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Challenges Encountering Literature Teachers of EFL Classes in Salahaddin University/ Erbil

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the factors underlying the challenges literature teachers face while teaching literature components at the university level. It also explores how literature teachers overcome challenges. The study tries to probe into three domains of challenges that are resulted from teachers themselves, from students, and from some external factors. To obtain data, fifteen literature teachers from English departments at colleges of Languages and Education in Salahaddin University- Erbil (SUE) participated as a sample of the study. A quantitative questionnaire and qualitative semi-structured interview questions are adopted as research instruments. It is concluded that the vast majority of the participants perceive the challenges resulted by students to be the most serious set of reasons behind the challenges. The researchers attributed the challenges resulted by the students to teachers' lack of both theoretical and practical knowledge about teaching literature effectively, and to the students' concentration on memorization rather than understanding and creativity in the process of learning.

Keywords: Challenges, Literature Teachers, Teaching Literature, EFL

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1- Introduction

Literature forms a significant part of the studied curriculum in English foreign language (EFL) departments. It is taught along with other linguistic materials in English departments in the universities of Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR). "Literature has always been an integral part of teaching foreign languages" (Hassan, 2018: p.15). Widdowson (1985) states that "Literature is language in use and cannot be separated from language" (cited in Sidhu, Fook, & Kaur, 2010: p. 54). Leech (1996: p.1) verifies this fact by saying, "we generally suppose that the literature cannot be examined in any depth apart from the language, any more than the language cannot be studied apart from the literature". It is taught because of its great value, "Literature has moral, aesthetic values, as well as linguistic values" (Gubair and Eltahir, 2019: p. 828). Literature can be used in EFL classrooms since it presents authentic sources for the readers. Besides, it improves students' language proficiency: literature promotes the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). It enhances students' vocabulary and grammar too. According to (Sidhu, Fook, & Kaur, 2010: p. 54) "A literature-enriched curriculum not only helps learners improve their reading and writing skills but more importantly helps them internalize grammar and vocabulary". Moreover, literature develops students' critical thinking abilities as it encourages students to make a reasonable judgment about the literary texts that they study and connect them to other aspects of their real life. Meanwhile, literature allows students to express themselves. Savvidou (2004) asserts "it can create opportunities for personal expression as well as reinforce learners' knowledge of lexical and

grammatical structure". Also, it enriches EFL students' cultural awareness. It is used "as the potential sources to know and identify the aspect of history, social, and culture of a foreign language" (Sugandi and Husnaini, 2015: p. 54). Furthermore, literature promotes motivation in the classroom and develops the sense of involvement with the target language by the students. However, students, as well as teachers, often experience great frustration and difficulties while studying or teaching literature. Teachers often think that teaching literature is full of challenges. Reasons rendering challenges can result from teachers themselves, their students, or some external factors. While much research is devoted to investigating the challenges literature teachers encounter when teaching literature in many EFL countries, none is available in IKR. The aim of the study is to explore the challenges and issues confronted by literature teachers in teaching the literature component in English departments at colleges of Languages and Education, at Salahaddin University- Erbil (SUE) / IKR, to investigate the causes of the difficulties, and how do teachers overcome the problems that they come across. The causes of the challenges are related to three main domains: teacher-related issues, student-related issues, and other external issues. Ultimately, the goal of the study is to find practical solutions to control the challenges or at least to reduce them. A qualitative questionnaire and quantitative semi-structured interview questions are adopted, to collect data about the problems under research,

1.1 Teachers' Challenges while Teaching Literature Components According to many studies, EFL literature teachers inevitably face serious challenges when they teach literature. While a large number of researches have shown that both teachers and students are responsible for the challenges, few studies have been

conducted on the challenges resulted by some other external factors related to the classroom environment. Sometimes, challenges are caused by the teachers themselves. They originated from teachers' lack of preparation in the area of literature teaching in EFL. Sometimes, teachers are not well qualified or trained to teach literature. To Chesterman (1983: p.136) one of the factors that bring about challenges is "the teaching approach" or teachers' wrong choice of teaching methods, another factor is students' "unfamiliarity to the study of literature in general", as students are the other side of the coin. Chang (2003) thinks that the challenges could also be caused by students because, according to him, "before entering English departments, students usually have not had much experience reading authentic literature written in English" (p.3). Nevertheless, Hoque (2007: p.26) believes that "finding appropriate literature to teach a second language classroom has always been a major challenge" though it is an external factor related to literature curriculum, it is also related to the teachers' autonomy. In some cases, teachers do not have any professional autonomy in choosing what to teach and how to teach. In order to overcome the challenges, Hoque sees that the studied text should not be too long, not linguistically and conceptually difficult, should match students' knowledge, and should promote students' interest (ibid: p.2) in case if the teachers have their autonomy. Absence of clear objectives defining the role of literature and a lack of the necessary background knowledge and training in literature, or shortage of pedagogically-well-designed materials are some other sources of challenges according to Lima, 2010; Khatib & Nourzadeh, 2011; Edmonson, 1997; (as cited in Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014, p. 248). On the other hand, Novianti (2016) sees that there are three main problems regarding teaching literature: students' reading habits or their lack of reading skills,

