An Exploration of Freshman Students' Attitude towards English Literature

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Abstract
Attitude has been considered by most researchers as an important variable that influences success in a learning task. Hence, analysing students' attitude is an important step that should precede making any changes in the course plan or content. This gains more importance when dealing with college students who have already finished school and look up to college to provide them with more interesting and varied content that addresses their needs. This study explores the attitude of Freshman students who plan to specialize in English towards English literature in general, its value in language learning and the utility of different literary genres. Analysis of these students attitude is essential for making decisions with regard to the kind of preparation they should get prior to embarking on the study of literary courses in their sophomore year. A five Likert scale questionnaire was used to analyze the different aspects of the students' attitude. Results showed that students have a positive attitude towards literature in general and fiction in particular. They believe that literary texts enhance their reading and writing skills and that they are a great source of learning about the target culture. Their attitude, however, is less favorable towards poetry and drama and towards the role of literature in enhancing their listening or speaking skills. Overall, they thought that certain literary genres are enjoyable and beneficial for language learning, yet they are not a core component of the language learning process.
Keywords: attitude towards literature, college students' attitude, language and literature, *literature* in the classroom, Palestinian students' attitude

Introduction and Background

Language learners' attitude has been considered one of the important variables which influence second and foreign language acquisition. Ellis (1994) identifies language learners' attitude as one of the personal variables which could have a positive or negative influence on the process of language acquisition. Krashen (1982), further argues that negative attitude could contribute to raising the learners' affective filter, hence slowing down the language acquisition process.

Attitude, hence, is a multidimensional factor that has affective, cognitive and conative constructs (Ghazali, 2008). It incorporates humans' beliefs and feelings about an issue in addition to the way they deal with it (McGroarty, 1996). It has been argued that students who have positive attitudes invest more effort in language learning and implement several learning strategies such as providing information as well as asking and answering questions (Baker, 1993). Fortunately, attitudes are not static in nature, i.e, they could undergo change if sources of negative attitude are analyzed and amended (Ghazali, 2008).

Many studies in the literature of language pedagogy have looked at the correlation among attitude and a number of variables related to the learners' level of proficiency as well as other academic and social variables (Candlin & Mercer, 2001). Other studies investigated the effect that negative or positive attitude has on the language learning task at hand (Ghazali, 2008). Few studies, however, have investigated language learners' attitude towards English literature and literary materials especially when those materials and texts are used alongside regular communicative texts and tasks in the EFL classroom (Ghazali, 2008).

It has been further argued that since language is a form of "social practice" (Kramsch, 1993), it cannot be separated from culture learning. Thus, inclusion of literary texts becomes indispensible because they include various dimensions of culture representation, i.e, the aesthetic, the sociological, the semantic and the pragmatic. These dimensions are all important aspects of language comprehension and production according to the parameters of the communicative approach (Adaskon, Britten & Fahsi, 1989). Cultural awareness is a tool that enhances language proficiency and that is enhanced by it according to Kramsch (1993). Kramsch also believes that learning about culture does not mean adopting the target cultural norms, rather it leads to a deeper understanding of the native culture in relation to the target one as well as to better sociolinguistic competence in dealing with target culture speakers and contexts.

Despite the multiple arguments that are in favor of literature inclusion, the topic is still subject of huge controversy. The debate continues to have several dimensions such as the quantity of literature that may be included in the language curriculum, the most useful genres, the criteria for selection as well as when, where, and how the literary materials may be incorporated (Katib & Rezaei, 2011).

Obeidat (1997), for instance, made a flagrant accusation against the predominance of literature courses at English Departments in the Arab World. He claimed that such predominance is responsible for reducing the number of language courses, which has led to the students' lack of competence in language skills. His argument was supported by viewpoints from different scholars who advanced several justifications for excluding literary materials from the language classroom (Buckledee, 2002; McKay, 1982; Scholss, 1981; Zughoul, 1986). These justifications are of theoretical and practical nature. Some scholars argue that literature is too complex in terms of the concepts it tackles as well as the language it uses both in terms of vocabulary and grammar. Such language and concepts are beyond the analytical skills of the average student (McKay, 1982). Buckledee (2002), on the other hand, argues that difficulty of literary texts is due to the criteria used in their selection. In most cases, texts that have major

literary status are preferred over those that are within the reach of the students. Hence, a literary curriculum that focuses on text or content rather than on students' level or preference would be beyond the reach of students structurally and conceptually. Besides these theoretical concerns, scholars also focused on the lack of practical utility of literary texts for everyday life and future jobs (Scholss, 1981; Zughoul, 1986). However, practical utility of different literary genres will be discussed in the literature review section of this paper.

