

Challenges and Opportunities of Teaching Literature in Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Saman Ali Mohammed¹, Shamal Abu baker Hussein², Inaad Mutlib Sayer¹

¹ Department of English, College of Languages, University of Human Development, Sulaimani, Kurdistan Regional Government – F.R. Iraq

² (MA in English Literature) (Lecturer at Sulaimany High Industrial School)

Abstract— This study aims to investigate the challenges literature teachers in Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) face and the factors underlying the challenges while teaching literature. This paper is based on a questionnaire which consists of twenty items; 17 items are statements that require the participants' responses on a five-point scale and the other three items are open-answer questions about literature in general. The study implemented a mixed approach: a quantitative approach to analyse the responses of the participants to the 17 on a five-point scale and a qualitative approach to analyse the responses to the remaining three open-answer questions. The results of the study showed that method of teaching is the most challenging component of literature teaching. The material taught is the second highest contributing factor to literature teaching challenges in KRI. Then, the external factors and the students are medium challenges respectively. Teachers are the least contributing factors in this regard. Analysis of the open-answer questions revealed that teaching literature is rewarding intellectually, philosophically, aesthetically and socially. It also exposed the concerns of a few respondents on how a literature class should be if they are given a choice to be in one.

Index Terms— Literature, Teaching Literature, Methods of Teaching, Literature Teachers, Challenges.

I. INTRODUCTION

This study is about the challenges facing teachers of English/American literature who are teaching literature subjects such as: novel, poetry, drama, short story, novella, literary criticism, and comparative literature in Iraqi Kurdistan universities in order to understand and identify these difficulties. The research also explores the opportunities in teaching literature. Literature is a unique reflection, a keen observation, and a special narration of one on life, man and truth or what it means to be human. It is simply about certain human experiences under certain situations and life conditions. It provides a creative and profound way of making human being feel that he/she is spoken to, worthy, and listened to, when engaging in internal dialogues with texts and all their humane components like characters, narration, conflicts, imagination, etc. It seems like a universal experiential

common arena between writers and readers for what may sound

like painful or joyful feelings, eye-opening moments or the opposite. Literature, unlike journalism, history or biology, reproduces and reshapes truth by capturing an experience, a moment, a realization in a scene of a fictional work; a record of a moment that by its reflection on the subject reveals portions of truth. Literature does not attempt to prove a fact, but present a scene through which one may derive certain perceptions, insights and conclusions. Literature sustains the fundamental human values such as: beauty, uniqueness, love, harmony, engagement, coexistence, creativity, benevolence, empathy etc.

Literature forms a great part of English departments, translation departments as well as college of basic education curriculums studied along with other linguistic and translation classes in both private and public universities in KRI. Examining the benefits and the importance of teaching literature, one can come across numerous studies. There is only one study conducted by Tayib and Hassan (2020) on the challenges that literature teachers at University of Salahadin in Kurdistan face while teaching literature. The scope of the study is limited to University of Salahadin, and 15 lecturers. Therefore, the present study is conducted to cover as many literature teachers from public and private in KRI universities as possible to recognize the challenges and opportunities of teaching English/American literature.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The Importance of Teaching Literature

There are challenges as well as opportunities to teaching literature. On the level of reading and writing skills, literature is a rich area where students can greatly be exposed to a unique aspect of language – literariness. Hill (1986) states that the study of literature contributes “both to the development of the student as an individual and to his or her command of the language” (p. 12). She further maintains that literature benefits students as it acts as a stimulus that flourishes their interest and motivates the student by involving them on a personal and emotional level (pp. 7-9). Literature serves to enhance students' linguistic competence because of its capacity for providing pleasure and enjoyment; the subject of literature can also increase the students' motivation to interact with text which

increases their reading comprehension. According to Sidhu, Fook, & Kaur (2010) “a literature-enriched curriculum not only helps learners improve their reading and writing skills but more importantly helps them internalize grammar and vocabulary” (p. 54). Along similar lines, Ur (1991) explains that literature provides different styles of writing and becomes a good base of vocabulary on a comprehension level, while also helping the student to become emotionally involved that contributes to their personal development. Moreover, literature encourages students toward empathy, critical and creative thinking, increased knowledge of target culture, worked knowledge and finally a heightened awareness of humanity and conflicts (201). On a personal level where students access a unique observation to philosophical questions on the self and human development, literature is a fundamental venue. Farrar (1940) summarizes the purposes of teaching literature as:

1. To enable the student to make his way of life,
2. To help him take his part socially with his fellows,
3. To enable him to perform his function in the fullest sense, as a citizen.
4. To increase the ability to get intelligent satisfaction and enjoyment out of life (p. 78).