their language proficiency, and the nature of the resources. Hussein, E.T., and Al-Emami, A. H. (2016) also, in their study, reached to the conclusion that there are three problematic factors affecting teaching literature: "language proficiency level of the students, linguistic and stylistic degree of difficulty of the texts and the degree of cultural (un) familiarity" (p.125). "Among the problems in EFL literature teaching - low motivation, lack of confidence, inadequate teaching methods, exam stress, under-qualified teachers, insufficient in-service training – students' proficiency levels"(Abdullah, T. et al., 2007; Arvidson & Blanco, 2004; Buyukyavuz & Inal, 2008; Brown, 2000; Cetintas, 2010; Ganakumaran, 2002; Karci & Vural, 2011; Katz, 2001; Krishnasamy, 2015; Mwape, 1984, as cited in Işıklı and Tarakçıoğlu, 2017, p. 83). Furthermore, Sarkar (n.d.) in his study associates the challenges with students and literature material cultural differences, students' low proficiency in English, their vernacular background, their poor vocabulary, and insufficiency of proper study materials. The study shows that students' lack of target cultural understanding. Students lack of prior literature knowledge, Students' cultural prejudice about foreign literature are among serious difficulties. Choudhury (1992) sees that the major problem in EFL literature class is with "the contents of the textbooks; that the teachers follow cultural contents in the textbook which are very much foreign and do not allow the students to use their imaginative power" (cited in Hassan, 2018: p. 17). Lack of student awareness of the importance of learning literature and students' different preferences of subjects of study are also among crucial sources of the problem. Finally, in a research (Al Sabiri and Kaymakamoğlu, 2019: p. 432) concede that teachers experience some circumstantial (classroom environmental) problems such as lack of equipment in their classes, lack of visual aids, lack of technology, and lack of

other supportive classroom environment. They also state that teachers may face some problems caused by them, specifically, the absence of self-confidence as well as the absence of establishing teacher-students rapport inside the class.

On the basis of these researches and the difficulties or the challenges that are stated in them, the present study attempts to identify the most serious challenges EFL literature teachers usually encounter at the university level in SUH setting. Both the questionnaire items and the interview questions that are used in this study are designed by the researchers by getting benefit from the researches that are reviewed in this section in order to answer the research questions proposed in the next section.

2. Methodology

2.1 The Problem and Objectives of the Study

Literature components are taught side by side the linguistic components in English departments at SUE. Teachers often experience great frustration and difficulty at the lack of progress by their students during literature classes. They feel that students have low motivation because they do not participate actively during the classes. Overall, students seem to be reluctant to study literature. Consequently, teachers confront many challenges in dealing with literature classes. In order to guarantee students' progress, it is necessary to identify the underlying factors behind the emergence of the challenges. Thus, the study aims at investigating the causes of the challenges, whether related to teachers themselves, the methods they follow in teaching....etc. to the students such as lack of motivation, low language proficiency....etc. or to some other external factors such as class context, unavailability of materials to

teach literature....etc. The major objective is to find practical ways to overcome the challenges or at least to reduce them.

The research questions are:

- 1- What is the most serious factor of challenges EFL literature teachers encounter?
- 2- Which domain of challenges affects teachers' performance more while teaching literature?
- 3- How do teachers overcome those challenges and what can be done to facilitate teaching English literature in IKR universities in general?

2.2 The Sample of the Study

The study is limited to English literature teachers in English Language Departments from Colleges of Education and Languages/ SUE for the academic year (2019-2020). Fifteen members of the teaching staff, whom they are currently teaching literature components in both colleges, were asked to answer the questionnaire first and then they were interviewed.

2.3 The Instruments

Two types of instruments were used for data collection. The first one is teachers' five points "Likert Scale" questionnaire ranging from two positive (strongly agree SA and agree A), a (neutral N), and two negatives (disagree D and strongly disagree SD). The questionnaire is made up of (22) items that are divided into three parts on the basis of the three major categories of factors resulting challenges. Those factors related to teachers themselves, challenges resulting from students, and those due to some external factors respectively. In addition, some demographic information about the participants is included. The second instrument is

teachers' semi-structured interview questions designed to explore the problems the teachers experience in their context. Thereby, asking teachers to make a written statement of their beliefs and thoughts on the issue of challenges in literature teaching. The purpose of the interview was to verify the findings provided by the quantitative dataset.

2.4 Validity

In order to judge the validity of the research instrument, experts among English language instructors from the English department of the college of Basic Education SUE were given the questionnaire as jury members. The members of the jury were asked to closely read the questionnaire and the interview questions so as to state their opinions and recommendations. All related opinions and recommendations were taken into consideration when writing the final draft.

3. Data Analysis and Explanation of the Results

3.1 Demographic Background of Literature Teachers (The Respondents)

Participants were teachers who taught various English literature components. Only fifteen teachers were selected to participate in the study. Of the fifteen respondents, eight of them were males, and seven of them were females in terms of gender. Thirteen of them were from the College of Languages, and the other ones were in the College of Education. Regarding their academic/scientific rank, nine of them were assistant professors, while another five were lecturers and only one of them was the assistant lecturer. Nine of the teachers were having more than

fifteen years of teaching experience, while the other six ones were having between ten to fifteen years of teaching literature experience.

