Teachers' Perceptions and Concerns about the Use of Literary Texts to Motivate Students:
A Case study at Chlef Secondary Schools

تصوّرات الأساتذة وانشغالاتهم بخصوص استخدام النّصوص الأدبيّة لتحفيز المتمدرسين: ثانويّات الشّلف أنموذجا

Hammadi Somia [1,*], Chaal Houaria [2]

[1] Laboratory of Information and Communication Technologies in the Teaching of Foreign Languages and Translation. Hassiba Ben Bouali University of Chlef, Algeria.

Article info	Abstract
	For some English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, literary texts are an excellent tool that boosts their students' motivation, gets them highly immersed and brings enjoyment during learning. For others, these are no more than complex texts that lead to a motivation decline. Accordingly, this study attempts to examine the Algerian Secondary School teachers' perceptions and concerns about the use of the literary component as a strategy to increase their students' motivation and foster their engagement while learning English. In an endeavour to reach valuable results, a questionnaire was distributed to 30 teachers who work in 14 distinct secondary schools in Chlef. The findings demonstrate that teachers hold mixed thoughts and feelings towards the impact of the literary component on the learners' motivation.Similarly to the findings of other related studies, students' low language proficiency, inappropriate designed literary materials, and teachers' limited knowledge about convenient techniques that trigger the students' motivation through a literary content were found to be in the first place in terms of demotivating factors and concerns.

ملخص

تُعدّ النّصوص الأدبيّة أداة تعليم ناجعة بالنسبة لبعض المعلمين . إذ أنها تزيد من دافعيّة وحماسة متعلميهم ، كما تجعلهم أكثر انغماسا واستمتاعا أثناء التّعلّم . في حين أنّها لا تعدو كونها نصوصا معقّدة تثبّط دافعيّة البعض الآخر . وعليه، فإنّ هذه الدّراسة تهدف إلى تسليط الضوء على آراء المعلمين بالمدارس الثّانوية في الجزائر ، وبولاية الشّلف تحديدا. وكذا الوقوف على انشغالاتهم بخصوص استخدام المحتوى الأدبيّ كاستراتيجيّة لزيادة دافعيّة متعلميّ اللّغة الانجليزيّة ومدى تجاوبهم أثناء الدّرس .وقصد بلوغ نتائج قيّمة فقد تم توزيع استبيان على عيّنة تضم ثلاثين أستاذا، موزعين على أربع عشرة ثانويّة بولاية الشّلف. أظهرت النّتائج أنّ آراء هؤلاء متباينة فيما يتعلّق بتأثير العنصر الأدبيّ على دافعية المتعلّمين وحماستهم .وهي نتائج لاتختلف كثيرا عن مثيلاتها في دراسات سابقة.اذ تستخلص الدّراسة أنّ المستوى اللّغوي المحتشم للمتعلّمين ، النّصوص الأدبيّة غير المناسبة ، وكذا معرفة الأساتذة المحدودة بتقنيّات وطرائق استغلال النصوص الأدبية قصد زيّادة حماسة المتعلّمين تأتي في مقدّمة العوامل المثبّطة والمعرقلة لدافعيّتهم وكذا انشغالات المعلّمين.

* Corresponding author at: Hassiba Ben Bouali University of Chlef, Algeria.
Email : s.hammadi90@univ-chlef.dz

1. introduction

Students need to be fully immersed and highly involved in order for them to acquire any skill or learn any foreign language. Without the learners' motivation, there is no pulse and no life in the class. Even teachers in all over the world enjoy teaching motivated students. Motivation constitutes one of the most important ingredients for learning. Many psychologists stress the necessity of engaging students while learning. In this regard, Tomlinson (1999) as cited in Brown (2004) points out that the most meaningful and successful learning takes place when students are fairly involved intellectually, aesthetically, and emotionally in their own education. Strategies for motivating learners have continuously been suggested by many scholars and educationists from all over the world. Similarly, foreign language teachers should be skillful in selecting techniques and materials that engage their students while learning.

