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Bridging the Gap: Language, Culture and Literature, (2011)
An Evaluation of Literature Teaching and Testing Tasks

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To my dear mother, Saliha

To my dear father Farouk

To my brother Zoheir, my sisters Fahima and Yasmine

To my dear friend, Fatma Soulami

To my future husband, Ouahcen Halilou

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Abstract

The attempt along this research was to identify the relation between literature teaching and testing in three English departments. In order to evaluate the pedagogical approaches and practices of the literature curriculum, we have analyzed the educational objectives of the literature tasks and tests. Bloom's Taxonomy of the Educational Objectives has served as a theoretical basis for the analysis. The study examines the content and the type of the cognitive skills introduced in the literature textbook, *Bridging the Gap: Language, Culture and Literature*. In addition, the cognitive objectives that are assessed in the literature tests are classified according to Bloom's Taxonomy. A comparative analysis between the objectives of the literature tasks and tests reveals that there is a significant divergence between the teaching approaches and the testing habits. The literature course emphasizes the understanding skills. The comprehension of the literary text and developing reading skills is the major objective of the literature course. However, the investigation on the testing habits reveals that higher cognitive performance is often required. The evaluative and analytical skills are the targets in the literature test. Accordingly, the results obtained from the research confirm the suggested hypothesis. The research shows that literature teaching and testing pose a didactic challenge in the EFL context, and in some Algerian English departments, there is a detachment between the course objectives and the testing expectations. The research also gives insight into some pedagogical procedures that bridge the teaching/testing gap.

Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| List of Figures | I |
| List of Tables | II |
| Acknowledgements | III |
| Abstract | IV |
| General Introduction | 1 |
| Review of Literature | 3 |
| The Issue | 8 |
| The Hypothesis | 9 |
| Methodology and Materials... .. | 10 |
| The Structure of the Study..... | 12 |
| Significance of the Study | 13 |
| Part One: Theoretical Framework | |
| Introduction | |
| Chapter One: Literature Teaching in EFL Context | |
| I. Teaching Literature in EFL Context | |
| Setting the Relation between Literature and Language | 21 |
| Literature Curriculum in the Algerian English Department..... | 24 |
| II. The Statement of the Literature Teaching Objectives: The Hard Task | |
| The Need for Stating the Teaching Goals..... | 28 |
| Bloom's Taxonomy of the Educational Objectives | 31 |
| The Cognitive Skills in Education..... | 33 |
| III. The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives in the Literature Curriculum | |
| The Analysis of the Literature Textbook According to Boom's Taxonomy | 39 |
| Description of the Literature Textbook... .. | 39 |
| 1. <i>Companion to Bridging the Gap</i> | 40 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 2. <i>Bridging the Gap: Language, Culture and Literature</i> | 42 |
|--|----|

End Notes

Chapter Two: Literature Assessment

| | |
|---|----|
| I. The Utility of Testing in the Curriculum | 49 |
|---|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| II. Issues in Literature Testing | 49 |
|--|----|

| | |
|---|----|
| Dilemmas and Practices in Literature Tests..... | 50 |
|---|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| Issues of Validity and Reliability in Literature Tests | 56 |
|--|----|

III. Literature Testing within the Algerian English Department

| | |
|---|----|
| Examination System in the Algerian Context..... | 58 |
|---|----|

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Literature Test in Practice..... | 60 |
|----------------------------------|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| Analysis of the Exam Questions According to Bloom's Taxonomy | 62 |
|--|----|

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| End Notes | 63 |
|-----------------|----|

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Conclusion to part one | 65 |
|------------------------------|----|

Part Two: The Empirical Investigation

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Introduction | 67 |
|--------------------|----|

Chapter Three: Analysis of the Teaching Strategy and Testing Policy

| | |
|---|----|
| I. Procedures of Analysis and Data Collection | 69 |
|---|----|

Stage One: Data Collection Tools

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Data Collected From the Literature Textbook <i>Bridging the Gap</i> | 70 |
|--|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| 2. Data Collected from Administered Tests..... | 72 |
|--|----|

Stage Two: Procedures of the Analysis

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| 1. Qualitative Method..... | 74 |
|----------------------------|----|

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| 2. The Quantitative Method | 75 |
|----------------------------------|----|

Stage Three: The Process of the Practical Analysis

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. The Analysis of the Literature Textbook, <i>Bridging the Gap</i> , according to Bloom's Taxonomy | 76 |
|---|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Results from the Textbook Analysis..... | 78 |
|--|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| 2. The Analysis of the Literature Exam Questions according to Bloom's Taxonomy | 81 |
|--|----|

| | |
|---|------------|
| 1. Results from the Exam Questions Analysis | 82 |
| Stage Four: Investigating the Correlation between Literature Tasks and Tests | 84 |
| Chapter Four: Discussion of the Results and Recommendations | |
| I. Discussion of the Results | 87 |
| 1. Discussion of the Results from the Textbook Analysis | 87 |
| 2. Discussion of the Results from the Exam Questions Analysis... .. | 99 |
| 3. Discussion of the Overall Results... .. | 105 |
| II. Recommendations | |
| II .1. Principles for the Effective Teaching and Testing of Literature | |
| II.1.1. Teaching Recommendations | 114 |
| a. Reinforcing Students' Autonomy in the Learning Experience | 114 |
| b. More Focus on the Language-Based Approach in Teaching Literature..... | 117 |
| c. From Literary Comprehension to Literary Criticism..... | 118 |
| II.1.2. Testing Recommendations | 120 |
| a. Writing Explicit Questions..... | 121 |
| b. Providing an Explicit Scoring Map..... | 121 |
| c. Employing Alternative Assessment..... | 122 |
| End Notes | 125 |
| Conclusion to Part Two | 126 |
| General Conclusion..... | 127 |
| Bibliography | |
| Appendices | |

List of Figures

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1: Pie Chart Representing the Frequencies and Percentages of the Tasks Distributed according to the Six Levels of the Cognitive Domain of Bloom’s Taxonomy | 78 |
| Figure 2: A Pie Chart Representing the Frequencies and Percentages of the Literature Exam Questions Distributed according to the Six Levels of the Cognitive Domain of Bloom’s Taxonomy..... | 83 |
| Figure 3: The Distribution of the Cognitive Skills across the Literature Tasks and Tests | 86 |

List of Tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Data Collected from the Literature Textbook <i>Bridging the Gap: Language, Culture and Literature</i> | 71 |
| Table 2: Frequencies of the Literature Tasks Distributed According to Six Levels of the Cognitive Domain of Bloom's Taxonomy | 77 |
| Table 3: Frequencies and Percentages of the Exam Questions Distributed according to the Six Levels of the Cognitive Domain of Bloom's Taxonomy | 83 |
| Table 4: A Representation of the Chi-Square Results..... | 85 |

General Introduction

As a very broad term, literature has received countless debatable definitions. In this respect, Gillian Lazar, for instance, defines literature as: “those novels, short stories, plays and poems which are fictional and convey their message by paying a considerable attention to language which is rich and multi-layered.”¹ Literature as a written or performed piece of art plays a significant role in the building up of the person’s linguistic and intellectual skills. Though it is commonly said that nowadays less interest is given to humanities and that literature tends to lose its appealing value, educational programs all over the world are still in support of humanities and literary studies.²

In Algeria, where the students are not native speakers of English, the teaching of English literature has turned out to be problematic and controversial. In order to have an efficient and a full understanding of any literary work, students need to take into account, both the linguistic and cultural dimensions of the literary work. This reality however, does not push educators to eliminate this subject from the educational curriculum. In fact, the implementation of literature in foreign language departments is an essential and rewarding means to open the students’ minds to the external world.

Therefore, educators and academic researchers tend to widen their inquiries to find out satisfactory strategies for teaching literature. In this regard, works by Brumfit and Carter (1986), Collie and Slater(1987), Carter and Long(1991) demonstrate an enthusiastic tendency to design educational approaches that facilitate literature teaching in non-native language speaking contexts.

In broader terms, in an “intercultural world”³, literary texts contribute to raising cross-cultural understanding. G. Lazar claims that the teaching of literature is considered as a major key in helping the students master the language, be familiar with the

culture, and decipher the codes of the history and the tradition of the target language speakers. Besides, it encourages the students to share in the construction of meaning and to appreciate and respond to literary works.⁴

These wide-ranging teaching outcomes are meant to be achieved through a literature course. Then, to check whether students grasp these intended competencies, assessment is a fundamental stage in the teaching-learning process. As one facet of assessment, tests are often considered as a rite of passage, and literature like the other subjects is taught and tested as well. In this context, H. Douglass Brown defines tests as: “a method of measuring a person’s knowledge, performance and ability in a given domain.”⁵ However, when the domain is literature; to test the students’ knowledge, performance, and ability is quite troublesome. Grant P. Wiggins claims that in the field of liberal arts and literature as well, to gauge the students’ appreciation of literary works is a cumbersome task. Since literature has much to do with the readers’ feelings and personal experience, to design an accurate and reliable testing strategies seems to be a challenging endeavor.⁶

Moreover, Christopher Brumfit considers literature as one of the areas where “success is not easily defined.”⁷ In this regard, Jane Spiro discussed the major reasons that lie behind this difficulty. When she compares the language skills to the literature skills, Spiro finds that the language skills are clearly defined and known by educators, and therefore, they are easily measured. However, a clear identification of the literary skills seems to be out of hand for teachers and students, and therefore, the measurement of these skills is not easily achieved.⁸

It follows that an accurate test requires an a clear description of the intended skills so that the assessment of these skills practically accord with these goals. To stress the

importance of assessment in educational systems, Amos Paran quotes Rea-Dicken's statement, "teaching involves assessment."⁹ In other words, assessment contributes to the teaching/learning process. We believe that the clear identification of the relation between the two educational aspects, 'assessment' and 'teaching' would reinforce the value of both the literature test and course. Ideally, tests are not just a mere sign of students' failure or success. They perform extra useful mechanism in the teaching/learning process, in the evaluation of the educational program, in the decision-making and in the improvement of the pedagogical activity in general.

As the title of our dissertation suggests, *Bridging the Gap: Language, Culture and Literature, 2011. An Evaluation of Literature Teaching and Testing Tasks*, this research is conducted to explore the area of literature teaching and testing. In this research, moreover, we seek to obtain a mature understanding of the relation between literature teaching and testing in the foreign language context, the major focus is upon testing in some Algerian English Departments.

The aim of this study is to investigate the current state of teaching and testing practices. To find out whether there is consistency between the literature courses and tests, an evaluation of both the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap* and literature test questions is conducted.

Review of Literature

In the area of literature teaching/learning and assessment, there is a little about the relation between the two educational aspects. When it comes to assessment, literature seems to be different from the other educational subjects. Before the establishment of literature as a separate subject, Robert Protherough says that assessment is one of the arguments that deprived literature of being formally implemented as any other subject in the English curriculum.¹⁰ The supporters of literature teaching grappled to establish literature as a significant subject. However, when compared with the literature teaching, the assessment

of literature received less critical consideration. The shift that makes literary studies a recognized area was not associated with the same contemporary enthusiasm to design an assessment framework and this fact magnifies the speculative nature of literature testing.¹¹

Moreover, though the area of literature teaching and assessment has been recently explored by many scholars, not much is achieved at the concrete level. In this respect, Brumfit claims that the assessment of literature is one of the issues that “have been more speculative, exploring problems which teachers cannot escape, but about which there is a little agreement on solutions or even on definitions.”¹² In addition, he notes that “On the testing of literature there is far more practice than principles and a consensus is difficult to obtain.”¹³ In the light of these statements, the field of literature teaching and assessment seems to be elusive. Moreover, an attempt to reach a full understanding or to establish agreed principles on which the literature test can be built is at its beginning, and uncertainty surrounds the whole area.

In his introduction to *Teaching Literature for Examination*, Protherough discusses the major viewpoints that hold skepticism and even a rejection of literature assessment. Protherough refers to this uncertainty in the words of W.W. Robson, who argues that assessment in literature is “more abused than in other subjects.”¹⁴ In almost all cases, assessment policies undervalue the worth of reading literature. Therefore, Protherough emphasizes the difficulty of adopting satisfactory assessment strategies. He claims that before embarking upon an assessment strategy, reasons for teaching and assessing literature should be outlined earlier.¹⁵ Therefore, it seems that literature falls in the perspective that “Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts.”¹⁶ The latter perspective is adopted by Stephanie Pace Marshall while discussing the challenging impact of assessing students’ performance in general.

So far, in the field of literary studies, questions like whether there is a possibility that literature could preserve its luxurious essence as a source of pleasure and to be taught and even assessed in educational settings have often been raised. In an ideal world, Amos Paran thinks that literature is not meant to be assessed, and the answer to the previous question is an open 'No'.¹⁷ This same skeptical attitude is raised in a work titled *Testing the Untestable in Language Education*, and whose editors show 'a critical attitude' towards literature assessment process. Contributors to this work tackle aspects in language assessment and try to offer a new vision in the area of language and literature teaching and assessment. Paran argues that in a language classroom, not only language that should be taught, but other competencies have to join language teaching, and the same can be said about testing. Linguistic competence is no longer separated from the other competencies, and there is a claim for teaching and testing other competencies like students' autonomy, intellectual competency, cultural awareness, in addition to literary competence, which is one of the major components in language learning.¹⁸

In spite of this uncertainty, educators consider the necessity of approaching this field, and a strong willingness to smoothen the way towards an adequate approach to make the literature teaching and assessment less frustrating is also witnessed. Moreover, the issue of testing literature is raised by J. P. Boyle, who offers a sample of testing literature in EFL contexts. The type of questions that J. P. Boyle suggests deals largely with the students' ability to write 'about literature', about the reading comprehension, the speaking, and the listening skills.¹⁹ However, this approach generates Brumfit's doubts about the value of such tests and he asks whether "it make[s] sense to test comprehension without examining the ability of students to construct and describe their own responses also."²⁰ Furthermore, in an attempt to integrate the linguistic, cultural and literary competencies into the teaching of literature, Mavis Hawkey and Laila Galal Rezk try to design tests to

assess these competencies. Their study is an example and a contribution to the efforts to find “a valid means of measuring the skills which represent the student’s competence.”²¹

Always in the area of literature teaching and testing, John Honey studied the effect of the linguistic and the cultural background in the teaching and testing of literature when English is a second or a foreign language. He draws the conclusion that whenever the students’ linguistic level and cultural background are taken into consideration, an opportunity to various ways of interpretation is likely to occur.²² Hui-Wei Lin, in his turn, points out that while teaching works of Shakespeare, the language awareness is sought to be developed as one of the teaching objectives, but there is a shortage in strategies to assess this competency. Lin argues: “The growth of language awareness over the past few decades has not been accompanied by a strong and productive interest in issues of its assessment.”²³ Therefore, in an attempt to tackle the problem of shortage of assessment strategies, he conducted a research about assessing language awareness in the Taiwanese context.

When it comes to the Algerian context, the area of assessment receives less interest and literature testing is barely explored. Unlike the teaching activity that is coming to the forefront and some attempts to improve the literature teaching are done, there is a lack of interest or ‘consciousness’ about the need of a clear-cut assessment plan, and hence, less effort is done to assist literature assessment process. In *A Multidisciplinary Approach to Teaching of Literature*, a collection of articles by Algerian educators describe the state of literature teaching in the English departments, and they elicit questions about the aim of teaching literature in the foreign language departments. F. Benzaoui reveals her experience in teaching English Literature and she comes to end her article by raising the issue of a clear identification of the purpose of teaching Literature in the Algerian English Departments.²⁴ The review of these articles gives the impression of an indecisive mood

and a fluctuant outlook which aggravates the state of literature teaching, and the same if not worse, can be said about its assessment.

Si Abderahmane Arab in his turn also discussed the assessment of literature through investigating the low level of students' performance in the Magister Entrance Examination of the academic year 2003/2004. He claims that:

Out of 100 candidates, only 9 were able to reach the pass mark (10 out of 20); of these, only 7 papers evidenced the capacities and abilities required of a literary essay of the conventional kind; and out of these, 4 only displayed the competencies and skills required of a potential Magister dissertation writer.²⁵

The research conducted by S.A. Arab deals mainly with Magister students who are engaged in the old regime, and it analyzes the linguistic and literary competencies. The result of the study shows a limitation of students' linguistic and literary backgrounds. Furthermore, the same writer, in another paper, demonstrates the students' unsatisfactory performance in literature and relates these dire consequences to the teaching methods. He justifies this unsatisfactory state claiming that: "The reason is that they simply have not been trained to read and respond to stylistically-marked texts, nor have they been taught how to write a literary composition or a text commentary."²⁶ In line with S.A. Arab's discussion, there is a reference to a new perspective on the teaching of literature with reforms of the LMD system. The latter plan makes the implementation of literature start from the first year at university. However, what the new strategy brings to the students' performance has not yet been approached.

The reference to this brief account of literature teaching and assessment in the EFL context shows some respectful attempts to make the activity of teaching and testing literature easier. However, there is no reference to the practice of literature test in our English departments and no clues to how it works and how we can link it to the teaching activity. In other words, the pedagogical observation in the local sphere is limited to the

teaching practice while the testing seems to be neglected. This attitude pushes us to look for a reflection on the relation between the teaching and testing of literature.

The Issue

In light of what has been previously reviewed, teaching and measuring the educational objectives in the literature curriculum seems to be a challenging task. In the local level, it seems plausible to state that there are more questions than answers and the issue of teaching and testing literature is rarely discussed by educators. While teaching and assessment are meant to be “twin sides of a single coin”²⁷, signs of separation are apparent. As a matter of fact, much confusion characterizes the relation between teaching and testing literature. Therefore, we assume that there is an urgent need for rethinking of the relationship between teaching and testing of literature, which is, somehow a unique and complex subject especially in an EFL/ESL context.

In the educational area, bridging the gap is an outstanding issue, and being aware of the reasons behind this gap would help in providing a strategy to build up a bridging channel. Questions such as to what extent our students grasp the intended goals, and to see whether the literature course succeeds in bringing out those goals, depend largely on the teaching approach and much more on the defined goals. In other words, if we know where our students are going, it would become easier to see whether they arrived or not. Consequently, we cannot have accurate tests that assess our students’ achievement, if we do not set a clear teaching map. In this sense, mapping the achievements area would facilitate the teaching/learning process as well as the assessment tactic. Moreover, an accurate test should not tell us about the students only, but also, about our teaching pitfalls and it should provide us with information to make the teaching/learning process more adaptable.

In an attempt to clarify the ambiguity in the teaching and testing area, we ask the following questions:

- What are the educational outcomes that the Algerian Literature Curriculum seeks to develop both through teaching courses and through piloting tests and exams?
- To what extent is the literature test adequate to detect the students' attainment of these objectives? In other words, is our literature test 'genuine'? Does it give an insight into the students' cognitive level, which is in a way or another, a mirror of our teaching?
- Where is the problem? Why is the testing activity not reliable? Is it the problem of the testing activity itself? Or the teaching and the learning activity as a whole?
- How can we set up a harmonious link between the testing of literature and the literature teaching objectives? And then, if we succeed to do so, how far does this link contribute to the teaching- learning process?

A successful treatment of this issue would reduce the ambiguity that characterizes the subject by offering a vision to facilitate the practice of Literature assessment in the Algerian English Departments.

The Hypotheses

We assume that when the subject is literature, there is a split between the two aspects of our educational system: the teaching and the assessment. Therefore, it seems that testing is less effective in enhancing the teaching/learning processes. To investigate the truthfulness of this presumed view, we put forward two main hypotheses, and on which our research proceeds:

1. First, one might argue that the teaching objectives that are supposed to be achieved are not tested, and this has to do with several reasons. First, we assume that the teaching objectives are elusively defined, and an adequate identification of the literature teaching goals is not offered. On the one hand, students are not informed about the intended goals, and thus, they are not used to give a satisfactory performance of those objectives. Teachers, on the other hand, are neither informed about the teaching objectives nor trained to design instructional items to test these objectives. Therefore, we assume that the assessment of English literature in our English Departments is done in a random way.

2. The second hypothesis is related to what comes after tests. The separation between teaching and assessment is assumed to be clear when reporting the tests results, that is, the evaluation of the educational program does not rely on the tests results. In their discussion of the cyclical dimension of assessment and its contribution to enhance the teaching/learning activity William A. Mehrens and Irvin J. Lehmann argue that:

[...] the specification and measurement of objectives are cyclical. One needs to set tentative objectives, employ a strategy to reach those objectives, measure the degree of attainment, and then reevaluate both objectives and strategy²⁸

We hypothesize that in our context, tests are somehow ‘sterile’ in the sense that they serve to be a sign of students’ failure or success, and they never contribute to providing information about the teaching/learning process, nor to improve or adjust what is inadequate. Assessment should not be at the end of the cycle in any educational program and, indeed, the lack of connective bonds remarkably widens the gap between assessment and teaching.

Methods and Materials

The teaching and testing practices are meant to be explored and examined. In so doing, we have borrowed the theoretical procedures from the taxonomy of the educational objectives presented by Benjamin Bloom. *The Taxonomy of the Educational Objectives*

offers insights into the pedagogical practices in general, and it helps in the evaluation of the performance of literature curriculum as well. In the process of testing the research hypothesis, an empirical investigation is required. In this respect, a checklist technique is one of the rewarding methods of research in the field of education, and it is adopted in the present investigation. The checklist procedures are also derived from Bloom's Taxonomy, this latter helps to explore the teaching plan and its alliance to the testing policy. That is, the empirical investigation is twofold: first an exploration of the teaching circumstances that is meant to be achieved through an in-depth analysis of the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap* (S.A Arab et al., 2011); second, an analysis of the testing practice through an evaluation of the instructional items in literature exams. It is worthy to note that the research studies only three cases of three English Departments and it goes through the following steps:

Textbook Analysis

At the highest level, textbooks are considered as a source of information about the teaching perspective. Therefore, in this study we take *A Companion to Bridging the Gap* (S.A Arab et al., 2011)-a teacher's manual introduced by a group of Algerian educators to teach literature for first-year university students- as a resource that offers valuable pieces of information about the teaching objectives and teaching practices in the English departments. This textbook is accompanied by a supplementary manual which is meant to be used by students. *Bridging the Gap Language, Culture and Literature* (S.A Arab et al., 2011) is designed for the same purpose and whose analysis would further contribute to the efforts of providing useful knowledge about the 'desired' circumstances of literature teaching in our English departments.

