

Literature in Streamlined EFL Programs: A Mixed-Methods Study of Didactic Practices and Student Outcomes

Asma DJAIDJA

University Center of Barika, Algeria

Email: asma.djaidja@cu-barika.dz

Received: 21/07/2025; Accepted: 21/02/ 2026; Published: 03/04/2026

Abstract

This research analyses how literature is used as part of a module for first-year students studying English as a Foreign Language at the University Center of Barika in Algeria, where it is not always consistently included in non-specialist programs. The research adopts Carter and Long's (1991) exploratory mixed-methods case study approach, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate whether current literature use supports students in developing linguistically and cognitively. Through the use of surveys, classroom observations, and interviews, data were collected from 40 students and 3 instructors. There are strong positive correlations between student interest in literature and their improvement in reading ($r = 0.58$) and participation ($r = 0.62$). Students reported that student-centered and interactive pedagogies were the primary drivers of their involvement in literature, while issues with linguistic complexity and cultural distance from Western literature were found to negatively impact students' learning experience. Based on this work, a five-dimensional model of literature use is proposed to strengthen literature teaching in other EFL contexts, with dimensions addressing selection and use of literature, pedagogy, assessment, technology integration, and teacher training and development.

Keywords: EFL education; didactics of literature; literary pedagogy; language proficiency; mixed-methods; Algerian higher education; culturally responsive teaching; Carter and Long model.

1. Introduction

In the context of teaching English to students who speak a different language, literature poses both a valuable resource for acquiring authentic communication skills as well as a challenging environment where the development of those skills can be slowed down. Literature contains vast amounts of authentic uses of English including diversity in vocabulary and syntax, differing ways of using language for persuasion and rhetoric, and many examples of cultural meaning. In contrast, traditional curriculum materials often utilize simplified language and are less able to demonstrate cultural meaning. Educators' methods for managing this complex relationship between literature and EFL can greatly impact whether or not literature will be beneficial and positively impact student learning.

Structural factors are also contributing to increasing tensions in the context of higher education in Algeria. In the majority of institutions of higher learning in Algeria, ESL (English as a Second Language) programs are largely considered to be general English language training programs, focused mainly on preparing students to use English for academic and

communicative proficiency. Literature generally exists within these programs as a single course among others, but does not exist as an independent discipline. The limited role that literature plays in the ESL curriculum is not the result of a pedagogical philosophy or a thorough examination of how literature could contribute to the development of the language, but rather the result of pragmatic challenges caused by the constraints of curriculum development in limited resource environments. As such, literature instruction in these environments may lack systematic pedagogical frameworks and consistent delivery practices, reflecting broader structural constraints rather than deficiencies in individual instructors' commitment or competence.

Students in Second Year EFL at the University Center of Barika are exposed to literature as part of a larger curriculum. Although the module appears on the syllabus, the allocation of instructional time and the pedagogical frameworks guiding delivery remain incompletely specified in relation to explicit language learning objectives, reflecting the broader curricular constraints common to streamlined EFL programs. Instructors use a variety of approaches to deliver literature instruction, as students have limited experience with literature in English, and much of the literature assigned to students is from the canonical Western literature tradition, which is culturally and historically distant from their lived experiences.

This paper addresses these issues through a systematic empirical study of current practices and outcomes associated with the literature module at the University Center of Barika, followed by the creation of a theoretically sound and didactic framework with which to enhance literary instruction in the context of streamlined EFL programs. The following two research questions guided the enquiry:

- **RQ1:** What relationships obtain between students' engagement with literary texts and their self-reported language proficiency outcomes?
- **RQ2:** What didactic principles should inform a more effective integration of literature into streamlined EFL programs?

This paper presents a structure that includes Section 2, which reviews the literature on teaching literature in EFL contexts; Section 3 discusses the methodology used; Section 4 reports on and analyses the quantitative results of this study; Section 5 reports on and analyses the qualitative results of this study; Section 6 presents a five-dimensional didactic framework, and Section 7 concludes with implications for curriculum design and teacher education.

2. Literature Review

The relationship between literature and language learning has been theorised and debated across more than five decades of applied linguistics scholarship. This review organises the key contributions around four thematic clusters: theoretical frameworks for literary pedagogy, the motivational and affective dimensions of literary learning, the evidence base for active learning approaches, and the principal challenges associated with literary integration in EFL contexts.