He further maintains that the teaching of literature helps “Training in logical thinking, the ethic aim, and increase knowledge of life”, and these are among many other fundamental advantages of teaching literature (p.78-82). Lazar (1948) states that using literature in the classroom is a productive method of involving the learner as a whole person, it is where the learners have great opportunities to express their personal opinions, reflections and feelings (p. 13-14). Literature is also used “as the potential source to know and identify the aspect of history, social, and culture of a foreign language” (Sugandi and Husnaini 2015, p. 54). It helps student to have awareness of human nature, natural world, morality, etc.

B. Challenges of Teaching Literature

One key question is what are the challenges that literature teachers face in EFL classes in KRI? Chesterman (1983) discusses that “the teaching approach” or the ineffective teaching methodologies is one of challenges of a fruitful teaching of literature and the students’ “unfamiliarity to the study of literature in general” is another challenge (p. 136). Chang (2003) reinforces this idea that “before entering English departments, students usually have not had much experience reading authentic literature written in English” (p. 3). Poor exposure to English and American literature to secondary and high school students in KRI creates a great challenge when teaching them literature at college level, as well.

The types of literature material students are exposed are another challenge as some of them are really difficult for their level considered they are not pedagogically well designed and/or selected. Hoque (2007) states that “finding appropriate literature to teach a second language classroom has always been a major challenge” and the educators have to be careful to choose a text that is not too long or difficult both linguistically and conceptually (pp. 1,2). Hussein and Al-Emami (2016) conclude that three factors make teaching literature challenging; “language proficiency level of the students,

linguistic and stylistic degree of difficulty of the texts and the degree of cultural (un) familiarity” (p. 125).

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research attempts to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the challenges that literature teachers face in KRI universities?
2. What are the opportunities of teaching English/American literature in KRI universities?
3. Is there any stylistically significant effect of gender, age, education, affiliation, and teaching experience on teaching literature in KRI universities?

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants:

The sample of this study consists of university teachers of English literature in KRI. Seventy-one university teachers responded to a web-based questionnaire about the challenges faced by teachers of literature in the universities of KRI. The participants were 38 males and 33 females. The participants were categorized into five age groups (25-30 = 9, 31-35 = 22, 36-40 = 13, 41-45 = 12 and 46 and above = 13). 36 participants were MA holders and 25 were PhD holders. The participants were affiliated by both public and private universities with 52 teachers from public universities and 19 teachers from private universities. In terms of teaching experience, 11 participants have 1-3 years, 17 participants have 4-6 years, 12 participants have 7-9 years, and 31 participants have 10 and above years (see Table 1).

Table 1
Profile of the Participants

Demographic data		Participants with difficulty		Participants with no difficulty		Total	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Males	26	55.32	12	50	38	54
	Females	21	44.68	12	50	33	46
Age	25-30	8	17.02	1	4.17	9	12.68
	31-35	14	29.79	8	33.33	22	30.99
	36-40	8	17.02	5	20.83	13	18.31
	41-45	8	17.02	4	16.67	12	16.90
	46 and above	9	19.15	4	16.67	13	18.31
Education	MA	32	68.09	14	58.33	46	64.79
	PhD	15	31.91	10	41.67	25	35.21
University	Public	35	74.47	17	70.83	52	73.24
	Private	12	25.53	7	29.17	19	26.76
Teaching experience	1-3 years	7	14.89	4	16.67	11	15.49
	4-6 years	13	27.66	4	16.67	17	23.94
	7-9 years	8	17.02	4	16.67	12	16.90
	10 years	19	40.43	12	50	31	44

B. The Questionnaire

The researchers used a google-form questionnaire to collect data from teachers of English/American literature in KRI universities. The questionnaire begins with background information about the participants concerning their gender, age, affiliation, place of living and teaching experience. After that, the participants should answer with *Yes* or *No* to the question “Do you face difficulty in teaching English/American literature?” before they rate the next 17 items concerning the

challenges which they might face in teaching literature. The 17 items were based on Likert Scale and they were in the negative form for those who replied to the preceding question with *Yes*, and in the positive form for those who replied with *No*. The questionnaire ends with three open-answer questions. **The participants' responses were tested for reliability by Cronbach's Alpha and the result was .946.**

C. Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics of the participants' responses was calculated by SPSS version 20 in terms of the frequency, mean, median and mode. The scores of the mean, median and mode were used to determine whether an item constitutes a challenge for literature teachers in KRI or not. By mean scores, an item is labelled *Strongly Disagree* if its mean score is between 1 - 1.79; *Disagree* if its mean score is between 1.8 - 2.59; *Neutral* if its mean score is between 2.6 - 3.39; *Agree* if its mean score is between 3.4 - 4.19; and *Strongly Agree* if its mean score is between 4.2 - 5. Accordingly, based on mean scores an item is considered a challenge if its mean score is 3.4 or higher. The responses to the three open-answer questions were analyzed qualitatively by collecting the responses to each question separately. After that, these responses were classified into key ideas/concepts. Since all the three questions target the role of literature, the answers were dealt with altogether. Thus, they were classified into seven key headings under which the answers were summarized.

V. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section falls into two parts; the first part is the quantitative analysis of the responses to the 17 items and the second part is about the qualitative analysis of the three open-answer questions of the questionnaire.

A. Results of the Quantitative Analysis

According to Chart 1., 66% of the participants (47 out of 71) face difficulty in teaching literature in KRI (the researchers will label them group 1), and 34% of the participants (24 out of 71) do not face any difficulty (the researchers will label them group 2). The two groups of the participants responded to different sets of questionnaire items to give their opinions concerning the challenges faced by university teachers of literature in KRI. The researchers will analyze the responses of each group of participants separately, and then analyze the responses of both groups together.

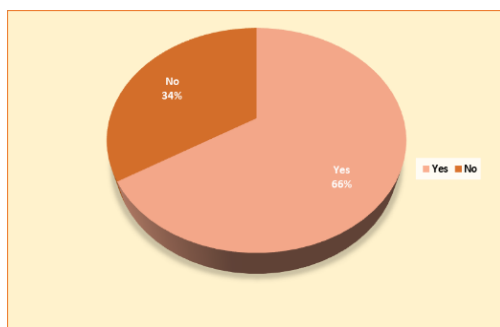


Chart 1. The Percentage of Participants who Responded to the Question "Do you face difficulty in teaching English/American literature?"

Table 2. below exposes the results of the analysis of the responses of group 1. The data are presented based on three measures, namely *mean*, *median* and *mode*. The overall mean of the responses ($M=3.87$) shows that all the problems raised in the items of the questionnaire are challenges in teaching literature. However, the means of the individual items reveal that there is variation in the opinions of the teachers regarding the challenges they face in teaching literature. As Table 2. shows, items 4, 5, 12, and 17 ($M=4.34, 4.40, 4.55$ and 4.28 respectively), which are related to method of teaching and to students, constitute the highest challenge for teachers of literature. Items 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16 ($M=3.40, 3.94, 3.55, 3.96, 3.40, 4.13, 3.64, 4.17, 3.89, 3.81, 3.72$ respectively) represent moderate challenges in teaching literature. However, the participants in this group have neutral attitude towards items 2 and 3 ($M=3.32, 3.21$ respectively).

Based on the median score, all the items, except item 3 which falls within the neutral level of Likert Scale, stand for challenges faced by university teachers of English/American literature. Besides, the mode scores reveal that all the items without exception constitute teaching challenges for literature teachers. The number of students in class is considered the highest challenge in teaching literature by all the three measures (mean, median and mode). In addition, students' lack of critical thinking is another highest challenge according to two measures (mean and mode).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of the Responses of Participants who Have Difficulty in Teaching Literature

Questionnaire Items	Count	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Median	Mode
Item1	47	1	6	16	21	3	3.40	4	4
Item2	47	1	11	11	20	4	3.32	4	4
Item3	47	2	10	15	16	4	3.21	3	4
Item4	47	0	1	3	22	21	4.34	4	4
Item5	47	0	1	2	21	23	4.40	4	5
Item6	47	2	3	8	17	17	3.94	4	4
Item7	47	2	9	8	17	11	3.55	4	4
Item8	47	0	4	8	21	14	3.96	4	4
Item9	47	2	10	9	19	7	3.40	4	4
Item10	47	0	2	4	27	14	4.13	4	4
Item11	47	1	5	11	23	7	3.64	4	4
Item12	47	0	0	6	9	32	4.55	5	5
Item13	47	0	2	6	21	18	4.17	4	4
Item14	47	2	2	6	26	11	3.89	4	4
Item15	47	0	5	10	21	11	3.81	4	4
Item16	47	4	6	3	20	14	3.72	4	4
Item17	47	0	1	3	25	18	4.28	4	4
Total							3.87		