3.2 Analysis of the Questionnaire

To answer the first question addressed by the study, about teachers' view on the most serious factors behind the existence of the challenges in literature classes, literature instructors' response to the questionnaire were analyzed statistically by using computer package program (version 24.0) SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The researchers used the frequencies, the percentage weight, means, standard deviation, and the rank of each item of the questionnaire as illustrated in the table (no.1) below:

Table (1): Descriptive analysis of the participants' perspective on the factors cause challenges

No. of the Item	Respondent's 5 points of the Scale	Frequency of the Respondent	Percentage weight of the Respondent	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank of the Item
1	SA	3	20%	3.93	0.961	10
	A	10	66.6%			
	N	1	6.7%			
	SD	1	6.7%			
2	SA	4	26.7%	3.26	1.486	21
	A	4	26.7%			
	N	1	6.7%			
	D	4	26.7%			
	SD	2	13.3%			
3	SA	2	13.3%	3.33	1.290	20
	A	7	46.7%			
	N	2	13.3%			
	D	2	13.3%			
	SD	2	13.3%			
4	SA	4	26.7%	4.13	0.639	8
	A	9	60%			
	N	2	13.3%			
5	SA	2	13.3%	3.4	0.985	18
	A	5	33.3%			
	N	5	33.3%			
	D	3	20%			
6	SA	3	20%	3.66	1.112	14
	A	7	46.7%			
	N	3	20%			

	D	1	6.7%			
	SD	1	6.7%			
7	SA	8	53.3%	4.4	0.828	4
	A	6	40%			
	D	1	6.7%			
8	SA	10	66.7%	4.66	0.487	1
	A	5	33.3%			
9	SA	9	60.1%	4.2	1.146	7
	A	2	13.3%			
	N	2	13.3%			
	D	2	13.3%			
10	SA	8	53.3%	4.33	0.899	5
	A	5	33.3%			
	N	1	6.7%			
	D	1	6.7%			
11	SA	4	26.7%	4.2	0.560	6
	A	10	66.7%			
	N	1	6.7%			
12	SA	10	66.7%	4.66	0.487	1
	A	5	33.3%			
13	SA	3	20%	3.46	1.181	17
	A	6	40%			
	N	1	6.7%			
	D	5	33.3%			
14	SA	9	60%	4.6	0.507	3
	A	6	40%			
15	A	13	86.7%	3.86	0.351	11
	N	2	13.3%			

16	SA	2	13.3%	3.66	0.975	13
	A	8	53.3%			
	N	4	26.7%			
	SD	1	6.7%			
17	SA	5	33.3%	3.8	1.207	12
	A	6	40%			
	D	4	26.7%			
18	SA	11	73.3%	4.66	0.617	2
	A	3	20%			
	N	1	6.7%			
19	SA	6	40%	4.13	0.915	9
	A	6	40%			
	N	2	13.3%			
	D	1	6.7%			
20	SA	1	6.7%	3.47	0.233	16
	A	7	46.7%			
	N	5	33.3%			
	D	2	13.3%			
21	SA	1	6.7%	3.6	0.985	15
	A	10	66.7%			
	N	2	13.3%			
	D	1	6.7%			
	SD	1	6.7%			
22	SA	2	13.3%	3.4	1.121	19
	A	6	40%			
	N	4	26.7%			
	D	2	13.3%			
	SD	1	6.7%			

The first section of the questionnaire required the respondents to give information on challenges literature teachers encounter resulting from teachers themselves.

In answer to the first item— *Teachers' insufficient or lack of training in literature teaching*, a large proportion of the respondents strongly agrees and agree, (20%) of them strongly agree while (66.7%) agree. Most of the teachers believe that teachers' insufficient or lack of training in literature teaching is among serious factors that cause problems while teaching literature. Just a small number, (6.7%) of them neither agree nor disagree, while (6.7 %) strongly disagree. The item occupied the rank tenth in the list of the questions related to the challenges with percentage weight (86.7), mean score (3.93), and StD (0.961).

In response to the second item— *Teachers' lacking self-confidence in teaching literature*, (26.7%) of the teachers strongly agree. Concurrently, another 26.7 percent of them agree that one of the reasons behind the challenges is teachers' absence of self-confidence. On the other hand, the answer of (6.7%) of them is neutral. Meanwhile, (26.7 %) of the respondents do not agree, whereas only (13.3%) of them strongly disagree. This indicates that almost more than half of the teachers reported that lack of self – confidence is one of the sources that bring about challenges in literature classes. The item occupied the twenty-first in terms of the challenges which is, in turn, ranked as the first least challenge literature teachers face with a percentage weight of (53.4), mean score (3.26), and StD (1.486).

The elicited data of the third item— *Teachers' wrong choice of teaching methods*, calls attention to the fact that only (13.3 %) of the instructors strongly agree, at the same time (46.7 %) of them agree, and both groups confirm that teachers are responsible for the challenges because of their inappropriate teaching approach. But (13.3 %) remain neutral, whereas, (13.3 %) of them disagree and another (13.3 %) strongly disagree to this point, they think that

challenges are not originated as a result of teaching methods. Therefore, the item occupied the twentieth rank in terms of the challenges with a percentage weight of (60), mean score (3.33), and StD (1.290) which, according to the results, is the second least challenge literature teachers encounter.

The teachers' response to the fourth item— *Lack of establishing teacher-students rapport in class* is (26.7 %) strongly agree, (60%) agree, (13.3%) disagree, and none of them strongly disagree. The item ranked eighth in terms of the challenges with a percentage weight of (86.7), but with the mean score (4.13) and StD (0.639). From the collated data of this item, one can infer that (86.7%) of the instructors perceive that in order to avoid difficulties during literature classes the teacher must endeavour to build good relationships with his/her students.