2.1 Theoretical Frameworks for Literary Pedagogy in EFL Contexts

Carter and Long's (1991) systematic framework conceptualises the role of literature in EFL classrooms through three distinct models of literary teaching. The language model identifies literary works essentially as samples of language. They provide opportunities for

examining vocabulary, grammar, style, and figurative language in a particular context. The cultural model views literature as an insight into the values, beliefs, and social behaviours of the target language speakers, thereby producing cultural and intercultural knowledge as the primary learning goal. The development model emphasises the feelings of the reader, building on reader-response theory, based on the need to be affected emotionally and cognitively when reading about another person's journey. Therefore, they have transformative power when engaged with fictional worlds of experience. Carter and Long argue that effective literary teaching should not rely on a single model alone; rather, each approach should draw on all three in varying degrees, depending on the proficiency level, cultural background, and learning goals of the students.

Lee (1993) builds on this framework by addressing practical issues in integrating literature into language programs, including text selection and sequencing, pre- and post-reading activity design, management of group interpretation tasks, and the alignment of literary works with formal assessment. Lee's work has been particularly helpful for non-specialist EFL contexts because it demonstrates that effective literary teaching is not simply about transmitting canonical knowledge or conducting literary criticism in a traditional academic manner; it is about designing purposeful instructional situations where learners and texts interact and support linguistic and literary development simultaneously through meaningful experiences.

Collie and Slater (1987) present a complementary practical account of four major advantages for literary study in EFL classrooms: access to authentic language; enrichment of culture; language enrichment by exposure to different styles and formats; and affective involvement of learners with characters, events, and concepts to enhance the memorability/meaningfulness of literature.

Widdowson (1990) approaches the question from an applied linguistics perspective, arguing that literature represents a form of language use that is inherently purposive and whose purposiveness makes it particularly well-suited to developing both linguistic competence and communicative performance. Unlike the controlled, pedagogically simplified language of conventional coursebook materials, literary language demands active interpretation and affords genuine encounter with the creative and expressive range of the target language.

2.2 Motivation, Engagement, and Affective Dimensions

A substantial body of research supports the motivating power of literary texts. According to Day and Bamford's (1998) seminal work on extensive reading, individuals who engage in meaningful, ongoing interaction with authentic literature demonstrate quantifiable gains in reading fluency, vocabulary development, and general language proficiency, with motivational engagement identified as the most important mediating factor. Their work further suggests that when literary texts are selected for linguistic accessibility and thematic relevance, they can serve as powerful motivators for the extensive reading practices essential to language development.

Ghosn (2002) provides empirical evidence that quality literary works engage learners' affective domains, fostering emotional connections to texts that promote higher levels of participation and sustained focus. Another point made by Ghosn is that literary works containing significant narrative content lower the affective filter (Krashen, 1985), the anxiety-related barrier to second language acquisition, thus allowing for relaxed-alert conditions that promote incidental language learning through the reading of literature.

The relationship between affective engagement and language acquisition receives further support from Carter and Long (1991), who argue that the personal growth model of literary pedagogy is particularly effective in generating the kind of motivated, self-directed reading behaviour that characterises successful language learners. When students experience a sense of personal relevance and emotional resonance with the texts they study, their engagement with linguistic form, vocabulary, syntax, pragmatic register, is qualitatively different from the instrumental processing that characterises much conventional language instruction.

2.3 Active Learning Strategies and Communicative Outcomes

Interactive, student-centered approaches to teaching literature in the classroom have generated a significant body of empirical evidence supporting their use. For example, a quasi-experimental study by Bataineh, Al-Rabadi, and Smadi (2013) with Jordanian university students concluded that literature-based instruction employing communicative tasks produced statistically significant improvements in both speaking and writing proficiency when compared to typical instructional practices. The findings of this study also suggest that while the texts themselves do not have any inherent communicative value in a literary education context, that value results from how those texts are used in conjunction with the overall pedagogical framework employed in an educational setting.

Another example of effective task types is outlined by Lazar (1993), who discusses four types of tasks students can perform to produce high levels of linguistic output and interpretive engagement: (1) group discussion; (2) dramatic reading; (3) creative re-write; and (4) comparative analysis. The communicative value of each of these tasks comes from the fact that they require students to articulate, negotiate, and defend their interpretations in the target language, and thus activate new vocabulary and syntactic knowledge, in an intentional manner, within a specific context. This finding is consistent with other research in task-based language teaching, which has identified meaningful output as a primary contributor to the ultimate acquisition of language.

