Challenges to Teaching English Literature in Sudan from a Teacher's Perspective: A Case Study of Khartoum University

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Abstract: *This study investigates the teachers' perspectives on the challenges of teaching English literature in Sudan. The study adopts a qualitative methodology using structured interviews for data collection. Four faculty members were interviewed and the collected data were synthesized, and analyzed with the purpose of finding out about the challenges in the teaching of English literature in the University of Khartoum, a representative of universities in Sudan. The focus was mainly on the difficulties, which both the teachers and their students encounter along the English literature teaching-learning process and the potential solutions to them. The findings showed a variety of challenges facing the teaching of English literature in Khartoum University. However, most of the challenges were in line with the challenges facing similar institutions in many parts of the globe.*

1. Background of the Problem

Literature is one of main components of any language programme. It provides channels for expressing thoughts, emotions and feelings. Through literature speakers also share their interaction with their surroundings and other speakers of the language in a variety of aesthetic and sensible ways. Hence, literature has moral, aesthetic values, as well as linguistic values. English Language has a huge heritage of literature both oral and written. Unfortunately, hunting for this treasure of literature is not as easy as it might seem for Sudanese EFL learners due to cultural, social, economic and professional restrictions. Every community has its own socio-cultural characteristics which influence the process of studying/ teaching English literature in a way or another, and adds to the challenges of teaching literature. The current paper investigates the challenges encountering both the teachers and students when teaching or learning Literature at the English Department of the University of Khartoum. The goal of the paper is to identify the challenges, the causes behind their existence to pave the way for suggesting some strategies to overcome them.

2. Statement of the Problem

Reading a novel, a story or a poem is something most people do voluntarily for pleasure and enjoyment. Hence, undertaking such an act is expected to be easy, enjoyable and stress-free. However, when literature is to be taught as a component in language programs with specific goals and ends, great challenges appear in the way and the task of teaching it becomes harder and tougher for most EFL teachers across the globe. Teachers in Sudanese universities, as well as their counterparts in many parts of the world, have experienced great challenges in teaching literature for years. This paper investigates these challenges from the perspectives of a Sudanese teacher. Many studies connected with the area of challenges to teaching literature have been conducted in Sudan. For instance, Mohamed A. Ali, (2001) studied the effect of stripping out the literature component from secondary school national program for English

language in the Sudan. As well, Salah Edin. H. E. M., (2015) investigated the effect of teaching literature on language proficiency achievements. The bulk of studies in this area in Sudan have been carried out at secondary level. Few studies have been conducted in teaching English at tertiary level.

3. Research Questions

The current study investigates the challenges to teaching literature at tertiary level in Sudan. It aims to answer the following questions:
1) What literary materials do universities teach as part of their language programs, and how do they select them?
2) What are the objectives of teaching English Literature to Sudanese EFL learners at tertiary level?
3) What are the challenges do Sudanese EFL teachers/ learners encounter in the pursuit of achieving these goals?
4) How can teachers overcome these challenges and what can be done to facilitate teaching English literature in the Sudanese context in general?

4. Scope of the Study

This research studies the challenges facing the teachers of English literature in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, and University of Khartoum. The subjects were ELT professors of literature who teach undergraduate students of English (grade to through four) majoring in English, at the English department. The study aims to highlight the challenges from teachers' perspectives, and suggest solutions. The study also seeks to compare these findings with the challenges found in similar contexts as reflected in previous research.

5. Literature Review

This paper investigates the challenges of teaching English literature in the Sudan, its objectives, problems, materials, and solutions. Firstly, the paper casts light on the teaching of

literature in general, its genres, main approaches, teaching materials, etc. Secondly, the previous studies on teaching English literature to EFL students will be reviewed. Then, we would look at Sudanese researchers' endeavors in investigating challenges of teaching literature in Sudan. Finally, what distinguishes the current study from the previous research, and how the study contributes to the awareness and enhancement of the present situation will be explained.