Before any attempt to see whether the objectives are assessed, we should know first what these objectives are, and whether they are taken into consideration while the lesson takes place. Relying on Bloom's Taxonomy, the classification of the teaching objectives

in the literature course is investigated and the categorization of the literature teaching tasks is achieved.

Literature Exam Questions' Analysis

As this research investigates the extent to which the teaching is related to the testing, and after an analysis of the teaching objectives, an identification of the testing objectives is sought. Bloom's Taxonomy is a profitable strategy that helps in the identification of the teaching goals and offers criteria to assess those goals too. Literature exam questions from the three English Departments (Tizi-Ouzou, Algiers, and Boumerdes) are taken into account, and an empirical analysis of these questions gives insight into how literature is tested in Algerian departments. Bloom's Taxonomy is also adopted in the analysis of the exam questions, and another checklist is designed. This latter describes the testing methods and depicts whether there is a link between the educational goals and the assessment policy.

The Research Structure

This research will be divided into two major parts. The first part provides a theoretical framework in the area of literature teaching and assessment and it is divided into two chapters. Chapter one sheds light on the teaching of literature in the foreign language context, and the emphasis is on the current practices in Algerian English Departments. A description of the literature curriculum, the pedagogical ideology, and the teaching strategies are the main points of this chapter. The second chapter will explore literature assessment issues. It probes the peculiarity of literature tests, the dilemmas that surround the examination system and the existing practices of literature testing in our English Departments.

The second part is mainly empirical. It investigates the state of literature teaching and assessment. Thus, this part is divided into two chapters. The third chapter handles the practical analysis of the literature textbook, and it identifies and classifies the educational objectives that are meant to be achieved via the literature curriculum. Then, the analysis and classification of the test questions are planned according to Bloom's Taxonomy. The process of the analysis is built upon a checklist whose results are meant to be presented and interpreted in the fourth chapter. Moreover, the fourth chapter introduces some pedagogical recommendations and a practical suggestion of a literature course and test.

Significance of the Study

Hopefully, the study would provide an understanding of the current practices and offer a prospect for a possible mediation between the teaching and the assessment through an association between the tasks' objectives and the exam questions. Within the local context, the assessment zone is characterized by a general disappointment represented by teachers' dissatisfaction about the students' low level on the one hand, and by the students' complaints about the difficulties they face in the process of learning and the assessment of literature on the other hand. The present research tackles the two pedagogical aspects: the teaching and the testing of literature. It is an attempt to make the educational activity more rewarding by identifying the nature of the relation between them.

As it is hypothesized, the source of evil lies on the mismatch between teaching and testing. This study inquires the circumstances in which literature is taught and assessed. It would also provide evidence to the feasibility of literature teaching and guidance of how literature should be assessed. By so doing, this research and other similar studies would contribute to develop an adequate assessment strategy that improves the teaching/learning process.

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Part One:
Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The first part of this research is a theoretical exploration that describes the educational practices in the area of literature teaching and testing and it is divided into two chapters.

The first chapter deals with literature teaching in EFL context and it focuses on the teaching of literature in the Algerian English departments. Throughout this chapter, we explore the relation between the teaching of literature and language, in addition to the outlined objectives of the literature course. In this process, we examine the educational objectives that are introduced in the literary curriculum and we compare them to the cognitive skills introduced by Bloom *et al.* Moreover, the discussion is contextualized within three Algerian English departments; therefore, we take the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap* as a reference to the teaching habits. The chapter offers a detailed description of the textbook and the outlined educational objectives.

The second chapter reviews literature assessment in terms of both principles and practices. Through this chapter, the stress lies on the peculiarity and the complexity of literature testing, especially for non-native speakers. In addition, the focus is on the structure and content of literature tests.

While this research investigates the relation between literature teaching and testing in the Algerian English departments, the first part is a platform for a better understanding of the teaching objectives and their relation to the testing.

Chapter One:
Literature Teaching in EFL
Context

Introduction

Like any other curricular subject, Literature is taught and assessed through classroom activities, homework assignments, and formal tests. In fact, literature assessment requires a clear idea about the teaching objectives. In this regard, Jane Spiro says: “The ideal scenario is that the teaching methods and the testing methods match.”¹ Therefore, to make a test a fair and reliable procedure in the assessment activity, it should have a strong connection with what has been taught. In other words, what is tested is derived from what is taught during the educational course. Besides, what matters most is the clear idea about the teaching objectives, or what Spiro refers to as the “teaching ideology.”² As we define the ideology, it becomes much easier to test the students’ attainment, and the whole activity of both teaching and testing becomes reliable and trustworthy.³ Assessment should not be separated from the teaching sphere and according to Grant P. Wiggins, assessment has even to contribute to educational progression. In line with this argument, Wiggins believes that assessment improves the teaching and learning processes, otherwise, if it fails to achieve this desirable result, it would be needless and sterile.⁴ Moreover, to reach this target point Wiggins also asserts that “we must determine the aims of education before we can determine what we should assess and what kind of evidence we should seek.”⁵ In fact, this assumption received acclaim among educators and a wide range of views tend to believe in its accuracy, but what we need to consider is whether this assumption exists and even practiced in the real world of education.

Setting up a convenient model of the pedagogical ideologies and objectives in the educational environment is so demanding and with a challenging impact. Moreover, an implementation of these educational doctrines may not be that an easy endeavor to achieve. In order to clarify the relation between the teaching objectives and the teaching practices, this chapter provides a theoretical investigation of the teaching activities, the educational

objectives, the target competencies, the skills and abilities that are meant to be achieved in the literature course within the EFL context.

The chapter starts with a description of the literature curriculum in the EFL context and then, we contextualize the description to the local context. Moreover, as it is argued, the clarification of the educational goals is a prerequisite for an appropriate and constant teaching and testing practice, therefore, the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap: Language, Culture and Literature*⁶ is analyzed. In order to check up whether the objectives

are clearly defined and how they are classified in the literature textbook, we adopt Bloom's Taxonomy as a theoretical background. As a starting point, this chapter sets up a thorough description of the current teaching practices that helps in getting a clear image of literature teaching circumstances, in addition to a description of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives that provides a theoretical basis for the empirical investigation.

I. Teaching Literature in EFL Context

Setting the Relation between Literature and Language

There is a common view that, nowadays, the teaching of literature is widely experienced by language teachers. Almost in all language departments, where native or even foreign languages are taught, literature plays a significant role in the learning process as it provides learners with an authentic source of language. Long ago, from the years of Grammar Translation Method in language teaching, the teaching of literature went hand in hand with the teaching of language, especially in foreign language context. The arguments for teaching literature are that literary studies make students develop their critical thinking, encourage them to reflect and speculate, and help them understand both the norms and the deviations of different language uses⁷. In this respect, it is relevant to note Nassera Senhadji's argument in her paper, where she refers to a comparative study conducted by

Lao and Krashen at the University of Hong Kong. This study confirms that unlike the students who read non-literary texts, the ones who read literary texts have a better improvement of their vocabulary and reading skills.⁸

As far as the relationship between literature and language, a distinction between ‘a language class’ and a literature class is necessary. According to H.G Widdowson, the concern of a language class is not the interpretation of the meaning, but the forms and structures in which the message is conveyed to the reader⁹. In this regard, the more the students travel through different styles and structures, the more they learn about the language system. In fact, literature helps students enhance their linguistic competence in the sense that it offers an opportunity to perceive language in all its complexities, particularly the ‘norms’ and the ‘deviation’ that are not likely to be seen in other contexts. Hence, literature contributes to the expansion of the students’ language awareness as it exemplifies and portrays the language system. H.G Widdowson reveals that a literary text is a manifestation of language in use.¹⁰

However, in the literature class, the focus is on the ‘study’ of literature, where literary works are deeply examined. This approach requires the students to examine and tackle the deviation of literary texts in order to understand what is behind the structures, or what H. G Widdowson refers to as the “single codes.”¹¹ The stress is on the message itself and not on the ‘single codes’ through which the message is delivered. Nevertheless, the understanding of the structures is a prerequisite as long as the full understanding of the hidden message is achieved via the ability to decipher the single codes.¹⁰ In other words, a person can never grasp and appreciate a literary piece as fully and as profoundly unless he/she becomes aware of the language system. Similarly, one cannot get the message of a painting unless he/she acquires a minimum knowledge of the rules or the standards that govern the world of art. For instance, a person cannot interpret the colors, the shadows, and

the shapes if he/she is 'blind', in the sense that he/she does not know about their meanings. Moreover, even if he/she succeeds to appreciate the painting in front of him/her, it remains a superficial and empty interpretation. In line with this, literature approximately has the same features. To understand what is behind a literary text, the way that should be driven first is the outer surface, and language is the outer surface of a literary text. Language, therefore, is certainly the key to a full understanding and a profound interpretation of any literary work.

Although the aim of the language class and literature class is different, this does not mean that they are separate subjects. The teaching of literature overlaps the language teaching and vice versa. For this reason, there is no evidence for separate Departments of Language, and others of Literature, especially in foreign or second language contexts. Therefore, what seems to be of a prime concern is to highlight and specify the outlined objectives in an integrated curriculum, where literature and language are sought to be taught and tested.

The brief reference to the interrelation between literature and language provided above contributes to the understanding of literary studies as an academic field, where the teaching of literature and language is integrated. G. Lazar reveals that students enrolled in literary studies are supposed to develop both their literary competence and their linguistic competence, in addition to their cultural awareness. Hence, literature teaching does not confine to the area of language, but it encourages the students to gain a successful communicative aptitude. Literature provides a profound understanding of the language system and the language use, moreover, it tells a lot about the social and cultural tradition of the language being taught.¹² Indeed, several reasons stand for the teaching of literature, and a variety of objectives are intended to be achieved. In a few words, it is of value to outline the goals of literature teaching in order to build an accurate teaching

strategy. This pedagogical outline, also paves the way to assess this subject more straightforwardly and in a less frustrating way.

Literature Curriculum in the Algerian English Department

As far as the Algerian University is concerned, students enrolled in the foreign language studies embark upon the study of various disciplines such as Linguistics, Civilization, and Literature. In fact, literature is an indispensable component of the English language curriculum. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research launched a pedagogical reform in which the old program was replaced by the LMD program. This pedagogical reform establishes the teaching of English Literature at the first year of the *Licence* degree. Contrary to the old regime, students under the LMD program undertake literary studies initially by an introduction to this discipline at the first year at university. In terms of the research scope, before going into a detailed description of the literature curriculum in the *Licence* degree, it is important to reveal the students' educational background.

In the Algerian context, university students coming from the secondary school are supposed to study English as a foreign language for seven years: Four years at the middle school (students aged between 12 and 15), in addition to three years in the secondary school (students aged between 16 and 19). During these educational years, students encounter different linguistic forms and they learn about the language system, they develop their grammar and vocabulary, in addition to the communicative skills (listening, speaking, writing and reading). However, in this phase students are rarely exposed to literary works in the English language. A glance at the English language textbook of the secondary school shows that secondary school pupils are indirectly introduced to some literary works that come in the reading comprehension. As an illustration, extract from Achebe's *Things Fall*

Apart is introduced in the second year¹³ and it is followed by comprehension practice. In addition, the secondary school English textbooks contain a section that is devoted to extra reading. This section introduces some literary texts from different genres that motivate learners to read outside the classroom context, it is harnessed for developing the reading for pleasure and it also contributes to the comprehension skill.

Though these introduced texts demonstrate a moderate attempt to familiarize the foreign language students with the English literary canon, they are devoted mainly to reading comprehension purposes, where only the improvement of language skills is the target point. In other words, students come to university with a deficient background in the field of literary studies and the rules that govern this area.

Therefore, at the level of university, students witness a formal transition in their learning experience, and the teaching of literature as an independent subject is established from the right beginning of the university course. Literature as a new subject aims at developing the students' communicative competence, mainly the linguistic, literary and cultural competencies. In fact, in the EFL context, the educational objectives expand at the university to cover different aspects. In relation to the objectives of literature course, Jane Spiro provides a detailed explanation of the target competencies that mold the students of literature. Spiro offers a paradigm of 'Six Role Models' for the literary curriculum. A literary scholar, an appreciative reader, language user, a poet, a humanist and a literary critic are the main types of the literature teaching objectives.¹⁴ A Curriculum may cover all these objectives or few of them and students cope with these objectives in order to develop their communicative skills.

Accordingly, Literature is considered as a multi-dimensional subject where not only one or two objectives are meant to be achieved. In this sense, literature teaching does not come to a firm conclusion about the intended goals. As regards the current pedagogical

practices in non-native language context, the rationale for literature teaching differs from one context to another depending on the priorities or more precisely, on the educational approach. In the foreign language context, the teaching of literature is often related to language teaching, and the motive for the use of literature whether in the language classroom or even as a separate subject is, indeed, to develop the communicative competence.

Students go through different stages, and they have to tackle the syllabus that covers a wide range of literary genres, the historical shift through the different literary eras and movements. In the Algerian context, the *licence* degree requires three years. In the first two years, students share the same syllabus; they are exposed to literary concepts or to what is known as the metalanguage of the subject matter, in addition to an initiation to the British and American literary canon. Then, in the third year, students used to choose between two different options: one option is related to language teaching and linguistics, whereas the other is concerned with literary studies. The latter option brings students to a profound study of literature that proceeds to the master degree. Taking into account the three English Departments of Tizi-Ouzou, Algiers, and Boumerdes, the teaching of literature covers different dimensions throughout the three academic years:

First Year: Right from the beginning, Literature teachers introduce the students to Literature as a fundamental discipline in liberal art. The focus is on the qualities of this discipline such as; the distinction between literary language and non-literary language, an exposure to different literary genres, an introduction to the essential terminology used in the field. Although students handle literary works in a moderate way in which the focus is on the text, they establish a basis for later interaction with different genres in the English Literature. As far as the courses' content is concerned, there is no fixed syllabus and teachers are flexible. Commonly, in the first year, they start with an exploration of the

Rise of Novel, the Founding Fathers, the Elizabethan Era is covered by works by Shakespeare and so forth.

Second Year: At this stage, students explore the area of Literature through studying some literary works, by British, American and African writers. The main objective is developing the students' cognitive skills. Critical reading of a variety of literary passages trains the students to analyze, synthesize, and give adequate commentary of their understanding of a literary piece.

Third year: Students of the third year, who opt for literature stream, proceed with British and American literature in addition to new modules that underpin the literary studies. Comparative Literature, Literary theory are the main modules that support the process in the field. In fact, the implementation of these additional modules provides students with the means to build a profound understanding and interpretation of literature written in the English language.

Moreover, students proceed from *License* degree to the Master degree and they take specialized classes to expand their literary competence. In fact, the description of the curriculum offers an insight into the actual practices, yet what we need is a clear-cut identification of the aims and the objectives. It is true that the students' exposure to various literary genres widens their knowledge about the literary canon in the English language, but the latter is not the ultimate goal. Quoting Einstein's well-known assumption, "Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think", this educational thrust is the basis of our national curriculum. In this sense, literature is harnessed for educational purposes, and the literature syllabus aims at developing the individuals' cognitive and affective progression. It also trains the students to manifest these skills in their daily life. Therefore, in the field of education, educationalists tend to

introduce pedagogical objectives in a well-structured way from the early stages to the advanced ones. The pedagogical objectives shape the map for the syllabus, the teaching material and the methods of teaching.

It is commonly argued that the educational curriculum of any subject entails a precise description of the educational objectives, and the statement of the educational goals is the thrust of educators and the people who are engaged in the teaching and the learning experiences. Therefore, a considerable attention is given to the educational objectives and many discussions have been maintained to build a reliable strategy for a better statement of the educational objectives.

II. The Statement of the Literature Teaching Objectives: The Hard Task

The Need for Stating the Teaching/Learning Goals

The educational system as any other social institution aims at achieving a set of intended outcomes on both short and long terms. That is to say, in the political, economic and educational life of any society, a set of defined and precise objectives are supposed to be accomplished via certain strategies and methodologies, and thus, the definition of the target goals would surely facilitate the way to achieve them. As one clearly knows about the direction he/she seeks to achieve, the route becomes easier and even the opportunity to arrive is often guaranteed. Typically, the same situation can be applied to the educational system. In fact, the statement of the educational objectives gives an insight into the curriculum content, the methodology that should be adopted to teach the content, and more importantly, the elaboration of measuring success or failure that becomes less frustrating.¹⁵ When the educational objectives are clearly spelled out, it becomes easier to see whether the students succeed to achieve them or not. The role of an explicit description of the

teaching objectives is discussed by Willam Mehrens and Irvin J. Lehmann, who claim that:

Teaching consists of five steps: (a) defining goals or instructional objectives, or outcomes, (b) choosing content, (c) selecting the appropriate instructional strategy(ies), (d) teaching, and (e) measuring the results.¹⁶

According to the above quote, the teaching cycle starts with an identification of the objectives. The latter is indeed a catalyst procedure in the educational system. Everything in the teaching/learning framework is related to the teaching goals. The teaching goals are the pillars on which the teaching content is determined and the teaching strategy is designed. More than that, the measurement process is also built upon those educational objectives. When it comes to testing, Mehrens and Lehmann state that the identification of 'goals', instructional objectives or outcomes' is of utmost importance and they argue that:

When and if objectives are either poorly defined, or not defined, we won't know what we should be measuring, and unless we can measure, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to tell whether or not, and to what degree, our objectives have been realized by the students."¹⁷

Anthony J. Liddicoat *et al.*, share the same view and stress the importance of what they call the "Conceptualization"¹⁸ of what is meant to be assessed. They consider that the step of conceptualizing the educational objectives comes at the preliminary level in the cycle of assessment because it would facilitate "the eliciting"¹⁹ or the designing of the instructional procedure. Anthony *et al.* investigate the possibility of assessing the intercultural competence, and they have drawn the conclusion that eliciting questions or designing instructional items before testing this competence have much to do with the identification or the conceptualization of both this literary competence and the purpose of its teaching and its assessment. For this reason, they put the 'conceptualization' of these aspects as a starting point of assessment cycle.²⁰

As for literature, Protherough says that: “The current failure of the nerve of those engaged in the literary studies grew from a pervasive uncertainty about what those studies actually *are*, and what they are *for*”²¹ Purves Alan shares the same view and he emphasizes the necessary endeavor to defining the literature teaching outcomes, arguing that when it comes to literature testing, the teaching philosophy is crucial. In other words, what to teach highly determines how and what to test.²² In an attempt to build up a clear-cut description of the literature syllabus, Peter Abbey claims that the test is based “[...]on an assumed general competence of the candidates, reflected by the syllabus that they have covered.”²³ Thus, as a fundamental point of departure, the literature curriculum is supposed to set the teaching competencies that are meant to be taught and assessed. The students' future performance is determined by what is designed as content and as a target competence.

Lazar in her turn stresses the importance of an explicit definition of what is intended to be achieved. When talking about the literary competence, she argues that:

“While it is extremely difficult to itemize all the skills that go towards making up ‘literary competence’, it is important for teachers to identify at least some of the most critical skills that make up the literary competence.”²⁴

The quote above, shows that literary competence is a vast area that requires a decision about which angle is intended to be taught and tested. Accordingly, it comes into sight that when there is no concrete and thoughtful guidance of teaching policy, the assessment policy also becomes an improvised and a tedious mystery for teachers and students. This consideration confirms that the testing pedagogy bears its foundation in the teaching pedagogy. The latter is supposed to be clearly elucidated.

Regarding goals of educational programs and strategies to assess those goals, some educators recognize the value of precise educational objectives and its contribution to design more efficient assessment strategies. Therefore, they set up an educational code for

teaching and assessment in terms of a clearer outline of the educational objectives that imply an alignment between the teaching and the testing of any subject matter. As a matter of fact, what is meant by the educational objectives, the role of the objectives in setting a harmonious link between the teaching and testing practices is currently the area of interest in the pedagogical setting.

Bloom's Taxonomy of the Educational Objectives

In the world of education, in general, to bring a theoretical assumption and setting a pedagogical objective into real practice is a hard task that requires a full understanding of the target objectives. Before going deeper into the classification of the educational objectives, let us consider the literal definition of the term 'educational objectives'.

Mehrens and Lehmann say: "The kinds of changes we wish to obtain in pupils are commonly referred to as *objectives*, or goals."²⁵ In line with this, Benjamin S. Bloom *et al.* consider the objectives as "the formulation of the ways in which students are expected to be changed by the educative process."²⁶ In this context, the term educational objectives stands for the predictable goals, the achievements or the 'intended behaviors' that should be different from the 'actual behaviors.'²⁷ That is, after exposing students to a given area of study, the endeavor is to gain a newly developed behavior resulted from an exposure to knowledge or what is referred to as the "educational experience." To find out whether the intended goal is achieved and whether the educational experience is valid, the "instructional procedures" make up what is generally recognized as tests. It follows that the 'educational objectives' are accomplished through the 'educational experience', then tested via 'instructional procedures.'²⁸

The definition of objectives or the emphasis upon the role of targets in the educational process so important, yet the classification of those objectives a preliminary

step. The classification is very rewarding and it facilitates the whole process of teaching and assessment.