Carter and Long (1991) further argue that role-play and dramatic presentation of literary texts are particularly effective for EFL learners because they require a form of embodied linguistic performance that activates phonological, prosodic, and pragmatic dimensions of language competence that more conventional forms of literary analysis do not. These activities also create conditions of low evaluative threat that encourage risk-taking and experimentation with language, conditions identified by Ghosn (2002) and Krashen (1985) as foundational to successful acquisition.

2.4 Challenges and Constraints

Even with established theoretical support, numerous barriers to using literature in the classroom with English as an additional language exist from educational and institutional perspectives. The selection of appropriate literature for use in the classroom is perhaps the most critical challenge. According to Widdowson (1990), "the success or failure of any given literary work in the classroom as a medium of instruction is fundamentally dependent on the extent to which it provides access to learners. Texts that are linguistically inaccessible or thematically unrelated to the life experience of the learner are not likely to create an environment of engagement". Lazar (1993) outlines the important factors to consider when selecting a text as

part of the EFL curriculum, with regard to learners' linguistic proficiency, linguistic/cultural background, previous experience in reading literature, and the curriculum's objectives.

In many non-Western EFL contexts, literature syllabi tend to follow what may be termed a canonical orientation. Because the EFL literary canon emphasizes British and American literary traditions, many of the cultural and ideological assumptions underlying it may be hidden from learners who come from either an Arabophone or Amazigh background. As Kumaravadivelu (2003), states in his work from a postmethod perspective, language teaching has to be specific, taking into consideration the conditions of the specific institutional and sociocultural environment in which it is taking place. When a syllabus disregards the cultural identity of its students, it risks producing learners who engage only superficially with the prescribed material.

Another structural difficulty comes from the lack of time and resources. As EFL program in universities become more streamlined, literature must compete with aspects like phonetics and grammar, and writing and oral communication for time during class. As a result, literature instruction risks being reduced to introductory coverage of canonical works, without the depth of engagement that research identifies as necessary for meaningful language development outcomes.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Theoretical Orientation

This study employs an exploratory mixed-methods case study design (Yin, 2018), combining quantitative survey data with qualitative data from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews to provide contextually grounded insight into the research setting. This methodology supports the research aims by enabling close examination of a single educational environment in a contextually sensitive manner, while the theoretical constructs employed provide a broader interpretive frame for the significance of the findings. The decision to triangulate quantitative and qualitative data streams reflects a pragmatic epistemological stance (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), whereby the two strands are used together to generate complementary insights that neither could produce independently.

The study is theoretically grounded in Carter and Long's (1991) tripartite model of literary pedagogy, which provides both a descriptive basis for evaluating the instructional approaches observed and a normative foundation for assessing their effectiveness in supporting language competence through literature in EFL contexts.

3.2 Research Context and Sample

The study was conducted at the University Centre of Barika in Algeria. The University offers a general EFL program for undergraduate students that includes literature as a separate module. All Second Year EFL students who took the literature module during the 2022-2023 academic year were included in the population sample (N=60). Forty participants were purposefully selected from this population (active enrolment in the literature module, willingness to participate in interviews, and availability to be observed) to provide a sample that represents the full enrolled population based on self-reported literature-reading experience and respective gender. All three instructors teaching the literature module participated in the study; their accounts provide institutional and pedagogical perspectives that enrich and contextualise the findings.

The case study design was selected deliberately to prioritise depth over breadth; accordingly, the findings are not intended as statistically representative of EFL programs across Algeria, but rather as a theoretically grounded and empirically supported account of the phenomena examined.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Student Survey

A purpose-designed questionnaire was administered to all 40 student participants. The instrument comprised 20 items measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree), organised around four thematic domains: (i) attitudes towards literary study; (ii) perceived impact on reading proficiency; (iii) perceived impact on writing proficiency; and (iv) participation and engagement in literature classes. The 20-item survey was created in conjunction with two applied linguistics experts and was piloted with a small sample of second-year students who were not part of the study. Pilot results were used to refine item clarity, and internal reliability was confirmed as acceptable (Cronbach's alpha = .81). Surveys were completed by students during class time to increase response rate.