5.1 Teaching English Literature

Literature encompasses the literary works of many genres: poetry, prose, drama, novels, short stories, memoirs...etc., throughout the historical phases of the English language starting from old English through Shakespearean, to Elizabeth until today, and in many English- Speaking Societies. The geographical expansion of the English literature has extended in the 20th century with the wide spread of the language around the world especially in the societies where English is the Second Language of the country. Each of the new English's (the different varieties of English) has its own English Literary Production, even here in Sudan where English is considered to be a foreign language, we can find some writers who write in English, and some great translations from Arabic or Sudanese Arabic to English. The current situation of English as the Linguafranca of the world of 21st century has compounded the amount and the importance of English Literature. Different objectives were meant to be achieved by teaching English Literature especially in an EFL context. Burke and Brumfit (2000) (cited in Novianti, 2016:44) listed three objectives: promoting students' literary skills and social skills, encouraging liberal, ethical, and humanitarian attitudes, and providing necessary information and knowledge of literary traditions and language.

According to the priorities of the teaching objectives, three main approaches are usually adopted. These include Language Model, the Cultural Model, and the Personal Growth Model, which combines the two models."Students are free to express their aesthetic appreciation of the literary texts and interpret the cultural and ideological values that a text reflects while studying or analyzing the linguistic elements of the text, Novianti (2016, p 44)

Teaching English Literature, using one of these approaches, and targeting one or all of these objectives is considered to be a very challenging task. As these challenges are main interest in this research, a review of the relevant previous studies outside and inside Sudan comes next.

5.2 International Studies in the teaching of literature

Andrew Chesterman (1983:136) in an article entitled, "*The Teaching of Literature to Non-Native Speakers", investigated the* problems occurring in the teaching of English literature to first-year university students in Finland and arrived at the conclusion that the main problem apart of his students is their *unfamiliarity to the study of literature in general,* even in the students' native language, and that *the teaching approach* followed in teaching English literature is the second main problem. The second problem is

concerned with combining an analytical approach with a creative/experiential/ aesthetic approach.

Indrani L Sarkarhas studied the challenges *to teaching English literature at tertiary level in India.* The writer claims that the English life, nature, feelings, views and opinions reflected in English literature are *foreign to the rural life of India* and therefore they represent the essence of the problem. He summarizes the challenges to the Indian students as the *problems in interacting with much English literary stuff due to cultural differences, low proficiency in English*, their *vernacular background*, their *poor vocabulary* and insufficiency *of proper study materials*. Sakar presented some different perspectives about the solutions from different groups of thinkers. These include a) teaching English literature and some other Indian literatures simultaneously in a comparative study, b) teaching the translated version of the great works of English writers like Shakespeare in their personal vernaculars, and c) teaching only Indian Writings in English. As each of these suggested solutions comes with its own challenges, the writer recommends working on evolving the students' level of mastering the language before coming to the university, if they are to enjoy the wonder of literature.

Aysun Yavuz (2014) conducted a qualitative research investigating the areas of difficulties in analyzing English literary texts. His study " *Teaching and interpreting literary texts: Difficulties of 4th year ELT students at a Turkish university"* depended on observing 42 final students in performing their presentations. The results demonstrated that the students have many difficulties in understanding and interpreting literary texts. The difficulties include a) understanding the relationship between the writer/poet, period of the text, and the theme/s of the literary piece, b) finding out and interpreting figures of speech, d) difficulties in suggesting rich variety of classroom implications in relation to using literature in teaching English, and c) difficulties in pronunciation and intonation. (p.27)

Nita Novianti (2016) conducted a study entitled, *"English Literature Teaching: An Indonesian Context***",** investigating the situation of teaching English literature in the Indonesian Universities. The informants of the study were three lecturers, teaching three different literature courses in a state university. The results showed three main problems encountering the informants**.** These were reading habits, language proficiency, and resources. Some solutions to each problem were suggested.

Hussein, E.T., and Al-Emami, A. H. (2016) conducted a similar study to the current one *"Challenges to Teaching English Literature at the University of Hail: Instructors' Perspective".* The findings revealed three main problems affecting the productivity of the teaching-learning processes. These include the *language proficiency level of the students, linguistic and stylistic degree of difficulty of the texts and* the *degree of cultural (un) familiarity* (p.125).