In an attempt to establish a comprehensive code of educational objectives, a revolutionary study conducted by Benjamin S. Bloom and other contributors was first published under the title, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals* in 1956.²⁹ Whenever talking about the educational objectives, planning a curriculum or designing test items, this handbook comes to the scene as a helpful guide to draw a link between the teaching and testing of educational objectives. David R. Krathwohl points out that the use of the taxonomy is “to classify curricular objectives and test items in order to show the breadth, or lack of breadth, of the objectives and items across the spectrum of categories.”³⁰ The taxonomy bridges the gap between the teaching experience and the evaluation of this experience. According to Bloom’s taxonomy, the educational objectives fall into three domains: the cognitive domain, the affective domain, and then the psychomotor domain. First, the cognitive domain “includes those objectives which deal with the recall or recognition of knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills.”³¹ Second, the affective domain has much to do with the students’ “[...] changes in interest, attitudes, and values, and the development of appreciations and adequate adjustment”³², and finally the psychomotor domain, which is also referred to as “the manipulative or motor-skill area.”³³ The latter is largely connected to physical education.

As far as literature is concerned, both the cognitive and affective aspects are related to literature. Protherough points out that what makes literature a unique subject and different from other subjects is that “In literary studies, the cognitive and the affective are inseparably bound up together; the reader’s response to the text is an essential element to what is being studied.”³⁴ Neil Gilroy Scott also claims that both the cognitive and the

affective aspects are essential while reading a literary text.³⁵ Literature is an artifact, and the exposure to literary texts in the educational setting, helps students expand their linguistic competence, increase their knowledge about literary works, and know more about the literary movements. Moreover, literature enriches the personal and affective growth. Students are better engaged in sharing their experiences with what they have encountered in literary works and they are emotionally involved in classroom discussions.³⁶

Nevertheless, it is important to note that, when it comes to the educational environment teaching literature for personal growth is dilemmatic, especially where assessment is a compulsory stage. The task of developing and assessing this affective aptitude is somehow challenging. In fact, it is generally assumed that the affective aspects are often not taught or learned, but they are rather a matter of naturally acquired behaviors.³⁷ Therefore, in terms of the present research scope, only the area of cognitive process is meant to be explored. First, we attempt to explore the cognitive domain and its educational levels, in general. Then, an implication of the taxonomy on literature teaching would be accomplished through an analysis of the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap*.

The Cognitive Skills in Education

What makes the human being different from other species is 'the mind'. Unlike animals that rely exclusively on the instinct, the human being has the ability to recall, recognize, analyze and evaluate the concrete and abstract phenomenon he encounters in the world. This human potential increases the one's readiness to learn and assimilate new information, and thus education assures this process. The cognitive domain is then a combination of knowledge and skills as it is suggested in Bloom's taxonomy: the cognitive domain "includes those objectives which deal with the recall or recognition of knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills"³⁸ and they are arranged hierarchically in six levels:

Knowledge

At a simple level, knowledge is the data or the information that makes up the foundation of the other abilities and skills. It is what a student records and uses as a background in the process of dealing with the different situations. In this sense, knowledge is the basis of the other educational objectives that are more complex, and it contributes to the expansion of the intellectual faculty. This introductory level is divided into other sub-levels like knowledge about the terminology, the facts, the methods, the strategies, conventions, theories, principles and generalities in a given subject matter. Hence, all these categories that fall into the pool of knowledge promote the understanding and help maintain the other skills and abilities. That is, knowledge is the material and the means by which students tackle the problems that encounter them.³⁹

However, in most educational settings, “what is needed is some evidence that the students can do something with their knowledge, that is, that they can apply the information to new situation and problems.”⁴⁰ In fact, the educational system does not confine to the knowledge level, which is not an ultimate objective. Students are members of society, and they are supposed to act and react to different situations and in different contexts. ‘Critical thinking’, ‘problem solving’ and ‘reflective thinking’ are all alternatives to the notion ‘Skills and Abilities’⁴¹ introduced in Bloom’s taxonomy, and they stand for the concrete application of knowledge. Skills and abilities shape the practical process of the cognitive domain. Therefore, the cognitive domains also call for other objectives that are set here:

Comprehension

It is one of the intended skills, and it serves to make the students communicate with the knowledge they have gained through the translation or the interpretation of the knowledge they have received, or through the extrapolation of what is coming next after being

exposed to knowledge. In fact, comprehension includes some sub-skills such as translation, interpretation, and extrapolation. These skills are all necessary and help the students communicate and make sense of their knowledge.⁴²

Application

After comprehension, application of the knowledge is likely to occur. In this sense, Bloom *et al.*, argue that: “If a student really apprehends something, he could apply it.”⁴³ This fact shows the extent to which the educational objectives are interrelated. Without comprehension, no application is likely to be achieved. Therefore, the adequate learning process promotes the students to apply the knowledge in new situations within the educational framework.

Analysis

The analysis is the ability to see the subject from different angles and to divide it into separate sequences in order to make a clearer image of the issue. This level is highly sought in the field of humanities, and it is required in the cognitive development. The skill of analysis calls for the breaking down of bits of information in a given subject to discover the interrelatedness and to make up a clearer image.⁴⁴

Synthesis

Conversely to the analysis level, the synthesis is a bottom down process, where the task is to gather smallest units to make an image that was not clear before. Synthesis is a cognitive skill that is based on a careful selection of the bits of information, and it aims to create a new vision. At this level, the focus is on production. It is creative yet restricted to the knowledge given in a particular context.⁴⁵

Evaluation

As its name denotes, it is the evaluation or the judgment of an idea, this judgment based on evidence that can be internal within the subject matter or external but still related to the subject.⁴⁶ Indeed, all the previous cognitive aspects are manifested in this top level.

The above six cognitive levels illustrate a paradigm of classification of the educational objectives. This original taxonomy is considered as a first attempt for the categorization of the educational objectives. Bloom and his companions refer to the need for a profound study and an ongoing research in the field for improvement. The dynamic progression by educationalists kept revising the original taxonomy and lately by the beginning of the 21st century, by David Krathwohl, -a student of Bloom and a member in the committee that initially established the taxonomy- introduced the new taxonomy under the title of *Bloom's Revised Taxonomy*.⁴⁷

The revised taxonomy brings some modifications in terms of the classification map and the levels of the cognitive process. In addition to the different levels of the cognitive domain, the new taxonomy opens a new dimension that classifies the nature of the knowledge. As far as the cognitive process is concerned, the revised taxonomy promotes using verbs to name the different cognitive levels instead of nouns. As an illustration, analyzing replaces the word analysis though the concept still holds the same meaning. However, some other levels are given new appropriate names such as 'knowledge' that becomes 'Remember', yet it still refers to the students' ability to recall previous knowledge. 'Comprehension' is replaced by 'Understanding', whereas 'Applying' retains its original names. There is an interchange between two cognitive levels namely, synthesis and evaluation. 'Synthesis' is given the name and the meaning of 'Evaluating', whereas, evaluation the sixth level of the original taxonomy is named 'Creating' and it replaces

synthesis referring to the ability to combine information to propose some new explanation.⁴⁸

In the planning of educational programs, at least one or two of the cognitive skills are never missing. In both the revised and the original taxonomies, the classification of cognitive skills is hierarchical, from the simple to the complex and the taxonomy shows the interdependence of these objectives. Bloom *et al.*, as well as Krathwohl go further and specify an assessment strategy for each level in the cognitive domain. The taxonomy introduces some 'Action verbs' for each cognitive level. The latter verbs serve as a mechanism that specifies the assessment instruction. Each educational objective within the cognitive zone has a number of instructional items that facilitate the understanding of a given task and the test instruction as well.⁴⁹

So far, what has been discussed above about the educational objectives and the taxonomy of the cognitive domain remains an abstract description. The point in highlighting this educational gain in the present work is to provide a platform for understanding the pedagogical practices within the Algerian university. In other terms, the taxonomy helps making the movement within the literature teaching/testing map more amenable. What is sought to be achieved in literature course or test is, then, a process of a variety of competencies that are classified in terms of taxonomy of cognitive knowledge and skills.

Overall, the taxonomy of the cognitive process in the educational world sets a sight for a clearer identification of the pedagogical objectives as well as for the means to assess these objectives. Literature is a broad discipline with multidimensional traits, and the educational objectives in the field of literary studies are twofold: on one hand, intellectual development, and on the other hand, the emotional growth. Questions like what is the knowledge?, what are the skills, and what kind of response or affective growth that are

sought to be achieved in the literature curriculum are often raised. Despite the fact that a meticulous definition of the educational objectives is likely to be difficult, especially in teaching literature to the non-native speakers, yet for an adequate testing practice, setting explicit teaching objectives is proved to be extremely necessary.

III. The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives in the Literature Curriculum

In the Algerian context, the recent pedagogical reflection on the educational system results in a general reform from primary school to university. The new adopted pedagogical strategy in the Algerian educational system is set from the early schooling years to be the CBA approach, an abbreviation to the Competency-Based Approach and it continues at university as well by implementing the LMD program. The latter program is based on a constructivist approach in which students are the centre of the teaching and learning experience. This educational theory makes students the cornerstone of the learning experience and higher cognitive skills are meant to be developed. In line with the educational perspective, literature teaching drives the methods and the goals from the Learner-centered Approach, and cognitive skills are ideally the gainful outcomes of literary studies. In this conducted research, the circumstances of literature teaching and learning are the area of exploration.

In order to obtain a deeper insight into the educational objectives within the literature curriculum, the application of Bloom's Taxonomy is adopted. To identify the educational objectives of the literature course, the literature textbook, *A Companion to Bridging the Gap and Bridging the Gap: Culture Language and Literature* are evaluated in the light of Bloom's Taxonomy. In so doing, we investigate the type of educational objectives that the course tasks hold. Moreover, the second part of the investigation moves to the evaluation of the testing objectives that are compared to Bloom's Taxonomy as well. A comparative analysis of the educational objectives of the textbook tasks and literature

test shows the degree of accordance between the teaching outcomes and the testing objectives, a comparison between the teaching and the testing objectives is the second step of the investigation. In other words, the enquiry helps finding out the lack or the existence of balance between the objectives of literature course and test in the real educational practices.

The Analysis of the Literature Textbook According to Boom's Taxonomy

Textbooks are considered as one of the most relevant pedagogical instruments that reflect the teaching tradition. Previous studies acknowledged the value of textbooks in revealing the educational practices and they tackle with textbook evaluation. Yet, to date, little research if none, has been carried out on textbooks in terms of a classification of educational objectives in Algeria. The locally designed Literature textbook is therefore, the source of data and the object of examination.

1. Description of the Literature Textbook

Algerian educators convey the new educational perception of literature teaching in a textbook entitled, *A Companion to Bridging the Gap* a manual for teachers, in addition to its supplementary version for students entitled, *Bridging the Gap: Culture, Language and Literature*. These two documents are designed to make the teaching and the learning of literature more reliable and feasible. The textbook provides a detailed explanation of the teaching strategy and practical illustration of the lesson plans.

S. A Arab the general editor of the literature textbook, *Bridging the Gap* and a *Companion to Bridge the Gap* precedes the publication of the textbook with an article: 'The Missing Link : A Foundation Course in Literature'. In this article, S.A Arab gives an in-depth description of the literature teaching habits, and he attempts to explain the desired educational theory and practice in the English literary studies. At first, S. A. Arab

questions the purpose of teaching literature in the Algerian English department and he claims that:

The aim pursued is not to cram the students with knowledge but essentially to form their intellectual and critical faculties to shape their minds in such a way as to equip them for the task of personal fulfillment and nation building.⁵⁰

In fact, the textbook shows an endeavor to clarify the literature teaching theory and provides a practical strategy to teach literature in the Algerian context and the major focus is on developing the students' intellectual faculty. As far as the parts of the textbook are concerned, the Algerian educators who designed the book, deliver the pedagogical in two main parts, therefore, the literature textbook is divided into two volumes:

Companion to Bridge the Gap

This part of the textbook emphasizes the major objectives of the educational theory and the teaching strategy as well. The textbook opens with the educators' general perspective about literature teaching, and it addresses both literature teachers and students in two different parts. In fact, *A Companion to Bridging the Gap* is mainly for teachers. It provides a description of the lessons' objectives and teaching procedures, and it also makes a link between the two volumes, *A Companion to Bridging the Gap* and *Bridging the Gap*. The general layout of the first volume is offered below:

Course Description

Arab and the other designers bring together the parts of the lessons and the teaching theory. They discuss the main reasons that drive the English department to make the teaching of literature in the first year. Moreover, as any other textbook, *A Companion to Bridging the Gap* sets the practical purposes of the literature course stating that literary texts introduced in the textbook are considered as:

1. A sample of language to be read and understood,
2. An artifact to be related to its cultural and socio-historical context,

3. Communicative rhetorical strategies,
4. An illustration of a particular genre.

In addition, literary texts are considered as a source of reading and understanding the human condition through the authors' vision and representation.⁵¹ In fact, literature aims at enhancing the communicative competence. It increases the students' knowledge about the English literature as well as the skills for critical reading. Language mastery, stylistic awareness, developing knowledge about the authors' literary and personal backgrounds, developing an oral and a written attitude to respond to the literary texts shape the cognitive and affective output that a literature syllabus that the textbook represents. The textbook, moreover, suggests a practical method of teaching hence, it offers to the teachers and students an opportunity to a gradual achievement of these intended goals.

2. Sample Lesson

This section offers outlined samples of lessons that train novice teachers to make a concrete performance of the lessons' objectives. The lesson goes through the different sequence and it helps teacher developing the required teaching background and skills to teach literature. This section suggests extracts from different literary works and well-structured samples of tasks and activities to teach these extracts.

3. Worksheet

This section is arranged according to the supplementary part of the textbook, *Bridging the Gap* and it suggests 17 worksheets that record the answers and some additional points to be developed in the lesson. It provides teachers with hints and practical procedures that assist the teaching course.

4. Glossary

This final section provides a list of literary terms that help students improve their metalanguage. Simplified definitions of technical terms are arranged alphabetically and

they offer an opportunity for the students to be professional in their treatment and their comments about literary works.

2. Bridging the Gap: Language, Culture, and Literature

The layout of this volume of the textbook is related to the teacher manual and it goes gradually, from a simplified explanation to a profound analysis of the literary texts. It leads then to an evaluation and a commentary on the texts. The lessons are planned as follow:

1. Words and Phrases

After reading the literary text, in this section of the lesson, students take a closer sight into the complex words and phrases in the literary text.

2. About the Author

The authors' personal background, literary movement and works help the student obtain an insight into the literary work and the surrounding circumstances of its publication.

3. Skimming and Understanding

This sequence exposes the students to different questions that widen their comprehension of the literary text. A careful reading widens the understanding of the text's main ideas and themes.

4. Exploring the Context

This section makes a link between the literary text and its circumstances and context. In this context, cultural and linguistic boundaries are crossed through a stylistic analysis and a clarification of the ironies, allusions, inter-textual reading and so forth.

5. Scanning the Style Effect

In this sequence, students learn more about the writer's style. They analyze the text to observe the deviation of the literary language and its effect on the general meaning.

6. Getting to Know the Genre

As the textbook covers five literary genres, each lesson provides a model of the literary genre and illustrates the specific techniques and characteristic of each.

7. Further Reading

The last section is an additional reading for students who are eager to know more about the theme, the genre, the literary movement, or the writer. It gives an opportunity to free reading to get the pleasure of literature.

It follows that the two parts of the textbook *A Companion to Bridging the Gap* and *Bridging the Gap* represent a structured scheme that introduces the students to literature in a smooth and a well-structured way. Moreover, the role of textbooks is acknowledged in the pedagogical life. Textbooks provide teachers with illustrative courses and tasks. The latter tasks form a sort of summative assessment, and therefore, there is a connection between textbooks and assessment.

The nature of this relation is the concern of this study. In fact, what is meant to be achieved in this conducted research is not a mere descriptive evaluation of the literature textbook. It is indeed, an exploration and a classification of the outlined teaching goals on the scale of Bloom's Taxonomy. In other terms, the main aim is a content analysis that gives insight into the outlined teaching objectives of the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap*.

Conclusion:

In this chapter, we have introduced the literature teaching in the EFL context and the major focus was the Algerian university. We have also drawn attention to the relation between language teaching and literature. Moreover, in order to understand the current pedagogical practices, we take the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap* as a source in order to investigate the presence and the distribution of the educational objectives that are

introduced in Bloom's Taxonomy. A concrete study is conducted in the empirical section of this research.

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Chapter Two:
Literature Assessment

Introduction

Everyday life is never free of judgments, formal or informal. Individuals interact with each other, they unconsciously evaluate each other and they make judgments. These judgments shape an impression about a person, yet the latter impression may be right or wrong. As a more formal aspect, evaluation is a whole system that enables an individual to pass from one position to another. In fact, in everyday life, people confront different evaluation challenges. To get a job or to obtain a driving license, for instance, people have to excel in tests and by so doing, they prove their abilities and, hence the merits of their actual position.¹

As far as educational systems are concerned, teachers put their students under examination, and day by day, they discover more about the students' attainment and their actual teaching process. Through this way, teachers build a formal impression within the pedagogical environment. They learn about their students' strengths, weaknesses, abilities, and needs, and this gives an insight into the teaching/learning process.² Assessment in the field of education forms a whole segment in the cycle of teaching and learning where students, teachers, and decision makers are involved. Testing is certainly the concern of individuals as well as institutions since it reveals the secrets and unveils the pitfalls of the existing practices. Assessment offers a vision of how to ameliorate and adjust the teaching/learning procedures. However, this desired advantage is not obtained unless the assessment is planned in a genuine and adequate way. Therefore, investigating the characteristics of assessment practices has become the concern of many educators. Today, it takes a large portion in the modern academic research.

Nevertheless, contrary to language assessment that has been the concern of educators, literature assessment witnesses a shortage in research, especially in foreign

language context. The complex nature of literature as an educational subject deprives educators of an explicit identification of the teaching objectives, and thus, the practical assessment of this subject is not yet maturely established. According to Christopher Brumfit, an adequate testing strategy recommends a deep and full identification of the educational objectives. However, it seems that the components of the literary curriculum are complex, and therefore, the assessment is confounding.³

The concern of the present chapter is the representation of the current assessment practices in the educational institutions. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the discussion, one has to address the issue of what is assessment, what to assess, and how to assess. Moreover, in line with the research question, the focus is upon literature testing. The present section gives an account of the assessment and the testing of this specific and highly complex subject.

I. The Utility of Testing in the Curriculum

Though tests are regarded as one of the simplest forms of the assessment and evaluation procedures, they are prevalent, and hence, an undeniable assessment paradigm. All educational institutions require a test or an exam as a formal method through which students may exhibit and execute their knowledge, skills, and attitudes⁴. In this context, Bachman, when comparing tests to other means of measurement, claims that: “[...] the value of tests lies in their capability for eliciting the specific kinds of behavior that the test user can interpret as evidence of the attributes or abilities which are of interest.”⁵

In other words, a test is considered as a set of questions to be answered and graded according to preset criteria. Moreover, the set of criteria aims at assessing specific cognitive or affective skills that have been developed during the course, and illustrated in the textbook. Educators conduct tests that are formally administered and whose results

contribute to the teaching/learning process. In their best state, tests help to gather data about the students' performance as well as the educational systems.⁶ In other terms, the aspiration of students, teachers, and the entire educational institution is to develop sound testing policies that would assist the teaching/learning process. However, educators have doubts about whether the actual testing strategies succeed at achieving this aspiration.

Unsatisfactory outcomes in the pedagogical life drive educators to probe the value of tests. While tests are meant to be a valuable procedure of pedagogical improvement rather than away of reward or punishment, it is commonly assumed that tests are limited with a negative effect on both students and teachers. Ideally, tests record the pedagogical conventions. At the individual level, tests tell about the student's achievements, and how they are doing. At the broader level, they report to the decision makers the current functioning of the educational programs.⁷

So far, a test is considered as a powerful pedagogical device only when it is cautiously designed.⁸ Thus, tests are still the major constituent of assessment and they are widely acknowledged providing that they adhere to the pedagogical principles of assessment. The present study inquires into the current state of testing and more precisely, it investigates the common practices of literature tests and its relative impact on the teaching practices.

II. Issues in Literature Testing

Literature is proved to be a different subject within the educational milieu. Literature curriculum entails the reading of different texts that hold an aesthetic value. Indeed, what makes literature a valuable piece of art is the peculiarity of the writer's style, and the way he /she uses and skilfully manipulates the words. Widdowson when discussing the peculiarity of literary texts, argue that writers utilize literary devices so adroitly that even a deviation from the conventional language contributes to the beauty of the piece of

writing. Moreover, literature constitutes of the whole world of fantasy, imagination, and deviation. This deviation ranges from the structure of the text to the content, and from the linguistic adroitness to the thematic innovation. For this reason, readers approach literary texts with a creative tendency in order to realize the deviations within the language, themes, plot, point of view and so forth. Furthermore, unlike conventional non-literary texts that deal with facts, literary texts evoke the readers' emotional response.⁹ In line with this specific features of literary texts, Amos Paran claims that it is the "aesthetic reading"¹⁰ that brings out the readers' private interest, motivation, and response. These features make the experience of reading literature a sort of a delightful individual experience.

However, apart from the pleasurable reading of literature, the formal reading or as A. Paran refers to "the efferent reading"¹¹ of literary texts within educational institutions may diminish the value of literature. That is, the specific features of literature lead to critical issues in the literature course and test. The linguistic deviation for instance, appears as an obstacle, especially for non-native language students, to whom literature might be a highly complex discourse and this is what makes the process of learning and assimilation less efficient.¹² It is true that higher cognitive skills and affective development are the prominent requests of reading literature, yet these features are barely accomplished in the pedagogical environment. In addition, the fact that literature is occasionally tested in the educational institutions puts teachers in quandary state. Questions such as how and what we should assess in literature test, how to grade the students' attainment are the critical aspects in literature testing framework.