In answer to the fifth item— *Lack of teacher autonomy*, (13.3%) of the lecturers strongly agree, (33.3%) only agree, another (33.3%) are neutral, whereas (20%) of them disagree. Results indicate that about more than half of the teachers do not believe that problems are aroused because teachers do not have any professional autonomy in choosing what to teach and how to teach. Therefore, the item occupied the eighteenth rank in the list of the challenges with a percentage weight of only (46.6), mean score (3.4), and StD (0.985).

In response to the sixth item— *Teachers' incompetence in English Language and English literature*, (20%) strongly agree, (46.7%) agree, another (20%) choose the “neutral” option and do not express a clear opinion on the question. On the other hand, (6.7%) disagree and another (6.7%) strongly disagree to the point. The item ranked the fourteenth in terms of the challenges with

percentage weight of (66.7), mean score (3.66), and StD (1.112). This shows that more than (66%) of the participants side with the idea that teachers' lack of linguistic as well as literary competence can create many difficulties while teaching literature.

The next section of the survey was concerned with the challenges resulted by students as the followings:

In answer to the seventh item— *Low language proficiency levels of students*, the vast majority of the survey respondents strongly agree and agree to this point, (53.3 %) strongly agree and (40%) agree, while the percentage falls to (6.7) of them disagree. The item ranked fourth among the challenges with percentage weight (93.3), the mean score of (4.40), and StD (0.828). Most of the participants think that students' language inefficiency is really a great problem that most of the teachers may encounter in literature classes.

In response to the eighth item— *Students' lack of reading skills*, all literature instructors either strongly agree or agree with this idea, (66.7 %) strongly agree and (33.3 %) agree. It is noticed that this item along with twelfth item occupied the first rank in the hierarchy of the challenges with a percentage weight of (100), mean score (4.66), and (0.487) StD. All the respondents concur to the fact that students do not know how to deal with literary texts, and they are not aware of the strategies that can be used in reading a text.

The acquired data from the ninth item— *Students' lack of speaking skills*, affirms that the majority of the participants strongly agree (60%) and agree (13.3 %). They believe that since students cannot speak English proficiently, they cannot participate actively

during class discussion, which is another great challenge for teachers, whereas (13.3%) neither agree nor disagree, and another (13.3%) disagree with the item. The item occupied the seventh rank in the hierarchy of the challenges with total percentage weight of (73.3), mean score (4.20), and StD (1.146).

The assessment of the tenth item— *Students' lack of self-confidence to participate during literature classes* indicates that most of the teachers strongly agree (53.3%) and agree (33.3 %). This item occupied fifth in the hierarchy of challenges with percentage weight of about (86.6%) of the teachers who regard that students' insufficient self-confidence to take part in class discussion is really a reason that brings about great challenge. While (6.7 %) are neutral only (6.7%) show their disagreement with the point with a mean score of (4.33) and StD (0.899).

In answer to the eleventh item— *Students' low motivation in learning foreign literature*, almost all the respondents either strongly agree (26.7 %) or agree (66.7 %), while (6.6%) of them are neutral. The item ranked the sixth rank in the list of the challenges with a percentage weight of (93.4 %), mean score (4.20), and StD (0.560). This result confirms that teachers must do their best to heighten their students' motivation.

In response to the twelfth item— *Students' lack of prior literature knowledge*, all the survey participants (100%) strongly agree (66.7 %) and agree (33.3 %) to this point. As it is mentioned before, this item also ranked first in terms of challenges with percentage weight (100), mean score (4.66), and StD(0.487). All the teachers believe that students do not have enough background information about literature once they start their university studies.

In regard to the thirteenth item— *Students' cultural prejudice about foreign literature*, (20%) of all the respondents strongly agree and (40%) agree, whereas (6.7%) are neutral, and (33.3%) disagree respectively. More than half of the teachers think that students are affected by their preconception about foreign literature they are not eager to know about. The item occupied the seventeenth in terms of the challenges with a percentage weight of (60), mean score (3.46), and StD (1.181).

With respect to the fourteenth item— *Students' lack of awareness of the importance of learning literature* the entire participants coincide in this opinion (60 %) strongly agree and (40 %) agree, whereas none of them disagrees. All the participants agree that students do not appreciate the value of literature. The item ranked the third in the list of the challenges with a percentage weight of (100) but with (4.6) mean score and (0.507) StD.

Concerning the fifteenth item— *Students' different preferences of subjects of study*, nearly almost all the literature teachers agree that teachers encounter challenges during literature classes maybe because students generally do not prefer literature components, while only a few of them, compared to the total number, (13.3%) are neutral. The item ranked the eleventh in terms of the challenges literature teachers face with a percentage weight of (86.7), mean score (3.86), and StD (0.351).

In the final part of the survey, respondents were asked to rate the challenges resulting from external factors and the results are the followings:

The results of the sixteenth item— *Insufficient number of literature teaching hours*, show that more than half of the

participants agree (53.3%), while (13.3%) strongly agree to the point. Most of them think that allotted hours for teaching literature are not enough. However, (26.7%) of the participants have no involvement in making decisions on this item. On the contrary, (6.7%) show the complete opposite viewpoints. The item came at the thirteenth rank in the list of the challenges with a percentage weight of (66.6), mean score (3.66), and StD (0.975).