3.3.2 Classroom Observations

Over a period of 4 weeks, non-participant observations were conducted in classrooms during an 8-session schedule (90 minutes each). Observations were recorded using a structured observation protocol based on the quality of teaching methods (lecture versus interactive), the degree of student engagement, the relationship between literary materials and language tasks, and the interaction patterns of students with each other and their teachers. Descriptive and reflective field notes were taken during each class. The observer maintained a non-participant role throughout the observation to reduce observer effect and ensure ecological validity of the classroom interactions.

3.3.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with all 40 students and with each of the three instructors, using separate interview guides developed for each group. Students' interviews focussed on their personal engagement with the literature, their perceived linguistic advantages and disadvantages, and their suggestions for improvement in this regard. Instructors' interviews focused on their pedagogical methods for teaching literature, their criteria and limitations for selecting texts, and their perceptions of the role of the module in relation to the overall EFL programme. All interviews were conducted in a private setting and were recorded between 30 and 45 minutes in length, and had written informed consent obtained for the purpose of being audio-recorded. All audio recordings were transcribed word-for-word before beginning the analysis phase.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative survey data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics (v.26). Descriptive statistics (means, medians, and standard deviations) were calculated for each survey item, and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to examine relationships between key variables. The significance threshold was set at $p < 0.05$.

Qualitative data from observations and interviews were analysed using the six-phase thematic analysis framework described by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarisation with data; generation of initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and producing the report. All coding and theme development were conducted

manually. To enhance the credibility of the analysis, member-checking was undertaken: coded summaries were returned to five student participants and two instructors for verification, and minor clarifications were incorporated into the final analysis. Triangulation across the three data sources served as the primary strategy for ensuring the trustworthiness and coherence of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the relevant institutional body at the University Center of Barika. All participants provided written informed consent, were guaranteed anonymity, and were advised of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence.

4. Results

4.1 Quantitative Findings

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for the six major survey items. Mean values for these items ranged from 3.10 for the relevance of literary texts to the lives of students (SD = 1.10) to 4.20 for perceived improvements in reading skills (SD = 0.70). The high mean score for perceived improvement in reading skills, combined with the relatively low standard deviation, suggests that students broadly agree that literary study contributes positively to their development as readers; by contrast, the lower mean and higher standard deviation for cultural relevance indicate considerable variation in students' perceptions of the assigned texts, with many appearing to have limited personal connection to the material.

Similarly, the mean scores on enjoyment of literature classes (M = 3.80) and engagement with literature in class discussions (M = 3.90) suggest that the majority of students have a positive affective response to this module, but the standard deviation for each (0.90 and 0.80) indicates some meaningful variance between students. Furthermore, the moderate mean score on perceived writing skill improvement (M = 3.60) suggests that students see a less direct relationship between reading literature and their ability to write compared to the more immediate relationship between reading literature and their ability to comprehend the written word.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Student Survey Responses (N = 40)

Survey Item	Mean	Median	SD
Enjoyment of literature classes	3.80	4.00	0.90
Perceived improvement in reading skills	4.20	4.00	0.70
Perceived improvement in writing skills	3.60	4.00	0.80
Relevance of literary texts to students' experiences	3.10	3.00	1.10
Engagement in class discussions about literature	3.90	4.00	0.80
Difficulty understanding language in literary texts	3.40	3.00	1.00

Note. Items measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree). SD = Standard Deviation.

4.1.2 Correlational Analysis

The Pearson correlation matrix outlining all four of the key variables can be found in Table 2. All three correlations involving enjoyment of literature reached statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). Enjoyment and discussion engagement yielded the strongest association ($r=0.62$), indicating students who enjoy studying literature are typically more responsive contributors to classroom discussions. Perceived reading improvement showed a moderate-to-strong correlation with enjoyment ($r = 0.58$), while perceived writing improvement, though less strongly correlated with enjoyment, remained statistically significant ($r = 0.43$). Reading and writing improvement were themselves moderately correlated ($r = 0.51$, $p < 0.05$), consistent with the expectation that the two competencies develop in a mutually reinforcing manner.

The correlation between discussion engagement and writing improvement ($r = 0.38$) did not reach significance, suggesting that literary discussion may more directly support oral fluency and reading comprehension than writing development. This points to the need for explicit instructional strategies to facilitate transfer from literary reading to academic writing.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix for Key Survey Variables (N = 40).

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Enjoyment of Literature	1.00	0.58*	0.43*	0.62*
2. Improvement in Reading	0.58*	1.00	0.51*	0.47*
3. Improvement in Writing	0.43*	0.51*	1.00	0.38
4. Engagement in Discussions	0.62*	0.47*	0.38	1.00

Note. * $p < .05$. Pearson product-moment coefficients. Variable numbers correspond to rows/columns.