5.3. National Studies in the teaching literature

In Sudan many researchers have investigated the effect of teaching English Literature and the suitability of the selected materials. Among these are the following:

Ali, M. A. (2001) conducted a comprehensive mixed study with the title, "Exclusion of Literature from Sudanese Secondary Schools English Language Syllabus and its Adverse Effects on the EFL Learners". Three reasons were mentioned to justify the exclusion of the literature component from the syllabus. These reasons were described in details by the theorists themselves, and the most prominent of these reasons were three: a) the exclusion does not affect teaching language and grammar due to the structural complexity of literature and its unique use of language, b) the study of literature does not help students meet their academic or occupational goals, and c) literature often reflects a particular culture perspective, (p.16).In the contrary to the above stated justifications for the exclusion of the literature component from the nation syllabus of English language, the findings of Ali's study stressed the importance 'the cultural content' in language teaching. He claimed that language and literature are twins to the extent that they inseparable at any level of language teaching and thatliterature as motivate students to learn English.

Mohamed, S. H. E. (2015) carried out a similar study entitled, "Towards Effective Values of Teaching Literature to Secondary School Students". Using a mixed method in collecting for data, Mohamed investigated the effect of teaching literature on EFL secondary school students. The study compared the level of two groups of students, the first group studied literature for more than six years while the other group did not study any literature texts for the same period. The findings indicated a positive, significant relation between the study of literature and the students' standard of English. In other words, literature teaching, affects learners' English language, (p2017).

His study demonstrates some of the difficulties that face English teachers dealing with literary issues. Nevertheless, he emphasizes the crucial importance of the study of literature for any language learner. Finally, he concludes with very nice recommendations for Teachers of English language

Al Faki, Ibrahim Mohamed. (2014) in his study *"Using Literature in EFL Classes: Assessing the Suitability of Literary Texts to Secondary School Students",* examined the suitability of the selected teaching materials to the students' needs, L2 language competence, age, culture, and literary background. The findings showed that the linguistic input and the cultural aspects of the selected books of the curriculum, *"Things Fall a Part, Treasure Island, Jane Eyre, The Prisoner of Zenda, Oliver Twist, Anna and the Fighter"*, do not meet the students' linguistic level and cultural background according to the descriptive analysis of their contents.

Ali, Ezzeldin M. T. and Abu Adam O. M. Ahmed (2015) have conducted a comparative quantitative study on the effect of using literature to address some grammatical rules.

The study was carried under the title, *"The Impact of Teaching English Past Tenses through Literature in Sudanese EFL Classrooms on the Promotion of Students' Performance".* The subjects' were 85 secondary school students in Gadarif province. They were placed into two groups. The first group was taught past and perfect tenses through literature. For the second group, 'Sudan Practical National Integrated English' (SPINE) was used to teach the same grammatical items. The results of the post exams showed a significant difference to the better on side of literature group over their counterparts in the other group, indicating the effectiveness of literature as a tool for language learning. On the basis of these finding, the study recommended establishing an English language syllabus that introduces language grammar through literary texts at secondary school level. Furthermore, the researchers recommended that simplified copies of English literature such as Oliver Twist, Great Expectations, Things Fall Apart, Treasure Island, etc., are very much recommended as formal literary teaching.

Interestingly, these recommendations contradict the findings of the previous study. Three of the four recommended books were in the examined list of the previous study. This result indicates that the question of the appropriateness of teaching materials as a challenge in teaching literature remains unresolved in Sudan.

5.4. Current Study

The current study has much in common with the previous studies whether national or international, in that it is concerned with investigating the challenges of teaching literature as a component in English language program. However, unlike most of the previous studies which focused on literature at secondary level, the current study investigated the challenges of teaching literature at tertiary level. Few Studies have considered the difficulties of teaching English Literature in universities. Hence, this paper attempts to uncover the main difficulties in Universities. Certainly the goals and objectives of teaching literature at university are altogether different from those at secondary stage. Literature at secondary schools is almost taught as extra reading stuff aiming to enhance the students' reading skill and enrich their vocabulary repertoire in the target language and in doing so 'Language Approach' to teaching literature is mostly adopted at secondary schools. Teaching English literature in universities, on the other hand, takes more cultural and aesthetic dimension. The students are expected to deepen and intensify their readings by reflecting, and criticizing the literary works. They are required to read the great works from their authentic volumes. Such an approach would certainly imply different challenges to both teachers and learners.