In this respect, Purves argues that knowledge, skills and response to literature are the main objectives that make up the pillars of literary curriculum, and therefore, they are the main concern of literature test. He specifies three targets for a literature course encompassing the educational objectives in the course and test:

One literature curriculum focuses on texts and knowledge of the literary and cultural heritage of a group; a second focuses on the development of skilled readers and critics of literary texts, and a third focuses on the encouragement of personal growth through reading and involvement with the text.¹³

Then, Purves claims that one curriculum may be “a hybrid of the three thrusts.”¹⁴ However, he states that, though such a holistic approach in teaching is amenable, designing test to assess all these thrusts is surely not easily obtainable.¹⁵ In line with the discussion of test content in literary studies, S.A. Arab in his analysis of the students’ performance in the Magister Entrance Examinations points out that the following three educational competencies were predicted: knowledge about the literary work, skills to analyze and deliver the ideas in a convincing way, in addition to attitudes like open-mindedness and readiness to experience the other cultures.¹⁶

In this regard, students who are engaged in literary studies go through the three targets introduced by Purves. Students expand their knowledge about the literary text, its linguistic and the socio-cultural circumstances. They develop their cognitive skills as problem solvers, they learn how to analyze, synthesize and evaluate literary texts as critical readers. They gain a personal growth through a direct interaction between the text’s message and the personal understanding and they develop a creative spirit. Nevertheless, the teaching and the implication of these aspects to literature testing is problematic. The alignment between the educational objectives and the test objectives is the quest of every educational institution, but assumedly this is, in fact, a far-reaching in the real practices.

In line with this probable misalignment, a survey conducted by the ‘Center for the Learning and Teaching of Literature’ in the United States shows that 61% of the items in literature tests aim at testing reading comprehension rather than the predictable objectives of literature teaching such as the students’ ability to analyze or evaluate a literary work.¹⁷ According to the study, test items fail to capture the intended objectives of literature

course. Despite the rationale for the teaching and testing of literature is to develop higher cognitive and affective aspects, it seems that there is a deviation from what is set as an objective to a random and consequently, an ineffective testing policy. Even if the target competencies are taught, there is no proof that students assimilate what is taught, and tests results' fail to give a reliable description of the students' abilities. According to the reviewed studies, literature tests often do not give an accurate profile of both the teaching and the learning processes. Therefore, it is highly desired to probe the source of such deviations in literature tests.

Dilemmas and Practices in Literature Tests

Literature testing in EFL context has been reputed to be controversial. Literature testing is problematic and the difficulty is theoretical and practical. On one hand, the identification of the educational goals is troublesome, and on the other hand, bringing these objectives into a test is practically difficult. Apart from measuring the affective appreciation that has much to do with "the aesthetic reading"¹⁸, to design test items that assess the cognitive progression is cumbersome. Therefore, in most cases, there is a lack of connection between the course task and the test question. Michael Long and John Carter explore the area of literature testing in the EFL context and they say that:

As language-based approaches to literature teaching develop, there are increasing dangers of disjuncture between teaching processes and the kind of product required by the end-of-course examination: a consequent loss of 'face validity' can result, in that the test will not appear a reasonable outcome of classroom activity.¹⁹

In most cases, literature tests seem to lose a fundamental principle of validity because the testing habits barely meet the teaching goals. Teachers who are in charge of teaching and testing literature in EFL settings confront crucial dilemmas when designing questions to test this complex subject. In this context, Paran echoes Wire's and Porter's expressive and

illustrative description when they compare the literature test designer to Odysseus being between the Scylla(a monster of six head and six long necks) and the whirlpool of Charybdis.²⁰ Moreover, Paran gives a full account of the possible challenges that a literature test designer may undergo and he explains some sources of the disjunction between a literature course and test.²¹

According to Paran the source of difficulty lies in the break between the pedagogical goals. While literature teaching has an internal goal, in the sense that it aims at developing the students' intellectual and emotional growth, the testing activity has an external goal as an administrative procedure to check the progress and the attainment of the students. A literature test is a formal device that is used to measure some skills. Therefore, examiners tend to design tests that make the literary attainment measurable and hence the test questions limit the achievements only to what is expected.²²

In fact, the source of this separation is rooted in the different perspectives of approaching literary texts that have already been discussed in the previous section. While "the aesthetic reading"²³ opens the boundaries to free reading and response, the reading within academic framework is more formal and it is determined by the pedagogical viewpoint. In other terms, the teaching and testing of literature abide by some educational principles. Therefore, literature tests seem to be constrained and less effective, since examinees have to perform according to the standard rules. For this reason, the split between the goals of teaching and testing is widened and it reduces the value of testing literature in educational settings.

Moreover, in line with the obstacles that hinder adequate testing policies, the educational environment itself adds to the complexity. In EFL context, the students' shortage of the linguistic, literary and cultural backgrounds deters them from a genuine interaction with literary text. Hence, in most literature classes there is a tendency to an

‘authoritative learning’ and students’ frequently fail to attain an intellectual and affective progression.

So far, the assessment of the intellectual competence is difficult. As a result, teachers tend to lore their students some interpretations from literary critic and they design tests to assess the students’ memorization of these formulated interpretations.²⁴

This fact leads to another dilemma that Paran discusses in his article. To test students’ knowledge about literature or to test their understanding of literature is another thorny issue.²⁵ In a curriculum based on developing higher cognitive skills or emotional growth, questions that probe the knowledge about literary texts seems to be invalid. Students rely on memorization, therefore, these tests do not serve as an adequate procedure to assess the students’ attainment of the predicted cognitive objectives.

In this context, J. Carter and M. Long examine the testing practice of literature around the world, and they evaluated the conventional methods of literature testing in the EFL context. The test type fall within three dimensions, the first type is “paraphrase and context”.²⁶ This type of questions implies the reading of a literary passage in addition to a number of reading comprehension questions. These questions make up the literature test and they are related mainly to the general meaning of the test, the objective along with this type is to assess the students’ grasp of this literary extract. The second type is “describe and discuss”,²⁷ and it does not differ from the previous one since it emphasizes upon the understanding of the literary work in general. J. Carter and M. Long claim that the answer to such kind of questions is based on a “retrieval of the of information from the text”.²⁸ The third type is “evaluate and discuss”,²⁹ where students compare between characters, explain the effect of the setting, the tone, the theme and so forth. In fact, the third type of questions includes a deeper “critical stance”.³⁰ Yet, the three types pose a problem of authenticity. In their evaluation, J. Carter and M. Long suggest that these

traditional testing strategies are not authentic and they lack a genuine interaction between the examined reader and the text.³¹ Therefore, J. Carter and M. Long highlight this fact saying that: “Once again, the student can digest these comments and either quote them or pass them off as their own opinions. In more senses than one, such ‘cribs’ are indispensable.”³²

Students acquired the literary work during the course, they confront these models of question and they manage to provide answers relying on their accumulated knowledge about the literary facts, or memorized critics interpretations. In other words, students do not perform their critical thinking, rather, they retrieve previous knowledge and understanding. In most cases, students’ literary commentary do not reflect their cognitive grasp.

Issues of Validity and Reliability in Literature Tests

The above description of the literature testing circumstances paves the way to a central point in the world of assessment and testing. So far, adequate testing policies have been associated with some principles, namely ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’. The Lack of validity in literature test is stemming from the damaging split between the task and test objectives. Hughes defines a valid test saying that “a test is said to be valid if it accurately measures what it is intended to measure.”³³

It is clear that a test that is limited to a recall of memorized knowledge about the subject matter does not stimulate cognitive functioning. In relation to the concept of validity in tests, Wiggins states that “The aim of education is to help the individual become a competent intellectual performer, not a passive “selector” of orthodox and prefabricated answers”³⁴. Therefore, he argues that a valid test induces a manifestation of “knowledge disposition” rather than a “knowledge possession”³⁵. While the objective is to develop higher thinking abilities a test item would not be valid unless it assesses this objective.

To frame the debate, it is worthy to refer to different types of tests in terms of what they practically seek to assess. In language assessment, Hughes distinguishes between content-based test versus objective based tests.³⁶ J. Spiro also refers to this distinction in literature assessment. According to J. Spiro literature tests fall into two main types: knowledge-based tests and skills-based tests. As for the knowledge-based tests, they are limited to the studied syllabus and only knowledge about the subject matter is assessed. However, the skill-based test is an objective test, and it aims at assessing the students ability to use the knowledge in new contexts and situations.³⁷ The latter test treats students as problem solvers, not just parroting the accumulated knowledge. In this respect, Wiggins argues that a test that is build upon rehearsal of knowledge lacks validity and it “would be like evaluating court judges on their knowledge of law only or doctors on their memory of biochemistry lectures”³⁸, where the evaluation of authentic attainment is likely to be ignored. In other terms, relying exclusively on knowledge-based tests does not sustain the modern educational theories, therefore, they would rarely fit the curricular aspirations.

Moreover, reliability is another fundamental aspect in the area of assessment. Hughes claims that test reliability is two fold: the examinees performance and the examiners’ scoring criteria.³⁹ A test designer has to consider the importance of explicit and varied test items. In order to make the assessment fair and reliable, a variety of test items is preferable. In this way, students can perform in an explicit and a more comfortable way; so that more is known about their attainment. Although, this requirement makes the test more reliable, it shakes its validity. In other terms, a sound test is meant to be authentic and probe the students’ abilities indirectly without any preset models of answers⁴⁰. In this respect, Hughes argues that:

In our efforts to make tests reliable, we must be wary of reducing their validity[...] there will always be some tension between reliability and validity. The tester has to balance gains in one against losses in another.⁴¹

Moreover, in relation to the issue of reliability the scoring criteria have to be known for the test takers too. Teachers who are in most cases the examiners and the ones who measure the students' performance have to provide convincing parameters of grading and scoring. The scoring criteria of a given test should not be a hidden agenda. Accordingly, a clear description of the measurement process is beneficial for students and test designers as well.⁴²

It follows that both validity and reliability are delicate concept in the assessment zone. They are interrelated and they contribute to the adequacy and soundness of tests.

III. Literature Testing within the Algerian English Department

Examination System in the Algerian Context

As far as the local context is concerned, assessment habits in the area of foreign languages and literature is challenging and they provoke some mistrust. Yet, academic research moderately explores the area, and reflections about the testing strategies are not fully developed. In line with the efforts that aim at enhancing the testing practice in the Foreign Languages Department, Riche Bouteldja gives an account about the divergence that characterises the examinations practices in English Departments. In his article, *'Assesment of the Practice of Evaluation in the Language Department'*⁴³, B. Riche states that there is a deviation from the ministerial instructions and the examination system fails to assist the teaching/ learning process. The testing activity is supposed to be based on a general agreement and a pedagogical team was created in every department. Among the missions of this team is to agree upon the testing procedures. Members of this team design, improve and adjust the test items, they decide on the scoring criteria, and they even train novice teachers to become professional test designers. Unfortunately, the article shows that in most settings, the pedagogical team disappeared practically and these target ideals are falling away. Every teacher manages to design a test that fits the requirement of his/ her

own view and this leads to another issue. Tests that are meant to be a means enhancing the students' performance and diagnosing the teaching and learning pitfalls, turn to be unfruitful or in Riche's words, "testing has become a one-shot affair because most teachers attend more to the final product or products of the students than to process."⁴⁴ Tests fall in the form of formative assessment and consequently it limits the opportunity for students to perform their skills and for teachers to continually assess their students attainment.⁴⁵

However, along with the recent educational reformation the examination system witnesses a prominent change. With regard to the old regime that was restricted to formative assessment, the LMD program expands the assessment strategy and both formative and summative assessment are adopted. Students are evaluated during the educational semester as well as by the end of each semester.

To make the discussion clearer, a distinction between 'tests' and 'exams' is important. Despite the two terms are interchangeable, in the Algerian context the term 'a test' is used to refer to a summative assessment type, whereas 'an exam' is a formative one. In the local context, 'tests' precede exams and they take the form of a standardized test, a homework assignment, a project work, portfolio assessment and so forth. Teachers are flexible and they are free to choose the summative assessment procedure. Then as a more formal step, achievement tests or 'exams' take place at the end of each semester.

An academic year is divided into two semesters, and by the end of each semester an exam is administered. Students go through tests and formal examinations to reach the average and get the passing mark of ten out of twenty for each subject. In case a student fails to pass the exam, he/she has the opportunity to take remedial exam. This process is adopted in both semesters. That is to say, in one educational year students take two formal examinations, in case they fail it is compulsory to take a remedial examination for each

semester. Beside, their learning progress is checked through tests from time to time. The final year of the *licence* degree, before they exit they accomplish a number of formal examinations. It is also compulsory for students to write a thesis in the field of study, either in literary studies or applied linguistics. The thesis is included in the evaluation procedure as it reflects the students' attainment.⁴⁶

The current examination practices indicates that there is a shift or an attempt to improve the practices of assessment, to provide a safer environment for assessment by including both summative and formative methods of testing. However, the remaining question is about the test content, the instructional items and whether the new educational objectives introduced by the LMD program are reflected in the testing strategy.

Literature Test in Practice

As for the current practices, the following sequence aims at portraying the testing habits of Literature in three English Departments: Tizi-Ouzou, Algiers and Boumerdes. First of all, the process of designing test questions varies across and within the three departments. In some cases, where the syllabus is commonly shared by the teachers of the same department, exam questions are likely to be designed in coalition. Simply, before the day of the exam, teachers who are in charge of teaching the subject offer their suggestions and they agree upon the final draft of the test question and the scoring criteria, this is the case of the University of Mouloud Mammeri of Tizi-Ouzou. In the two other cases, teachers are responsible for planning their own exam questions according to the covered syllabus. Overall, in the Algerian context, teachers are the examiners and they do not receive the test items from an external institution. Nevertheless, it is a habit that while designing the questions teachers are often inspired by some critics, theory books and so forth.

Moreover, throughout our exploratory observation about the examination practices, we found that almost in all the departments, the summative form of assessment is omitted. A remarkable case was noticed at the University of Boumerdes. A literature teacher suggests research about a literary work, namely Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. Students present a literary analysis including themes, characters, writer's style and its connection with the literary movement in general. However, the requirement of a project work and an oral presentation conducted by second-year student was not taken into consideration while grading the students. Therefore, it can not be considered as a formal assessment strategy. Yet, it trains students to conduct research, analyze and evaluate some uncovered literary works by themselves and bring together their understanding of literature.

Turning now to the questions type, a glance at the questions that circulate at the three English Departments shows that the literature test belongs to essay writing. It is rare to find multiple choice questions when the subject is literature. Open-ended questions require either writing a short paragraph or longer essays that are based on the covered syllabus. Moreover, the scoring criteria is another aspect that shakes the reliability of assessment in the field of literary studies. Explicit grading criteria is necessary for reliable tests, but when the subject is literature and the students' performance is manifested in the form of essays, it is difficult to establish explicit procedures to weigh up the students' cognitive performance. In line with this aspect, educators distinguish between two types of grading students, norm-referenced testing, and criterion-referenced testing.⁴⁷ This distinction is tied to the grading phase. In what is called 'norm-referenced tests', examiners grade one student's performance according to the other student. However, in 'criterion-referenced testing' all students are graded according to a preset standards.⁴⁸ In our educational environment, both 'criterion-referenced test' and 'norm-referenced' tests are

generally employed to assess the students' behavior. Teachers are flexible in designing test items and grading the students' performance.

Overall, the conditions of literature testing in the Algerian Departments is flawed from different dimensions: the theoretical perspectives of designing the questions, the practical formulation of the questions, in addition to methods of measuring and scoring students' performance.

Analysis of the Exam Questions according to Bloom's Taxonomy

These theoretical considerations about the conditions of literature testing show that the assessment of literature is fluctuant. Therefore, a concrete investigation is meant to be conducted for a deeper exploration. In this investigation, we rely mostly on the questions that are running in three English Departments, Tizi-Ouzou, Algiers, and Boumerdes. Moreover, we include all the subjects that are related to literary studies, namely questions designed to test British, American and African literatures. In addition to the two additional subjects, Literary Theory and Comparative Literature. This wide covering is justified by the global objective of these subjects, in the sense that they all seek to teach and develop the students' literary competence that reflects students' cognitive development

Conclusion

Since the teaching of literature is part of the educational area, it abides by the pedagogical standards and the assessment of literature obtains an important role. This chapter has attempted at portraying the assessment practices, especially for literature as a unique subject.

Overall, it is clear that in the modern world of education, literature is not a latent relic, but on the contrary, educators in EFL contexts employ literature to enhance the students' cognitive and affective progression. Students are supposed to be competent in the sense that they become equipped with knowledge and skills that are necessary for problem-

solving and the students manifest these competencies in the test performance. In this respect, H. G. Widdowson says: “The writer of literature is really in the problem-setting business, and the reader of literature is in the problem-solving business *par excellence*.”⁴⁹, yet what is important is to design tests that promote the authentic cognitive performance.

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Conclusion to Part One

The theoretical framing went through two chapters, the first dealt mostly with the teaching of literature in the EFL context. It provided an in-depth description of the literature teaching ideologies and practices in the local context. A description of the literary curriculum of the Algerian English Department gives an insight into the actual teaching practices. Moreover, the literature textbook is the source of data collection and helps to inquire about the type of objectives we seek to achieve in a literature course. Relying on Bloom's Taxonomy, the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap* is examined.

As the hypothesis implies, the split between Literature course and test is rooted in the lack of a concrete alignment of the objectives in the Literature curriculum. An exploration of the area of Literature assessment is required and therefore, the concern of the second chapter was mainly literature testing. The second chapter is an explanation that takes into account the assessment policies in the area of literary studies in the Algerian context.

So far, this theoretical part is a descriptive review of the current state of literature teaching and testing. The following part moves to the experimental evidence on the source of the gap between the two pedagogical aspects: course and test. It also suggests some pedagogical implementations that make the process of literature teaching and testing more satisfactory.

Part Two:
Empirical Investigation

Introduction

The research investigates literature teaching and testing in three Algerian English Departments and the main focus is on the interrelation between the educational objectives. A possible split between the literature course and test is embedded in the discrepancy between the outlined objectives of the literature curriculum and the testing habits. After the in-depth description of the teaching and testing theories introduced in the previous section, the present section offers some insight into the concrete practices of the literature teaching and testing in the Algerian English Departments.

The empirical part is divided into two chapters. First, the analysis of the textbook and the exam questions are offered in chapter three. Then the fourth chapter represents the discussion and interpretation of the results, in addition to some pedagogical suggestions and recommendations for the literature course and test.

Chapter Three:
Analysis of the Literature Textbook and
Exam Questions

Introduction

As a starting point, the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap* is examined. The tasks and activities that are used in the literature course are classified according to Bloom's Taxonomy. Likewise, the test instructional items are examined and classified in the light of Bloom's Taxonomy. In other words, Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives stands as the theoretical basis of the empirical study and it applies for the analysis of the literature textbook as well as the exam questions that circulate in three English departments (Tizi-Ouzou, Algiers, and Boumerdes). In so doing, the type and the frequency of the educational objectives that appear in the literature course and tests will be deduced and compared.

Hopefully, this empirical study will enable us to check the consistency between the objectives of literature teaching and testing. This chapter explains the tools and data collection, in addition to the procedures of analysis.

I. Procedures of Data Collection and Analysis

The procedure of our analysis is approved and adopted by different researchers in the field of textbook evaluation. As an illustration, Gholamre Zareian *et al.*¹ apply a practical method to classify the educational objectives of two textbooks in the field of teaching English for Specific Purposes. The tasks of the textbooks are classified according to Bloom's Taxonomy of the cognitive domain, and the results indicate that the textbooks emphasize the lower cognitive skills, such as knowledge, comprehension, and application. According to the research findings, the tasks of the two textbooks fail to develop the students' higher cognitive skills.² Another research conducted in the area of textbook evaluation relies on Bloom's Taxonomy to find out the frequency of tasks that seek to develop higher cognitive skills. Abdul Kareem Igbaria in his turn conducted a content

analysis of the textbook entitled the *Horizon* relying on Bloom's Taxonomy. He claims that the results of the research show that the adopted method to analyze the textbook is reliable.³ Accordingly, Bloom's Taxonomy of the educational objectives serves to be a theoretical basis for curriculum planning as well as for the textbook evaluation, and more precisely for a content analysis of the course tasks and activities.

As far as our practical analysis is concerned, we adopt Bloom's Taxonomy to classify the tasks that appear in the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap* as well as for the literature exam questions. The analysis of data is based on both qualitative and quantitative methods, and the procedure of classification goes through different stages.

Stage One: Data Collection

As mentioned earlier, the subject of examination covers both the teaching and testing practices. For the teaching, the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap* is the source of data and the body of analysis. In addition, samples of literature exam questions from three departments provide the second element of the empirical investigation. In other words, the source of data is twofold and they presented as follow:

1. Data Collected From the Literature Textbook *Bridging the Gap*

As for the literature textbook, it is worth noting that the focus of the analysis is on *Bridging the Gap*, the second part of the textbook, which is primarily addressed to students. The teachers' manual *A Companion to Bridging the Gap*, therefore, goes beyond the scope of the present study. Despite both educational devices make up one textbook, the one designed for students (*Bridging the Gap*) offers raw data in terms of course tasks and activities. The reading of the textbook was firstly meant for a descriptive purpose. It gives an insight into the general layout of the textbook as well as the literature course plan. A second reading is meant to collect and organize the data in a well-structured way. Then a

detailed reading of the structured data helps examine and classify the educational objective of each task.