4.2 Theoretical Framework: Carter and Long's Three Models Applied

Before presenting the qualitative findings, it is useful to situate the pedagogical approaches observed in the study within the framework proposed by Carter and Long (1991). Table 3 maps the three models onto the instructional contexts observed, indicating where each approach was employed and how it might be further operationalised.

Table 3: Carter and Long's (1991) Three Models of Literary Pedagogy: Application in the Present Study

Approach	Primary Focus	Application in the Present Study
Language Model	Literary text as linguistic specimen; focus on lexical, syntactic, and stylistic features	Scaffolded vocabulary work; guided close reading; metalinguistic discussion of style
Cultural Model	Literary text as cultural document; focus on values, beliefs, and worldview	Cross-cultural comparison activities; contextualisation of canonical texts within Algerian experience

Personal Growth Model	Literary text as catalyst for reader response and personal development	Role-play, creative writing, reflective journals; student-centred interpretive tasks
------------------------------	--	--

Note. Based on Carter, R., & Long, M. N. (1991). *Teaching Literature*. Longman.

4.3 Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of the observation field notes and interview transcripts yielded eight principal themes, distributed across the three data sources. Table 4 provides a structured overview; the four most significant themes are then developed in the subsections that follow.

Table 4 : Summary of Qualitative Themes by Data Source

Data Source	Key Theme	Illustrative Evidence
Classroom Observations	Interactive methods foster engagement	Group literary discussions; role-play sessions generating spontaneous TL use
Classroom Observations	Lecture-based delivery limits participation	Students' passive, disengaged; minimal voluntary contribution
Classroom Observations	Cultural distance impedes comprehension	Confusion and disengagement during 19th-century canonical fiction sessions
Student Interviews	Perceived gains in reading and vocabulary	Students report richer lexical repertoire and improved reading comprehension over time
Student Interviews	Language complexity as barrier	Archaic diction and idiomatic density slow comprehension and reduce enjoyment
Student Interviews	Cultural disconnect reduces motivation	Inability to identify with characters and social contexts of Western canonical texts
Instructor Interviews	Interactive strategies recognised as effective	Instructors report higher engagement and richer output when using student-centred methods
Instructor Interviews	Curriculum and resource constraints	Limited class time; absence of culturally diverse texts in prescribed syllabus

Note. Themes derived from thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006).

4.3.1 Interactive Methods and Student Engagement

The most striking difference observed across classroom sessions related to the type of instruction employed: some instructors used interactive, student-centred methods, while others relied primarily on lecture-based delivery. A clear contrast in student behaviour was evident between sessions where literary analysis unfolded through group discussion and those structured around traditional instructor-led exposition. Participating in this type of group literary analysis led to a high degree of participation, spontaneous use of the target language, and an ongoing commitment to literary interpretation by students. One remarkable example of this was when multiple groups of students were asked to give competing interpretations of the central theme of a piece of literature to the rest of the class. Peer negotiations for meaning

conducted by students resulted in high levels of unprompted production of English language, with an unexpected degree of complexity being attained when compared to traditional forms of interaction within the context of the classroom.

The role-playing activities that were conducted using dramatic texts also produced very high levels of student engagement. When students were permitted to use their imaginations to embody literary characters while improvising dialogue based on their understanding of the literary text, they were not only creative with their use of language, but they also created a deeper emotional connection to the story itself. This form of engagement with literary works represents, as described by Carter and Long (1991), an example of the personal growth model in practice, and embodies the type of emotionally engaged and linguistically productive activity identified by Ghosn (2002) as the ideal form of literature for language learning.

Student participation was markedly reduced during teacher-led sessions, with many students adopting a passive, note-taking role and limited voluntary contribution observed across these sessions. The observation of students' lack of engagement is consistent with data gathered from the surveys showing a significantly strong relationship between being engaged in the class discussion and how much they enjoyed reading literature and how much they perceived they had improved in their reading abilities, which further demonstrates how the way the instructor teaches his/her students can affect how much literature can assist with their language development.

4.3.2 Cultural Relevance and the Distance of Canonical Texts

Students reported significant difficulty connecting the literary texts they were reading to their own identities and lived experiences. This was particularly evident with nineteenth-century British novels, which students found challenging to contextualise historically and with which they struggled to identify on a cultural level.