6. Research Methodology

A qualitative methodology was adopted in this study, using structured interviews for collecting data. The study investigates the challenges encountering the teachers of English Language in teaching English Literature to EFL students in the Sudanese Context. Four informants from the teachers of literature at the department of English, Faculty of

Arts, and University of Khartoum were interviewed the data collected were analyzed, discussed and interpreted.

6.1. Technique of data collection

The four teachers were interviewed for collecting data. Each interview took place in the teacher's own office in the main campus of the University of Khartoum, so that, each could feel comfortable and speak freely. The interviewer used a primary list of questions which were distributed in advance, so that the teachers could think better and get prepared for the interview. In addition to the interviews, the researcher made use of some official documents provided by the department of English, University of Khartoum.

6.2. Instrumentation

As mentioned above, the study depended on a semi-structured interview, consisting of 12 open-ended questions (see Appendix). In addition, some personal information about the interviewees was collected. The responses to the questions were expected to generate data for answering the questions raised in the introduction. They were also desired to help the teachers to reflect on their teaching experience. The secondary source of information was the list of courses offered at the Department of English for all levels, organized according to the semesters in which they are offered, the courses code numbers and their devoted hours per week were also mentioned.

6.3 Informants

The interviews were conducted with four informants who have adequately answered the interview questions. Three of the informants were female Sudanese teachers and the fourth was a native speaker of English language. Three are currently teaching literature in the department and the fourth left the department. Two of the informants were Ph.D. holders while the other two were MA holders. The ages of the informants ranges between 30 and 50 years and their teaching experiences range between 3 and 25 years. Two of the informants worked in many universities inside Sudan and one worked abroad. Moreover, they taught a variety of literature courses to students at different university grades. Among the courses they taught were introduction to literature, American &British (16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries) African literature, Shakespeare...etc. They also taught literature to students of all grades from the second through the fourth.

6.4 Procedures

After deciding to investigate the difficulties of teaching English literature to Sudanese EFL students in the faculties of Arts and Education, the researcher has chosen to study the case of the teachers of the English department, Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum, which is considered the pioneer in teaching literature among the departments of English in the country. Then, the research questions were established. After that, the primary list of the interview questions was designed in order to help in answering the research questions. Then, a list of staff teachers who teach literature at the department was prepared and handouts of the interview questions were copied. The meetings were arranged and the researcher visited the teachers' offices and distributed the copies to the available teachers (4 out of 6). Two teachers have chosen to write down their answers, while the remaining two opted to reply orally and let the door open to any emerging questions. So half of the interviews were structured, but the second half was semi-structured. The Data collected was analyzed according to Zoltan Dornyei's strategy in data analysis. Dornyei (2007) identifies four phases for qualitative data processing, which includes (a) transcribing the data, (b) pre-coding and coding, (c) drawing ideas from secondary sources, and (d) interpreting the data and drawing conclusions. Both recorded and written answers were collected, analyzed, summarized, categorized, compared and contrasted to find out the similarities and differences, the common and the special. In addition to the data collected by the interviews, a list of courses offered in the department of English was used to find more information. The data were synthesized and analyzed, discussed to yield results.

7. Data Analysis

The paper aims to investigate the instructors' perspectives concerning the challenges to teaching English literature to undergraduate EFL students in University of Khartoum. Four out of six members of the teaching staff were interviewed. The data collected would be the processed data and displayed in accordance with the four domains of the research questions. The researchers use their own words to convey the teachers' opinions without necessarily referring to that specific speaker. However, when a quoting, the teachers will be referred to as follows (T1, T2, T3, or T4).T stands for teacher.

7.1. Objectives of teaching literature from the point of view of the informants

The informants mentioned that when teaching English literature, the ultimate goal is to develop students' characters through developing their competences in the different aspects of literary works by: a) using intensive and extensive reading to improve their language and enrich their vocabulary, b) developing an appreciation for the English Literature by deepening students' understanding of the literary text and identifying how its language works to communication messages, c) constructing the basic knowledge of the different terms, movements, and phases in the history of English Literature, and providing the students with the different techniques of analyzing the different genres through the different approaches to English Literature, d) improving their personal reflective, analytical, critical, interactive abilities in general and in literary texts in particular, e) enlarging their knowledge by reading about other cultures, traditions, and societies and, f) enjoying the aesthetic experiences emerging from literature.

In addition to these objectives, one of the teachers assured that all the objectives mentioned above were the stated objectives of the curriculum, where each course has its own objectives drawn from the above stated ones.