Statement of the Problem
English major students at Palestinian universities are required to take a number of language courses before they embark on their specialization. Teachers of these language courses usually try to develop the students' proficiency in the four language skills, i.e., reading, writing, speaking and listening. Rarely do these students, however, study specific literary courses or content prior to formally entering the English department. This problem is aggravated by the fact that Palestinian students study very few literary texts at schools because the Palestinian syllabus in its various stages contains a limited number of such texts, some of which are even abridged to suit the learners' proficiency level (Shrouf & Dwaik, 2013). School teachers, according to students' reports, often ignore teaching the literary texts available in the syllabus either due to time constrains or to the lack of proper training and qualification.
One may hence argue that students enter the English department with minimal preparation to handle the requirements of literary texts. What is even worse is that they may embark on such a challenging endeavor with a rather negative attitude towards literary materials in general.

Significance of the Study
Most previous research which explored the attitude factor in language learning or acquisition has focused on students' attitude towards the English language or culture. Very few studies tackle attitude towards and in the context of literature. Even studies which explore attitude towards literature, investigate the issue from the teachers' rather that the learners' perspective. The present study, however, explores the issue of attitude from the learners' perspective. Further, it investigates whether exposure to literary texts would improve the students' attitude towards some literary genres.

From a communicative perspective, literary materials are believed to enrich students' linguistic competence since they build their vocabulary repertoire and enhance the lexical range available to them (Mackay, 1982; Povey,1972). They also expose learners to complex sentences, untraditional sentence structures, as well as stretches of coherent language beyond the sentence level, hence enhancing their discourse competence (Mackay, 2014).
Another important dimension attributed to literary materials is their aesthetic value and features which make them a perfect tool to tap the students' artistic inclinations, thus, leading to the maturation of their integrative motivation. Integrative motivation, which is often defined as the learners' positive orientation towards language learning that stems from genuine love of the language, its speakers and art representations, is considered by some to be essential if the learner intends to reach high levels of proficiency in L2.

Literature Review
Since the late 1980s, many researchers have argued in favor of the inclusion of literary materials in EFL classrooms. John (1986) for instance criticized language oriented courses for being unable to develop students' linguistic competence mainly because they focus on teaching rules

about the language rather than language use itself. In contrast, students exposed to literary materials will experience actual language use as it is presented in different literary genres, i.e., narratives, plays, poetry, etc.

Besides the aforementioned linguistic value, other researchers have focused on the general value of literature in education. They believe that literature enhances different dimensions of learning and helps in developing human character and insight in terms of morality, experience, universal knowledge and wisdom (Sage, 1987; Schloss, 1981).

Mckay (1982) further stresses the two dimensional role of literature which enhances both the students' knowledge of rules in addition to providing them with actual examples of these rules in use. Povey (1972) states that literature increases all language skills because it extends linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, and "complex and exact syntax" (187).

Exposure to literary texts, according to Mckay (1982), does not only train learners in what should be said in certain contexts, which is the main concern of language courses, but it also exposes them to how things are said to reflect the personality and individuality of the character or speaker. Hence, literary exposure emphasizes the idea of "voice", an essential element is literary representation of characters.

Rosenblatt (1978) believes that focus should not be on the difference between literary and regular texts, but rather on the levels and dimensions of interpretation that literary texts allow the reader to get engaged in, thus better enhancing their reading comprehension skills and strategies. Rosenblatt (1978) distinguishes aesthetic reading as being different from efferent and regular reading for information because reading aesthetically underscores the change that the readers may undergo as they engage in the text rather than just deriving bits and pieces of information from it. Such engagement requires special attention to text selection so that it may be interesting to the students and related to their personal experiences, thus leading to various interpretations that could be brought back to the text itself adding new dimensions to its meaning.

Many researchers exploring the role of literature in language learning have focused on the specific value of different literary genres. On the negative side, Simpson (1997), for example, argues that dialogues in Drama or plays do not reflect the nature of every day communication or interaction. Mckay (2001), in contrast, asserts that dramatic dialogues are perfect tools for developing students' sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence, essential dimensions of the students' emerging communicative competence. As argued earlier by Rosenblatt, dramatic dialogues provide a richer context for interpretation than normal dialogue since these dialogue can be normally read on two levels: that of the direct interaction among characters in the play as well as the indirect continuous dialogue that takes place between the writer and the readership.

Although some researchers argue that poetry does not provide a standard model for language use, others argue that the unrestricted mode of expression in poetry emancipates the students from the tough linguistic demands of grammar and vocabulary, thus enhancing their ability to imitate such texts in creative writing and to use their limited language resources to express complex ideas (Mckay, 2014; Malay & Duff, 1989; Widdowson, 1992).