In EFL classrooms, literary texts are deemed the type of materials that help students to gain this experience. Now, literary texts are used in many language classrooms as a resource for linguistic competence and personal engagement since literature is basically meant for entertainment or pleasure. Mackey (1986) states that literature involves affective, attitudinal and experiential factors and therefore may motivate learners to read. Following the same drift, Lazar (1993) in her book "Literature and Language Teaching" adds that literature is motivating to the learners for several reasons. Accordingly, there is a meaningful relationship between literary texts and students' motivation in foreign language learning. Compared to the sheer volume of research on the students' engagement with literary texts at university, research on students' motivation through exploiting the literary component in Algerian secondary school education is quite slim. This is probably due to the fact that literature itself is left behind compared with grammar teaching which is still dominating. What is worse is that this grammar is taught through the use of isolated sentences that are not put in a clear context. Throughout her career as a teacher, the researcher has many times encountered colleagues who have been skeptical about using literary texts for fear that these

last are written in a complex language and difficult vocabulary and hence may demotivate students. The study at hands therefore, attempts to examine the Algerian secondary school teachers' views and concerns about the use of literary texts as a strategy to increase students' motivation. The teachers' views, which are believed to be mixed thoughts and different feelings, as well as their concerns will be examined through the use of a questionnaire as a research instrument.

2. The Role of Motivation in Foreign Language Learning

Motivation is a key element and an initial engine for learning in general and in the field of foreign language learning in particular. According to Gardner (1985), motivation is a very complicated psychological phenomenon that has a great impact on the learner of a second language. Dorneyi(1994) distinguished between two distinct categories of motivation namely "intrinsic and extrinsic motivation". The former is a kind of a personal satisfaction and an inner enjoyment or a pleasure of the learner himself when doing a task. The latter, on the other hand, is a sort of an outer excitement to fulfill a task, it is driven by punishment, rewards and other external factors. Deci et al.(1999) went further by stating that according to psychologists, intrinsic motivation is more desirable and results in better learning outcomes than extrinsic motivation does. Skinner et al.(2017) refers to intrinsic motivation as "engagement". This engagement according to Frediricks (2004) as cited in Bloemert et al.(2019)"is a combination of a number of components, identified as emotional, behavioral, cognitive and social". The two major components for Lee (2014) that are often included in studies of engagement are behavioral and emotional engagement.

# 3. Increasing Motivation Through Literary Texts

Before delving deeply and providing more insights about the effective role of the literary component in increasing foreign language learners' motivation, it is safer to refer to the definition of literary texts. According to Daira (2020), these are imaginative pieces of writing that are constructed to reflect human experiences, offer pleasure and enjoyment,

stimulate thoughts and arouse the readers' emotions. Lucas (1990) clearly distinguished between literary texts and non literary texts. Figure one clarifies this classification.

In the EFL context, literary texts are deemed excellent teaching tools that help raise awareness in terms of language. Not only this, but they can be used to get students both emotionally and behaviorally engaged. Through engaging students emotionally, a literary text has a supreme power over the learners' affective reactions of enthusiasm, interest, and enjoyment as well. (Skinner et al. , 2008).

Figure 1

Lucas Classification of Literary Texts

source : http: //www.researchgate.net
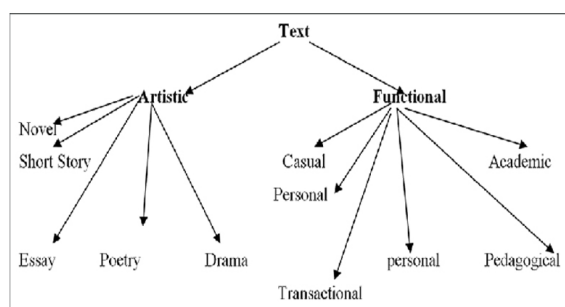
It is worth mentioning here that from a psychological perspective, teens in their way to become adults undergo multiple development adjustments including emotional changes, therefore, by engaging these adolescents with learning activities that purify, refine and guide these emotions, teachers will be doing a great job through exploiting literary texts in a way that engages the students more. Additionally, learners get immersed and involved if their teachers expose them to what relates to their real life experiences. Ghosen (2002) and Van (2009) argue that literary texts are very motivating due to their authenticity and the meaningful context they provide.

