthusiasm also presented a unique challenge: synthesising their diverse and rich accounts into a cohesive narrative. Each conversation and interaction added layers of complexity to the research, underscoring the importance of capturing the essence of their experiences.

My encounters with the students and teachers were not just informative; they were transformative. They encouraged me to recognise the significance of conducting research within a bounded system, where the goal is not merely to collect data but to truly understand and represent the experiences and the views of the participants. I felt a deep sense of responsibility to voice their views respectfully. This responsibility compelled me to approach the data with care, ensuring that the themes I generated were not only aligned with the research question but that they also provided a vivid, narrative account of the shared narratives.

While coding the data and generating themes, I aimed to create a structure that would do justice to the complexity and richness of the participants' experiences. This endeavour was more than a technical exercise; it was a narrative journey that required empathy, critical thinking, and a commitment to authenticity. As I navigated this process, my understanding of the topic deepened and evolved, influenced by the diverse perspectives I encountered.

In conclusion, this research journey has been a profound learning experience. It has reinforced the importance of meticulous research and the power of capturing human experiences. As I move forward, I carry with me the lessons learned and the narrative shared, ready to embark on the next phase with renewed passion and a deeper appreciation for the intricacies of research.

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APPENDICES

1.1. APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION SHEET

Project title: Understanding the status of teaching English Literature in Algerian Universities

Invitation:
I would like to invite you to take part in this research study. However, before you decide whether to take part or not please read the following information carefully so you will have an understanding about why this research is conducted and what your participation would involve. If, however, anything is not clear please do not hesitate to contact me.

What is the purpose of this research?
The purpose of this study is to explore why and how English literature is introduced at university levels in Algeria. It is believed that an understanding of these realities would lead us to acquire useful insight into teaching English literature in Algerian Universities.

Who is doing the study?
The study is being carried out by Ahcene Adjeb, a PhD student from the School of Language and Social Science at Aston University, Birmingham, UK.

Why I was asked to participate?
You have been asked to participate because you are a Student of English literature at Algerian Universities and your understanding on the issue is of high importance to this research.

What will happen if I take part in this study?
If you choose to take part in this study, please email me and we will arrange for a schedule for the data collection phase. This means that you will take part in a focus group interview where you can tell me about your understanding of literature and your experience of studying literature in your institution. It will entail too that I will participate in your classroom as an observer and sometimes a participant in the discussion. I will not intervene in the teaching process nor make any criticism. I am there to learn how the job is done! These interviews will be audio recorded and observation will be video recorded to help me out understand these issues. Also, your written essays will be scanned and anonymised. Please be assured that I will not share any information without your consent.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of taking part?
This study offers you the opportunity to reflect on your experiences as a student of English literature which may illuminate you to understand this a bit deeply about yourself as you will be answering questions and reflecting on it. You may find it meaningful to have a stay about the teaching of English in Algeria by sharing your understandings.

Can I withdraw from the study at any time?

Yes. Participants can withdraw at any time and do not have to have reasoning for doing this.

Will my taking part in the study be confidential?

All information collected during the research will be kept strictly confidential. No personal information (your name, your university, etc.) will be shared. Any details which could potentially identify you will be either removed or changed. That is full anonymity is granted for participants.

What do I need to do to participate in this research?

- You will allow me to video record certain classes of English literature teaching.
- You will allow me to observe and take notes while attending these sessions and I may participate in the discussion of classes.
- You will allow me to conduct and record an interview with you.
- You will allow me to scan your essay which will be anonymised.

Apart from not sharing my personal information, what will happen to the data?

- The data will be stored in a secure place where only I, the researcher, have access to it.
- My notes, as a researcher, will be kept securely with me as well. Only I, the researcher, have access to it.
- Some of the discussion that would emerge from the data may be published, but participants will be anonymised.
- The data collected will be available for the researcher and his supervisors to consult during the time of the research and later will be destroyed.

What if I have some concerns and wanted to contact you?

If you have any concerns about this study, you can contact me directly or my supervisors on the following:

Ahcene Adjeb Email: adjeba@aston.ac.uk

Dr. Marcello Giovanelli Email: m.giovanelli@aston.ac.uk

Dr. Chloe Harrison Email: c.harrison10@aston.ac.uk

Should you choose to take part in this study, you will be asked to keep this information sheet and asked to sign a consent form.