Mackay (2014) underscores the value of fiction in relation to culture learning especially when making corss cultural comparisons. She provides the example of immigrant stories as a perfect tool to engage learners in deep and rich discussions of their culture in relation to that of the target language. Mackay also stresses the fact that such exposure does not alienate learners from their own culture because learning about target cultural norms does not mean adopting them.

Purpose of the Study
Taking into account the vast literature that explores the positive role that literature could play in the language classroom, the researchers, felt there was an urgent need to enrich the general language courses usually taught before entering the English Department with literary materials. Prior to taking this step, the researchers felt the need to explore the students' attitude towards literary texts and genres so as to make informed decisions. Results of the study would help illuminate several dimensions related to the possibility of incorporating literary materials at different stages in the college curriculum. Preparation for the study of these texts may be required to start from an early stage to ensure learners' readiness for the more advanced courses. The study will also throw more light on the students' attitude towards different genres, hence, incorporating students' interest as an important variable in text selection.

Research Questions
1. What is the general attitude of students towards English literature before embarking on the study of literary courses?
2. What is the attitude of students towards literary genres ?
3. What is the students' attitude towards the role of literature in language learning?
4. What is students' perception of the cultural and moral value of literature for language learners?

Methodology
   Sample
Sample of the study consisted of 85 students enrolled in two sections of English 103 which is a specialization requirement at Hebron University English department. Fifty of these students were females and 36 were males.

   Instrumentation
The researchers designed a Five Likert Scale questionnaire to probe both students' and general attitudes towards literary materials as well as their attitudes towards different literary genres, the role of literature in language learning and the cultural or moral value of literature. The number of questionnaire items under each of the previously mentioned dimensions ranged between 5-8 statements with the exception of the last category cultural/moral which included 11 items (see appendix one).
The different categories in the questionnaire were chosen taking into account the issues frequently discussed in the literature pertaining to attitude towards literature and its value. Choice was also based on the researchers' perspectives with regard to the intended purpose behind incorporating literary materials in the 103 course as gleaned from previous informal discussions with the course instructors.

Results and Discussion
Results of this study will be presented in terms of the information obtained from the questionnaire which was distributed to the students before the incorporation of literary materials in the language classroom. All results will be presented in the order of the research questions stated earlier.

Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

Three judges were asked to review questionnaire items, the first specialized in language, the second in literature and the third in statistical analysis. Their comments included issues related to questionnaire content and format. The researchers incorporated most of their modifications in the final copy of the questionnaire.

To ensure reliability of the questionnaire, it was distributed to a small sample of students. On the basis of the feedback obtained, the researchers modified the phrasing of some items to enhance clarity.

Cronbach Alpha formula was also used to assess the reliability of the questionnaire. which turned out to be as high as .92. Furthermore, One way analysis of variance was used to investigate the influence of the independent variables, i.e, academic level, gender, and university GPA on the dependent variable of attitude.

Effect of Academic Level, Gender and GPA on Students' Attitude Towards Literature

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showed that there was no statistically significant effect of academic level on students' attitude towards literature ($F=.98$, $p= 376$), See table one below. In other words there were no significant differences between second and third year students in terms of their general attitude towards literature. This could be explained by the fact that the third year students are a minority (9 out of 86) and they are mostly unspecialized, which means that neither those in the second nor the third year level have yet been exposed to the bulk of literature courses which are normally taken after the completion of specialization requirements including the current course, i.e., (English 103).

Table 1. *Means and standard deviations of students according to Academic level or year of study.*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Freshman	5	112.2000	25.23292
Sophomore	71	101.7606	21.66001
Junior	9	110.3333	28.44293
Total	85	103.2824	22.59088

T-test was used to measure differences between males and females in terms of attitude towards literature. Table Two below shows that there is a significant difference between female and male students in favor of females (M= 108.5 for females and 96.4 for males).

Table 2. *Means and standard deviations of male versus female attitude towards literature*

Intervention		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total	1.00	50	108.5400	19.80024
	2.00	36	96.4722	24.44876

A paired samples t-test was conducted to compare the difference in attitude and it showed that there was a significant difference in favor of females (t=2.5, α = .01), See table 3.

Table 3. *T-test results for difference in attitude among males and females*

			df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			t-test for Equality of Means	
Total	Equal variances assumed	2.526	84	.013
	Equal variances not assumed	2.44	65.438	.017

As for the correlation between the students' attitude towards literature and their GPA grades, Pearson correlation formula showed a very low insignificant correlation between these two variables (R= .029, p = .82), See table four below. It is worth mentioning that such GPA grades reflect students' performance in General university and college requirements that are not part of the English department plan and that have minimal literary content.