Following the same drift, Khatib et al.(2011) add that experience shows that motivation is especially achieved when students are exposed to what they really enjoy and they are highly motivated when they are exposed to literary texts for language learning purposes.

Since literary texts are appealing to most students, they can make them participate at class by conveying their own interpretations, engaging in creative writings using the literary work as a model and/ or an inspiration, listening carefully and attentively to their teacher reading a story aloud for them at class, or simply practicing oral English and know some social facts about countries through practicing lyrics on their own and singing songs to finally leave class with a tune on their lips. This involvement that includes a change in the students' behavior is known as "behavioral engagement".

Li et al.(2019) indicate that the more proficient the student is in the language, the more he enjoys the literary text he reads. As he will not remain focused on understanding the meaning of every single word, he will then never lose the pleasure of enjoying what is read. This implies that on the other hand, fresh learners or EFL students who are still struggling to develop an English vocabulary base, can never enjoy reading a literary text or be motivated and engaged.

Nevertheless, motivation of EFL learners through the literary component can be possible if the teacher uses other techniques or instruments to engage students more with the text. These instruments are believed to be visual aids.

 In this context, Yunus et al.(2013), in an insightful research on using visual aids as motivational tool in enhancing students' interest in reading literary texts, found out that the use of visual aids enhances students' motivation and gets them more engaged. He further discovered that most secondary school teachers in Kapit , Sorawak and Malysia hold positive attitudes toward the use of visual aids in reading literary texts.

Vural (2013) echoes this view, and stated that short stories as a literary genre can be used as a positive stimulation to motivate students in a foreign language learning setting. Following the same drift, Liyu et al.(2019) in a study that was conducted about reinforcing learning motivation through literature in English teaching proposes the use of literature as a means to motivate students rather than as an end by itself. In Dutch EFL secondary schools, Bloemert et al.(2019) found out that literary texts are significantly more emotionally engaging then behaviourally for students during EFL literature lessons. In the Algerian

context, Boureguig (2021) indicated that teachers could even use literary texts to assess students through tests and exams, and this will create interest in the literary works and motivate students both intrinsically and extrinsically.

Schmidt and Crookes (1991) state that the success in the acquisition of any language is often determined by the students' interest and enthusiasm for the material used in the language classroom, the level of their persistence with the learning task, and the level of their concentration and enjoyment. This type of students' involvement may come from the material used at class.

Literary texts, though regarded as excellent teaching materials that offer enjoyment, can turn to be boring and uninteresting in some cases, one case might be when these texts are used with beginners whose language proficiency is regarded low. In the words of Carter and Long (1991) *"Level of language difficulty has to be considered because the access will be restricted if the students cannot attain the basic level of comprehension"*. To this, students' level of motivation will remarkably decrease. As a solution to this, Carter and Long (1991) suggest that this kind of experience and enjoyment need not always be hampered by linguistic difficulty or complexity of the words as an exciting or motivating text can itself be an incentive and a stimulant to overcome some of the linguistic or cultural barriers in the text. Therefore, what at the beginning might seem complex and demotivational, can turn to be exciting and engaging for learners. This depends mainly on the type of the material, which is the well chosen literary text in this case. Choosing appropriate literary texts that trigger the students' motivation constitutes a part of the teachers' role.

3.1 The Teacher's Role

While literary texts are reckoned to be motivational for some learners, the case may not be true when instructors are clueless about its effective use as an engaging tool. Additionally, literary texts, especially those written in a foreign language can be a burden and a source of frustration to students when teachers fail to select the appropriate texts that correspond

with the learners' age, language aptitude, literary and cultural background.

As a matter of fact, even literary texts that are written in the learners' native language may not capture their interest or get them engaged, because they are randomly chosen and do not match with the above mentioned criteria or simply because of the teachers' methodology. Paran (1998) clarified that some teachers tend to avoid literary texts because of limited time during classroom period and because they think they are not equipped methodologically to use these texts due to the difficulty of choosing them.