The course plan is divided into six main sections and each section includes a number of tasks. The latter are picked up and classified according to the given objective they convey. The following chart represents a visual summary of the data collected from the textbook *Bridging the Gap*:

| Sections | Number of Lessons | Total of tasks |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Novel | 10 | 221 task |
| Short story | 6 | 148 task |
| Drama | 5 | 109 task |
| Poetry | 9 | 236 task |
| Essay | 1 | 25 task |
| Biography/ Autobiography | 2 | 41task |
| Total | 33 | 779 |

Table 1: Data Collected from the Literature Textbook *Bridging the Gap: Language, Culture, and Literature*.

The above chart covers six literary genres that constitute the literature textbook and the syllabus in general. The textbook offers detailed lesson samples and they are categorized into three levels according to their linguistic and literary accessibility. Each level contains a number of lessons, the novel section for instance, covers three levels and the first level deals with five literary works. The lessons deal with literary extracts that use both simple questions and tasks that are more complex. In some cases, the tasks can be answered orally in the classroom, and in other cases student need to write well-structured answers.

In the process of collecting reliable data that serve the present research, the major focus was on a specific parts of the course, which is the while and post-reading phases. In

these parts of the lesson, students are likely to interact with the text and with the teacher via a number of questions. The emphasis is on the nature and the type of the tasks. Each task is analyzed in the light of the objectives of Bloom's Taxonomy and the frequency of these tasks help figuring out the kind of course objectives. According to the above chart, the total number of lessons is (33) lessons, and they provide (779) questions. It is important to note that, in some cases the question is originally divided into two parts, and therefore, when collecting the data we chose to deal with each part in a separate way.

It is also important to note that the questions are intentionally copied as they appear in the course plan without any modification in order to probe the reliability of the instructional item. In other word, the genuine interaction with the lesson questions helps evaluating the rate of the 'action verbs' that are vital in the clarity of questions for students as well as for the classification of the educational objectives in Bloom's scale. Moreover, the identification of the page of each question is another procedure that has been considered while collecting data. The questions are associated with their original page according to their occurrence in the textbook to make the analysis easier and straightforward. That is to say, each time before we classify the tasks' objective in Bloom's scale, the task is linked to the course and the literary extract is consulted. For more details, tabulated data collected from the literary textbook, *Bridging the Gap* is provided in Appendix B.

2. Data Collected from Administered Exams and Tests

As far as the data collected from the exam topics, both progress and achievement tests frame the mode of assessment in the English departments, therefore, the present research covers both the test and exam questions. In other words, tests and exams of American, British and African literature were taken into consideration in the process of collecting data. Moreover, the present investigation deals with the undergraduate level, and

the stress is laid upon the educational practices during the three years of the *License* degree. However, unlike the data collected from the textbook that was large, the exam and test questions are fewer and the process of the collection was restricted to the three departments (Tizi-ouzou, Algiers and Boumerdes).

For ethical considerations, before the collection of data we obtained the permission from heads departments as well as literature teachers who are the test designers. Moreover, there was a shortage of question in some department's archive, and therefore, it was necessary to contact the teachers who did not hesitate to collaborate and provide us with the questions they used in their assessment process. A total of (63 samples) were taken from three departments and a variety of question types were gathered starting from the academic year (2013/2014) to the academic year of (2015/ 2016). In line with the question types, the data includes direct questions, literary commentary on statements or quotations, in addition to passage analysis.

Stage Two: Procedures of the Analysis

The nature of the research and the collected data requires the implementation of mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative methods). At the first level, to break down the questions' into categories according to the cognitive taxonomy, a qualitative method is adopted and a list of action verbs assists the process of classifying the different kinds of questions. Then, as a second step, the quantitative approach helps quantifying the questions into numerical data according to the frequency of the educational objectives. Moreover, in order to have a reliable data analysis, Chi-Square Test was adapted to identify the relationship and the interdependency between the educational objectives within the units of the textbook, and the same for the testing questions. A clearer description of the course of the analysis is offered below:

1. The Qualitative Method

In the field of education research, qualitative research is often conducted, and it is also employed in the present study. Once the samples were extracted, it was first necessary to reformulate the theoretical background of the present work, namely Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives. In other words, in order to have a quantitative evaluation of the data, there was a need for a concrete checklist.

Each of the six levels of cognitive domain includes a number of action verbs that facilitate the understanding of the textbook tasks and exam questions, and hence, the deciphering of their hidden objectives would be easier. A synthesis of different readings about the categories and classes of the cognitive domain results in a simplified chart that explains the six levels, and provides definitions and an illustrative list of action verbs. In fact, the chart is considered as a checklist, that was the basis in the process of the qualitative analysis of the data. In other terms, the analysis bears its grounds to Bloom's Taxonomy of the cognitive domain that is introduced in a designed chart (see Appendix A). This checklist is a means to qualify the nature of the course tasks and exam questions. In other words, the qualitative approach assists the deciphering of the objective of questions and finding out in which cognitive class each question falls.

In this respect, the qualitative treatment of the data implies a content analysis that is based on checklist evaluation. The qualitative approach helps in the hermeneutic analysis of the educational instructions presented in the textbook in terms of activities and tasks, in addition to the questions of literature collected from the three departments. However, it is obvious that the process of deducting the educational objectives and classifying the questions in the appropriate cognitive level was not the ultimate goal of the research. A further step was needed to quantify the frequency of each level in both the textbook courses and the exam questions.

2. The Quantitative Method

As far as the second step is concerned, quantitative analysis of the data was necessary. In order to make the classification of data more neutral and authentic, a 'coding process' is established. The interpretation of the question leads to one of the six cognitive objectives. The latter objectives are codified from the simple to the most complex, as they occur in the original taxonomy. The six cognitive levels are coded as follows: Remembering (1), Understanding (2), Application (3), Analysis (4), Evaluating (5), and finally Creating (6). Then, the questions are stratified in accordance with one these cognitive levels.

Next, the calculation of the frequencies of each cognitive level in the different sections of the textbook and then in the exam questions was achieved via a statistical analysis. In fact, the percentage distribution and the whole data management was performed using SPSS software (version 22). In addition, to probe the relation between the literature tasks and tests, the results that were obtained from the textbook and the exam questions analysis were compared. The a comparison between the results gives an insight into the relation between the teaching and testing practices. For accurate statistical analysis we also conducted a Chi-square Test that shows the significance of the frequencies of the two parts: tasks and tests.

What is coming next is, then, a representation of the analysis and the finding of the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap* as well as the exam questions.

Stage Three: The Process of the Practical Analysis

The empirical investigation went through two main steps. The first deals with the textbook, and the second is concerned with the exam questions.

1. The Analysis of the Literature Textbook, *Bridging the Gap*, according to Bloom's Taxonomy

As previously explained, the evaluation of the literature textbook went through different stages. The textbook was divided into six parts according to the literary genres, and therefore, each part was analyzed separately. In order to gain a deeper insight into the activities and tasks' type, several readings were conducted. As for the reliability of the analysis, a cautious reading, and a confirming analysis was necessary. In this respect, we meant to associate each question by a page number where it appears, in order to draw a connection between the question and the context in which it occurs. Before deciding on the type of the objective the task and the activity implies, it was necessary to read the whole literary extract. Moreover, in some cases, the answers were provided in the teachers' manual, *A companion to Bridging the Gap*, therefore, the reading of the second part of the textbook was compulsory. The classification of the objectives implies a careful reading of the literary extract and its surrounding detail. In other terms, a conformational analysis of the textbook tasks was extremely necessary. In fact, this repetitive analysis was meant to making an adequate classification of the task objectives eliminating any invalid interpretation. The following tasks provide illustrative model:

- Question 1: What is Okonkwo success based upon? (2)
- Question 2: How would you qualify this passage? Is there any authorial instruction here?(5)
- Question 3: Imagine a conflict between father and son later in the novel. Narrate the incident in 20 -30 lines.(6)

The three questions above are taken from the while and pre-reading phases. They are extracted from the first section of the textbook (the novel), and more precisely from lesson three: *Okonkwo*, from by Chinua Achebe. The first question is given the code (2) since it implies the understanding skill. The second question represents the fifth level in Bloom's

Taxonomy, evaluation, and thus, it is codified with (5). The last example is typically creative and it is classified under the sixth level. A systematic calculation of the frequency of each code allows a revealing vision about the educational orientation of the textbook, *Bridging the Gap*.

1. Results from the Textbook Analysis:

The overall results emerging from the statistical analysis are highlighted in the table below:

| Level of Questions | Remember | Understand | Apply | Analyse | evaluate | create | total |
|--------------------|----------|------------|-------|---------|----------|--------|-------|
| Novel | 4 | 77 | 13 | 51 | 56 | 20 | 221 |
| Short story | 1 | 60 | 3 | 28 | 40 | 15 | 147 |
| Poetry | 10 | 58 | 3 | 97 | 59 | 9 | 236 |
| Drama | 4 | 39 | 2 | 33 | 26 | 5 | 109 |
| Essay | 0 | 6 | 0 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 25 |
| Auto (biography) | 0 | 14 | 0 | 8 | 15 | 4 | 41 |
| Total | 19 | 254 | 21 | 226 | 203 | 56 | 779 |
| Percentage | 2,44% | 32,6% | 2,7% | 29,01% | 26,05% | 7,2% | 100% |

Table 2: Frequencies and Percentages of the tasks Distributed in the Six Sections of the Textbook *Bridging the Gap* according to the Six Levels of the Cognitive Domain of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Before reporting the overall result of the textbook analysis, the table shows some observations related to the data. First, the number of the lessons and questions differs from one section to another. Therefore, the frequency of each cognitive level shifts from one section to another. The section that contains the largest number of questions is Poetry section with the total of (236) questions, whereas, the essay section offers only one lesson and a total of (25) questions.

Second, the tasks that are employed in the textbook cover both lower order-thinking skills and advanced order-thinking skills. In other words, all the cognitive levels that are arranged in Bloom's scale are sought to be achieved in the literature course, yet the frequency of occurrence is relatively different.

This fact leads to our third observation. In fact, the six cognitive levels may not appear in every lesson. In some cases, tasks that assess the students' knowledge or their ability to apply the previous knowledge never occur in the whole course. In other terms, not every lesson is supposed to cover the six levels of the cognitive domain and educational objectives vary from one lesson to another and from one literary genre to another.

Moreover, in order to make the findings from the textbook analysis clearer and to illustrate the frequencies of the educational objectives, the pie chart bellow offers a visual representation of the same results.

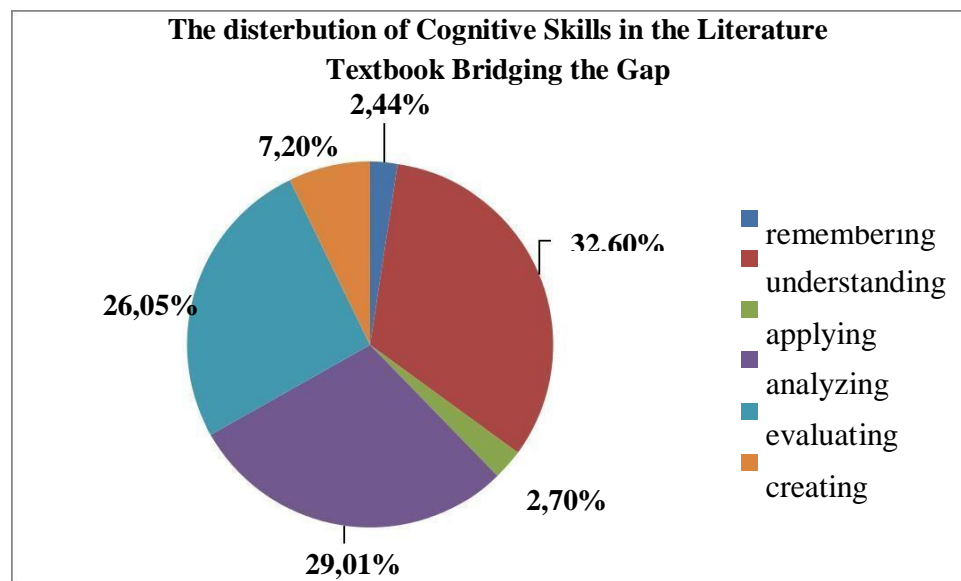


Figure 1: Pie Chart Represents the Frequencies and Percentages of the tasks Distributed in the Six Sections of the Textbook *Bridging the Gap* according to the Six Levels of the Cognitive Domain of Bloom's Taxonomy.

As it can be seen from Figure (1), the tasks that are employed in the literature course aims at developing both lower and higher cognitive skills. On one hand, at a lower level, the result shown in the above Figure, indicate that the first cognitive skill ‘Remembering’ is present in the textbook with only (2,44 %). ‘Remembering’ is based on a recall of the previous knowledge and it is considered as the simplest educational outcome. As an illustration, the following samples show some tasks that set up remembering as a major goal:

What do you know of the institution of slavery in classical antiquity in (Greece and Rome) in colonial America?

What do you know of the transportation of American slaves to slave holding countries in the Americas?

According to the results presented in Table 2 and the pie chart, the number of this type of questions is only (19 questions) out of the total of (779 questions). Moreover, the result shows that ‘Application’, another lower cognitive level, also has a low frequency. Only (2,70%) of the tasks acquire a practical application. In fact, the data analysis reveals that ‘Application’ often serves to develop the stylistic competence, the case for the following examples:

Check the meaning of the following words and phrases in the glossary, narrative prose, point of view [...] In what way are they illustrated in the text?

Look up the following words in the dictionary? Melodrama, crescendo, climax, coup de theater, parody, pathos, bathos[...] Relate each to the passage and comment on the use of each in relation to the story and how it is told?

However, the second cognitive level of Bloom’s Taxonomy, ‘Understanding’ is significantly more frequent in the textbook tasks. Table (2) shows that (254 questions) apply for ‘Understanding’ level. That is (32, 60%) of the questions ask for comprehension of the literary extract. In order to get an adequate interpretation of the text, understanding of the overall idea is important.

As for the higher cognitive objectives, the data analysis shows that the literature textbook provides tasks that seek to develop critical thinking. The fourth level in Bloom's Taxonomy 'Analysis', obtains the highest portion with the frequency of (29,01%). Most of the tasks impel students to examine the literary extract in a detailed way. A thorough reading helps expanding the students' awareness about the literary text and consequently, they would be able to solve the following questions for instance:

Read carefully the stage directions at the beginning of the scene and: say where actions take place?

Where does the turning point of the story occur?

Pick up instances of Mary Jones' speech that reveal her mordancy, sense of humor, and sense of justice?

These questions exemplify the students' cognitive process in analyzing the literary extract referring to the different parts or aspects that build up the whole idea of a given work. Then, a deeper grasp of the literary extract and the ability to contextualize the text into its literary movement or comparing it with different works requires the skill of Evaluation. The latter cognitive target is present with the average of (26%). As an example,

Comment upon Mark Twain's art as a storyteller, provide an illustration from the text?

How can you describe the relationship between blacks and whites in the 1930's and now?

Can you qualify these in the light of Alex Haley's use of narration, description, dramatization? How are they conveyed to the reader?

Finally, among the targeted educational objectives in a literature course Table 2, shows that 'Creating' represents (7,20%) of the tasks. 'Creating' in literary studies requires a mature understanding of the literary work, but also a creative attitude in order to offer an effective response or develop a new vision towards the literary work, writer, or the movement. It is the highest cognitive skill in Bloom's Taxonomy yet, according to the

results, tasks that engage students in a creative writing are moderately present in the textbook *Bridging the Gap*. The followings are illustrative examples:

In a short paragraph write about similar situation; trying to imitate the humor and irony of Jane Austen.

Narrate the early captivity of the young man using the same devices as the author to suggest an African setting.

Imagine a follow-up of the passage I which you answer one of the interrogations raised in the last paragraph?

After highlighting the results obtained from the textbook analysis, it follows that Understanding the second cognitive level takes the highest portion in the literature tasks with the frequency of 32. Then, it is followed by Analyzing with the percentage of 29. Moreover, Evaluation has nearly the same portion as analyzing with the average of 26. The highest cognitive skill Creating is slightly frequent with 7. The two lower cognitive skills Applying and Remembering share nearly the same low frequency between 2 and 3.

2. The Analysis of the Literature Exam Questions according to Bloom's Taxonomy

The process of analyzing the data collected from literature tests is similar to the previous one. The analysis required both qualitative and quantitative approaches. First, a heuristic analysis allows a deeper insight into the conveyed objectives of the exam questions. In order to probe the question types, we relied on the same qualitative strategy using the checklist of cognitive levels and the action verbs (see appendix C). Then, a statistical analysis helps count the frequency of these objectives. To frame the discussion, we can refer to some examples.

Question1: Answer the following question in a well-structured essay. Define Romanticism by highlighting some of its distinctive characteristics and themes.
(1)

Question 2: Study the thematic significance of Harry's flashback in Hemmingway's "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" argue with reference to meaningful examples from the short story. (4)

Othello and Macbeth are among Shakespeare's fascinating tragic heroes.
 Compare these two protagonists with reference to both Othello and Macbeth.
 (5)

As previously discussed, the questions were codified according to the target objective they imply. Moreover, the analysis of the exam questions was repeated several times in order to remove any inadequate interpretation. In this respect, it is worth to note that in some cases, the testing instructions require more than one cognitive skill. Therefore, in the process of the analysis, some questions were divided into two parts according to the various cognitive outcomes that the questions seek to assess. As an illustration, the question below is mainly designed to examine the students' ability to evaluate and judge the quotation. However, the latter goal cannot be achieved without an analysis of the literary passage.

Passage extracted from the novel, in addition to the following question:

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) is a journey to the dark soul of mankind. Develop this statement with reference to the passage above. Support your answer by referring to the novella.

This type of questions was divided into the different instruction that aims at assessing different targeted outcomes, and hence in the process of analysis, each targeted objective was treated separately. The overall results of the test analysis are offered in the following sequence.

2. Results from the Exam Questions Analysis

The following table and figure reflect the results emerging from the analysis of the Literature exam questions of the first, second and third years.

| Exams | Remember | Understand | Apply | Analyze | Evaluate | Create | Total |
|------------|----------|------------|-------|---------|----------|--------|-------|
| Questions | | | | | | | |
| Questions | | | | | | | |
| frequency | 07 | 05 | 0 | 22 | 29 | 0 | 63 |
| percentage | 11,11% | 7,93% | 0% | 34,92% | 46,03% | 0% | 100% |

Table 3: Frequencies and Percentages of the Exam Questions Distributed in the Six Sections of the Textbook *Bridging the Gap* according to the Six Levels of the Cognitive Domain of Bloom's Taxonomy.

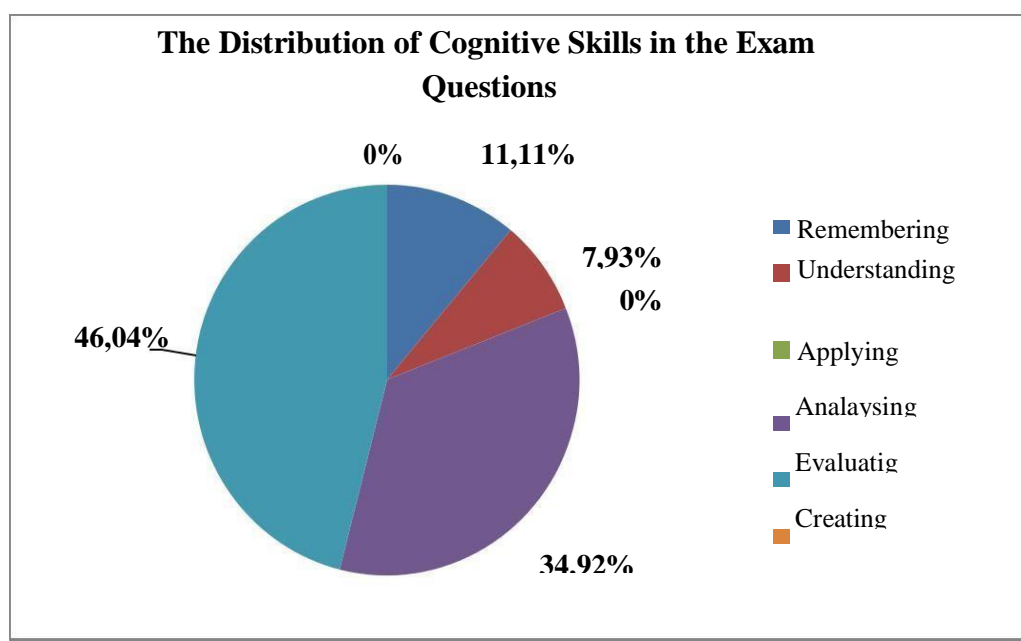


Figure 2: Pie Chart Represents the Frequencies and Percentages of the Literature Exam Questions Distributed according to the Six Levels of the Cognitive Domain of Bloom's Taxonomy.

The results from the exam question analysis show that the literature test leads the student to perform higher cognitive skills. The frequencies range from 0% to 46,03%. This indicates that not all the six cognitive skills introduced in Bloom's Taxonomy are present. A glance at the pie chart, for instance, shows that 'Applying' and 'Creating' are completely absent in the literature exam questions with 0%. The findings from the analysis show that exam questions that emphasize 'Understanding' are slightly present with the frequency of (5 questions) out of the total of (63 questions) and the percentage of 7,93%. In addition, the simplest cognitive skill is present with the frequency of (7 questions) and the percentage of 11,11%. Moreover, the cognitive skills that appear most frequent in the exam

questions are: 'Evaluating' with the frequency of 29 and the percentage of 46,03%. Followed by Analysis with 'Analyzing' the frequency 22 of and percentage 34,92%.

It follows that both the higher thinking skills 'Analyzing' and 'Evaluating' are of a significantly higher rate. In other words, the assessment of critical thinking is prominent in the literature test items. However, 'Creating' is totally de-emphasized. No question among the analyzed data displays a requirement of creative response to literary works. 'Understanding' and 'Remembering' receive a moderate concentration whereas 'Applying' is unfocused.