Table 4. *Correlation between the students' attitude towards literature and their GPA*

		Total	GPA
GPA	Pearson Correlation	.029	1
Sig. (2-tailed)		.820	
N		66	66

The following section presents the results of the students' responses to the different sections of the questionnaire. Results will be presented in the order of the research questions.

Question One
What is the general attitude of students towards literature prior to embarking on the study of literature courses?

Descriptive statistics of the questionnaire items were conducted to show the hierarchy among items within the section itself. As for the general attitude of students towards literature, which is the concern of the first research question, it was clearly reflected through the responses to items 1-8, which compose the first part of the students' questionnaire. The item which received the highest mean in this section is the fourth (M= 3.31), while the one that received the lowest agreement is the fifth (M = 3.0). This is rather surprising taking into account the content of these statements. The fourth statement investigates the students' interest in reading Arabic literature while the fifth statement investigates their interest in reading international literature in Arabic. This difference in means is probably an indicator that students have other types of inhibitions when it comes to literature other than the language barrier or complexity. Such inhibitions could

be related to the culture, values or other elements that are inherent in literary texts. Another factor that may have played a role in this result is that the Palestinian Arabic syllabus contains a substantial amount of literary texts. This may have contributed to enhancing students' familiarity with and their positive attitude towards such texts.

Table 5. *Descriptive statistics of the students' general attitude towards literature*

#	Statement	M	SD
	General attitude towards literature		
1	I enjoy reading Arabic literary texts. أستمتع عادة بقراءة النصوص الأدبية العربية.	3.31	1.425
2	I think English literature is interesting. أعتقد أن الأدب الإنجليزي ممتع.	3.25	1.129
3	I read unassigned English literary texts for pleasure. أقرأ نصوصا أدبية انجليزية غير مطلوبة أحيانا بهدف المتعة.	3.24	1.362
4	Literary works are a good source of information (historical, geographical, etc.). الأعمال الأدبية مصدر جيد للمعلومات العامة (جغرافية، تاريخية..الخ)	3.19	1.225
5	I like to read English literature. أحب قراءة الأدب الإنجليزي.	3.15	1.142
6	English literature reflects a great civilization and culture. الأدب الإنجليزي يعكس ثقافة وحضارة عريقتين.	3.13	1.303
7	Literature is the best embodiment of human experience. يشكل الأدب أفضل تجسيد للتجربة الإنسانية	3.06	1.155
8	I enjoy reading English and international literature in Arabic. أستمتع بقراءة الأدب الإنجليزي والعالمي باللغة العربية.	3.06	1.308

Question Two
What is the attitude of students towards the different literary genres?

Descriptive statistics showed that students had the least favorable attitude towards reading English poetry (M=2.6). In contrast, they showed a very positive attitude towards reading fiction in general, and novels in particular (M= 3.76). As for reading short stories in English the mean was also high (M=3.72). Favoring the narrative over poetry may be due to the complexity involved in the linguistic and aesthetic interpretation of poetry. This is due to the less common diction chosen by poets and to the deviation from traditional sentence word order that characterizes poetry in general. As for the narrative, relative length of texts helps in creating a certain level of redundancy that makes reading easier. Also, the variation in the representation of human nature in different personalities and characters may make the narrative text more relevant to the students' life experience.
 One may argue that the reason behind favoring fiction might be inherent in the Arabic culture itself where the narrative form has traditionally gained a lot of popularity among different social groups.

Table 6. *Descriptive statistics of the students' attitude towards literary genres*

	Attitude towards literary genres		
1	I would like to be able to read English novels. أتمنى أن يصبح بمقدوري قراءة الروايات باللغة الإنجليزية.	3.76	1.628
2	English short stories are interesting. القصص القصيرة باللغة الإنجليزية ممتعة	3.72	1.508
3	Drama dialogues may enhance my speaking skills لغة الحوار في المسرحيات يمكن ان تعزز قدراتي في المحادثة باللغة الانجليزية	3.41	1.490
4	Drama and plays are enjoyable to read in English. استمتع بقراءة المسرحيات باللغة الانجليزية	3.23	1.369
5	I enjoy reading English poetry.	2.59	1.331

Question Three
What is the students' attitude towards the role of literature in language learning?