According to Chambers (1999), teachers may affect students' motivation either positively or negatively. This is probably why students may be highly motivated and engaged within a certain text taught by one teacher, while they might show no interest or enthusiasm towards the same text being taught by another teacher. It is the teachers' methodology that creates the difference in learners.

4. Literary Texts decrease Students' Motivation

Literary texts may on the other hand lead to a motivation decline among students.

This decrease in motivation is reflected in the students' reluctance to read a literary text or accomplish a task in relation to it, to engage in class discussions or to share opinions since: first, the topic of the literary text does not seem to match the learners' interest. Rief and Heimburg (1996) confirm that students need reading materials that catch their interest, motivate them , and make them enjoy texts that have meaningful connections to their lives and personal experiences.

Second, students might seem uninterested in what the teacher is presenting to them as a story or a poem because the language in that lines of story or poem is very complex and difficult. Brumfit et al.(1986) argues that the linguistic difficulty of the text can be a barrier for the learners. He further added that it is impossible for a piece of literature to be enjoyable and motivating for learners whose language proficiency is still low while the words in the story paper are beyond their grasp and language capacity.

Third, teachers' lack of training on how to use literary

texts to boost the students' motivation constitutes another major barrier and lead to the use of wrong methodologies by teachers ,this in turn results in students' disaffection and demotivation. Kheladi (2020) confirms that the responsibility of assuring engagement does not only fall on the learners'side but it equally constitutes a major part of the teachers' role.

5. Research Method

The case study covers 14 Secondary Schools in Chlef. The researcher's aim is to investigate the teachers' perceptions and concerns about the use of literary texts as a way for motivating students and engaging them more in the teaching/ learning process. A quantitative methodology was therefore utilized to examine these attitudes and concerns.

6. Participants

A cohort of (30) teachers (11 male and 19 female) , who teach in various secondary schools in Chlef province, participated in this study by responding to a questionnaire groping their perceptions and multiple concerns about the use of the literary component as a strategy to motivate the students to learn English as a foreign language. The teachers have a working experience that ranges from four to twenty seven years and have dealt with three levels (first, second and third year) for both scientific and literary streams.

7. Data Collection Instrument

The quantitative methodology in this study employed the use of a questionnaire as an instrument to gather treasured data. Eliasson (2013) stated that *"when investigating how widespread attitudes are or to be able to draw conclusions that apply to more than those included in the study, it is useful to use some kind of quantitative study, for example a questionnaire"* (p.31).

In order to measure the level of behavioural and emotional engagement of the students from the teachers' point of view, we adopted some elements in Engagement versus Disaffection survey by Skinner et al.(2009), the questionnaire was later sent to three experts in the field and some modifications were done accordingly. The questionnaire consisted of three rubrics. The rubrics contained both open- ended and closed- ended questions.

8. Reflections on the Findings

The present study aimed to examine the perceptions and concerns of secondary school teachers of English in Chlef province in relation to the use of literary texts as teaching tools to enhance students' motivation.

The results indicate that, in respect to their field experience and classroom practices,the teachers seem to hold mixed thoughts about the impact of literary texts on the students' level of motivation. They further added that this type of texts was rarely used with literary stream classrooms since it was a part of their program. Although all the teachers (100%) believe that motivation plays a major role in facilitating the learning of a foreign language, very few of them (10%) use literary texts as short stories, poems and song lyrics as strategies to motivate students. The teachers, on the other hand, use other strategies that result in extrinsic motivation as giving rewards, adding some extra marks to the final test score, or sometimes plan games or use visual aids (power point presentations and pictures) and audio files related to the course to get the students reflect and participate .The great majority (90%) consider literary texts mainly short stories highly motivational for students especially if the texts are carefully chosen and meet with the students' interest. This emphasizes the importance of text selection discussed earlier by Rief and Heimburg(1996) who stressed the necessity of using reading materials that catch the students' interest and make them build connections between their personal experiences and what they read at class. No teacher seems to agree upon the use of novels as a literary genre to trigger motivation. This is probably because novels are complex for most of the students and time consuming for all the teachers and thus they should be avoided .Table one shows the most appropriate literary genre for students according to the teachers ' views.