One student indicated that their experience was characterized by a feeling of reading a language that they understood linguistically; however, it had no resonance to their own cultural experience. This observation highlights the importance of engaging with literary texts at a level that goes beyond formal linguistic proficiency. It also foregrounds the concept of cultural literacy, understood here as the reader's capacity to identify and interpret the cultural assumptions and cues embedded within a literary work.

The testimonies strongly reflect the cultural component of Carter and Long's (1991) framework for effective literary pedagogy, which argues that an essential element of effective pedagogy is cultural-contextualising texts. While these testimonies suggest that students can gain valuable learning experiences from cross-cultural interactions with texts that are located outside their own culture (that is, texts from other cultures) and will continue to do so in the future, they also indicate that culturally-distanced texts need to be frameworked in such a way that they create a cultural bridge between students and the text world. In addition, all instructors who were interviewed confirmed that instructors needed more systematic comparative work to relate the cultural issues of the works identified as canonical to the social and historical realities of their students.

4.3.3 Language Complexity as a Productive Challenge

Linguistic difficulty was a consistent concern across all interview sessions. Students broadly cited three sources of challenge: archaic diction, figurative language, and syntactically complex prose. Many also expressed frustration at encountering vocabulary obstacles in rapid

succession, making it difficult to sustain comprehension while simultaneously processing unfamiliar lexical items. One student described it as "losing the thread of meaning" when they could not find an individual word, demonstrating both the high working memory demands of reading in a second language (L2) and the unique vocabulary density issues associated with literary prose.

All of the instructors were aware of these issues and used a variety of scaffolding strategies to address them; these strategies included pre-teaching vocabulary, providing annotated excerpts and guiding students through close readings of selected texts. These scaffolding responses reflect the language model element of Carter and Long's (1991) framework in that they view literary language as an opportunity for linguistic learning and not simply as an impediment to comprehension. However, the success of the scaffolding strategies varied significantly among instructors, suggesting that more systematic guidance regarding scaffolding techniques which are supported by research on vocabulary development and L2 reading would further enhance instructors' pedagogical responses to this challenge.

4.3.4 Perceived Linguistic Benefits

Most participants reported perceiving clear linguistic benefits from engaging with literary texts. The most frequently cited benefit was improved reading comprehension, which students attributed to their exposure to a wider range of sentence structures and vocabulary than they typically encountered in standard coursebook materials. Other participants indicated that they also experienced a positive transfer effect from engaging in literature to their written language; they saw that reading literature had increased their lexicon and stylistic choices when writing.

One participant noted that she was able to notice some qualitative changes or improvements in the diversity and complexity of sentence structures available to her while writing academically; this is an important observation since it aligns closely with findings of Lazar (1993) and Carter and Long (1991) that demonstrate the benefits of reading literature in this area. The improvements reported by the participants also echo the quantitative finding that the item with the highest mean rating (4.20) based on the survey, was the perceived improvement in reading skills. The convergence of qualitative and quantitative findings thus provides mutually reinforcing evidential support for the view that literary engagement yields genuine and meaningful language benefits, even within the constraints of a streamlined curriculum.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study converge on a set of theoretically coherent conclusions that extend and refine the existing literature on literary pedagogy in EFL contexts. Three overarching themes merit particular discussion.

First, the data confirm that the pedagogical approach through which literature is delivered is at least as consequential as the literary content itself. The consistent superiority of interactive, student-centred methods over lecture-based exposition, documented in both observation data and correlational survey findings, aligns with Carter and Long's (1991) emphasis on the personal growth model as the most motivationally effective orientation for EFL literary pedagogy, and with Bataineh et al.'s (2013) experimental demonstration of the communicative benefits of literature-based instruction structured around active tasks. The

implication for curriculum design is clear: the pedagogical framework adopted for literary teaching must be explicitly specified and systematically supported, rather than left to individual instructors' discretion.

One of the most significant contributions of this study is the finding that cultural relevance functions as a key mediating variable in literary engagement. While those working within the theoretical literature (notably Widdowson, 1990, Lazar, 1993, and Kumaravadivelu, 2003) have acknowledged the existence of cultural distance, the impact of this variable on EFL learners in non-Western contexts is not only substantial but is also deeply emotional as evidenced by the data presented in this study. The finding that the students' ability to identify personally and culturally with the characters/characters in the literature being read is a key factor in determining engagement with literature and understanding supports a compelling case for expanding the literary syllabus beyond the traditional Western canon to include culturally proximate texts. The Western canon should not be abandoned, given its cultural and linguistic value for EFL learners, but it should be strategically supplemented with postcolonial Anglophone literature, translated works from Arabic and Tamazight literary traditions, and texts written in English by Algerian and Maghrebi authors.