One may easily notice that the students' perception of the role of literature in language learning is highly favorable. The item which received the highest agreement (M= 3.58, SD=1.72) is the one which says that "literary texts are a great tool to learn the English language". Students also think that it is a great tool to learn English vocabulary (M=3.52, SD=1.262). They also think that literature is a great tool to improve the reading and writing skills (M=3.54, SD=1.233). These responses show that the students do not underestimate the value that literature has as a language learning tool despite the fact that they have not yet been exposed to any literary courses or materials. Their perceptions may be built on previous experience with literature in the first language or on the few literary texts they have been exposed to in the school curriculum. Despite this apparently positive view, the students did not think that literature is 'indispensible" or essential in the language curriculum. The point which says "I think literature is an indispensable component in language education" received lowest agreement (M= 3.05, SD= 2.40). This shows that despite their initial enthusiasm, students still think that literary materials could just be an accessory or additive to the curriculum rather than being a core component. This attitude could have been influenced by the way literary materials are presented in the school curriculum. In the English syllabus, literary materials are presented outside the main textbook in the form of readers or anthologies, which might give both students and teachers the impression that they are not essential components of the curriculum or that they have functions other than language development. Most previous literature confirms that literary texts develop linguistic competence, cultural awareness as well as integrative motivation. The students' response however contradicts such orientation. They see some value in literature for certain aspects of language and culture, yet they do not perceive it as an integral or indispensible aspect.

Table 7. *Descriptive statistics of the students' attitude towards the role of literature in language learning*

Attitude towards the role of literature in Language learning		
I think literary texts are a great tool to learn the English language. أعتقد أن النصوص الأدبية وسيلة ممتازة لتعلم اللغة.	3.58	1.172
Learning literature helps me improve my reading and writing skills. دراسة الأدب تساعدني على تحسين مهارتي القراءة والكتابة	3.54	1.233
I can learn a lot of vocabulary from literary texts. أستطيع تعلم الكثير من المفردات من النصوص الأدبية	3.52	1.262
Learning literature helps me improve my listening and speaking skills. دراسة الأدب تساعدني على تحسين مهارتي الاستماع والمحادثة.	3.50	1.195
One may learn a lot of good expressions from a literary text. يمكن أن يتعلم الشخص الكثير من التعبيرات الجيدة باللغة الانجليزية من النصوص الأدبية.	3.43	1.451
Literature develops my ability to think out of the box. يساعدني الأدب على تطوير قدرتي للتفكير خارج الصندوق (التفكير الإبداعي)	3.27	1.223
Literary texts contain good examples of English grammar in use. تحتوي النصوص الأدبية على أمثلة جيدة لقواعد اللغة الانجليزية المستخدمة	3.20	1.247
I think literature is an indispensable component in language education. أعتقد أن الأدب مكون لا يمكن الاستغناء عنها في النظام التعليمي.	3.05	1.240

Question Four

What is the students' perception of the cultural and moral value of literature for language learners?

The students showed highest agreement with the statement which focuses on the role of literature in learning about culture: Reading literary texts is a good tool to learn about the target culture" (M= 3.51, SD=1.290). This positive attitude is congruent with the view of most educators that literature is a great tool to learn about the target culture, whether it is the capital C culture in terms of the great achievements of a certain civilization or the small c culture as represented by everyday practices (Kramsch, 1993, Mackay, 2001). The students showed lowest agreement, however, with the statement that says: "Reading literature makes me more skeptical" (M=2.68, SD=1.391).   The low agreement with this statement is surprising especially that literary texts usually raise big questions pertaining to human existence and experience such as life vs death, and good vs evil as well as the meaning of human existence in the universe.   The fact that all that does not raise doubt in the students' mind could be due to the way literary texts are selected or presented as a mere tool for language learning rather than a starting point for analysis and thinking,

Table 8. *Descriptive statistics of the students' attitude towards the cultural and moral value of literature*

	Attitude towards the cultural and moral value of literature		
1	Reading literary texts is a good tool to learn about the target culture. قراءة النصوص الأدبية وسيلة جيدة لمعرفة الثقافة الأجنبية	3.51	1.290
2	Literature teaches us about the everyday practices in a foreign country.	3.39	1.181

	يطلعنا الأدب على أنماط الحياة اليومية في الدول الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية		
3	Literature shows us the great achievements of a certain civilization. يطلعنا الأدب على الإنجازات العظيمة لحضارة معينة.	3.37	1.274
4	Literature teaches us about the values of a society. يعرفنا الأدب على القيم السائدة في مجتمع معين.	3.16	1.462
5	Reading literature leads me to a better understanding of good vs evil and right vs wrong. قراءة الأدب تقودني لفهم أفضل للخير والشر	3.06	1.290
6	Reading literature makes me more independent in my thinking. قراءة الأدب تجعلني أكثر استقلالية في أفكاري	3.05	1.331
7	Reading literature helps me approach life in a more mature way. قراءة الأدب تساعدني على التعامل مع الحياة بشكل أكثر نضجا	3.00	1.371
8	Reading literature helps me become a better human. قراءة الأدب تجعل مني انسانا أفضل	2.98	1.442
9	Reading literature makes me feel more compassionate with fellow humans. قراءة الأدب تجعلني أكثر تعاطفا مع بني البشر	2.97	1.301
10	Reading literature helps me understand people more. قراءة الأدب تجعلني أكثر تفهما للآخرين	2.96	1.349
11	Reading literature makes me more skeptical. قراءة الأدب تجعلني أكثر شكاً.	2.68	1.391

Conclusion and Recommendations:

This study attempted to explore the freshman students' attitude towards literary materials hoping that results reached by the researchers may inform future decisions regarding the incorporation of additional literary texts in the courses preceding the core literary courses at the English Department.