1.2. APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM

Project title: Understanding the status of teaching English Literature in Algerian Universities

By signing this form I agree that:

1. I am willing to participate in research led by Ahcene Adjeb

2. I have been given sufficient information about this research. The purpose and the implication of my participation this research has been explained to me and is clear.

3. I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate. I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reasons

4. I have been given the explicit guarantees that the researcher will not identify me by name or function in any reports using information obtained from this study and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.

5. I understand that some of the emerging data may be later published. I will not be identified not any of my personal information.

6. I understand that all data will be destroyed after the researcher finish his study. I understand that some of the data will be used in the presentation of the final PhD dissertation as well as at academic journals and conferences.

7. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

8. Please indicate if you DO NOT wish to be video recorded: ----------

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Name of the participant	Date	Signature

1.3. APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FORM FOR LITERATURE TEACHERS

The Interview design

University: _____

Interviewee (Title and Name): _____

Been in the position for: _____years

Field of study: _____

Interviewer: Ahcene Adjeb

Interview Section Used:

_____ A: Interviewee Background

_____ B: Institutional Background

_____ C: The Literary Text

_____ D: Objectives of Using the Text

_____ E: Teaching and Learning Methods

_____ F: Students experiences with the text

_____ G: Closing questions

Other Topics Discussed:_____

_____

Post Interview Comments or Leads:

_____

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Teaching and Learning English Literature at the University

Introductory Remarks

Many thanks for agreeing to talk to me today. In order to facilitate note taking, I would like to audio record our interview. It is only researchers on this project that will be permitted to the recording which will be eventually destroyed after transcribed. Can you please sign in the Consent Form which is essentially to state that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) I do not intend to inflict any harm. Once again, thank you for agreeing to participate.

I have planned this interview to last no longer than one hour. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning. Thank you for understanding.

Introduction

The reason that you have been selected to talk about teaching and learning of English Literature in the Algerian University is that you have been identified as someone with a great deal of expertise in the field of teaching learning English Literature on this University. The research project on the whole focuses on understanding the realities of teaching and learning activities of English literature with the aspiration of improving the reading/learning event of the literary text. Of particular interest to this project is understanding the teachers understanding of the literary text, the teachers aims from using the literary text, the ways in which you make use of the literary text in the classroom, and the students' responses and involvement with the literary text. This study does not aim to evaluate nor judge your techniques of teaching or experiences. Rather, I am trying to learn more about teaching English literature in the Algerian universality, and hopefully learn about the students' engagement with the literary text.

A. Interviewee Background

Tell me more about how did you become an English literature teacher?

Probe: how do you think your academic career is reflected/influencing your teaching?

B. Institutional Background

Tell me about the teaching context at the university?

What resources/ materials are available to literature teachers for teaching and learning English Literature?

What rewards do teachers receive from the institution for engaging in innovative teaching/learning?

C. The Literary Text

How would you define a literary text? What constitute a literary text for you?

What would you say characterises the literary language?

D: Objectives of Using the Text

What is the purpose of using literary texts in this institute?

What do you think the student get from the literary experience?

Probes: I new perspectives? Personal growth? Democratic views? Linguistic competence? Etc.

E: Teaching and Learning Methods

How do you describe you teaching method?

What do you consider while selecting literary texts?

What kind of activities do you use?

F: Students experiences with the text

How do you think you students feel about learning literature at this institute?

Do you think they face any difficulties while reading the literary text?

How would you describe their responses to literary work? Are they similar? Are they creative? Do they have any prejudice against the literary text?

G: Closing questions

Would like to add anything that you see of importance regarding your teaching experience and thoughts about teaching literature at the university?

1.4. APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FORM FOR FOCUS GROUP STUDENTS OF LITERATURE

The Interview design

University: _____

Interviewee group: _____

Level: _____

Field of study: _____

Interviewer: Ahcene Adjeb

Interview Section Used:

_____ A: Interviewee Background

_____ B: The Literary Text

_____ C: The Reading Experience

_____ D: Challenges and Difficulties

Other Topics Discussed:_____

_____

Post Interview Comments or Leads:

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Teaching and Learning English Literature at the University

Introductory Remarks

Many thanks for agreeing to talk to me today. In order to facilitate note taking, I would like to audio record our interview. It is only researchers on this project that will be permitted to the recording which will be eventually destroyed after transcribed. Can you please sign in the Consent Form which is essentially to state that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) I do not intend to inflict any harm. Once again, thank you for agreeing to participate. I have planned this interview to last no longer than one hour. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning. Thank you for understanding.