Table 1: Appropriate Literary Genre

Literary genre	Shortstory	poem	novel	novella
N°of teachers	27	03	00	00
Percentage	90%	10%	00%	00%

Reflecting on their teaching experiences and classroom practices, (50%) of the teachers described their students' level of motivation as "low" when confronted with the literary component, (43%) mentioned that it was just medium ,while only (06%) considered it as "high" level motivation . Figure 02, which is a kind of a bar graph illustrates these findings.

Figure 2 : Students' Level of Motivation
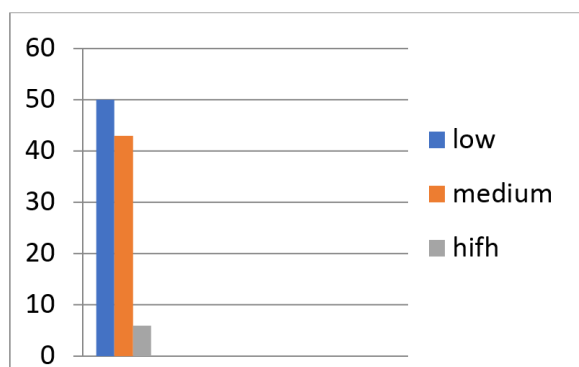
The results in tables 02 and 03 exhibit as well that the students are neither emotionally nor behaviourally fully engaged with the literary texts used at class and that their response towards these texts is cold and indifferent due to some reasons.

Table 02: Students' Behavioural Engagement with Literary Texts

Students' behavioural engagement	Yes	No
Do your students participate when you expose them to literary texts?	11 36%	19 63%
Do they try hard to do well ?	09 30%	21 70%
Do they listen very carefully?	09 30%	21 70%
Do they pay attention when you use literary texts to teach them?	13 43%	17 56%
Do they think about other things when you use literary texts to teach them?	21 70%	09 30%

Table 03: Students' Emotional Engagement with Literary Texts

Students' emotional engagement	Yes	No
Do your students feel good when you use literary texts to teach them?	15 50%	15 50%
Do they feel interested?	09 30%	21 70%
Do your students find literary texts fun?	12 40%	18 60%
Do they enjoy learning new things when you use literary texts to teach them?	11 36%	19 63%
Do they get involved?	11 36%	19 63%
Do they feel frustrated when you use literary texts to teach them?	17 56%	13 43%
Do feel bored when you use literary texts to teach them?	16 53%	14 46%

Unlike previous studies, which have proven mostly the effectiveness of this type of texts and their crucial role in increasing the motivation of learners, in Algerian secondary education, the literary component seems to be not yet appropriately exploited to engage the learners and trigger their motivation. On the other hand , literary texts lead to a motivation decline for a great majority of the students due to a host number of factors . To start with , the teachers expressed their first concern with the use of literary text by focusing on the students' language proficiency. According to all the teachers, secondary school students in Algeria seem to be not yet linguistically ready to read, understand and engage with literary texts written in English. In the words of Carter and Long (1991) *"for each piece of literature, an appropriate level of proficiency is required"* (p.06). In this context, the teachers added that individual differences among learners came to play a major role on their level of motivation and engagement. The solution to this low language proficiency among learners according to some teachers is to select appropriate and simple texts that

meet with the students' linguistic level and vocabulary wealth. Nevertheless, a great number of teachers (90%) seem to be at odd with the right methodology to use or choose literary texts that can increase the students' motivation since they have not received any training in this area and this may elucidate the fact of disregarding these texts and focusing on others. This again confirms what Paran (1998) has stated about teachers who ignore literary texts in their classes for fear they will not be able to deal with them or exploit them in the right way. Additionally, most teachers use these texts to deal with some comprehension questions or focus mainly on teaching new vocabulary without engaging the students which creates a monotonous atmosphere. Lazar (1993) pointed out that the linguistic material should not be excessive and overemphasized, because it would certainly mar the pleasure of reading literature.