Results of the study show that certain steps should be taken to build on the positive dimensions in the students' attitude. They also show that the negative aspects of the students' attitude should be carefully analyzed and perhaps altered through text selection. This is particularly significant because researchers agree that attitudes are changeable by nature and through exposure to the right input (Ghazali, 2008). Results, for instance, showed that students enjoy reading literary texts in their native language (Arabic) which means that their general orientation towards literature is not negative. As for literary genres, they seemed to favor fiction over poetry and drama. Finally, they thought that literature is a valuable source for both language and culture learning, yet they did not agree that such value is high enough to make the inclusion of literary texts of utmost necessity or indispensability.

Taking into account the previous results, the researchers make the following suggestions with regard to dimensions that should be considered in order to foster students' positive attitude towards literature. First, students should be helped to transfer their positive attitude towards L1 texts when dealing with L2 literary materials by stressing the universal nature of literary themes and connecting them to the students' own culture and experience. This could be achieved through the selection of translated texts for Arab writers especially texts that gained international recognition. This is particularly important since students showed positive attitude towards their

L1 literature, yet an exceptionally negative one towards texts translated from other languages into Arabic.

Students' attitude towards certain literary genres could also be targeted and developed. Poetry was negatively evaluated as a useful or enjoyable genre, yet this attitude could be changed through the selection of texts that are within the students' reach in terms of complexity and relevance to their own experiences. Moreover, students' attitude cannot be modified unless their EFL teachers undergo training that would help them see and appreciate the different dimensions of the value of literary texts and genres. From informal discussions with the teachers themselves, the researchers noticed that they perceive poetry as the literary genre most difficult to handle by students. This teacher perspective may be easily noticed by and transferred to students.

The researchers believe that students' attitude, though positive, could be developed to become more appreciative of the value of literature in developing specific language aspects. Students did not see the value of literature in developing the grammar of the target language although grammar books in their first language are loaded with examples from different literary genres to illustrate certain grammatical points. This point should be stressed since in the Arabic language, literary texts especially classical ones are considered to be the model of Arabic language standard use. In the case of English literature, there are many examples of idiomatic, proverbial and poetic quotes that are daily used by native speakers of English and that could be incorporated in the EFL curriculum to enhance the connection between language and literature or to promote literary samples as a model of language use. Mckay stresses this point when she argues that literature develops both the students' knowledge of rules in addition to providing them with actual examples of these rules in use.

Furthermore, one may notice, that English textbooks used at Palestinian schools focus on the inductive teaching of grammar which reflects the philosophy of the communicative approach. However, none of the examples used in the exercises come from literary texts whether poetry or fiction despite the fact that such genres are loaded with examples of standard language use that reflect both sentence and discourse structure.

Taking into account all the previous recommendations, the researchers, who are also decision makers, have decided to offer a special literature course at the freshman level that would take into account results of this study. Choice of the materials in this course would take into account students' attitude, preferences, academic level and language proficiency, hence responding to their various needs and to the conclusions in previous literature that texts should not be beyond the analytical skills of individual students.

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17.
Appendix A
Attitude towards English Literature
Students' Survey
This survey is intended to explore students' attitude towards English literary materials and their role in language learning. Any opinions you supply in this survey will be kept confidential and used for the purpose of scientific research only.
Part One:
Academic Level: 1. Freshman   2. Sophomore   3. Junior   4. Senior
Gender: 1. Male   2. Female
University GPA: --.
Circle the courses you have already taken and indicate the grade you obtained in each of them:
1. 101   Grade:-----------------------------------.2. 102   Grade:----------------------------------
,
What grade do you expect to get in this course (103)?
---.
  Part Two:
Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements where 1 shows the least level of agreement and 5 shows the highest.