Introduction

The research project on the whole focuses on understanding the status of teaching and learning of English literature with the aspiration of improving the reading/learning event of the literary text. Of particular interest to this project is understanding the students' conception of literature, the experience of reading the literary text, the difficulties you encounter while reading. This study does not aim to evaluate nor judge your techniques or experiences. Rather, I am trying to learn about the students' engagement with the literary text.

A. Interviewee Background

What made you decide to take literature as a major?

B. The Literary Text

What constitute a literary text for you?

What would you say characterises the literary language?

What is that you think is the value of literary language?

C: Studying Literature at This Institution

How are you encouraged to reading literature? Respond to it? Link it with social life?

Do lectures impose a certain way of thinking about literature? Reading it? Responding to it?

How would you respond to the literary work?

Is your reading to literature at the university different from your reading outside university?

D: Challenges and Difficulties

What difficulties you face while reading the literary text?

1.5. APPENDIX 5: PHD STUDENT RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL FORM (REC1)

PLEASE NOTE: You MUST gain approval for any research BEFORE any research takes place. Failure to do so could result in a ZERO mark

Name	**Ahcene Adjeb**
Student Number	**170231912**
Proposed Thesis title:	**A Qualitative Case Study Research Design: Understanding the Status of Teaching English literature at Algerian Universities**

Please type your answers to the following questions:

1. **What are the aim(s) of your research?**

   To explore the status of teaching English literature in Algerian Universities. More precisely, the understanding of Algerian University teachers of the literary work, their understanding of the purpose of teaching English literature, and how the teaching is carried out to fulfil the teachers' aims.

   The research will proceed from the following research questions:

1. For what purpose is English literature introduced, read, and explored in Algerian Universities?
2. How do Algerian University teachers of literature use the literary text within the classroom?

2. **What research methods do you intend to use?**

   This research project will adopt a qualitative approach to data collection/generation. It will make used of the following research methods to generate data.

   1. Classroom Observations

By making use of observations, I am aiming at understanding how teachers of English literature at tertiary levels in Algeria introduce and make use of a literary text and how students on the other hand interact with the text. The observations will be video recorded and carried out for one classroom session of three teachers from each university (case).

   2. Interviews

The semi structured interviews are designed to reveal the teachers' philosophy of what is considered literature, what is the purpose of using the literary text within the class, how they think is best to make use of the literary text, and difficulties they face. I am hoping to understand as well how the teachers' background is reflected in their choices and shaped their teachings. The semi-interviews will be carried out for three teachers form each university (case).

The focus group students' interviews will focus on understanding the students' conception of literature, their experiences in reading fiction and what difficulties they face throughout the

reading event. The semi structured interviews will be carried out for a maximum of 2 groups of maximum 6 student in each university (case).

3. Students' written responses

The documents in questions are the students' written responses to the literary works being used in the classroom. The purpose of collecting these essays is see how students engage with reading the works and express their responses in written forms. The document in question will be scanned and collected only from the students who participated in the focus group interviews.

- Piloting

I intend to visit Oran University for piloting the data generation tools. I am hoping to see whether the methods are yielding adequate results especially the question of the interviews.

Having piloted the tools and reflected on what works and what needs improvement – I will then continue the data generation phase. By the end of the period of this period, I will have four sets of data to explore the teachers understanding of what constitute a literary work, the purposes of teaching literature and the ways in which this teaching is carried out from different universities (case studies).

The three sets of data will be stored in a password-protected online Box file and uploaded to NVivo for organisation and later analysis. At this point, I will have had a strategy and a framework for data analysis.

3. Please give details of the type of informant, the method of access and sampling, and the location(s) of your fieldwork. (see guidance notes).

On the 2nd of September, I officially asked the ministry of higher education to issue for me a permit so I can visit the Algerian Universities for the data generation phase of my research. I have received an official letter to facilitate this process on the 10th of October.