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of the Responses of Participants who Have No Difficulty in Teaching Literature

Questionnaire Items	Count	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Median	Mode
Item1	24	0	2	6	11	5	3.79	4	4
Item2	24	1	0	5	12	6	3.92	4	4
Item3	24	1	0	3	7	13	4.29	5	5
Item4	24	1	2	1	15	5	3.88	4	4
Item5	24	1	1	3	7	12	4.17	5	5
Item6	24	1	5	7	8	3	3.29	3	4
Item7	24	0	3	4	14	3	3.71	4	4
Item8	24	0	3	3	12	6	3.88	4	4
Item9	24	0	2	5	12	5	3.83	4	4
Item10	24	0	1	3	16	4	3.96	4	4
Item11	24	0	1	4	15	4	3.92	4	4
Item12	24	0	5	2	4	13	4.04	5	5
Item13	24	0	5	8	10	1	3.29	3	4
Item14	24	0	1	8	9	6	3.83	4	4
Item15	24	0	4	6	11	3	3.54	4	4
Item16	24	2	7	4	7	4	3.17	3	2
Item17	24	0	7	9	7	1	3.08	3	3
Total							3.74		

Analysis of the responses of group2 (Table 3) revealed that although the participants stated that they face no difficulty in teaching literature, their responses were within the neutral level in statements 6 and 13, based on mean and median measures, and in statements 16 and 17 based on mean, median and mode. However, the mean score suggests that this group of teachers have no challenges in teaching literature.

To analyze the responses of all the participants together, the researchers used the items given to group1 and reversed the coding of the responses of group 2, i.e., Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5 for group1, but Strongly Disagree=5, Disagree=4, Neutral=3, Agree=2, Strongly Agree=1 for group 2.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of the Responses of all the Participants

Questionnaire Items	Count	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Median	Mode
Item1	71	6	17	22	23	3	3	3	4
Item2	71	7	23	16	20	5	2.90	3	2
Item3	71	15	17	18	16	5	2.70	3	3
Item4	71	5	16	4	24	22	3.59	4	4
Item5	71	12	8	5	22	24	3.54	4	5
Item6	71	5	11	15	22	18	3.52	4	4
Item7	71	5	23	12	20	11	3.13	3	2
Item8	71	6	16	11	24	14	3.34	4	4
Item9	71	7	22	14	21	7	2.99	3	2
Item10	71	4	18	7	28	14	3.42	4	4
Item11	71	5	20	15	24	7	3.11	3	4
Item12	71	13	4	8	14	32	3.68	4	5
Item13	71	1	12	14	26	18	3.68	4	4
Item14	71	8	11	14	27	11	3.31	4	4
Item15	71	3	16	16	25	11	3.35	4	4
Item16	71	8	13	7	27	16	3.42	4	4
Item17	71	1	8	12	32	18	3.82	4	4
Total							3.32		

The descriptive statistics of Table 4. reveals that items 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 16 and 17 are challenges to teachers of literature by all the three measures (mean, median and mode) and items 8, 14 and 15 are challenges by two measures (median and mode), whereas items 1 and 11 are challenges by the mode measure only. By contrast, items 2, 7 and 9 carry no challenge to teachers of literature by one measure, namely mode.

Independent-sample t-tests were conducted to examine the influence of gender, education and affiliation on the challenges of teaching literature. The results of the tests have shown that these independent variables are statistically not significant determinants of the challenges of teaching literature in KRI. The scores of the three variables are females (M=3.25, SD=0.93) and males (M=3.38, SD=0.88) conditions; $t(69) = .575$, $p = .567$.; MA holders (M=3.43, SD=0.90) and PhD holders (M=3.12, SD=0.88) conditions; $t(69) = 1.391$, $p = .169$.; and public universities (M=3.34, SD=0.89) and private universities (M=3.26, SD=0.94) conditions; $t(69) = 0.302$, $p = .764$. respectively.