#	Statement	M	SD
	General attitude towards literature		
1	*I like to read English literature.* أحب قراءة الأدب الإنجليزي.		
2	*I think English literature is interesting.* أعتقد أن الأدب الإنجليزي ممتع.		
3	*English literature reflects a great civilization and culture.* الأدب الإنجليزي يعكس ثقافة وحضارة عريقتين.		
4	*I enjoy reading Arabic literary texts.* أستمتع عادة بقراءة النصوص الأدبية العربية.		
5	*I enjoy reading English and international literature in Arabic.* أستمتع بقراءة الأدب الإنجليزي والعالمي باللغة العربية.		
6	*I read unassigned English literary texts for pleasure.* أقرأ نصوصا أدبية انجليزية غير مطلوبة أحيانا بهدف المتعة.		
7	*Literature is the best embodiment of human experience.* يشكل الأدب أفضل تجسيد للتجربة الإنسانية.		
8	*Literary works are a good source of information (historical, geographical, etc.).* الأعمال الأدبية مصدر جيد للمعلومات العامة (جغرافية، تاريخية..الخ)		
	Attitude towards literary genres		
9	*I enjoy reading English poetry.* استمتع بقراءة الشعر الإنجليزي		
10	*English short stories are interesting.* القصص القصيرة باللغة الإنجليزية ممتعة		
1	*I would like to be able to read English novels.*		

1 1	أتمنى أن يصبح بمقدوري قراءة الروايات باللغة الإنجليزية.		
1 2	*Drama and plays are enjoyable to read in English.* استمتع بقراءة المسرحيات باللغة الانجليزية		
1 3	*Drama dialogues may enhance my speaking skills.* لغة الحوار في المسرحيات يمكن أن تعزز قدراتي في المحادثة باللغة الانجليزية		
	Attitude towards the role of literature in Language learning		
1 4	*I think literary texts are a great tool to learn the English language.* أعتقد أن النصوص الأدبية وسيلة ممتازة لتعلم اللغة.		
1 5	*I can learn a lot of vocabulary from literary texts.* أستطيع تعلم الكثير من المفردات من النصوص الأدبية		
1 6	*Literary texts contain good examples of English grammar in use.* تحتوي النصوص الأدبية على أمثلة جيدة لقواعد اللغة الانجليزية المستخدمة		
1 7	*One may learn a lot of good expressions from a literary text.* يمكن أن يتعلم الشخص الكثير من التعبيرات الجيدة باللغة الانجليزية من النصوص الأدبية.		
1 8	*Learning literature helps me improve my listening and speaking skills.* دراسة الأدب تساعدني على تحسين مهارتي الاستماع والمحادثة.		
1 9	*Learning literature helps me improve my reading and writing skills.* دراسة الأدب تساعدني على تحسين مهارتي القراءة والكتابة		
2 0	*Literature develops my ability to think out of the box.* يساعدني الأدب على تطوير قدرتي للتفكير خارج الصندوق (التفكير الإبداعي)		
2 1	*I think literature is an indispensable component in language education.* أعتقد أن الأدب مكون لا يمكن الاستغناء عنها في النظام التعليمي.		
2 2	*Reading literary texts is a good tool to learn about the target culture*		
	Attitude towards the cultural and moral value of literature		
2 3	*Literature teaches us about the everyday practices in a foreign country.* يطلعنا الأدب على أنماط الحياة اليومية في الدول الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية		
2 4	*Literature teaches us about the values of a society.* يعرفنا الأدب على القيم السائدة في مجتمع معين.		
2 5	*Literature shows us the great achievements of a certain civilization.* يطلعنا الأدب على الإنجازات العظيمة لحضارة معينة.		
2 6	*Reading literature helps me become a better human.* قراءة الأدب تجعل مني انسانا أفضل		
2 7	*Reading literature makes me feel more compassionate with fellow humans.* قراءة الأدب تجعلني أكثر تعاطفا مع بني البشر		
2 8	*Reading literature helps me understand people more.* قراءة الأدب تجعلني أكثر تفهما للآخرين		
2 9	*Reading literature leads me to a better understanding of good vs evil and right vs wrong.* قراءة الأدب تقودني لفهم أفضل للخير والشر		
3	*Reading literature helps me approach life in a more mature way.*		

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0	قراءة الأدب تساعدني على التعامل مع الحياة بشكل أكثر نضجا		
3	*Reading literature makes me more independent in my thinking.*		
1	قراءة الأدب تجعلني أكثر استقلالية في أفكاري		
3	*Reading literature makes me more skeptical.*		
2	قراءة الأدب تجعلني أكثر شكاً.		