I have also been in contact with prospective teachers/professors of English literature so they can facilitate finding suitable keen teachers to take part into the study. The preliminary piloting study and snowballing for prospective teachers will start from my contact at Oran University: Professor Miliani Mohamed and Professor Fatiha Kaid Berrahal. These teachers have been contacted to elicit primary interest into taking part in the study without giving full details about the study.

The plan is that I will elicit prospective universities and selection with the help of these contacts at Oran University. To this day, I am considering working with a maximum of three-four universities from different places in Algeria (West, Centre, East and South). Each case will be composed of 03 teachers and 12 students.

The participants at this study are teachers and students of English literature from Algerian Universities (tertiary level of instruction). That is to say, all participants are adults.

4. Please give full details of all ethical issues which arise from this research

This project will raise some ethical issues for data generations and participants' rights. These issues are: Data Protection, Confidentiality and Anonymity. These issues are interrelated when it comes to the methods being used in addition to the particularity of each method.

1. Data protection

The right for participants to know how and why the data is generated and to whom it will be available for/dissemination is trigged while generating the data with the previously mentioned methods.

2. Confidentiality

The steps or the policy to keep the data safe. That is how the data will be stored and who is permitted to have access to it. These steps need also to be clear for both the participants and the researcher.

3. Anonymity

Details that could potentially identify any participant from the data being gathered is also triggered. The question of anonymising the participants is raised. Would there be a danger from sharing personal information or not? For the purpose of this study, I will anonymise students and teachers' personal information to protect their identities.

5. What steps are you taking to address these ethical issues?

Informed consent will be sought from participants before data generations. Also, information sheet will be accompanied to make sure the participants understand the scope, the aims of the research and their rights for voluntary participation and data protection, confidentiality, anonymity, and more importantly the right to withdraw if they wish too at any time.

I intend to protect participants' anonymity, confidentiality, and data generated by following these steps:

- Teachers' names and students will be anonymized where any data is reproduced for analysis.
- Data will be kept electronically on USB driver and later uploaded to BOX file while I and my supervisors only will have access to it.

To avoid causing potential offenses or emotional harm for the participants and/or universities, or even violating law against data protection. I will be selective in my choice of data to be read and analysed focusing only on the issues with relation to the research aims. The following discussion, for example, will be avoided:

- Topics dealing with sensitive issues.
- Topics that could harm participants and/or universities

These issues will be discussed with supervisors to make sure not to harm individuals.

As for the process of data generation tools, I am planning to make use of participant-observation, as it will allow me to be a member of the group, and by playing a dual rule of observer/participant I can mitigate the effects of the challenges mentioned earlier. That is, the challenge of acting unnaturally. Moreover, it is also recommended to have participant-observers in adult learning context.

As for interviews, a procedure of making sure the participants understand their rights of anonymity and data security for both the teachers and students will be held to explain these issues, and all the data generated will be recorded and kept confidential in a Box file for later analysis.

6. **What issues for the personal safety of the researcher(s) arise from this research?**
7. **What steps will be taken to minimise the risks of personal safety to the researchers?**

Minimal personal safety issues are likely to arise from this research. As will be mainly dealing with adult learners and teachers in a higher institution during the data collection phase. I imagine that no harm will be done during teaching sessions at universities. During this phase, I will be staying at hotels and will update my supervisors about my location regularly. After that, the rest of the research will be carried out from Aston University. One potential risk might be the over usage of computers, but I will try to keep up with my schedule of no more than 5 hours per day with little breaks from time to time.

Statement by student investigator(s):

I consider that the details given constitute a true summary of the project proposed

I have read, understood and will act in line with the LSS Student Research Ethics and Fieldwork Safety Guidance lines.

Name	Signature	Date
Ahcene Adjeb	Ahcene Adjeb	21/10/19

Statement by PhD supervisor

I have read the above project proposal and believe that this project only involves minimum risk. I also believe that the student(s) understand the ethical and safety issues which arise from this project.

Name	Signature	Date
Marcello Giovanelli	Marcello Giovanelli	30/10/19
Chloe Harrison	Chloe Harrison	06/11/19

This form must be signed and both staff and students need to keep copies.