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the effect of age and teaching experience on the challenges faced by teachers of literature in KRI. The results of the ANOVAs revealed that there was no significant effect of age and teaching experience on the challenges faced by teachers of literature at the $p < .05$ level. The scores of the ANOVAs results are $F(4, 66) = .769$, $p = .549$ for age, and $F(3, 67) = .464$, $p = .709$ for teaching experience.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics of the Factors Contributing to Challenges of Literature Teaching in KRI

Factors contributing to literature teaching challenges	Questionnaire Items	All participants = 71			Participants with difficulty = 47			Participants with no difficulty = 24		
		Mean	Median	Mode	Mean	Median	Mode	Mean	Median	Mode
Teaching method related factors	1, 2, 5, 9, 11, 12	3.63	3.75	4.25	4.13	4.25	4.25	2.65	2.63	2.25
Content-related factors	6, 10	3.47	3.50	4.25*	4.03	4.00	4.25*	2.38	2.50	2.00
External factors	8, 15	3.35	3.50	4.00*	3.88	4.00	4.50	2.29	2.00	1.50
Students-related factors	4, 13, 16, 17	3.20	3.50	3.83	3.79	3.83	3.83	2.06	2.00	2.84*
Teachers-related factors	3, 7, 14	3.05	3.00	3.67	3.55	3.67	3.67	2.06	2.00	2.33

* The score stands for the mean of two mode values

The scores of the mean, median of the five factors contributing to literature teaching challenges, based on all the participants' responses, suggest that the method of teaching literature, literary content taught and the external factors are potential challenges in KRI literature classes, whereas teachers and students are neutrally perceived by the participants. However, the mode scores of these groups show that all the suggested factors are challenges in teaching literature, with teaching method and content being the most challenging components, external factors being less challenging component, students being less than the former three components, and teachers being the least challenging components of literature classes.

By contrast, the scores of the factors underlying literature teaching challenges, by the mean, median and mode measures, indicate that all the nominated factors are challenges faced by teachers of literature in KRI. The factors can be ordered from the highest challenging to the least challenging as follows: method of teaching, external factors, the content taught, the students and the teachers. However, if only the mode scores are considered, external factors become the most challenging, then come the teaching method and the content which have the same score, and the students as less challenging, and finally the teachers as the least challenging.

According to the responses scores of those participants who have no difficulty in teaching literature, teaching method factor falls within the neutral scale while none of the other four factors is contributing to challenges in teaching literature in KRI.

The data in Table 6., which are based on Pearson correlation, indicate that there is a strong positive relationship between the five factors underlying the challenges faced by teachers of literature in KRI universities. The strongest correlation is between students-related factors and the external factors (.824) and the least strong correlation is between the content-related factors and the external factors.

Table 6
Correlations between the Five Factors Underlying the Challenges Faced by Literature Teachers in KRI.

	Teachers related factors	Methodology related factors	Students related factors	Content related factors	External Factors
Teachers related factors	1				
Methodology related factors	.746**	1			
Students related factors	.778**	.801**	1		
Content related factors	.713**	.744**	.763**	1	
External Factors	.796**	.809**	.824**	.718**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The finding that method of teaching is a high challenge for teachers of literature is supported by a study conducted by Chesterman (1983: p.136) who found that “the teaching

approach” or the ineffective teaching methodology is one of the challenges of a fruitful teaching of literature.

Chang (2003: p.3) believes that teaching literature to students who have poor pre-college experience reading authentic literary texts is a major issue in EFL classes. This idea is in line with the present study which revealed several factors related to students as potential challenges in literature classes in KRI universities.

A study conducted by Hoque (2007: pp.1, 2) asserted that “finding appropriate literature to teach a second language classroom has always been a major challenge” and this assertion is reinforced by the findings of the present study. According to the data in Table 5., the material taught obtained a high rank within literature teaching challenges nominated by this study.

Hussein and Al-Emami (2016: p.125) concluded that three factors make teaching literature challenging, namely “language proficiency level of the students, linguistic and stylistic degree of difficulty of the texts and the degree of cultural (un) familiarity”. Interestingly, these factors refer to students-related factors, content-related factors and external factors respectively, which the current study proved them statistically as major challenges in teaching literature.

Tayib and Hassan (2020: p.1231) found out that students-related challenges are the most serious among the three proposed types of challenges, namely challenges resulted by teachers themselves, challenges resulted by students and challenges resulted by external factors. Conversely, the present study concluded that challenges caused by method of teaching, the material taught and the external factors are more serious than those caused by factors related to students or teachers. However, the two studies agree that challenges ascribed to teachers themselves are the least serious.

B. Results of the Qualitative Analysis

Although there are challenges of teaching literature, it is rewarding to teach literature since it deals with human values as it experientially presents human conditions/experience. The respondents were asked to answer three open-answer questions about literature:

1. In your own words, what does literature mean to you?
2. If you were a student right now, would you like literature? Why
3. What has literature provided you with or what have you learned from literature?