While two of the teachers assured that they have fully achieved these objectives, a third teacher said he managed to feel satisfied with his students' standard of understanding, and the fourth illustrated his uncertainty about the achievement of the stated aims, saying:

"yes and no, some people do not like literature. They think it is a waste of time. Some students, I've seen them grow ... their appreciation grows, and that's wonderful and good, yes, this is an expectation reached..." (T3).

All the four informants agreed that the responsibility to make the students aware of the aims of studying English Literature, and to motivate them to achieve the stated goal is the teacher's. Therefore, they inform their students with the objectives at the threshold of their courses.

"In the beginning of every course, I introduce the course and ask the students about their expectations and what they think they might learn. Then I tell them about the course's objectives..." (T2).

They added that through observation, students' attendance and participation, regular testing, teachers could evaluate the students' willingness and endeavors, and that these are not only closely related to their motivation but also to the teachers' effort and follow-up.

7.2 Challenges to teaching literature:

The challenges, as described by the informants, are ordered according to their frequency in the informants' responses. The challenges the informants talked about included students, resources, English literature, teaching staff, and other miscellaneous restrictions.

7.2.1 Students
Many challenges seem to associate with the students themselves. These are strongly related to the students as individuals (of course some students do not experience such difficulties), and their consequences exceed the learner to the teacher and the whole process of teaching English literature. The most common challenges associated with this category include: a) low standard of language proficiency which affects their reading competency, b) lack of basic knowledge of literary terms, tools, as well as the lack of critical thinking, c) reluctance and lack of enthusiasm to studying literature, reflected in the form of frequent absences from lectures and refraining from reading literary works, d) lack of exposure to the language resulting in poor vocabulary, complaints about texts difficulties, e) lack of motivation and passion, and f) alienation from British and American cultures. One of the teachers frankly stated, *"..some of the students do not have the passion for studying literature. They just study to pass the exam". (T2)*

7.2.2. Resources
Resources as a challenge to teaching literature have been mentioned repeatedly in the statements of the informants. Almost all of the interviewees have complained about resources many times and in many ways. Their complaints include: a) unavailability of and inaccessibility to both soft and hard literature resources, b) the insufficiency and

inappropriateness of the existing materials in the libraries of the university to the stated goals of teaching literature in the current curriculum, c) insufficiency of the students' experience with literary works at earlier stages, *"The students study in secondary schools are rather intensive reading but not typically literature"*, said (T4), and d) inappropriateness of the design of both ''the courses and selected literary materials'' in the curriculum *to raise students' literary appreciation"*, remarked (T4).

7.2.3 English Literature
This challenge is closely connected to the nature of English Literature represented by the British and American which in turn represent the western culture. The challenge is reflected as follows: a) English literature pertains to a totally different historical, geographical, ethnical, philosophical and religious background, leading to a great difficulty in understanding, imagining and interacting with it, b) English literature contains a considerable amount of difficult vocabulary, some of them are obsolete, c) some ideas and concepts in poetry are so complicated to the extent that they need to be explained and illustrated so that they can be clear and understandable to the students, and d) diversity in the styles of the English authors requires the students to adapt themselves to it.

7.2.4. Teachers
The informants talked about teachers as a challenge to teaching literature. They said the challenge reflects itself in the lack of specialized, well-trained professors of literature due to the phenomenon of brain-drain in the country during the last three decades due to economic and political crisis. The availability of such qualified cadres would have helped in simplifying complicated concepts, and motivating unmotivated students.

7.2.5 Miscellaneous restrictions to English literature
In addition to the above main challenges, the informants mentioned the following as difficulties which they favored to separate from the major challenges mentioned above. These restrictions were categorized separately because not all the informants included them in their responses and considered them challenges. Therefore, we collected the occurrence of different items under the heading of miscellaneous challenges. These include: a) the limited time allocated for teaching literature, T2, b) the African culture prefers oral transmission and communication to reading, and writing literature, c) social media represent serious threats to books and reading culture, and d) lack of investments in publishing, libraries and book stores due to the economic situation in the country, restricts receiving and producing literature.