1.6. APPENDIX 6: MINISTRY PERMISSION FOR DATA COLLECTION

الجمهـــورية الجزائريـــة الديمقراطيـــة الشعبيـــة
وزارة التعليم العالي و البحث العلمي

مديرية التعاون و التبادل ما بين الجامعات
نيابة مديرية التكوين و تحسين المستوى بالخارج و الإدماج.

رقم : ٩٩٢ م.ت.ت.ب.ج/ م.ف.ت.ت.م.خ

الجزائر في : 10 OCT. 2019

شهادة

أناالممضي(ة) أسفله ، **السيدة بلهوشات كريمة**

المديرة الفرعية للتكوين وتحسين المستوى بالخارج والادماج بمديرية التعاون والتبادل مابين الجامعات على مستوى وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي، أعطي موافقتي للسيد(ة) **عاجب أحسن** طالب متفوق تخصص لغة أنجليزية إستفاد من منحة دراسية وطنية لتحضير شهادة الدكتوراه (**Ph.D**) بالمملكة المتحدة (بريطانيا) في إطار البرنامج الإستثنائي للغة الإنجليزية، بجمع المعلومات والبيانات وقيام بمقابلات مع الطلبة والأساتذة على مستوى الجامعات الجزائرية ، إضافة الى حضور بعض الحصص وذلك لما فيه من اهمية لاستكمال البحث البيداغوجي .

وعليه أرجوا منكم تمكين المعني من إجراء بحثه.

سلمت هذه الشهادة للمعني(ة) لإستعمالها في حدود ما يسمح به القانون.

Letter of “permission for data collected letter,” issued by the ministry, which is written in Arabic.

The letter reads as follows: ‘I am signing underneath Ms. Belhouchet Karima, Sub-Directorate for Training and Improvement Abroad and Integration at the Directorate of Inter-University Cooperation and Exchange at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. I give my approval and permission to Mr. Adjeb Ahcene, an excellent English language student who has benefited from a national scholarship to prepare for his Ph.D. in the UK as part of the exceptional English program to gathering information and data and conducting interviews with students and professors at the level of Algerian universities in addition to attendance to some classes, as it is important to complete his research
I hope that you enable the concerned to conduct his research
This certificate has been handed to the concerned for use within the limits permitted by law.’

1.7. APPENDIX 7: CODE (EXAMPLE)

code	Sample of data segment
The purpose is to empower on a personal level	"I think they take away what I kind of what I hope is kind of what I've heard is that they take away this kind of in love of finding new their own ways to look at it at a text that even a text that may have seemed kind of opiec or maybe again little more complex than what they're used to they have found I think that's pretty empowering to see a 100 to have some to have been presented with a 100 year-old text with very kind of archaic like maybe a vocabulary and language and to have been able to really interact with it in the ideas presented in it and and bring their own thoughts …" – Anas ''There is something else which is how are they going to learn the text on a personal level … Personal growth? Yeah ... like learning from the content rather than the form ... and the author writing the text ... he has a purpose and a message in mind ... what is it? What do you think of it? And by doing that we are encouraging them to think critically …'' Siraj
The purpose is to explore the literary terms at work	''The idea is like … I want them to know first what an allegory is and what is an analogy because they were not familiar with figurative language ... that was the purpose of that session'' Bothaina ''I choose to teach and probably you know things like idiomatic expressions and again figurative language become kind of more important to teach and become kind of more pronounced when you're teaching cultures and other cultural contexts'' Anas
The purpose is to debate the viewpoints	''Yeah ... I think all that ...even the thinking process ... for example I gave them a quote I told them that Césaire said it ... the idea of the quote is that Africa is what it is today because the Europeans came to Africa … and if the Europeans did not come to Africa Africa would be something else because before the arrival of the Europeans Africans had such great civilizations and so on . ... so, I told them do you agree with this idea? They said yes and they start to argue and one student told me it would change because if Europeans did not come to Africa so they would not sell slaves …