The fundamental point that binds these three questions together is the impacts literature has had on the respondents. Their responses greatly help to know their attitudes and appreciation of literature which can predict their impacts on the education of their students. According to the responses, almost all the respondents have benefited from studying, reading and teaching literature that has impacted their worldview and perceptions regardless of the challenges they faced in their career.

The rewarding impacts of literature, mentioned by the respondents, can be classified as follows:

1. Literature as Source of Knowledge/Insight about Human Cultivation

Literature portrays what it means to be human; expression of human inner world, feelings, psychological and sentimental aspects of human. It is a guide to self-growth and self-discovery; re-discovering untrodden territories of being and self. It is an expression of and finding the inner peace. It voices an expression of universality of human experience and human struggle. It Intellectually refines human mindset and critical thinking.

2. Literature as an Enlightening Refuge in Life

Literature consoles us as a life interpreter; a mirror to life that accompanies us to reflect on human condition; it can help regulating human life style by broadening our minds to other possibilities, experiences, and realities, to see through hidden layers of life. On an enlightening philosophical level, literature helps in uncovering vagueness of life, presents experimental truth, hidden meanings of life.

3. Literature as a Source of Ethics

Literature is experientially a reflection of human conscience and morality; about limits of being kind and tolerant, for instance.

4. Literature as a Distinctive Footprint/Product of Human Being

It is a subjective experience to entertain human thoughts imaginatively (addressing imaginative conditions/human experiences), both aesthetically and educationally. It channels human creativity and perceptions. Literature is an autonomous process.

5. Literature as a Timeless Cultural Treasure

Literature is an individual's/nation's identity; a knowledgeable source to know one's culture, history and language as an essential and timeless part of human life. Literature contains long-lasting political insights.

6. Literature as a Source of Resilience and Survival

Literature empowers men to overcome difficulties and challenges. It is psychologically encouraging, making one a productive and responsible person.

7. Literature as Effective Tool for Language Learning

Literature offers a rich source for language learning on various levels such as structure, grammar, and vocabulary.

When asked about whether they would choose literature over other subjects if they have a choice (If you were a student right now, would you like literature? Why), a few of the respondents said yes but also raised their concerns about the conditions. They were concerned that the lecturer needs to be professional and the class environment has to be supportive and encouraging. There were also concerns about future employment and job security as well as stigma/attitude towards literature as not being a necessary subject in education system, seeming like a very vague subject to some people

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, literature teachers in KRI face challenges when teaching English/American literature. Based on all the participants' responses the challenges are related to method of teaching, content related factors, external factors, student related factors, and teacher related factors. According to the results teaching methodology is the highest challenge. It is vital that teachers of literature take specific training courses for teaching literature. The teacher needs to have sufficient background in educational psychology. He/she needs to have the potential to recognize differences in the students' individual competences as it is the case that students come from both scientific and literary branches as they graduate from high school. Along similar line of thought, instead of memorization, the students need to reflect on the literary subjects. That's why there should be a vital methodology to help them learn to reflect and this has to be taken into great consideration and reflected in the teachers' methods of assessments. The nature of literature as a field is different from other fields of study because it is an imaginative representation of reality with all its complexities; it deals with human conditions both internally and externally. The teacher of literature needs to recognize this complexity and be interdisciplinary in mindset as well as approaches of communicating the subject/literature.

Another challenge is the literary content (content related factor) and it is the second highest challenge. Sometimes wrong choice of texts causes a challenge in teaching literature. Thus, students' levels of engaging with such contents, and the depth/complexities of the texts must be taken into consideration. It would not be advisable to teach a complex text to a group of students who have not yet mastered tools of analysis. Literature is a multilayered - linguistic, symbolic, and thematic - manifestation of life, which needs critical thinking and feasible analytical tools to approach. This complexity by itself can be seen as one of the challenges in communicating them to the students.

There are many external factors that cause challenges in teaching literature. One of them is the number of students in a class that is sometimes difficult to manage and/or apply right and effective method of teaching literature. There is also lack of sufficient resources such as online catalogues and library resources. Sometimes, lack of an encouraging environment on campus to study and research is another challenge. There is prejudice and misjudgment towards humanitarian and literary studies in terms of securing future professions. It is vital that the university's world view paves the way for critical thinking to make independent graduates. And finally, gadgets and social media have affected the accessibility, acceptance and importance of literature, as well.