8. Designed courses and Selected Materials

A major challenge to teaching literature is to find answers to questions such as what to teach? What courses, genres, and cultures to teach? Who selects the materials, and how? To answer these questions, a list of the courses offered at the department and the information collected from the informants were considered. The Department of English offers 10 courses of literature out of 29 courses other courses in the program offered to the students majoring English

Language and its literature. First year students do not study literature at all. They have one intensive, integrated course of General English. Students specialize in English from grade two. After reaching a basic level of language proficiency in the first year, the students are introduced to the basic knowledge of literature. Sophomore study two introductory courses of literature: "*Introduction to Literature*" and "*Introduction to Drama*". In the third year, they 4 courses: *"Romantic or Victorian Literature", " Poetry and Poetic Appreciation", " Literary Prose",* and *"19th and 20th Century British Literature".* In their final year of the programme, they study 4 additional literary courses: *"Drama / Shakespeare",* "*19th and 20th Century American Literature", "Cinema",* and "African Literature".

After reaching a basic level of language proficiency in the first year, the students are introduced to the basic knowledge of literature by attending 2 courses including key terms, movements, tools of analysis, and the main characteristics of each genre, before they can deepen and enlarge their knowledge of literature in the 3rd and 4th years by studying 8 courses tackling the main literary genres, and historical phases in both British and American Literature, in addition to a final course in African literature, which may not only give the study of English Literature an intercultural dimension, but also a personal dimension because it is closer to the students' own culture.

Distinguished students are entitled to register for a fifth year to graduate with B.A. (honors). These students can choose to study the fifth year either in linguistics or literature to qualify for a master degree in literature or linguistic by studying 8 more courses in literature or linguistics. However, due to lack of specialized professors in literature, these students remain with only one choice before them, that is specializing in linguistics and lose their opportunity to specialize in literature.

However, a series of questions concerning what the teachers teach in these courses, how they select the teaching materials and whether the students have any role in this selection process, still needs answers. In the interviews, the answers to these questions varied considerably. For example; (T1&T3) demonstrated that they choose for their students the easy, entertaining, enjoyable texts, which help to achieve the teaching objectives of the syllabus. Both teachers agreed that the students have no role in the material selection process. *"Till now no, the lecturer is the responsible one of the material which satisfies the syllabus*" (T1). On the other hand, (T2) proved that the students contribute effectively in the process of selecting what they learn; *" I choose one material that is related to the literary form under study and then provide the students with a list of texts from which they might choose a piece freely"* (T2). In the opposite extreme, we find that (T4) ensured that the students contribute nothing in this process, and surprisingly added that *"even the teacher has no role"* (T4). This statement illustrates that the teaching materials are all determined by the curriculum developers solely.

At this point, what the teachers reported in their responses regarding material selection and preparation seems to be a little bit confusing. Nevertheless, after discussing these contradicting findings with the head of the department, he clarified the scene by indicating that the informants belong to different generations which may contribute to different approaches they adopt in selecting the teaching materials. He explained that according to the current policy, the department determines the titles of the courses with a (*skeleton)* i.e. a flexible description of each course, (objectives, plan, content, texts, etc..), leaving the details to the teachers who would put the flesh on the bone, and choose from a wide range of materials available what satisfies the needs and wants of their students as reported previously by (T1& T3). However, (T2) takes a more student-centered approach and shares with his students the responsibility of material selection, while (T4) relies completely on the suggested materials prescribed in the given course plan.

9. Suggested Solutions

Although all the informants believe the above stated restrictions are the real challenges to teaching literature in Khartoum University, some of them were cautious to generalize these challenges to other similar institutions in Sudan. To cope with these challenges, informants suggested some strategies and procedures to be adopted by the teachers, the students and in educational institution.

Teachers of literature need to a) select enjoyable texts from interesting literary works available that best suit the students' needs and wants and compliance *with their students' cultural, (T1), b) provide models of literary criticism by providing r*eading the texts, explaining difficult words in them,, analyzing them, and clarifying the historical, social, ideological visions they involve, c) capitalize on the advancement in technology and telecommunications in providing handouts, giving assignments, tests, feedback and establishing seminars and discussion corners to provide chances for the students to reflect, discuss, criticize, and correlate the teaching materials with their real life, ideas, and feelings, d) empower the students to discover themselves and the world around them through study literary works, *(T3), e) increase the students' awareness of the artistic and aesthetic values of literature and try to help them feel the joy in literature, (T2), and* keep connected with the students by allocating office hours, E-mails, or social media groups.