Appendix B

Questionnaire Items in Descending Order According to Level of Agreement

#	*Statement*	*M*	*SD*
	General attitude towards literature		
1	*I would like to be able to read English novels.* أتمنى أن يصبح بمقدوري قراءة الروايات باللغة الإنجليزية.	*3.76*	*1.628*
2	*English short stories are interesting.* القصص القصيرة باللغة الإنجليزية ممتعة	*3.72*	*1.508*
3	*I think literary texts are a great tool to learn the English language.* أعتقد أن النصوص الأدبية وسيلة ممتازة لتعلم اللغة.	*3.58*	*1.172*
4	*Learning literature helps me improve my reading and writing skills.* دراسة الأدب تساعدني على تحسين مهارتي القراءة والكتابة	*3.54*	*1.233*
5	*I can learn a lot of vocabulary from literary texts.* أستطيع تعلم الكثير من المفردات من النصوص الأدبية	*3.52*	*1.262*
6	*Reading literary texts is a good tool to learn about the target culture.* قراءة النصوص الأدبية وسيلة جيدة لمعرفة الثقافة الأجنبية	*3.51*	*1.290*
7	*Learning literature helps me improve my listening and speaking skills.* دراسة الأدب تساعدني على تحسين مهارتي الاستماع والمحادثة.	*3.50*	*1.195*
8	*One may learn a lot of good expressions from a literary text.* يمكن أن يتعلم الشخص الكثير من التعبيرات الجيدة باللغة الانجليزية من النصوص الأدبية.	*3.43*	*1.451*
	Attitude towards literary genres		
9	*Drama dialogues may enhance my speaking skills.* لغة الحوار في المسرحيات يمكن أن تعزز قدراتي في المحادثة باللغة الانجليزية	*3.41*	*1.490*
10	*Literature teaches us about the everyday practices in a foreign country.* يطلعنا الأدب على أنماط الحياة اليومية في الدول الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية	*3.39*	*1.181*
11	*Literature shows us the great achievements of a certain civilization.* يطلعنا الأدب على الإنجازات العظيمة لحضارة معينة.	*3.37*	*1.274*
12	*I enjoy reading Arabic literary texts.* أستمتع عادة بقراءة النصوص الأدبية العربية.	*3.31*	*1.425*
13	*Literature develops my ability to think out of the box.* يساعدني الأدب على تطوير قدرتي للتفكير خارج الصندوق (التفكير الإبداعي)	*3.27*	*1.223*
	Attitude towards the role of literature in Language learning		
14	*I think English literature is interesting.* أعتقد أن الأدب الإنجليزي ممتع.	*3.25*	*1.129*
1	*I read unassigned English literary texts for pleasure.*	*3.24*	*1.36*

5	أقرأ نصوصا أدبية انجليزية غير مطلوبة أحيانا بهدف المتعة.		2
16	*Drama and plays are enjoyable to read in English.* استمتع بقراءة المسرحيات باللغة الانجليزية	3.23	1.369
17	*Literary texts contain good examples of English grammar in use.* تحتوي النصوص الأدبية على أمثلة جيدة لقواعد اللغة الانجليزية المستخدمة	3.20	1.247
18	*Literary works are a good source of information (historical, geographical, etc.).* الأعمال الأدبية مصدر جيد للمعلومات العامة (جغرافية، تاريخية ..الخ)	3.19	1.225
19	*Literature teaches us about the values of a society.* يعرفنا الأدب على القيم السائدة في مجتمع معين.	3.16	1.462
20	*I like to read English literature.* أحب قراءة الأدب الإنجليزي.	3.15	1.142
21	*English literature reflects a great civilization and culture.* الأدب الإنجليزي يعكس ثقافة وحضارة عريقتين.	3.13	1.303
22	*Reading literature leads me to a better understanding of good vs evil and right vs wrong.* قراءة الأدب تقودني لفهم أفضل للخير والشر	3.06	1.290
	Attitude towards the cultural and moral value of literature		
23	*Literature is the best embodiment of human experience.* يشكل الأدب أفضل تجسيد للتجربة الإنسانية	3.06	1.155
24	*I enjoy reading English and international literature in Arabic.* أستمتع بقراءة الأدب الإنجليزي والعالمي باللغة العربية.	3.06	1.308
25	*Reading literature makes me more independent in my thinking.* قراءة الأدب تجعلني أكثر استقلالية في أفكاري	3.05	1.331
26	*I think literature is an indispensable component in language education.* أعتقد أن الأدب مكون لا يمكن الاستغناء عنها في النظام التعليمي.	3.05	1.240
27	*Reading literature helps me approach life in a more mature way.* قراءة الأدب تساعدني على التعامل مع الحياة بشكل أكثر نضجا	3.00	1.371
28	*Reading literature helps me become a better human.* قراءة الأدب تجعل مني انسانا أفضل	2.98	1.442
29	*Reading literature makes me feel more compassionate with fellow humans.* قراءة الأدب تجعلني أكثر تعاطفا مع بني البشر	2.97	1.301
30	*Reading literature helps me understand people more.* قراءة الأدب تجعلني أكثر تفهما للآخرين	2.96	1.349
31	*Reading literature makes me more skeptical.* قراءة الأدب تجعلني أكثر شكاً.	2.68	1.391
32	*I enjoy reading English poetry.* استمتع بقراءة الشعر الإنجليزي	2.59	1.331