It is worth mentioning that all the teachers (100%) believe that the literary texts that are provided in the textbooks are not motivational or engaging for the learners at all." These are boring ,complex and uninteresting texts that belong to the past and the students are no longer interested in old as hills topics, except for one or two good passages" also ,"students would certainly be more engaged if we use some interesting fairy tales alongside with pictures and sound effects and I am quite sure that their motivation would run high if we expose them to good fiction stories that attract them, in fact this is what I have experienced with my second year foreign languages students", in the words of two teachers . To the researcher's knowledge, though it is sometimes good to refer to an old text or an ancient story to learn from it, it is very hard for a teacher to relate this text to the students' present life. Table 04 presents the findings about the teachers' lack of training on how to choose and use literary texts.

Table 04 : Receiving Training on how to Use Literary Texts

Receiving Training	Yes	No
N°	03	27
Percentage	10%	90%

What worsen the situation is, although the teachers are not in favour of the literary texts that are provided in the textbooks, they are not willing to replace them with other more engaging ones. This is mainly because teachers can not afford to xerox a sample of a literary text for every single student in an overcrowded classroom. Therefore, they are forced to keep the same texts on the textbooks.

9. Conclusion

In a nutshell, the findings force us to claim that although secondary school teachers of English in Chlef value literary texts for their various benefits to students , they consider that the classroom scene does not really reflect this positive belief , as the literary component turns to be demotivational and less engaging both emotionally and behaviorally for most students whose linguistic competence and language proficiency is still low, their unfamiliarity with such type of texts at class can be considered as another reason. The everyday practice and issues faced by both the teachers and their students show that the teachers need more training on how to select appropriate literary texts that fit with the students' linguistic level and transform classes into an environment where students enjoy literary texts and learn English at the same time. Literary texts, mainly short stories, can easily find their way in the class of foreign language stream especially and may boost the students' motivation but only if the teachers take their positive beliefs about the literary component to their classrooms and use appropriate literary texts and smart teaching methodologies.

Besides, the teachers should be aware that introducing the learners to literature in this stage is not meant to focus on certain literary works or concepts but rather to motivate them and create interest in reading .

Finally, to better examine the students' motivation and engagement with the literary texts, it would be much more appropriate to conduct classroom observations to establish what is really happening inside the classrooms. Overall, to know about the students' emotional engagement, the use of a questionnaire designed for learners themselves would be much more appropriate.

Conflict of Interest

I declare that I have no conflict of interest

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Appendix

5) What criteria do you consider when you select any literary text to be used with your students?

-The students' interest

- their age

-the length of the text

-Others

....

6) How would you rank your students' level of motivation in general when you use these texts to teach them?

- High   - Medium   - Low

•   Put a tick (√)

Type of engagement	The Questions	Yes	No
Behavioural Engagement	-Do your students participate when you expose them to these texts?		
	-Do your students try hard to do well when you use literary texts to teach them?		
	- Do your students listen very carefully when you use literary texts to teach them?		
	- Do your students pay attention when you use literary texts to teach them?		
	-Do your students think about other things when you use literary texts to teach them?		
	- Do your students wander when you use literary texts to teach them?		
Emotional Engagement	-Do your students feel good when you use literary texts to teach them?		
	-Do your students feel interested when you use literary texts to teach them?		
	-Do your students find literary texts fun with you at class?		
	- Do your students enjoy learning new things when you use literary texts to teach them?		
	your students get involved when you use literary texts to teach them?		
	-Do your students feel frustrated because they cannot answer questions about literary texts at class?		
	- Do your students feel bored when you use literary texts to teach them?		

Part Three: The Teachers' Concerns and Suggestions

7) What are the reasons behind the students' reluctance when you expose them to literary texts?

(you can choose more than one)

- Their low language proficiency
- Long texts
- Uninteresting texts
- Others ....

8) Are the literary oriented texts provided in the textbooks motivating enough for the students?

- YES   -NO

➤ Why do you think so?
....
....

9) Do you usually use the same texts that are included in the textbook or rather you adapt them?

....

➤ Why? ....

10) Is the time that you devote to literary texts enough for you and for your students at class?

....

11) Have you ever received any training on how to choose and use literary texts ?

- Yes   - No

12) What are your suggestions in order to boost students' motivation through the literary component ?

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

Thank you so much for your participation

How to cite this article according to the APA method