The answers are given to the seventeenth item— *The absence of supportive classroom environment and lack of facilities such as visual aids, technology*, reveals that most of the participants answer positively and choose the strongly agree (33.3%) and the agree (40%) options, whereas (26.7%) have a negative opinion as they choose disagree option. The question occupied the twelfth rank among the challenges with a percentage weight (73.3), mean score (3.80), and StD (1.207).

Results obtained from the eighteenth item— *The large class size*, indicate that almost all the participants either strongly agree (73.3%) or agree (20.0%) with the fact that the crowded class is one of the serious obstacles in front of literature teachers while they teach literature. Meanwhile, only a small portion of the participants (6.7%) disagree that the large class size has a noticeable role that can cause challenges. It is worth noting that this item occupied the second most challenging item with percentage weight (93.3), mean score (4.66), and StD(0.617).

Regarding the nineteenth item— *Poorly-equipped libraries*, most of the teachers strongly agree (40%) and agree (40%) that libraries are not well- equipped for students, while only (6.7%) of them have contradictory opinions and (13.3%) of the teachers have no involvements in making decisions on this

question. Thus, the question occupied the ninth most recurrent challenge with a percentage weight of (80), mean score (4.13), and StD (0.915).

In response to the twentieth item— *Shortage of pedagogically-well-designed materials*, the percentages of literature teachers' strongly agreement and agreement are (6.7%) and (46.7%) respectively, while (13.3%) seem to have different opinions, and (33.3%) choose the neutral option. The question ranked the sixteenth in the list of the challenges with a percentage weight of (53.4), mean score (3.47), and StD (0.233).

Data obtained from the twenty-first item— *Absence of clear objectives defining the role of literature*, indicate that (6.7%) of the respondents strongly agree and (66.7%) agree that there are no explicit objectives that show the role of literature which is in turn could cause challenges for teachers during literature classes. Whereas, 6.7% disagree and 6.6 strongly disagree with the statement, while (13.3%) of the participants' responses are neutral. The item came at the fifteenth rank in terms of the challenges with a percentage weight of (73.4), mean score (3.60), and StD (0.945).

Finally, teachers' response of the twenty-second item— *The hard language of literary works written in old forms of English*, reveals that more than half of the participants, (13.3%) strongly agree and (40%) agree, believe that the hard language of literature is another reason causing a great challenge. Only (13.3%) disagree and (6.7%) strongly disagree with the point, while (26.7%) of them do not state their opinion. The item only ranked the nineteenth in the rank of the challenges. Meanwhile, the third least challenge teachers encounter with a percentage weight of (53.3), mean score (3.4), and StD (1.121).

To sum up, the combined percentage results of the survey confirm that (79%) of participants show their positive attitude towards the reasons for the challenges that EFL literature teachers encounter nowadays in the IKR context. Only (10%) of them do not think that the above-mentioned factors arouse any challenges, whereas, (11%) remain neutral in their resolution (See table no. 2).

Moreover, the results of mean scores show that the respondents consider students' lack of reading skills, students' lack of prior literature knowledge, and the large class size with mean scores (4.66), StD (0.487) for each of the first two ones, and with StD (0.617) for the third one, to be the most serious challenges. However, it is also found that students' lack of awareness of the importance of learning literature is also considered as an important cause of challenge with the mean score (4.60) and StD (0.507), though rated lower than the three. For the teacher respondents, students' low motivation in learning foreign literature with mean and StD scores 4.20 and 0.560, comes next. Teachers' responses additionally reveal that teachers rate lack of establishing teacher-students' rapport in class and Poorly-equipped libraries as less serious with the mean score (4.13) and StD (0.639) for the first one whereas with StD score 0.915 for the second (See table no. 1).

Table (2) participants' total view on the degree of the factors behind the challenges

No. of the participants	Scales	Total Frequency	Total Percentage	Mean	StD Deviation
15	SA	5	36%	3.945	0.863
	A	7	43%		
	N	1	7%		
	D	1	7%		
	SD	1	7%		

To answer the second study question which states "Which domain of challenges affects teachers' performance more while teaching literature", the three domains of the reasons of challenges namely, challenges resulted by teachers themselves, teachers challenges resulted by students, and teacher challenges resulted by external factors, are compared by calculating the average of mean of each of them which are ($\bar{m} = 3.61$), ($\bar{m} = 4.263$), and ($\bar{m} = 3.817$) successively (See Figure no.1).