Students need to a) *attend lectures, take notes, and complete the course requirements (T1), b)* prepare for lectures by reading in advance, c) read intensively and extensively in literature, d) search for what they need to understand by themselves, e) ask, discuss, interact, and make use of the availability of their instructors during office hours for finding answers to their problems, and, f) shoulder the responsibility of learning on their own as autonomous learners and try to find the strength and weakness of their characters to capitalize on the on the strength and tackle or neutralize the weakness.

Educational institutions are required to a) improve the students' language proficiency *by continuously* improving the curriculum and updating the teaching materials, *b)* disseminating the culture of reading and encourage good

reading habits, by creating healthy environment with suitable facilities and make them accessible to students, (T3), c) d) recruit specialize teaching staff and organizing teacher training programmes and works shops g*) "develop assessment and evaluation mechanism that guarantees* progress and high quality learning outcomes, (T4).

10. Results and Recommendations

This research sets out to highlight the challenges that encounter the teachers in teaching English literature in the context of the Sudan. Four teaching staff of literature at the Department of English was interviewed and the data collected were analyzed and the results were discussed. The final results of the research can be summarized as follows;

Firstly, the main aim of teaching English literature was to develop many aspects of the students' characters. These aspects include the linguistic, intellectual (Knowledge and skills), emotional, artistic, social and intercultural competences. These objectives were obviously attendant in the teachers' minds. Teachers showed complete awareness of these goals and declared full responsibility towards their students' awareness and motivation to achieve them.

Secondly, considering the challenges encountering both the teachers and their students in teaching literature, many other factors have persistently helped the existence the challenges. These factors include: a) students' low standard of English language proficiency, and lack of motivation, b) lack of well-trained and specialized teachers, c) lack of appropriate literature resources, and d) the wide gap that exists between the students' cultural background and the cultural background of English literature.

Thirdly**,** although selecting suitable teaching materials and offering them is very crucial to the teaching process, the teachers' and the department's policy in selecting the materials seems to be a controversial issue. Hence, stating clearly the criteria for selecting materials and sharing the responsibility of the selection with the teaching staff, the learners, and the administrators in the department is a real need so that the outcome can meet the students' needs and wants. This would certainly contribute to better educational atmospheres, as well as better learning outcomes.

Fourthly, to rectify the status of teaching literature, the teachers suggest: a) improving the linguistic proficiency of the students in English language in general, b) enhancing students' reading skills, reflective and critical thinking, and encourage them to read intensively and extensively in English Literature, and any other useful domains, c) enriching the University libraries with attractive and meaningful literature books in all literary genres in order to help the students to find what motivates them to read, d) trying to simplify and analyze literature without losing its aesthetic value to enable the students to enjoy its fascinating ambiances, and e) selecting for teaching materials the kind of literature that really teach them and develop their personal, social and intercultural characters.

11. Conclusion

The findings of the current study are in line with the findings of the previous studies presented in the literature review. The challenges in the face teaching of English literature in Sudan are not an exception, but a norm in most similar EFL contexts throughout the globe. Hence the suggested solutions to solve the challenges to teaching of literature at the English department might be applicable to all departments of English in Sudan and some other similar institutions. The findings the study are hoped to encourage experts to design some appropriate literature teaching materials (curriculum) that can enhance the language, sentiments, thoughts, and communication among learners and help in raising students' cultural awareness with a full retention of their unique individual identities.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1) What are the main objectives for teaching English literature?

2) To what extent do you think you have achieved these objectives?

3) What obstacles did you face while attempting to obtain these objectives?

4) How do you evaluate your students' awareness, acceptance, willingness, and endeavors to achieve these shared goals?

5) What are the challenges that your students encounter in dealing with English literature?

6) What are the causes of these challenges that have led to their existence?

7) What do you do to overcome these challenges?

8) What do you recommend your students do so that they can overcome their challenges?

9) How do you select your teaching materials to suit your students' wants or needs?

10) Do they have any contribution in the process of selecting what they learn?

11) To what extent do you think we can generalize or limit the challenges and their suggested solutions?

12) What can be done to facilitate teaching English literature in the Sudanese context?