Stage Four: Investigating the Correlation between Literature Tasks and Tests

The previous stages of the empirical investigation provide some insights into the practices in the field of literature teaching and testing. In fact, the classification of the educational objectives help to explore the pedagogical ideologies both in the teaching material, (through the textbook evaluation), and the English departments (through the evaluation of the exam questions). Yet, this exploration offers half of the answer to our research question. The previous stages answer the one research question which is:

What are the educational outcomes that the Algerian literature curriculum seeks to develop both through teaching courses and through piloting tests and exams?

With respect to the research question, it was hypothesized that there is a split between the literature course tasks and tests, and the source of this split is rooted in the lack of balance of the educational objectives in the two pedagogical aspects, Literature courses and tests. In order to probe the accurateness of this hypothesis, we compare the results emerging from the evaluation of the textbook and the exam questions. In other words, the concern of the final stage of this empirical investigation is a comparative analysis of the results.

In the process of the comparative analysis, Chi-Square Test is the statistical procedure that assists this comparison. The Chi-Square Test was accomplished relying on SPSS software version (20), and Table (4) below represents the results from this test.

Chi-Square Test

| | value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|----|--------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 24,000 ^a | 20 | ,242 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 18,729 | 20 | ,540 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 1,896 | 1 | ,169 |
| N of Valid Cases | 6 | | |

a. 30 cells (100,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 17.

Table 4: A Representation of the Chi Square Results.

The research hypothesis says that there is no balanced distribution of the educational objectives between the literature course and tests. Chi-Square Test that is carried out in the comparative analysis was significant at 0,0001. $\chi^2 = (24,000^a, df = 20)$. So, we conclude that there is a significant difference in the distribution of the cognitive levels across the Literature tasks and tests.

The Chi-Square Test proves the evidence of the research hypothesis. In other terms, the educational objectives introduced in Bloom's Taxonomy are not equally distributed in the two pedagogical aspects: the literature course and test. In order to make the representation more concrete, a visual demonstration of this distribution is offered in a table (4) and figure (4) bellow:

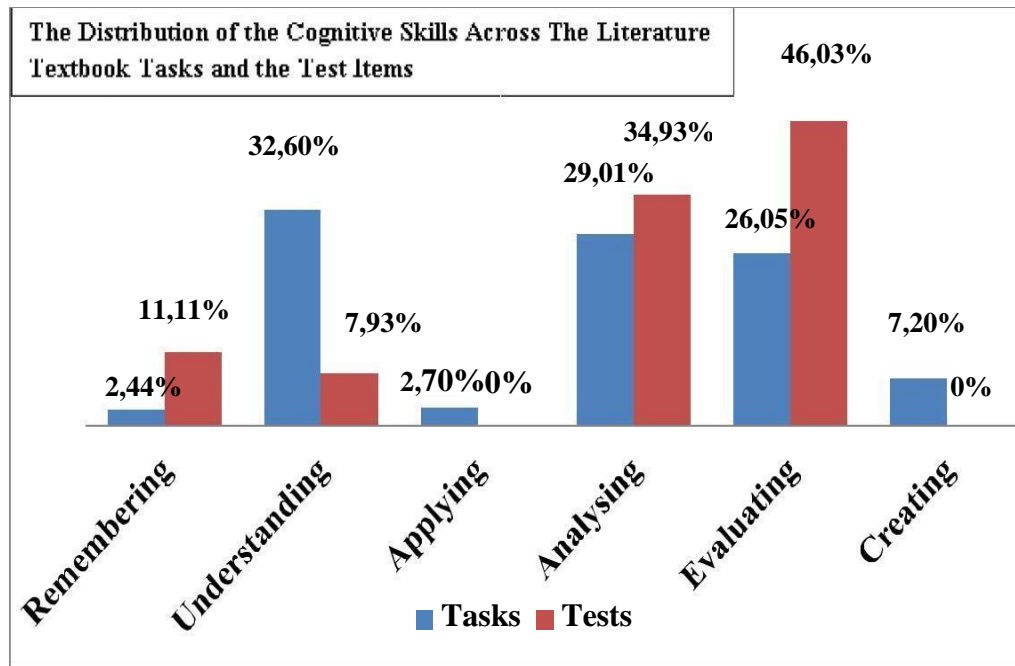


Figure 3: The Distribution of the Cognitive Skills across the Literature Tasks and Tests

Conclusion

This study was conducted to assess how the educational objectives are taught and tested within the Algerian Literature curriculum. Thus, a classification of the educational objectives was carried out relying on Bloom's Taxonomy. Through this chapter, we introduced the process of the data collection, the different steps of the analysis, in addition to the overall results emerging from the investigation. A rapport between Literature teaching and assessment is sought to be deduced from the analysis. Yet, more knowledge about the relation between literature course and test is to be gained in the next chapter that scrutinizes the reported results and suggests some pedagogical recommendations.

End Notes:

1. Gholamreza Zareian, An Evaluation of Questions in Two ESP Coursebooks Based on Bloom's New Taxonomy of Cognitive Learning Domain, International Journal of Education and Research , Vol 3 No ,8 August 2015, 317.
2. Ibid,.
3. Abdul Kareem Igbaria, A Content Analysis of The WH Questions In EFL Textbbook of *Horizon*, International Educational Studies, Vol 6,No 7, 2013.

Chapter Four:
Discussion of the Results
and Pedagogical
Recommendations

Introduction

At the outset of this study, we assumed that there is a mismatch between literature tasks and tests. In order to confirm or infirm the presumed hypothesis, we attempted to identify the objectives of literature teaching and testing. The content analysis of the textbook, *Bridging the Gap*, and the exam questions provide a starting point for answering this question.

More importantly, comparing the frequencies of the educational objectives appearing in the textbook and the exam questions give insight into the relation between the two pedagogical elements: teaching and testing. The findings help to picture the status of the literature teaching and assessment and at the same time, they reveal the effect of assessment on pedagogical improvement. Therefore, interpretation of the results will display the relation between literature tasks and tests, in addition to the extent to which the assessment policies contribute to a better teaching-learning process in the Algerian English departments.

To simplify the discussion, results drawn from the analysis of the textbook and the exam questions will be interpreted separately. Then, a comparative interpretation will be deduced.

I. Discussion of the Results from the Textbook Analysis

In order to have a deeper understanding of the distribution of the educational objectives in the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap*, we return to Bloom's classification of the six cognitive objectives. The following discussion treats the target objectives that are embodied in the course tasks through two levels. First, the tasks that set up lower cognitive skills namely: Remembering, Understanding and Applying. In addition to the tasks that expand the higher cognitive skills, which are Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating.

1.Lower Cognitive Skills

Remembering

The results show that the activities that require the students to recall previous knowledge represents only 2,44% of the textbook tasks. Most of these tasks appear at the beginning of the lesson. They aim at warming up the students' minds and setting the scene for the course, so that they elucidate the literary extract. These tasks entail a recognition of some literary aspects or recall of historical facts that are related to the author or the writing circumstances. Although the frequency of 'remembering tasks' is low, the role of this step is not refuted.

A reference to some tasks in the textbook shows hidden educational target, which is a transition of knowledge from different disciplines. By employing remembering tasks, the textbook designers attempt to bring out the students' previous knowledge and stretch their cognitive ability. The issue of 'Slavery' for example is covered in the Civilization course and it appears in a Literature course through some tasks that require the students to 'Remember'. As an illustration, the textbook offers a lesson plan that deals with a passage from *The Capture from Roots* by Alex Haley, and the questions below show a connection between the Civilization and Literature courses:

What do you know of the institution of slavery in classical antiquity in (Greece and Rome) in colonial America?

What do you know of the transportation of American slaves to slave holding countries in the Americas?

Certainly, this type of activities is employed in the textbook *Bridging the Gap* as a teaching strategy that reinforces the students' assimilation and transition of knowledge. It makes the link between the two subjects: Literature and Civilization. It opens an opportunity for

students to transfer their previous knowledge in new settings. Hence, it prevents the linear dimension in the whole educational program.

Moreover, in relation to ‘Remembering’ as primary educational objective, the textbook is a good source of knowledge. Although it is necessary that teachers and textbooks provide students with information, but it could be much better if the students look for the information by themselves. What is noticed in our analysis of the textbook *Bridging the Gap*, is that the knowledge about the author and the literary movement, for instance, is already introduced at the beginning of the lesson. Yet, before the students go to read the text, they read about the author first.

On the one hand, this is considered as a positive point because it assists the understanding of the literary extract. However, what makes it tedious and fruitless on the other hand, is that all the courses are designed in the same way. In other terms, all the courses, without exception, offer a brief authorial description, and students are not engaged in making some pieces of research. This would make the learning experience dominated by teachers and teaching materials, and therefore, less productive for students.

Generally speaking, when comparing the remembering objective to the other objectives, the focus on ‘Remembering tasks’ is reduced in the textbook. It is no wonder about this fact since the literature course aims at developing a higher critical thinking skills rather than a mere collection of knowledge. It is true that ‘Remembering’ is not an end in itself, yet it is the first level in Bloom’s Taxonomy and educational program as well. Therefore, what a learner should remember about the literary work, help him/her expand their higher cognitive skills, to be able to make a link between previous knowledge and the new experiences, so that, they train themselves to deal with unexpected circumstances.

Understanding

The results indicate that the dominant cognitive skill in the textbook *Bridging the Gap* is ‘Understanding’, with the frequency of 32,6%. Most of the tasks appearing in the literature course are harnessed to facilitate the understanding of literary texts, so that students would generate a reasonable grasp of the literary discourse.

In line with the understanding skill Bloom *et al*, discuss the core of this skills saying that, “when students are confronted with a communication, they are expected to know what is being communicated and to be able to make some use of the material or ideas contained in it.”¹ In this sense, the emphasis of understanding is on communication. Before going deeper or building any type of interpretation, understanding of what is being addressed is essential. The fact that students are not native speakers of the English language, they gradually build an image about the features of the literary text. In other words, this type of tasks helps students to expand the linguistic or the thematic comprehension of the literary extract.

The analysis of the textbook shows that *Bridging the Gap* introduces a whole sequence for comprehension tasks. This part of the course enables students to approach literary texts through scanning and skimming practice. The following questions are taken from the short story course, *Charles* by Shirley Jackson and offer an illustration of the comprehension tasks:

Who are the main character of the story ?

What important event has brought a change in the life of the mother?

How does her son react when he comes home from his first day at kindergarten?

Give examples of Laurie’s disrespectful attitude towards his father?

The ‘Understanding tasks’ do not stimulate the higher cognitive performance or critical thinking, but they establish a primary stage that trains students to explore literature. The

above illustration for instance, shows that the question type aims at developing a general understanding of the different characters, the events and the gradual shift in the plot. In other words, these tasks do not make students go beyond the surface of the literature extract and they barely transfer critical skills. Therefore, literature course is becoming much similar to reading comprehension.

In line with this view, Ronald Carter distinguishes between the reading for general comprehension and the analytical reading of a literary text. He claims that the paraphrasing, translation and the commentary about a literary text are an initial necessary stage in the reading of any literary discourse. He considers that this stage is sort of “experiencing literature”. Then, Carter calls for the second step of “analyzing the experience” in which the reader makes use of his/her analytical skills.²

As far as the textbook is concerned, putting the understanding skill as the primary goal in the course reflects that the outlined objective is the literary comprehension, the experience of literature rather than responding or developing a proper vision about literary works.

Applying

Applying is the third cognitive skill in Bloom’s scale. According to the results, this skill is almost absent in the literature course with the frequency of 2,7%. This reduced rate of application tasks can be explained by the different nature of this objective and the subject matter. In fact, the nature of Literature as an educational subject does not imply many rules to be applied. Bloom *et al*, refer to this significant characteristic for application claiming that in the field of Humanities, the objective of application is rarely employed. If we compare Literature to other disciplines like mathematics or natural sciences, Literature does not take use of this skill as an essential objective in the lesson plans or the assessment

instructions. In other terms, application requires a practical performance of the students' understanding, and in literary studies, this cognitive process takes the form of 'Analyzing' or 'Evaluating' rather than 'Application'.³

Yet, the very few 'Application tasks' in *Bridging the Gap* help students manifest their knowledge and comprehension of the linguistic features of a literary passage. Moreover, they train students to expand their literary and stylistic control. The following illustration shows the different forms of application tasks.

What type of poem is *The Tramp*: descriptive, reflective, narrative?

What kind of eulogy is the poem?

What is the part of Romance in her dream of escape?

Check the meaning of the following words and phrases in the glossary: narrative prose, point of view.. In what way are they illustrated in the text

Look up the following words in the dictionary: Melodrama, crescendo, climax, coup de theater, parody, pathos, bathos [...] Relate each to the passage and comment on the use of each in relation to the story and how it is told?

According to the above samples, the application tasks demand the skill of bringing the previous knowledge about the rules into new situations. In the first task for instance, students learn about the characteristics of the different types of texts and they try to apply these rules and principles to the new passage, so that they can identify the nature of the passage; descriptive, reflective or narrative. Then the same process is followed in the other samples. The application objective in the textbook *Bridging the Gap* trains students to exhibit their external understanding of some stylistic concepts into the actual literary passage. In addition, students' knowledge about the metalanguage is also manifested through the application procedure. The last sample above is a model for application practice.

2. Higher Cognitive Skills

Analyzing

Analyzing is one of the skills that the literature curriculum seeks to develop. This pedagogical objective appears in the literature course with the frequency of 29%. In this sense, in the textbook *Bridging the Gap*, analysis comes as a second objective after understanding. The ‘Analyzing tasks’ enable students to give an account about what they have experienced while reading the literary extract.

As far as this educational objective is concerned, analyzing is conceived to be a transfer skill through which students maintain higher cognitive functioning. In his taxonomy, Bloom *et al*, distinguish between three main steps in the process of analyzing.⁴ To make the discussion of the tasks type more convenient, we bring this distinction to the literary course.

According to Bloom’s Taxonomy, analyzing starts first, by the identification of the different elements of the literary passage. Indeed, this procedure is widely seen in the literature textbook, *Bridging the Gap*. The analysis of the characters for instance, falls in the category of identifying the elements of the literary texts. The following task from the course plan, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe is a good illustration for this skill:

In what way does the evocation of Unoka differ from the portrayal of

Okonkwo? What do you think is special importance in traits of each character?

The questions above take the students to a profound study of the characters behaviors, and link it to the plot and the theme. Bloom states that the recognition of the different elements is an analytical skill through which students are in the process of ‘[...] Skill in identifying motives and in discriminating between mechanisms of behavior with reference

to individuals and groups.”⁵ Moreover, not only with the study of characters but also in the identification of the setting, the writers’ point of view, students need to differentiate the different elements of the literary text.

Moreover, as a second step in the analysis process recognizing the relationships between the elements, the ultimate goal is not only to distinguish between the different elements of the text but also to build up a clear image about the relationship between those elements and the effect on the general meaning.

Second, the process of analysis goes farther and students learn how to detect the relationship between the different elements of the literary text. That is, the reader makes links between what is in the text and its effect on the general meaning. Bloom state that, in this step, students manifest their “Ability to recognize what particulars are relevant to the validation of a judgment.”⁶ As for the textbook *Bridging the Gap*, the tasks expose students to this type of objectives. As illustration, the sample is taken from the lesson plan of the short story, *Charles* by Shirley Jackson:

Why does the author choose to draw a parallel between the attitude of Laurie at home and that of Charles at Kindergarten?

Why does the author contrast the reaction of Laurie’s parents towards Charles’s bad influence?

In the first question, students analyze the two characters (Laurie and Charles), and then they study the relation between their behaviors. Then in the second, they analyze to bring evidence to their interpretation.

Third, the process of analysis ends up with the students’ ability to recognize the organization of the different elements of the text. Organization comes in the form the breaking out the different parts of the passage and considering their organization.

For example, the study of the plot in the short story illustrated this skill and this often practiced in the while reading phase.

Identify the beginning, development, climax, and denouement of the story?

There are three main parts in the story. Identify them and comment on the boy's attitude in each part, indicating the key sentence in each?

Refer to the glossary for the definition of plot. I identify the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement of this story.

The tree sample tasks above shows that the textbook *Bridging the Gap* train students to study the organization of the text. It follows that the textbook *Bridging the Gap* displays analysis skill to deepen the students' literary awareness. It helps them to learn about the specific characteristics of literature. They learn about the different literary genres, in addition to the characters, the plot, the point of view and so forth. In other terms, the process of reading and analyzing helps students to be able to give an adequate literary criticism. Furthermore, with the frequency of 29%, it may be said that analysis is one of the essential objectives in the textbook and the literature course.

Evaluating

The results from the textbook analysis reveal that 26% of the tasks are harnessed to set up the evaluation skill. The latter skill requires from students to respond to what they have read, to justify their understanding and to bring evidence to their understanding. In relation to the function of this objective, Bloom claims that the evaluation of a given text is based on an internal or external evidence. As for the internal evidence, students accomplish the understanding, application and analysis processes; then they shift to the evaluation of the text in the light of what is concluded from these previous stages. In other terms, in the analysis stage the reader tries to understand the relationships between the different elements and their organization in the text. In the evaluation stage, he/she judge

and comment on these interrelations. This cognitive performance is widely introduced in the literature course and the tasks in the textbook *Bridging the Gap* expand this skill.

Illustrations are introduced below:

What does the meeting between the two reveal in terms of respective social background?

Show how is this seemingly neutral portrayal of character foreshadows a potential conflict between the two protagonists?

The above task samples show that students' critical reading of the text enable them to provide an adequate judgment. That is the criteria of judgment are within text.

Moreover, the evaluation of the literary passage is also based on an external evidence. In order to evaluate a literary text the reader may rely on: "[...]the techniques, rules, or standards by which such works are generally judged; or the comparison of the work with other works in the field."⁷ For instance, in the following tasks students utilize their external knowledge to solve the problem.

Is the opening of the story representative of the genre?

Read the story "Indian Camp" in the Additional Reading section. Contrast the children's and the grown-ups' perception of death in both stories. How is this conveyed? (through dialogues, actions, behaviors etc)

It follows that evaluation tasks lead to reflective reading and train students to make criticism while reading and contextualize their understanding in the area of literature. In fact, the evaluation tasks are employed in the textbook *Bridging the Gap* to teach learners how to respond to literature, and by so doing, they develop their higher thinking habits.

Creating

The sixth educational objective in Bloom's Taxonomy is present in the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap*, but with a minor emphasis. Only 7% of the tasks demand

innovative competence. Creating entails a high cognitive functioning. A creation task encourages the students to take advantage of different elements to produce a completely new pattern. In literature teaching, creating tasks advocate imaginative response to the literary passage. It is based on production such as, a completion of a short story, a change in the point of view, writing original literary piece and so forth.

In the textbook *Bridging the Gap* and accordingly the literature course, the creating tasks teach different aspects in literature. They are harnessed to expand the linguistic control and students produce a kind of linguistic structures. As an illustration, the following tasks are taken from the Novel and Poetry sections. Students take use of some English terms and use them in new contexts .

Use the following verbs in sentences of your own, to covet, to shut up, to dissever?

Write a short narrative paragraph? using the following words? Misty, light, on ominous, clanging of steel....

Moreover, the type of creating tasks arise the students' literary awareness and it trains them to produce literary devices. For instance, in the following task samples, students rewrite a text in a different genre or a different point of view, they shift from poetry to prose, or they use the literary qualities such as tone or style.

Write a description of Celia from Johnson's point of view? 10-15 lines

In short paragraph write about similar situation; trying to imitate the humour and irony of Jane Austen.

Using the same journalistic style, complete Simeon's story

Recount in your own words the story of the poem.

In addition, in line with the creating tasks, they also aim at teaching creative writing through the English language. A higher cognitive process is demonstrated in the following samples through which students introduce an authentic experience.

Describe a scene involving children in an Algerian context(during a celebration for instance)

Imagine a follow up of the passage in which you answer one of the interrogations raised in the last paragraph.

Imagine a conflict between father and son later in the novel. Narrate the incident in 20 -30 lines.

By assembling the results of the textbook analysis, the frequency of each educational objectives shows that there is a remarkable misbalance in the distribution of the cognitive objectives. The cognitive skill that appear frequently is 'Understanding' with the percentage of about 33%. The focus is on understanding, and the comprehension of the literary text is favored. Yet, the two higher cognitive skills, analyzing and evaluating are significantly important. The latter skills share a relative emphasis and a profound interpretation is offered later in the overall results.

Discussion of Results from Exam Questions Analysis

Similarly to the previous discussion, the findings from the exam questions analysis cover two levels. Hence, the interpretation of the results proceeds from lower to higher cognitive skills.

1.Lower Cognitive Skills

Remembering

According to the results, the examination of knowledge is present in the literature test with the frequency of 11,11%. Moreover, the few exam questions that probe the students' recognition of knowledge are designed for the first year examination. In fact, the literature syllabus for the first year expands the students' knowledge about literature. Literature test examines the acquired knowledge. The following exam samples illustrate the remembering target in literature test:

What are the major characteristics of early colonial literature in America?

Answer the following question in a well structured essay. Define Romanticism by highlighting some of its distinctive characteristics and themes.

Identify the following lines (poet and poem's title)

These questions consider knowledge about literature and they investigate the extent to which students are familiarized with the subject matter. Facts and historical knowledge, definitions and distinction between the literary movements and the different eras shape an introduction to literary studies. In fact, this low emphasis on the testing of remembering has a plausible explanation. Teachers of literature tend to avoid questions that require a mere recall of knowledge. This type of questions only reflects the students' ability to record and remember information, and no critical thinking is performed. The testing of remembering is present in the literature exam because it establishes platform for a deeper study of the literary extract.