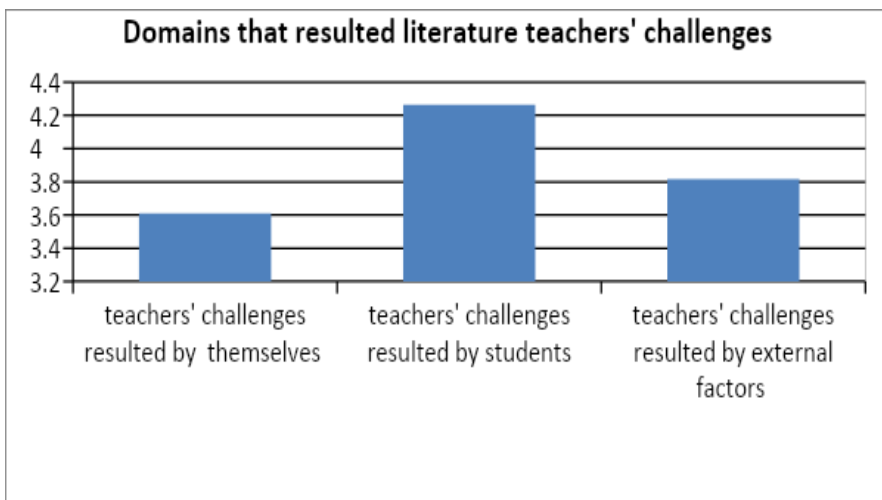


Figure (1) Domains that resulted in literature teachers' challenges

Analysis of the average of mean scores of participants' responses on challenges English literature teachers encounter show that far more teachers perceive that challenges resulted by students with an average mean ($\bar{m} = 4.263$), to be the most serious set of reasons behind the challenges literature teachers encounter. They believe that this domain affects teachers' performance more than others while teaching literature. Furthermore, the percentage results of the Participants' total view on the challenges aroused by each of the domains also verify this fact (See table no. 3 and Figure no.2).

Table (3) Participants' total view on the challenges resulted by each of the domains

No. of the respondents	Teachers' 5 points "Likert Scale"	Teachers' challenges resulted by themselves	Teachers' challenges resulted by students	Teachers' challenges resulted by external factors
15	SA	19%	45%	33%
	A	46%	42%	43%
	N	15%	5%	13%
	D	12%	6%	9%
	SD	8%	2%	2%

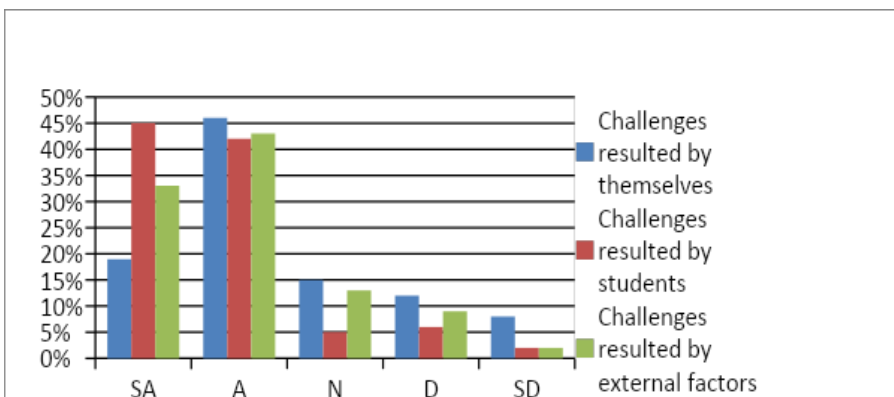


Figure (2) Participants' total view on the challenges resulted by each of the domains

3.3 Analysis of the Interviews

In answer to Question 1 which states, “What are the challenges that you come across when you teach literature components?” Once more as the results of the questionnaire items have shown, the majority of the teachers associate the challenges with the students. Results reveal that, according to EFL literature teachers, student-related challenges constitute the most important source of challenges. Thirteen out of fifteen (86.7%) of the interviewees stated that the challenges are resulted by the students, only (13.3%) related the challenges to the external factor whereas none of them refer to any challenges resulted by teachers themselves. They perceive that they face challenges during literature classes because of students':

- a- *“lack of motivation and interest for studying literature”*
- b- *“Lack of reading skills”*
- c- *“Lack of speaking skills”*
- d- *“Lack of prior literature knowledge”*
- e- *“Lack of writing skills”*
- f- *“Lack of awareness of the importance of studying literature”*
- g- *“Some students say that English language and literature are all symbols of anti-faith” which is the “Students’ cultural prejudice about foreign literature.”*

Regarding the challenges resulted by class environment and other external factors, interviewees think that challenges are aroused due to:

- a- *“The large class size.”*
- b- *“The shortage of time allocated for literary studies”.*
- c- *“The lack of a suitable environment for teaching literature in EFL classes”.*

In response to Question 2, *“Can you do the tasks/ activities or exercises that you aim to teach the literature component in your classes/ If not, why?”* Only (26.6%) answered negatively with (No) in their opinions, for the following reasons:

- a- *“The crowded classes”.*
- b- *“Students lack of language proficiency”.*
- c- *“Lack of motivation to do the tasks”.*
- d- *“Students’ lack of prior literature knowledge”.*
- e- *“Time limitation”.*

It is worth noting that the answers of the first two questions of the interview verify the results that have been discussed in the previous section, namely, the analysis of the questionnaire. Both the answer of the first two questions of the interview and the questionnaire results answer the first and the second questions addressed by the study.