Among the five nominated factors that are challenges faced by teachers of literature in KRI is also student related factor. This challenge arises mostly from poor exposure of high school graduates to literature and its nature as well as discussing and reflecting on literary subjects. Sometimes, literary students try to depend on memorization, while they need to be more open and flexible to engage with critical thinking in studying literature. Furthermore, the market expectations and opportunities are dominated by STEM fields of study, i.e. science, technology, engineering and mathematics, rather than

culture, literature or arts. This can be seen as another challenge for the students to lose interest in literature as the two are not compatibly matched easily.

Another challenge in teaching literature is related to the teacher. It is vital for the teacher to have tools of analysis, critical thinking, questioning, and openness to debate and discuss what is presented in a literary work to the students. The teacher related factor and methods of teaching are interrelated. Sometimes it is the teachers' lack of passion and interest in literature as well as teaching literature that makes one of such challenges. Once more, as literature and culture are not widely targeted in the market value chain, that's why sometimes, literary teachers feel hopeless and pessimistic about their career.

Apart from the challenges facing teachers of literature, there are opportunities to the teaching of literature as it is linked to the nature of literature as being a field where human being is experientially presented. Literature portrays three main questions about human condition: what it means to be human? Who are we? And, how do we communicate? Because it deals with human values, for the teachers as well as for the students it has been a great arena to learn about great minds, great insights as well as great tales that are aesthetically preserving what it means to be human. Classifying the results of the three open answer questions, one can clearly see the positive impacts of literature on the teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Method of teaching is the highest challenge in the five factors and the teacher related factor is the least challenge yet they are interrelated. So, enhancement and pedagogical training courses specifically for literature specialists and not general courses on teaching are required to help literature teachers improve skills and mastery of the tools and methodologies of teaching literature. This will help them to practically get more interactive and be able to manage the diversity of teaching approaches.
2. In terms of the five factors contributing literature teaching challenges, the content related factor is the second highest challenge. Thus, reading literary texts are needed and preferable by both teachers and students. It needs to be campaigned for vitally on a wide scale.
3. External factors score the third highest challenge among the five factors. Class size is one key component of the external factors. Therefore, there needs to be a specified group of students in a class, preferably no more than 20-25 students. And if not, then literary teachers need to practically learn to adjust themselves to a sufficient number of students, to master activities and techniques that help making the best out of this number of students.
4. Technology and digitalization as external factors have impacted all aspects of life. Items 9 and 11 shed lights on their role and impacts, it is important to highlight the necessity of addressing, exploring and finding ways to bridge the gap between literature and technology in order to make the best

out of the commonality and usability of technology. This may need to be accomplished through specific conferences or open discussions among experts of pertinent fields or disciplines.

5. Items 3, 6, 7, 11, and 14 mainly focus on the teacher. Since it is one of the challenges although the least one, it is a good indication that literary teachers need to work more, scrutinize deeper, see wider and think more openly when they handle literary texts and when they teach them to students. And this is one of the other topics that need to be covered in literary conferences and debates.
6. Another external factor that can be worked on is the world view and impacts of the university policy makers and strategic planners on humanities. They need to take into consideration the graduation quality and mindset that would help securing future job opportunities and occupations for their graduate generations. Items 8,13, and 17 expose this matter.
7. Another external factor is that poor background of literature goes back to high school years, and university policy makers and strategic planners need to take this in the consideration when trying to enrich this background.

REFERENCES

- Chang, H. S., (2003). Difficulties in studying and teaching literature survey courses in English departments in Taiwan. Unpublished Ph.D.Thesis, The University of Texas at Austin.
- Chesterman, A. (1983). The teaching of literature to non- native speakers. *AFinLa:nVuosikirja*, 135-142.
- Farrar P. (1940) Aims of the teaching of literature. *The High School Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 78-83
- Hill, J. (1986). Teaching literature in the language classroom. London: Macmillan.
- Hoque, M. E. (2007). The use of literature in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). *Harvest, Jahangirnagar Studies of Literature and Language*. 22, 1-27.
- Hussein, E. and Al-Emami, A. (2016). Challenges to teaching English literature at the University of Hail: Instructors' perspective. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, 7 (4), 125-138.
- Lazar, G. (1993). *Literature and language teaching: A guide for teachers and trainers*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Likert, R (1932). "A Technique for the Measurement of Attitudes". *Archives of Psychology*. 140:1-55
- Sidhu, G.K. Fook, C.U. Kaur, S. (2010). Instructional practices in teaching literature: Observations of ESL Classrooms in Malaysia. *English Language Teaching*, 3, (2), 54-63.
- Sugandi, B. and Husnaini, (2015). Teaching Poetry in ELT Classrooms: □□Some Challenges and Solutions. The 3rd International Multidisciplinary Conference on Social Sciences (IMCoSS 2015) Bandar Lampung University (UBL), 1, 54-57.
- Tayib C. and Hassan H, (2020). "Challenges Encountering Literature Teachers of EFL Classes in Salahaddin University/ Erbil" *Twezhaz Journal گۆنھاری نوێژەر* 3.2
- Ur, Penny. (1991). *A Course in language teaching: practice and theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