The weaker literary engagement/improvement writing correlation ($r = 0.43$) contrasts with the stronger literary engagement/improvement reading correlation ($r = 0.58$) highlighting an additional gap needing to be addressed with effective literary pedagogy. While there are some "passive" advantages for developing writing through literary reading in terms of vocabulary acquisition and models of syntax, they are not alone sufficient to improve writing. In order for an individual to realise the full portfolio of the benefits of literary reading on language development, effective pedagogical approaches must provide explicit instruction regarding the transfer from reading literature to writing in an academic setting by providing opportunities for tasks such as stylistic analysis, imitation and creating writing based on models of writing. Lazar (1993) provides a practical source of language-focused literary pedagogy that can be used presently and in the future.

Further research regarding the study's methodological limitations should focus on resolving the limitations of using a purposive sample at one institution, which reduces the potential for generalisability of results and the self-reported measures of language improvement that are affected by social desirability bias and do not provide objective evidence of language proficiency improvements. Additionally, pre-test and post-test measurements of linguistic competency could be used to establish the causal relationship between literary engagement and language development. Further studies should use longitudinal methodology, objective dated measures of language proficiency, and multiple institution samples. It should be noted that the constraints identified in this study reflect systemic patterns documented across comparable EFL contexts internationally, and should not be interpreted as indicators of institutional inadequacy specific to the University Center of Barika.

6. A Didactic Framework for Literary Integration in Streamlined EFL Programs

The following framework synthesises the empirical findings of the present study with the principled guidance offered by Carter and Long (1991), Lazar (1993), and Collie and Slater (1987) to provide a practical model for enhancing literary instruction in non-specialist EFL

university programs. The framework is organised around five interconnected dimensions, summarised in Table 5.

Table 5 : Proposed Didactic Framework for Literary Integration in Streamlined EFL Programs

Dimension	Guiding Principle	Recommended Strategy	Expected Outcome
Text Selection	Cultural accessibility and linguistic graduatedness	Pluralistic canon: Anglophone postcolonial and Maghrebi literature alongside canonical texts; graded difficulty progression	Increased cultural identification; reduced cognitive overload; greater engagement
Pedagogy	Learner-centred, task-based instruction	Group discussions, role-play, creative writing, reader-response tasks; reduced reliance on lecture	Higher participation; improved oral fluency and written expression; autonomous learning
Assessment	Process-based, formative evaluation	Reading portfolios, reflective journals, peer review, analytical essays	Development of critical thinking; sustained engagement; meaningful feedback cycles
Technology Integration	Multimodal and digital engagement	Digital storytelling, film adaptations, online collaborative reading spaces	Enhanced motivation; 21st-century literacy; engagement beyond classroom
Professional Development	Instructor capacity-building	Workshops on literary pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and formative assessment design	Improved instructional quality and coherence across the program

Note. Framework integrates Carter and Long (1991), Lazar (1993), and Collie and Slater (1987).

Dimension one of the text selection areas refers directly to one of the main findings: that cultural distance presents a significant challenge to engagement. The framework supports a pluralistic approach to the canon, providing a supplementary body to the traditional Western canon of literature with Anglophone postcolonial literature, literature from the Maghrebi and broader Arabic traditions, and literature by authors from cultures that are similar to those of students. This diversification appears to agree with Lazar's (1993) criteria for principled text selection by focusing on the extent to which text is culturally accessible, how linguistically appropriate it is for the learner based on their proficiency level, and how much contextual information is available to assist with comprehension, and not simply about providing a linguistic exercise.

The second dimension refers to pedagogy. The framework includes the personal growth model of Carter and Long (1991) and evidence that interactive teaching approaches are

generally more effective than lecturing at engaging students and providing them with language output. The framework for literary pedagogy is based on using reading and interpretation of literature as input for future communication tasks; therefore, the primary modes of student engagement in the classroom should be group discussion, role-play, creative re-writing and reader-response writing, but teacher-led exposition could also occur; it would, however, be used primarily as a scaffolding technique (providing contextual/cultural/linguistic knowledge) to help students engage productively with literature, not as the main method of instilling literary knowledge in students.