To answer the third research question, the interviewees are required to answer Question 3 and 4. In response to Question 3 which is, *“To what extent do you think we can limit the challenges and their suggested solutions?”* the respondents believe that the status of teaching literature in EFL classes can be rectified by:

- a- *“Reducing a large number of students in EFL classes.”*
- b- *“Focusing on the student-centred methodology thus to engage the largest number of students into various activities”.*
- c- *“Increasing the time allocated for literary studies”.*
- d- *“Raising students’ awareness toward the importance of studying literature in EFL language classes”.*

e- *"Promoting the students' level of English language".*

f- *"If the teacher is efficient, he/she can help the students to enjoy literature classes and to analyze the texts were given"*

g- *"Increasing the students' motivation and interest thus by letting them imitate the characters they tackle with in the studied literary texts"*

h- *"Providing enough opportunity for the teachers to be trained on the latest literature teaching methods".*

i- *"Encouraging the teachers to be aware of the fact that building good relationships with the students is the only way to motivate them and to make them realize the value of studying literature in their academic and personal lives".*

j- *"Teachers must take the students' desire and their linguistic level into consideration when they choose the materials to be studied".*

k- *"Providing a teaching system which helps the students with new curriculums were designed".*

l- *"Writing essays and assignments".*

Question 4 asked the respondents "Is there anything else that you would like to share that may have been forgotten to bring up?", only (26.7%) participants added some points as mentioned below while the rest (73.3%) left the question unanswered.

a- *"The love among the students and their instructor who alternatively should love the students and use it as a basic tool for motivation and the learning process".*

b- *"I think the biggest challenges we are all facing in these recent years are the unintelligent students and their ignorance and carelessness of the educational field".*

c- *“In my opinion, giving an introduction to English literature for the first grade will be of great help for both students and teachers”.*

d- *“It is good to have a native speaker to speak about literature once or twice a semester to give the impression of an English environment”.*

Findings and Conclusion

1. Based on the data analysis and the explanation of the results of the previous section, the following findings revealed:
2. Over 75% of the respondents strongly agree and agree that Salahaddin University English literature teachers encounter major challenges while teaching literature.
3. 87% of the participants ascribe major sources of teachers' challenges to students. They believe that challenges resulted by students affect teachers' performance more than others while teaching literature. The vast majority of them think that most of the challenges of this domain are due to "students' lack of reading skills" and "students' lack of prior literature knowledge". These two items occupied the first rank in terms of the challenges.
4. 76% of the participants think that the challenges are caused due to some other external factors out of the hand of the teachers and students. The item that occupied the first in this domain is "large-sized class" which is ranked the second in terms of the challenges in general.

5. Only 65% of the teachers see that challenges are emerged by the teachers themselves. The item that occupied the first in this category is "lack of establishing teacher - students' rapport in class" which is ranked the eighth in the list of the challenges.
6. To rectify the status of teaching literature in EFL classes, the vast majority of the teachers suggest: a- dividing students into small groups, b- adopting the student-centred approach, c- increasing the time devoted for literature, d- Raising students' awareness toward the importance of studying literature, e- improving the linguistic proficiency of the students in English language, f- Increasing the students' motivation and interest, g- training teachers on the latest literature teaching methods, h- Encouraging the teachers to build good relationships with their students, i- selecting the materials that can meet the students' needs and desire.
7. In general, the researchers attributed the challenges in teaching literature to the lack of both theoretical and practical knowledge on the part of the teachers. Moreover, they attributed the challenges caused by the students to
8. Teachers' concentration on lecturing students rather than providing them with ample activities, assignments, tasks, projects, and worksheets to be done inside and/or outside the classes, giving them proper guidance about how to improve their reading skills, and also teaching them how to use the appropriate strategies for studying literature
9. Students concentration on memorization of the teacher's lectures for the exams or for the accuracy based test over understanding and creativity

- i. Also, the researchers attributed the overcrowded classes to the fact that studying at English language departments are much in demand on the part of high school graduate students than other departments.

Recommendations

1. Workshops should be held by literature teachers in order to discuss and provide solutions for students' problems in studying literature.
2. English language departments should focus on training courses, workshops, and micro-teaching sessions to teach literature effectively.
3. Teachers should provide students with proper guidance about how to improve their reading skills and use the appropriate strategies for studying any literary text.
4. The teacher should provide the students with proper activities, assignments, or worksheets to help students be really involved in the teaching-learning process.
5. Teachers should guide and motivate students on how to improve their language proficiency.
6. Teachers should motivate students to speak confidently during literature classes. They should enhance students' participation and interaction.

7. University administrators should have a plan for answering the needs of their English departments. For example, enriching the university libraries with useful and attractive books about literature in order to help the students, motivate them to read, and improve their reading skills and providing classes with necessary audio-visual equipment.
8. English literature classes should be divided into small groups.

Suggestion for Further Study

1. A study should be conducted on the challenges EFL learners (students) encounter while studying literature.
2. A study should be conducted on the impact of teaching/studying literature on the learners' reading skills development, language learning proficiency, and cultural awareness.

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APPENDIX 1: THE TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondents (Literature Teachers) this questionnaire has been designed to collect data on challenges encountering literature teachers of EFL classes. Personal information collected in this questionnaire will only be used for research purposes, and your name will remain anonymous and will be kept confidential. Thank you for participating and cooperating in this survey.

The questionnaire consists of two parts as follows:

Part A: Background information.

Part B: Items that are designed to collect data on challenges encountering literature teachers of EFL classes at the university level.

Part A: Background information.

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1-Gender: Male | Female | |
| 2-College: Languages | Education | |
| 3- Academic Rank: Professor | Assist. Professor | Lecturer |
| Assist. Lecturer | | |
| 4-Teaching experience: (1-5) years | (5-10) years | (10-15) years |
| Over (15) years | | |

Part B: Please kindly give your opinion about the following points after you read them.