Teachers intend to administer the remembering test instructions to facilitate the transition from lower cognitive grasp to a higher cognitive performance. The remembering testing items facilitate the shift from classroom activities to the exam, and they make less frustrating. Moreover, it is worth noting that, remembering tasks are usually accompanied with other tasks that require higher cognitive performance. As an illustration, the following exam question has two parts. The first entails a recall of previous knowledge about the qualities of romantic poetry. Then, the second part requires from the students to analyze the poem and find out the romantic traits. That is the remembering is associated with other skills to make the cognitive performance more effective.

Discuss the main features of romantic poetry.(please make reference to the poems studied in class).

Understanding

The analysis of the exam questions reveals that understanding is not the primary concern of the literature examination. Only 7,93% of the analyzed questions require the comprehension skills. Moreover, the questions that test the understanding skill are administered to the first year students. None of the comprehension questions appears in the second and the third years. The intention in this type of questions is to test students' ability to conduct an initial reading of the literary extract. For example, the questions below highlight the extent to which the understanding has much to do with the reading skills.

Read the following poem and answer the question: Death Be Not Proud By John Donne.-Explain the sense devices in the underlined lines

-What are the poet's arguments to support his view that death should not be proud.

Read the following poem (Holy Thursday by William Blake) and answer the questions. Explain how children progress from weakness to meekness and beauty to strength.

Read the following sonnet, then answer the questions(sonnet 19 William Shakespeare): -To whom do you think the poem is dedicated

-Briefly summarize the argument of the sonnet

It worth to note that the few understanding questions are administered in the testing of poetry. In order to test the students' ability to comprehend the poem, these questions are essential. In the illustrative samples above, students scan the content of the text and try to decipher the meaning and the arguments through scanning the poem. The latter process is purely a reading skill that is very rewarding in literary studies. The literature exams take into account the testing of comprehension skills, yet the frequency is very low. Whereas, the literature course aims at developing the comprehension skill, only 5 out of 63 questions are harnessed to test the understanding skill. This reduced emphasis

on comprehension skill in the test questions reflects a divergence in the objectives of the literature course and test.

Applying

The application skill is absent in the test instruction. None of the analyzed questions introduces an application procedure. This fact shows that the examination of literature does not assess the students' ability to apply any type of standards or rules that govern the subject matter. This low appearance of application skill is explained by the nature of the subject matter. Unlike the other sciences, literature rarely demands an application process. This point has been explained before earlier in Bloom's Taxonomy, instead application, literature stresses analyzing and evaluating skills.

2.Higher Cognitive Skills

Analyzing

The results show that 34.93% of the test items examine the students' analytical ability. It is common that studying literature at an advanced level such for the university is to develop higher cognitive skills. Therefore, analyzing is one of the paramount objectives in the literature test. The literature examination in the three English departments, demonstrate a significant emphasis on analyzing. In fact, analyzing comes in the second position in the test questions.

As far as the questions' structure and form, the study proves that the question types examine the analyzing skill in a straight way. The following illustration shows that the 'action verbs' introduced in Bloom's Taxonomy and the checklist of our empirical study reveal that there is no ambiguity in the test items that require analyzing.

Discuss three distinct figures of speech used by the poet.

Then analyze them (base your analysis on the theme and the main figures of speech).

Find out the following elements of fiction in the text below: exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, character(s), setting.

Discuss the significance of the heroic code of Comitatus in 'Beowulf', considering specifically the action of Beowulf, Wiglaf as young warrior, and the cowardly retainer at the dragon fight.

Identify the following: Rhyme scheme, rhyme, alliteration, assonance.

To some extent, the questions above are explicit and they provide the examinees with hints about the required performance. For example, they test the students' ability to analyze either the figurative language, the different qualities of the literary genre, or a thematic analysis. Yet, in some cases, there is a kind of vagueness. While the test instruction reflects the objective and the required performance, some questions are too open and students are rarely directed towards the expected answer.

Analyze the following literary passage taken from William Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation.

Analyze the following passage

Analyze the following passage taken from Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre.

Analyze the following literary passage taken from William Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation.

On the one hand, there is no idea about which basis is the passage supposed to be analyzed. The term 'analyze' is vast. It can be a literary, linguistic or a thematic analysis. Therefore, what to analyze and how to analyze is the significant aspect of the literature test. However, on the other hand, the majority of the passages introduced in the test have already been analyzed in the classroom. For this reason, students find themselves obliged to rewrite the notes they have taken during the course.

It is true that the test question examines the analytical ability, but almost in the majority of the cases, what the students expose on their essays is not a genuine production. The analytical skill is rarely examined and no authentic performance of this skill is deduced. A farther discussion of this point is offered later in the overall result.

Evaluating

According to the results, the evaluating skill is at the top of the educational targets in the literature examination. Almost half of the analyzed questions are employed to assess students' evaluating skills. The results reveal that about 46% of the exam questions gauges the students' critical thinking, namely the ability to judge, argue on, or defend a literary viewpoint. The skill of evaluating is complex one. Students have to draw on internal and external evidences to provide a consistent commentary. The evaluation competence exhibits all the process of remembering, understanding and analyzing. Students' ability to express themselves, offering their reaction or their proper vision towards the literary passage or a critic's statement is the aim of the literature test. The illustrations below demonstrate some test instruction in which students make a literary evaluation.

Passage/ Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*(1902) is a journey to the dark soul of mankind. Develop this statement with reference to the passage above.

"Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is considered as a bridge between Victorianism and modernism" comment.

Write a short essay to explain the following statement: " He[Othello] has formerly proved himself to be one of the finest of men, yet Ego has unleashed suspicion and unfounded jealousy in his mind, so Othello is being eaten up by the worst instincts in man" (John jack and Martin Coyle, How to Study Shakespeare Play . 1985:83)

Creating

The results show that the literature test in some English Departments, never assess the students' creative aptitude. Although some of the textbook tasks develop the creative practice, the entire test questions that have been analyzed refrain from assessing the students' innovative skills. This may be linked to many reasons. Apart from the obstacle of the linguistic incompetence, the fact that the literary creativity is subjective, it is not likely to be judged.

Discussion of the Overall Results

First, the study proves that Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives is a rewarding means in checking the alignment within the curriculum. The taxonomy depicts the nature of the course objectives and their relation to the test objectives. The findings help to picture the status of the literature teaching and assessment in the three studied Departments. However, the question to be answered now is what the results tell us.

The combination of the findings indicates that there is a light divergence in the objectives of the literature course and test. This is proved by the Chi-Square test that shows the degree of dependence between the analyzed tasks and tests, is less than 0.5. This result confirms our hypothesis and shows that there is a mismatch between the literature course and exam. The split is rooted in the theoretical perspective that deviates from outlined objectives and the real life situations.

As for the teaching, the textbook *Bridging the Gap* that portrays the literature course, reveals that the mismatch is between the stated objectives of the textbook and the actual course plan. It is not a matter of identifying the objectives in a provisional theoretical sphere, but the essential thing is to bring those educational aspirations to a concrete realization in the classroom. Unfortunately, according to the analysis of the textbook the

course plan, the tasks and activities fail to achieve this intended aspiration. There is misbalance in the distribution of the objectives. Moreover, there is a slight divergence between what is stated as objectives and what is actually developed in the course through the tasks and the activities. The textbook designers claim that higher cognitive skills are the main objectives of the literature course. The focus is accordingly on higher cognitive skills and the analytical ability is the target.

However, the results show that the textbook's tasks are oriented towards 'Understanding'. This finding is somehow disappointing. While the educators who design the textbook, *Bridging the Gap* declare that the aim is to develop higher cognitive skills, the focus is largely on the text comprehension. Rather than an in-depth analysis of the literary extract, the textbook employs tasks that are significantly for reading comprehension. There is no doubt that this heavy emphasis on comprehension is necessary. However, if we compare the frequency of the comprehension tasks with the tasks that are devoted to develop the rest of the other cognitive skills, there is a lower importance given to the other higher cognitive skills namely, analyzing, evaluating and creating. That is, there is a remarkable misbalance between these cognitive objectives.

Concerning the literature tests, the gap between the objectives and the actual test instructions is much wider. The test questions are oriented towards analysis and evaluations skills. Teachers tend to assess students higher cognitive skills. They want their students to bring the individual competence into the test. In this context, David R. Krathwohl discusses the importance of "meaningful learning" in which "transfer skills" are of a highest value⁸. The literature exam indicates that the purpose is to assess the higher cognitive functioning that entails a transmission of knowledge and skills. Literature test disregard the testing of lower skills and in this respect, Krathwohl claims that: "when meaningful learning is the goal, then remembering becomes a means to an end, rather than

the end itself.”⁹ Certainly, at university level, what is advocated is meaningful learning and higher cognitive performance is expected. However, there a wide gap between these expectations and the existing habits. There is a difference between what set as an objective in the test instruction and what is actually performed and graded.

It follows that the disparity is between the objectives and the actual practices. The results also reveal that the arrangement and the frequency of these objectives fluctuate within the textbook *Bridging the Gap*, and the literature exam questions.

The findings enable us to see that the pedagogical orientation of the literature tasks and tests is not the same. This difference includes a shift in the educational objectives, and the general layout of the course and test instructions. Both in literature course and test, students are put in front of literary texts, yet the way they treat these texts in the course is moderately different from the day of the examination. Our practical investigation confirms that the teaching strategies differ from the testing policies and the following discussion captures the complexities of this divergence.

On the one hand, students during the class are gradually led to a profound understanding of the literary extract. They interact with the text through different tasks and activities that go smoothly according to the cognitive order. In other terms, the cognitive skills introduced by Bloom *et al* are present in the literature course. Although the distribution of these skills is different, the literature course takes into account the six cognitive skills. This contributes to the diversity and the depth of the learning experience.

Moreover, the students’ interaction with the text covers different angles. In *Bridging theGap*, students approach literary text from linguistic, stylistic, cultural, thematic perspectives. Hence, the student’s appreciation of the text grows gradually. Furthermore, they are even supposed to write some creative response and the personal interaction is

encouraged. This assumption is proved through the results obtained from the analysis of the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap*. The latter textbook shows that the six cognitive skills are meant to be developed, from remembering to creating. Despite the frequency of occurrence shifts from one cognitive level to another, they all go in harmony to shape the students' cognitive grasp and ability to be competent problem solvers. This has a psychological effect on the learning habits and their performance.

On the other hand, in the formal examination, the students' speculation is not induced in a well-arranged way. That is, the question types and structures do not stimulate the students' cognitive skills to function in natural and systematic way. While the focus of test instructions is largely on 'Evaluating' and 'Analyzing', the other cognitive skills, especially the lower cognitive skills are put in the margin. This negligence of the other skills makes it difficult for students to provide adequate and genuine answers. In other terms, students cannot jump directly to the higher cognitive skills without a primary interaction with the literary text.

It is worth noting that, in the pre-university phase, students' early experience with literature test is seen in the Arabic literature in addition to the English language tests. In their tests, students used to deal with a text, and then, follow up questions. The general lay out of the questions is divided into three parts; the reading comprehension section, the language mastery section and finally, the writing sections. Students are familiar with a sequence of questions that facilitate the performance. Their mental progress shifts gradually from lower cognitive performance to a higher critical thinking. However, this type of exam structure disappears at university and abrupt isolated questions replace the traditional model. In fact, the transition from high school to university widens the gap and makes the testing experience more frustrating. As a result, students would rather prefer to be safe and copy and imitate 'secured answers.'

This observation leads to another important issue of students' performance in Literature tests. While the exam questions entail critical thinking, especially the ability to analyze and evaluate, what is encountered in the students' performance is a recall of what have been analyzed and evaluated before the exam. Moreover, even these evaluations are not done by the students themselves, but rather by teachers or external approved literary critics. The students' essays and answers do not give insight into their cognitive process, but they are just a sort of 'secured answers' that guarantees the passing marks. The following question for example, shows that students are allowed to refer and bring external evidence from literary critics.

Study the theme of paralysis in James Joyce's *Dubliners* (1914). Support your ideas with reference to the short stories you have studied as well as some scholar works that analyze the work.

This means that, students are tested about their ability to provide a coherent literary commentary where the argumentation and the evaluation is adequate. The question mentioned above does not stimulate an authentic mental progression since the work has already been discussed and analyzed.

A farther point to be discussed in relation to the testing habits is the test structure and content. In fact, the students' poor performance is rooted in the test structure and the assessment policies in general. When students are trained to tackle any problem, they need key questions that guide them to the answer in a smooth logical way, the point which is almost absent in the Literature tests designed in the three English Departments. 'Understanding the question is the half of the answer'; this assumption runs throughout the educational institutions, and teachers from the early stages, try to convince their students to read the exam question carefully. However, almost in all the analyzed cases, teachers who are the test writers fail to design tests that stimulate an effective cognitive functioning. In

this context, students who are the problem-solvers need to be introduced to the problem in clear and direct way. The representation of the problem is an essential step in problem solving. The exam question should bring students to challenge their minds and not to an empty prepared interpretation.

Ideally, during the class, students are equipped with the knowledge and skills. Then, they transfer them in the new experiences on the day of the exam. If the exam question refrains from promoting that kind of new experience, then the limitation is not only on the teaching strategies or the learners' low performance, but also on the testing policies. According to the analyzed data, the bulk of the questions promotes the rote learning whose answers are based on 'Remembering'. The following test model, for example, has been repeated for several years through the English Department of Boumerdes University.

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is about darkness and about ways that people deal with darkness. In an essay, and with specific supporting evidence from the novella, explain what Conrad means by the 'darkness'.

Answering this question requires less cognitive effort, since the students have dealt with the answer during the class. Nevertheless, the students' performance in recalling previous knowledge needs a range of cognitive skills. Writing an adequate, clear and convincing essay are the criteria of a correct answer that shows an acceptable cognitive functioning. In fact, teachers are assessing the students' ability to use their cognitive skills in exhibiting their "rote learning"¹⁰ and their memorized knowledge. The tests that circulate in the studied Algerian English Department do not bring a new experience where students initiate and represent their own private interaction with the text, therefore, we may say that "meaningful learning"¹¹ is relatively neglected.

Fortunately, in our analysis of the exam questions, we found one exception where the teacher tries to adopt reinvigorate strategy that leads to an authentic performance. The questions are varied and planned in a well-structured way. The sample is presented below.

Read the following sonnet, then answer the questions: (sonnet 19 William Shakespeare).

Sonnet 19

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws,
 And make the earth devour her own sweet brood;
 Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaw,
 And burn the long-lived phoenix in her blood;
 Make glade and sorry seasons and thou fleet's ,
 And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
 To the wide world and all her fading sweets;
 But I forbid thee one most heinous crime:
 O, crave not with thy hours my love's fair brow,
 Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen;
 Him in thy course untained do allow
 For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.
 Yet do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong
 My love shall in my verse ever live young.

William Shakespeare

- 1) To whom do you think the poem is dedicated?
- 2) Briefly, summarize the argument of the sonnet.
- 3) Discuss three distinct figures of speech used by the poet.
- 4) Identify the following: Rhyme scheme, rhyme, alliteration, assonance.

In the above example, the teacher deliberately assigns one of Shakespeare's sonnets that have not been discussed in the classroom. This procedure is profitable in terms of an authentic evaluation of the students' attainment. The answers are not built on their rote learning of the knowledge, but on displaying their skills of analyzing the literary text. Moreover, not only the higher cognitive skills are assessed, but also lower ones the case for the first question that assesses the students' comprehension skills.

Another feature to be mentioned here, is the teachers and students' attitudes towards literature tests. During our research and meetings with literature teachers, we hold some informal discussions about the weakness of the literature tests. We have noticed that teachers are aware of the dissatisfying state of literature testing, and they associate it to different reasons. Although teachers consider the importance of assessing the higher cognitive skills, the latter objectives pose a unique challenge to the whole educational institution.

In fact, the Algerian student is not familiar with 'cognitive-based tests', therefore, this kind of tests poses didactic problems. Whenever a teacher tries to adapt tests that stimulate a genuine cognitive functioning, students feel insecure and they demonstrate their discomfort against this policy. For this reason, teachers prefer 'peace' against putting students in front of new antagonizing experiences. Not surprisingly, the students' level is dramatically falling down year after another, and the pedagogical staff is still looking for the solutions and reforms.

It is true that the assessment of students' analytical and critical thinking is a challenging affair, but it is necessary for the pedagogical life. For students, tests are part of learning experience. For teachers, tests inform and provide feedback about the teaching methods and materials. However, the actual practices show that the tests are not playing their projected role.

In the outset of the research, we have supposed that our literature test is far from being rewarding means in the pedagogical progression, and we linked this fact to the split between the educational objectives. The findings confirm our assumption. The lack of consensus between literature tasks and test deprives testing of being a source of educational improvement. As far as this issue is concerned, Bloom et al claim that:

“Evaluation provides feedback for future curricular revision.”¹² The analysis of the data shows that the literature tests do not contribute to the learning process, since they barely drive students to challenge their minds. The administered literature tests in the three English Departments do not set off a new experience, therefore, they do not provide a genuine profile of the students’ attainment. This means that the current testing policies are not a reliable procedure to evaluate students’ level, and even the teaching/learning conditions. In other terms, test results help in drawing conclusions about the pedagogical practices, and they play an important role in the educational reforms. They bring out pedagogical improvement in terms of syllabus and teaching methods, yet the case is different in the Algerian context.

In short, the research proves the existing gap between the literature course and test. The study confirms that the grounds of this gap lie in the divergent objectives of the literature course and exam questions. Though the textbook’s tasks and activities are proved to be moderately balanced in terms of cognitive skills, (understanding 32%, analysis 29%, evaluating 26%), this distribution does not fit the projected objectives and the actual practices show the opposite. The literature textbook *Bridging the Gaps* lightly meets the educational objectives of the recently reformed curriculum launched with the LMD program

Moreover, the testing practices reveal that there is a divergence between the tests objectives and the testing instructions. The problem is that the textbook designers and the academic staff do not provide the practitioners with pedagogical insight into the testing strategy. The literature tasks presented in the textbook differ from the test, and therefore, there is a damaging split between the literature course and test what makes the pedagogical practices less effective.

Yet, the aim of the research is to contribute to the field of the study by responding to this educational dilemma. In the following sequence, we try to provide some principles for adequate testing strategies that will manage to bridge the gap between the literature course and test.

II. Recommendations

II.1. Principles for the Effective Teaching and Testing of Literature

The research proves that the source of the current failure of students in literary studies is related to the discrepancy between the methods of teaching and testing. Therefore, we suggest some pedagogical strategies that bring remedy to the notable lack of a consensus between the literature courses and tests. Rather than counting the challenges that literature assessment poses and the degree of divergence that testing habits introduce, there is an urgent need to find practical procedures that harmonize the teaching and assessment practices.

Teaching Recommendations

As a first step, we take into account the teaching weaknesses that are revealed by the research findings. The following proposals attempt at providing some supplementary assistance to the teaching plan.

Reinforcing Students' Autonomy in the Learning Experience

Starting with the textbook *Bridging the Gap*, the research reveals the lack of equilibrium in terms of tasks and educational objectives. *Bridging the Gap* establishes a preparatory stage. Novice teachers and students rely on this textbook to accomplish the literary curriculum. Yet, the general layout of the textbook needs some revisions. In line with the pedagogical potential of teaching literature, S.A. Arab argues that the literature

course is meant to “[...] respond to and cater for the students’ cognitive and performative capabilities.”¹³ However, the tasks and the activities of the textbook show that there is a lot to be done by the teacher and the students are passively engaged in literature.

The course outline is almost typical to all the literary genres, and the success of the course is based on the degree of the students’ grasp of ‘teachers’ talk’. The success of the course is not based on the teachers’ ability to make the students decipher the key elements to understand the literary text. Teachers, in this case, are not conductors for critical thinking, but rather establishers of ‘authorized thinking’.

Some tasks in the textbook *Bridging the Gap*, show that it is up to the teacher to come out with a solution to the problem. In the age of learner- centered pedagogy, students’ autonomy is still restrained and unfortunately, the learning experience is controlled by the teacher.

Therefore, there is a strong need to reinforce the students’ autonomy in studying the literary extract. Training students to hold a genuine interaction in the classroom or as a home assignment would surely lead to a progression in the students’ cognitive behavior during the course and the day of examination. The remaining question is how to activate the analytical faculties of students in the course. Gillian Lazar argues that the choice is multifold: “This is because every teaching situation is different, every literary text is different and every theory explaining literature itself or how to use it in the classroom is different.”¹⁴, but in all cases, there are many task models that reinforce the students’ autonomy.

Sample Task One: Guided Learning through Group Discussion

This suggested example entails a group work. Different groups read the same literary passage, and then they provide a sheet that contains a list of questions and the

answers. The questions train them to deduce the key elements of the text, and through the answers, they offer their own understanding and interpretation of the passage. They can base their analysis on different angles, thematic, linguistic, stylistic...etc.

What is important in this task model is that each group gives a written report about the passage. Then, to reinforce the active learning, students swap their sheets and they discuss them in the classroom. The teacher's feedback is a sort of an adjustment rather than an informative talk. The group discussion with the guidance of the teacher would certainly lead to an effective evaluation of the literary passage. This kind of tasks promotes the autonomous learning and motivates students to read and write at the same time.

Sample Task Two: Displaying Individual Skills in Approaching Literary Extract

The underlying objective of this model is to reinforce the creative response to literary texts. Students choose a passage from the novel and write it in their own style. They can switch the genres from poetry to prose or from drama to short story for example. Moreover, students can select a passage that has not been studied in the classroom. Teachers assign to write a literary comment on which students identify the characteristics of the literary genre.

The tow model tasks stress the students' skills in analyzing and evaluating literature in an independent and autonomous way.