	we will nor have slave trade meaning that no agricultural in America meaning no materials for industrial revolution meaning even Europeans ... they won't be as developed as they are now yeah ... you see how they …'' Fatima ''Yeah… to get them to speak and express themselves ... this way they learn the language and how to think … how to benefit from other people's experiences.'' Siraj
The purpose is to develop personal readings	''for example, 5th year then when they graduate and start teaching I want them to have a good idea or memories about Africa literature and make them read about it even if they don't have not read it just for the class ... but for pleasure and for their own …" Fatima "The objectives are class instruction because reading and one also an objective is how to make them autonomous learners and critical thinkers. For example, you give them an assignment. All what they do is that they go at and consult the internet for ready-made analyses. So, coming back to class I drop all their ideas out and I tried to show them that's what you have come back with from the internet I mean come back with is wrong and try to initiate them to sit and for…" Zaineb
The purpose is to enhance language competency	'' because if we talk about literature the minimum you can get is to improve your language'' Bouthaina I think there are many purposes for that...one is the language … because they are foreign to the language ... not natives speakers … And so ... when they are reading a text they are learning new words new vocabulary ... new phrases ... that help them to improve their language level ...'' Siraj (ENS)
The purpose is to link texts to literary theories	'Oh yeah... Here we have hobs theory ... here we have Darwin's theory ... oh this is this and this is that ... see here we have the struggle of the society ... you know they start linking.'' Bouthaina ''So ways of dealing with a literary text through different lenses for example sometimes initiating some approaches like biographical approach where used to check the kind of information about the writer's date of birth and other information like what he did in his life…For example there may be a difference between the way they used to read before being instructed in class and the way they do it

	after in the sense in the class they start discovering the theories and tools. It means how the text could be turned on from reading for pleasure reading academically'' Zainab
The purpose is to link text to historical setting	''Exactly …because these are novice student-to-literature and they need something to relate to so I tried to bring the program closer to civilization … he second one is to see how fictional setting ... while the author created the fictional setting to criticise the effects of Industrial Revolution ... so they will go back to the setting again'' Bouthaina "why the writer is saying that ... what about his background at that time … I mean all these aspects must be taken into consideration when teaching literary texts… link the text to its historical context... in order for them to make sense ...why are we dealing with this…" Siraj
The purpose is to build knowledge on literary works	"I knew that they would deal with a portrait of the Artist as a Young Man without the idea of the myth, but Ulysses was new to them…Have you noticed not all of them were talking about Ulysses" Bouthaina
The purpose is to build knowledge about African literary works	"I told them to go and check this writer ... she was born only in 79 she is young she is she has ...she wrote a lot of novels and they are all Best Sellers and you can just pick one of them and read it you will start liking African literature again and then they know that African literature is not about Things Fall Apart … a grain of wheat... they know that it is just the classics of African literature … yeah … We have contemporary works ...they are worthy of study..." Fatima "my purpose is to make them read African literature" Fatima
The purpose is to build knowledge on US and British Literature	"I feel like the students are getting a kind of kind of a survey class but a survey class of literature that is on par with the level they would get in higher education in my country so it is you know we we usually start as a Bachelors at the bachelor's degree level we usually have fun kind of prerequisite Humanities courses literary literature Humanities courses called interpretation of literature or things like this that are very similar in in curriculum to what I've seen here at the school so it's been kind of a very easy transition to go from the to come here to teach here .. ." Anas ''Yes, they were supposed to discover romanticism in both in British and American literature. Now this is all through a collaboration with colleagues and teachers. Otherwise the ministry said American and British literature and that is it. American and British literature is very

	vast. Which period? Which movement? what you to teach? What literary work? What to focus on? So, we decided with colleagues that this is what we should do it's like an official introduction to the literary analysis and we're going to start with modernism … this is the work we are going to tackle let's write poetry, so they'll discover different genre, so we managed to ...'' Bouthaina
The purpose is to develop new perspectives	"so, they will form new perspectives about this culture because they have these views that Africa is underdeveloped to the others and so on… but when they start reading it, they start to discover new things about it and new perspectives...their perceptions about Africa will change..." Fatima they linked that...so because the first class didn't get to this idea but the second class, they had they had this idea that even Europeans would be underdeveloped if they didn't come to Africa…" Fatima Yeah … these perspectives are generated from any literary texts ...'' Siraj "Interesting … it is like through the reading experience of the literary text they have some kind of New Perspectives? yes, I think so and even New Perspectives on their own intellectual inquiry" Anas
The purpose is to build knowledge on the literary language	"at the beginning I start asking them to read about books about them …understanding what is the novel …what is the feature of the novel …what is an author … what is a biographical novel… what is a semi biographical novel? … They need to know these" Bouthaina