The third dimension proposes changing the philosophy of assessment from summative, knowledge-based assessments to process-based, formative assessments. For example, using reading portfolios, reflective literary journals, multi-draft analytical essays and peer-review will allow teachers to assess the progress of students' understanding of literature, in addition to the amount of knowledge they have accumulated up to that point, which corresponds with the recommendations made in Lazar (1993) for an assessment system that reflects literary development and subsequent need for academic writing support needed around literary reading.

The fourth dimension incorporates digital technologies as a means to extend literary connections past their traditional limitation of the classroom. For example, film adaptations can serve to provide both cultural and narrative structure to difficult pieces of literature; digital storytelling sites can offer opportunities for students to create multimodal literary responses; and collaborative online reading sites can enable literary discussions to happen asynchronously and can provide many avenues to extend the time and space available to literary learning, these possibilities are often especially valuable in time-constrained educational programs.

The fifth and final dimension is related to the professional development of educators of literature. The success of any literary curriculum is related to the level of instructional quality instruction that it receives. The findings of this study suggest that there is a wide range of variation in the pedagogical practices of instructors of literature, as well as their ability to manage the two-fold challenges of teaching literature and teaching language. Targeted professional development in the areas of culturally responsive text selection, task-based literary pedagogy, and creating formative assessments is recommended as a critical piece of any systemic change to literary instruction in time-constrained EFL programs.

7. Conclusion

This research article has produced a theoretically grounded and empirically supported account of how literature is presently taught in a second year EFL program at the University Centre of Barika, Algeria; and has provided a principled didactic framework by means of which to improve the teaching of literature in other similar, non-specialized EFL contexts. The results indicate that literature can have a positive effect upon EFL students' language development when integrated through interactive, culturally responsive, and task-based pedagogies. In particular, the study shows that using literature for teaching EFL can benefit learners in terms of their reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and participation in oral communication. Further, the research reveals barriers that currently limit the ability of literature to be an effective educational medium for learners in this study context. They include cultural distance from the classical texts; the linguistic complexity of the texts; and the predominance

of lecture-based pedagogies and assessment methods that do not reward learner engagement with literature.

The five-dimensional Framework presented in Section 6 serves as a theoretically consistent and practically-oriented reaction to a number of challenges presented by the teaching of literature in EFL programs. While addressing each of the five dimensions simultaneously in the context of literature instruction as an ongoing systemic issue that requires multiple interventions for resolution, the Framework suggests literature in EFL programs should be seen as a principled method of teaching and not only an "extra" activity, and that its successful implementation relies on the purposeful planning and informed professional practices of teachers to develop EFL students' proficiency using literature. This one recommendation has repercussions that extend well beyond the particular situation in Barika.

Several directions for future research are indicated by the present study. Longitudinal investigation of literary instruction over full academic years, incorporating objective pre- and post-test measures of linguistic competence, would provide stronger causal evidence of literature's contribution to language development. Multi-site comparative studies across different Algerian universities and across different EFL contexts in the Maghreb and the broader Arab world would assess the generalisability of the present framework. Research specifically examining the effects of culturally diversified literary syllabi, comparing student outcomes under canonical-only and pluralistic canonical conditions, would provide the empirical basis for curricular reform. Finally, investigation of the relationship between instructor professional development in literary pedagogy and measurable student outcomes represents an important and currently underexplored research agenda in the didactics of literature.

References

- Bataineh, R. F., Al-Rabadi, R. Y., & Smadi, O. M. (2013). Fostering Jordanian university students' communicative performance through literature-based instruction. *The TESOL Journal*, 4(4), 655–673. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.61>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Carter, R., & Long, M. N. (1991). *Teaching literature*. Longman.
- Collie, J., & Slater, S. (1987). *Literature in the language classroom: A resource book of ideas and activities*. Cambridge University Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (1998). Extensive reading in the second language classroom. *RELJ *Relc Journal**, 29(2).
- Ghosn, I. K. (2002). Four good reasons to use literature in primary school ELT. *ELT Journal*, 56(2), 172–179. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/56.2.172>
- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Longman.
- Kumaravivelu, B. (2003). A postmethod perspective on English language teaching. *World Englishes*, 22(4), 539–550. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.2003.00317.x>
- Lazar, G. (1993). *Literature and language teaching: A guide for teachers and trainers*. Cambridge University Press.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE Publications.

Widdowson, H. G. (1990). *Aspects of language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.