No.	a- Teachers' challenges result from themselves:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1-	Teachers' insufficient or lack of training in literature teaching					
2	Teachers lacking self-confidence in teaching literature					
3	Teachers' wrong choice of teaching methods					
4	Lack of establishing teacher - students rapport in class					
5	Lack of teacher autonomy					
6	Teachers' incompetence in English Language and English literature					
	b-Teachers' challenges result from students:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7-	Low language proficiency levels of students					
8-	Students' lack of reading skills					
9-	Students' lack of speaking skills					

10-	Students' lack of self-confidence to participate during literature classes					
11-	Students' low motivation in learning foreign literature					
12-	Students' lack of prior literature knowledge					
13-	Students' cultural prejudice about foreign literature					
14-	Students' lack of <u>awareness</u> of the importance of learning literature					
15-	Students' different preferences of subjects of study					
	c-Teachers' challenges result from external factors:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16-	Insufficient number of literature teaching hours					
17-	The absence of supportive classroom environment and lack of facilities such as visual aids, technology					
18-	The large class <u>size</u>					
19	Poorly-equipped libraries					
20-	Shortage of pedagogically-well-designed materials					

21-	Absence of clear objectives defining the role of literature					
22-	The hard language of <u>literary works</u> written in old forms of English					

APPENDIX 2: THE TEACHERS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1- What are the challenges that you come across when you teach literature components?
- 2- Can you do the tasks/activities or exercises that you aim to teach as a literature component in your classes? If not, why?
- 3- To what extent do you think we can limit the challenges and their suggested solutions?
- 4- Is there anything else that you would like to share that may have been forgotten to bring up?

پوختە:

ئامانجى ئەم لىكۆلىنەۋەيە دەستىنىشانكردىنى ھۆكارەكان و چۆنىيەتى زالبوون بەسەرئەۋ ئاستەنگانەي كە مامۇستايانى زانكۆ پوبەروۋى دەبنەۋە لەكاتى ووتنەۋەي بابەتە جياۋازەكانى ئەدەبىي ئىنگىلىزىيە. لىكۆلىنەۋەكە ھۆكارەكانى ئاستەنگەكان دابەش دەكات بۆ سى كۆمەلە ھۆكارى سەرەكى. ئەۋ ئاستەنگانەي كە مامۇستايان ھۆكارن، ئەۋانەي كەۋا قوتابيان ھۆكارن، ۋەھەرۋەھا ئەۋانەي كە دەگەرینەۋە بۆ چەند فاكتەرىكى دەرەكى. بۆبەدەستەينانى داتاي پىۋىست، پا نزە مامۇستاي ئەدەبىي ئىنگىلىزىيە لە بەشەكانى زمانى ئىنگىلىزىيە ھەردوۋ كۆلىۋى زمان و پەرۋەردەي زانكۆ سەلاھەددىن بەژداريان كرد لەۋ تويژىنەۋەيە ئەمەش بەبەكارەينانى ئامرازى شىۋازى راپرسى چەندايەتى و چاۋپىكەۋتنى نىمچە دارىژراۋى جۆرى. ئەنجامەكانى لىكۆلىنەۋەكە ئامازە بەۋەدەكەن كەۋا زۆربەي ھەرە زۆرى بەژداربوان پىيان وايە كەۋا كۆمەلەي ئەۋ ئاستەنگانەي كە قوتابيان ھۆكارن بەكارىگەرترىن ھۆكارلە پىشت ئاستەنگەكان دادەنرىن. تويژەرەكان ھۆكارى ئاستەنگەكان دەگەرینەۋە بۆ نەبونى زانىارى تىۋرى و پراكتىكى دەربارەي چۆنىيەتى ووتنەۋەي بابەتى ئەدەب بەشىۋازىكى كارىگەر لەلايەن مامۇستايان، ۋەھەرۋەھا بۆ ئەۋەي كەۋا قوتابيان پەيرەۋى شىۋازى لەبەركردن دەكەن لەپروۋسەي فىربووندا نەۋەك تىگەيشتن و داھىتان.

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة تحديد أسباب التحديات التي يواجهها مدرسو الأدب الإنكليزي في الجامعات عند تدريسهم لمكونات الأدب المختلفة، مع محاولة إيجاد الحلول المناسبة لها. تقسم الدراسة عوامل وأسباب التحديات الى ثلاثة أقسام رئيسية وهي: التحديات الناشئة عن المدرسين أنفسهم والناشئة عن الطلاب والناشئة عن عوامل أخرى خارجية. لغرض جمع البيانات، تم اختيار خمسة عشر مدرسا لمادة الأدب الإنكليزي في أقسام اللغة الإنكليزية في كليتي اللغات والتربية في جامعة صلاح الدين/ أربيل. الأدوات المستخدمة في الدراسة هي إستبيان كمي مع مقابلة نوعية شبه مقيدة للمشاركين. خلصت الدراسة الى أن أغلبية المشاركين يعتقدون أن مجموع التحديات الناشئة من الطلاب هي التحديات الأكثر تأثيراً. حيث تعزو الباحثتان اسباب التحديات الى النقص المعرفي للاستاذة حول التدريس الفعال للأدب بشقيها النظري و العملي، والى كون الطلاب يتبعون اسلوب الحفظ بدلا من الاسلوب الفهمي و الابداعي في عملية التعلم.