APPENDIX

There are 17 major questions that need to be rated after answering this question (Does an English teacher face difficulty in teaching literature? Yes or No

If yes, rate the reasons listed below:

1. Methods of teaching literature are inactive or ineffective.
2. It is difficult for me to apply/master an effective method of teaching literature, such as: (right critical questioning, group works, grading, reflective writing, student based, subject based or a combination of these when required)
3. There are ineffective personal characteristics of the teacher related to teaching literature, such as: (not being ready or humble enough to learn the creative process of teaching an English subject).
4. There are mixed abilities in literature classes, such as: (language inefficiency, teacher and student linguistic interaction, Poor literary background for both, age difference, life experience, and interest for the subject)
5. Teaching literature requires critical thinking which is not necessarily offered by all the students.
6. Nowadays, reading literary texts is not effectively common among teachers and students.
7. Most of the time teachers do not have a clear vision on the outcomes of teaching and learning literature.
8. Most of the time the university's world view does not pave the way for different thinking, critical thinking and creative thinking to make independent graduates.
9. Necessary accessories may not be available such as: (data show, film productions or other adaptations of the play, the original text).
10. The nature of literary works or subject is a challenge by itself in terms of (High linguistic quality of literary texts, the fictitious nature of literary texts, the figurative language including coding and decoding facets)
11. Sometimes the difficulty arises from inaccuracy in tests, examinations and grading practices.
12. When there are a big number of students in a class, teaching literature is challenging.
13. Students are in the dilemma of market expectation, job requirement, and conscious discussion of life through literature.
14. Inability of some literary teachers to link between teaching literature in a way that employs the skills the students learn from literature in real life and market.
15. Gadgets and social media have affected the accessibility, acceptance and importance of literature.
16. High school education system produces and formulates the mindset of the freshmen of university about literature and humanities.
17. There is prejudice and misjudgment towards humanitarian and literary studies in terms of securing future professions.

Does an English teacher face difficulty in teaching literature?
Yes or No.

If no, rate the reasons listed below:

1. Methods of teaching literature are active and effective.
2. It is easy for me to apply/master an effective method of teaching literature, such as: (right critical questioning, group works, grading, reflective writing, student based, subject based or a combination of these when required)
3. There are effective personal characteristics of the teacher related to teaching literature, such as: (being ready or humble enough to learn the creative process of teaching an English subject).
4. There are mixed abilities in literature classes which helps teaching literature, such as: (language inefficiency, teacher and student linguistic interaction, good literary background for both, age difference, life experience, and interest for the subject).
5. Teaching literature requires critical thinking which is offered by some of the students.
6. Nowadays, reading literary texts is getting more common among teachers and students.
7. Some teachers have a clear vision on the outcomes of teaching and learning literature.
8. Some universities' world views pave the way for different thinking, critical thinking and creative thinking to make independent graduates.
9. Most of the time necessary accessories are fairly available such as: (data show, film productions or other adaptations of the play, the original text).
10. The nature of literary works or subjects is inspiring/encouraging by itself in terms of (High linguistic quality of literary texts, the fictitious nature of literary texts, the figurative language including coding and decoding facets)
11. Sometimes the motivation arises from accuracy in tests, examinations and grading practices.
12. When there is a small number of students in a class, teaching literature is helpful.
13. Sometimes students are aware of market expectation, job requirement, and conscious discussion of life through literature.
14. Some teachers are capable of linking between teaching literature in a way that employs the skills the students learn from literature in real life and market.
15. Gadgets and social media have facilitated the accessibility, acceptance and importance of literature.
16. High school education system does not produce or formulate the mindset of the freshmen of university about literature and humanities.
17. There is a good impression towards humanitarian and literary studies in terms of securing future professions.