II.I.2.More Focus on the Language-Based Approach in Teaching Literature in EFL

Context

Besides the complex nature of the literary discourse, the low linguistic control magnifies the need to expand the students' awareness of the English language. In the context of literature teaching, Lazar argues that the language-based approach is recently

proved to be a constructive method in the teaching of literature in the EFL context. This approach fosters the students' ability to interact with the literary text through deciphering the linguistic structures.¹⁵

In this context, M. H Short refers to the importance of following the sequence of intellectual performance in studying the literary text especially for the EFL students. M.H Short claims that the intellectual process should go in the following outline: (description, interpretation and evaluation).¹⁶ The description is mostly a linguistic one, when the students grasp the linguistic feature of the text they can make larger interpretation. The course tasks should enhance the students' ability to read the surface of the text in addition to what is hidden between the lines. Here, the role of stylistics and the language-based approach comes to make the cornerstone of the literary course especially in the EFL class. Lazar argues that:

Stylistics, which involves the close study of the literary text itself, has two main objectives: firstly, to enable students to make meaningful interpretations of the text itself; secondly, to expand students' knowledge and awareness of the language in general.¹⁷

In an attempt to find out some suggestive illustrations that enhance the linguistic and stylistic practice, we take some examples from Gillian Lazar's models:

Sample Task One: Recognizing the Figurative Meaning of the Text

Recognizing the figurative meaning of the passage is a key element in studying literature. The textbook *Bridging the Gap* offers some opportunities to develop the skills of understanding figures of speech. However, what we have noticed is the focus on this valuable step is low. The general layout of the textbook reduces the chances to use and grasp the literary devices. For example, it is preferable to explain the meaning of the figure of speech before engaging students to look for them in the literary passage. For instance, it

is favorable to provide a definition to the literary concept, and then the students tackle with the concept in a concrete way. For example Gillian Lazar offers this sample:

Metaphor: a comparison made between things which are unlike each other by describing one as if it were the other.

Simile: an explicit comparison made between two unlike things which is usually indicated by using the words *like* or *as*.¹⁸

Relying on this definition, identify the metaphors in the text.

Change the figure of speech from metaphor to a simile.

What effect does the figure of speech have on the general meaning of the sentence.

II.1.3. From Literary Comprehension to Literary Criticism

Of course, the understanding of any literary passage entails tasks that foster the general comprehension of the literary text. Yet, at the level of university, comprehension should not be the ultimate goal of the literature course. The comprehension phase is a starting point for an analytical and evaluative reading. In other terms, more elaborated tasks should follow the initial understanding. M.H. Short for example insists on the role of making literary criticism as a primary concern of the literature course. According to M.H. Short, the description of the literary passage should lead to interpretation. Then interpretation leads to evaluation. A successful treatment of the literary text would emerge from this cognitive track.¹⁹ It follows that Short's observation does not deny the role of comprehension tasks that represent a platform for specialized study. What is considered necessary, however, is a variety of tasks that increase the students' interpretative and evaluative skills. The course tasks have to encourage students to move from the paraphrase and summary to criticism and commentary. When the course implies activities that reflect active interaction with the literary work, students would

certainly be familiar with writing interpretative summaries instead of paraphrasing and retelling the story.

The following are some task models that make literary as a primary concern and the practice of criticism more tangible:

Sample Task One: Writing Interpretative Essays

Analyzing the literary passage according to:

The genre to which it belongs through identifying the characteristics of the literary genre in the text.

The literary movement and to contextualize it in its proper era, compare or inter-textualize the text to other works.

Recognizing the significance of the plot, the setting and themes.

Sample Task Two: Tasks that Increase the Mastery of Metalanguage

Metalanguage enables students to expand the terminology about the literary studies. When students obtain the key elements of the subject matter, they become more aware of what they are actually doing. This makes the learning experience more effective and students feel more engaged instead of blindly following the course or the teachers' talk. Therefore, guided questions that expand their vocabulary enhance the literary command and it makes the analysis more professional. Here are some examples that utilize the metalanguage:

Relying on the 'flashback technique', identify this technique in the text and comment on its effect on the work in general.

The writer employs the technique of 'stream of consciousness', identify this technique in the text and transform it into a dialogue between two characters.

II.1.2. Testing Recommendations

Educators are aware that there is a lot to be adjusted in the testing area, therefore, this sequence offers some guidance to the testing policies. The recommendations are mainly a reflection on the content and the lay-out of the literature test. In addition, we draw insight into the criteria for grading and some useful alternatives of the current testing strategy.

Writing Explicit Questions

A truth to be told, the students' main complaint is often related to the structure of the exam question. The test items often fail to convey the expected idea and the objective that is meant to be tested. In most cases, the literature questions miss the communicative purpose and students fail to interpret the tasks before providing the answers. It is evident that the precision in the question minimizes the misunderstanding, and therefore, the structure of the question item should be relevant to what it seeks to test.

In our inquiries about how to find a way to achieve this target, a study conducted by Rebecca Kopvira shows some remarkable facts about the role of the test item, especially for EFL students.²⁰ Kopvira claims that when the language of the test is not native, there should be some kind of lucidity in the questions. Therefore, she recommended some principle such as writing simple sentences, using the present simple and avoiding the passive, in addition to a careful use of multi-meaning words.²¹

Moreover, in line with the tests structure, using a variety of questions is more rewarding. Taking into consideration the hierarchical functioning of the cognitive skills, it would be better if the test outline contains some objectives of low and higher cognitive skills.

Providing an Explicit Scoring Map

It is common that, the tests' mark has a punitive sense where teachers and students appear as enemies. In fact, a huge misunderstanding occurs when a student reads his/her corrected sheet. Therefore, setting explicit criteria of how the essay is going to be corrected facilitates the communication between the student and the teacher. Before the day of examination, students must be informed of how an adequate literary essay is considered in the eyes of the test designer. Then, in the feedback session, it is preferable to provide a rubric that shows the scoring criteria. The latter procedure would fulfill the students' doubtfulness toward what counts for the corrector. Students always question what matters more: the content of the essay or the way it is introduced in, or it is both of them. If so, what is the proportion for each? Answering these questions seems to be neglected by teachers, yet this issue is of an utmost importance for students. Bloom stresses this point and claims that:

Test items may be so structured that several answers are partly right but one represents a more adequate analysis than the others. Here the distinction is not between right and wrong, or between ability and inability, but is made in terms of the quality of analysis.²²

In literature test, the scoring process is qualitative, therefore, in legible handwriting, teachers have to write relevant and precise remarks that diagnose the pitfalls of the students' answers and explain the deserved mark.

Moreover, relying on a single mark would be unfair in some cases. Regarding some external circumstances, it happens that students fail to perform on some occasions. Thus, only one mark would not reflect their capabilities. Cumulative grading is so rewarding and teachers could rely on the ongoing process of students during the course and the day of examination to build up a global score.

Employing Alternative Assessment

Educators are aware that the one-shot test has its drawbacks, therefore, recent educational strategies rely not only on a unique test at the end of the semester to evaluate the students' progression. Different practices to improve the testing are suggested to be done in the classroom and to be part of the learning experience. As an illustration,

Project Work: During the educational semester, literature teachers may assign some tasks that are taken into consideration in the exam mark. For instance, writing a review of a given work, respond to a review, doing a research about the writer's biography, or evaluate the work in the light of a literary theory would be a valuable strategy to keep the students active and responsible.

Creative Writing: The continuing assessment may take the form of innovative writing. Writing a short story or a poem about the same theme, completion of the story, writing an alternative ending to the story are among a variety of tasks that enhance the students' creative aptitude.

Performing Drama: Generally speaking, plays are neglected in the assessment scope. Yet, role playing or performing a literary work deepens the understanding of the work and at the same time, it reinforces the performative skills and oral communication. Performing the studied plays can be taken as an extra activity that can assist and enlarge the testing area.

In the light of the recommendations suggested above, it becomes clear that to bridge the gap, there should be an adjustment in the teaching strategy that entails a change in the testing practices. Moreover, in order to make the testing procedure a rewarding aspect in the pedagogical par it should be part of the teaching-learning experience.

Conclusion

To conclude, the chapter comes out with some significant remarks. The literature course and test do not share the same pedagogical orientation in terms of cognitive outcomes. The distribution of the educational objectives in the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap* and the sample of the literature test is to some extent different.

Although the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap* is based on understanding as an essential goal of the literature tasks, the general layout of the course follows the hierarchical functioning of the cognitive skills. In other words, there is a moderate balance between the lower and higher cognitive skills. The tasks promote a deep comprehension of the texts, linguistic analysis, and literary evaluation.

However, the literature test ‘shoots’ the higher cognitive skills and it attempts to assess the students’ critical thinking disregarding the lower cognitive skills what makes the students’ mental performance less effective.

The negligence of some educational objectives introduced in Bloom’s Taxonomy is not the only pitfall of the literature tests. While the textbook *Bridging the Gap* attempts to approach literature from different pedagogical perspectives (linguistic, stylistic, literary, cultural, personal and so forth), the sample of the test questions emphasis on the literary criticism. This is one of the paradoxical practices in the English Departments that restrain the students’ mental appreciation of the literary text during the literature course and the day of the exam.

‘Creating’, the highest cognitive skill in Bloom’s Taxonomy is neglected in the literary studies. The textbook *Bridging the Gap* introduces some tasks of creative writing, but the literature exam does not assess the students’ creative thinking. This fact deviates from the educational approach that encourages the students’ production. The learner-based

approach is advocated in our educational programs, but neither the teaching nor the assessment strategies tend to evaluate this educational target.

In relation to the role of tests in the pedagogical improvement, the research proves that the literature test is not perceived as a new learning experience that improves the students' performance. When the test is based on a rote memorization of vacant information, it is surely far from being an impetus to progression. Unfortunately, this is the case for the literature tests in the three English Departments.

End Notes

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Conclusion to Part Two

The empirical part is an observation of the teaching and testing habits in some Algerian English departments. It includes two chapters. In the third chapter, we introduced the data collected from the textbook *Bridging the Gap* and the literature exam questions. It also sets out the procedures and the different stages of the analysis. In order to identify the task and test objectives, we designed a checklist based on Bloom's Taxonomy. The latter checklist was the means of the quantitative and qualitative evaluation. The analysis of the textbook and the exam questions comes out with representative findings that provide an answer to the research questions.

So far, the classification of the educational objectives on Bloom's cognitive scale enhances our understanding of the educational orientation in teaching literature. The findings of the analysis were introduced in the fourth chapter. This final chapter offers a detailed discussion and a profound interpretation of the results. In addition, in the light of these results, the chapter suggests some pedagogical recommendations for both the teaching and the testing areas.

General Conclusion

The teaching of literature in the EFL context is not easily accomplished. Yet, literature is always present in the educational institutions. At the university level, the implementation of literature in the curriculum entails another pedagogical aspect, which is the assessment. Students enrolled in literary studies attend the courses, and then they perform their competencies in the test. The little works conducted in the field have been reviewed in the theoretical part of this study. The review of these works shows that there is a low interest in the field of literature teaching and testing among the Algerian educators, and the few writings give limited insight into the issue. Therefore, the main concern of this research is to explore the area of literature teaching and testing.

Enhancing the students' cognitive functioning and performance is among the outstanding objectives in the educational programs. At the outset of the study, it was hypothesized that there is a split between the teaching and the testing objectives in the literature curriculum. The skills and the target competencies of the literature course are not clearly defined, and this leads to critical confusion in the testing of these objectives.

In order to evaluate the consistency between the course and test objectives, and to identify the cognitive orientation in literature teaching and testing, we conducted an empirical investigation. First, Bloom's Taxonomy of the Educational Objectives serves as an educational theory that makes up the platform of our study. The study scrutinizes the teaching objectives and the testing objectives in the light of Bloom's Taxonomy. We intended to classify the educational objectives of the literature tasks and tests according to the six cognitive levels, which are: *remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating*.

For the teaching sphere, we took the literature textbook, *Bridging the Gap* as a source that informs us about the teaching habits. Algerian educators designed this textbook in an attempt to implement some educational reforms under the LMD programs. Indeed, the analysis of this manual expands our understanding about the teaching approaches and goals in the Algerian English departments. Accordingly, to find out the objectives of the literature course, we analyzed the frequency of the six cognitive skills appearing in the tasks.

Similarly, the testing sphere follows the same procedure of analysis. Bloom's Taxonomy of the six cognitive skills was employed in the analysis of the literature exam questions. However, it is worth to note that the investigation of the testing practices covers only three departments. Literature exam questions were collected from three departments, namely the English department of: Tizi-Ouzou, Algiers and Boumerdes. Then, we made a comparative analysis between the objectives of the literature tasks and test. The comparison aims at probing the match or mismatch between the literature course and tests.

The results show a significant difference between the cognitive objectives of literature tasks and tests and this confirms our hypothesis. The split between the literature teaching and testing is rooted in the mismatch between the objectives. While the literature textbook *Bridging the Gap* gives a larger importance to the understanding skill and the comprehension of the literary text, the exam questions assess the higher cognitive skills and the assessment of the evaluation skill is the target objective of the literature tests. The teaching course aims at developing students' ability to understand and grasp the linguistic and the literary elements of literary extract. However, the test aims at measuring the students' analytical and evaluative performance. Moreover, the results reveal that the literature test disregards some lower cognitive skills. This split in the educational

objectives deprives tests from being an authentic procedure in the educational development.

The success or failure in the literature curriculum is based on the explicit and concrete connection between the educational objectives. Bridging the gap between the literature course and test seems a challenging endeavor. However, knowing about the source of this gap was rewarding. Therefore, the present study brings some pedagogical suggestions that would enhance the teaching and learning process. The suggestions come in the form of teaching and testing recommendations. There is a proposal for teaching the tasks that enhance higher cognitive performance, such as reinforcing students' autonomy in the learning experience, encouraging language-based approach in the course, and training students to write literary commentaries. Moreover, the research postulates a kind of explicitness in the testing strategies, mainly for the test instructions and the scoring criteria.

In fact, the findings of the investigation raise our awareness of teaching and testing conduct. On the one hand, teachers who are the test designers and they are responsible for the teaching and learning process, in addition to the assessment phase. Therefore, they have to share their experience to diagnose the pitfall of the teaching and testing methods. They also have to engage in new approaches and create a new atmosphere to uplift the level of performance during the course and the day of the exam. On The other hand, students are responsible for their learning process. In learner-centered approach, it is no longer the teacher's talk that counts during and memorizing the exam answer is not an option anymore.

Finally, concerning the limitation of the study, the educational objectives that were analyzed confine to the cognitive domain. The affective domain is not introduced though it plays an important role in literary studies. Moreover, there is a need for investigating the

students' attitude towards literature course and their performance in the literature test. Therefore, farther research is required to probe the cognitive performance of the students at the concrete level.

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Appendices:

Appendix (A):

Checklist for Analyzing the Tasks and Tests objectives according to Bloom's Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain

1. How many objectives does the task/test instruction hold?
2. What is the 'Action Verb' that is used in the instruction?
3. What is the objective of the instruction? In which level is the instruction classified?

| The cognitive skill | | Definition | Action verbs used in Instructional items) |
|---------------------|------------------------------|--|--|
| 1 | Remembering (Knowledge) | Exhibit memory of previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts, and answers. | State Define, Find How, Label, List, Match, Name, Omit, Recall, Relate, Select.... |
| 2 | Understanding(Comprehension) | Demonstrate understanding of Facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving, descriptions, and, stating main ideas. | Classify, Compare, Contrast , Demonstrate, Explain , Extend , Illustrate, Infer, Interpret, Outline, Relate ,Rephrase , Show , Summarize |
| 3 | Applying | Solve Problems to new situations by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different way. | Apply, Build, Choose Construct, Develop Experiment With, Identify, Interview |

| | | | |
|---|------------------------|--|---|
| | | | Make, Use of Model, Organize |
| 4 | Analyzing | Examine and break information into parts by identifying motives or causes. Make Inferences and find evidence to support generalizations. | Analyze, Assume , Categorize , Classify Compare, Conclusion Contrast, Discover Dissect, Distinguish Examine, Inference, Inspect, Survey..... |
| 5 | Evaluating (synthesis) | Present and defend opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas, or quality of work based on a set of criteria. | Agree, Appraise, Assess, Criticize, Decide, Deduct, Defend, Determine, Disprove, Estimate, Evaluate, Explain, Interpret, Judge, Justify, Measure, Perceive |
| 6 | Creating (Evaluating) | Compile Information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions. | Change, Choose, Combine, Compile, Compose, Construct, Create, Delete , Design , Develop, Discuss, Elaborate |

Appendix (B):

The Analysis of Literature Tasks Occurring in the Textbook *Bridging the Gap* according to Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Domain:

Section one: The Novel:

| | | | |
|----|---|------|---------------|
| | Novel | | |
| | Lesson one: <i>A Round up from the Stone Face</i> by William Gardner Smith | | |
| | QUESTIONS | Page | Taxonomy code |
| 1 | Look up for the following words verbs in the dictionary | 24 | 2 |
| 2 | Use them in sentences of your own | 24 | 6 |
| 3 | What is meant by the following phrase | 24 | 2 |
| 4 | Why do you think the Old Algerian waved to Simeon | 25 | 2 |
| 5 | Why were the people divided into small groups | 24 | 2 |
| 6 | How would you interpret the woman's you-you | 25 | 2 |
| 7 | Who could Ahmed be | 25 | 2 |
| 8 | Investigate and explain the attitude of : the Algerian to Simeon, Simeon to the Algerians, the French police to Simeon, the French police to the Algerians. | 25 | 4 |
| 9 | Justify your answer by reference to specific passages in the text | 25 | 4 |
| 10 | Imagine the circumstances which have led to the present scene. Write this down. | 25 | 6 |
| 11 | Sum up the text in ten lines | 26 | 2 |

| | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| | Using as many pertinent adjectives and adverbs as possible. | | |
| 12 | Enquire into the real socio-historical circumstances from which this text was initially inspired | 26 | 5 |
| 13 | Sum up your finding in ten-minute ‘talk to the class’ | 26 | 5 |
| 14 | Try and find about the following people Martin Luther King Jr, Malcom X...the following place, Little Rock, and the following verbs, sit-in, bussing... | 26 | 5 |
| 15 | how does the writer convey the feeling and the impressions of the various protagonists | 26 | 5 |
| 16 | what tense is used in this text? | 26 | 4 |
| 17 | To what effect? | 26 | 4 |
| 18 | Comment on the length and the structure of the sentences | 26 | 4 |
| 19 | Would you say that the tone of the passage is: compassionate, neutral, ironical, Sentimental? | 26 | 5 |
| 20 | Substantiate your answer with examples from the text. | 27 | 5 |
| 21 | using the same journalistic style, complete Simeon’s story | 27 | 6 |
| 22 | Imagine the old Algerian telling the story to a friend of his, write it in dialogue form. | 27 | 6 |
| 23 | Check the meaning of the following words and phrases in the glossary, narrative prose, point of view.. | 27 | 1 |
| 24 | In what way are they illustrated in the text | 27 | 3 |
| 24 | total | | |

| | | | |
|----|--|------|---------------|
| | Novel | | |
| | Lesson two: The Graduation Speech from Black Boy, by Richard Wright | | |
| | Questions | Page | taxonomy code |
| 1 | Who is the narrator and who is talking to? | 31 | 2 |
| 2 | Where are they both? | 31 | 2 |
| 3 | What are they talking About? | 31 | 2 |
| 4 | At the beginning of the text, who do you think “those white people” are? | 32 | 2 |
| 5 | Does this tell us about sort of man the Principal is? | 32 | 2 |
| 6 | Why does the speaker think the principal is ‘tempting’ him, ‘baiting’ him? | 32 | 2 |
| 7 | Which of the following adjectives would best describe the Principal? Which the students? angry, hypocritical, meek, patronizing, rebellious, submissive? | 32 | 2 |
| 8 | Explain in your own words why the students refuse to read the speech the principal has written for him, one paragraph | 32 | 2 |
| 9 | Read the Battle Royal by Ralph Ellison in the further reading section , can you see any similarities between the two protagonists? | 32 | 4 |
| 10 | Try and find out about the Jim Crow Laws in the south of the USA | 32 | 5 |
| 11 | There are three main parts in this text. Give a title to each part , justify your answer | 33 | 4 |
| 12 | What kind of idea does the following sentence convey? Why? Well, Richard Wright , here ‘s your speech’ he said with smooth bluntness.... | 33 | 5 |
| 13 | Study the language used by each character. Is it plain, literary, highflown, colloquial, formal | 33 | 4 |

| | | | |
|----|--|----|---|
| 14 | Find examples in the text | 33 | 4 |
| 15 | Render in dialogue from a conflict between any people , eg father , son, student, teacher etc | 33 | 6 |
| 16 | Compare this text with the poem entitled Booker T and W.E.B as far as the protagonist's beliefs and principles are concerned | 33 | 5 |
| 17 | Autobiography is an account of person's life written by that person, In this text, Find examples of the students speaking | 33 | 4 |
| 18 | Find examples of the author's instruction | 33 | 4 |
| 18 | Total | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|------|---------------|
| | Novel level I | | |
| | Okonkwo from Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe | | |
| | Questions | Page | taxonomy code |
| 1 | What other title could you be given to this text? | 37 | 2 |
| 2 | Why is Amalinze a fearful opponent? | 37 | 2 |
| 3 | What Okonkwo's success based upon? | 37 | 2 |
| 4 | What characterizes Okonkwo ? how do people regard him? | 37 | 2 |
| 5 | Why does Okonkwo hate everything his father used to enjoy? What does he think of Him? | 37 | 2 |
| 6 | Does Achebe make utterly negative portrait of Unoka? From what point of view? | 37 | 4 |

| | | | |
|----|--|----|---|
| 7 | Describe the difference between father and son in 8 -10 lines | 37 | 4 |
| 8 | How is life in an African village organized? | 38 | 2 |
| 9 | What kind of religion is practiced there? | 38 | 2 |
| 10 | How would the village or town be governed? | 38 | 2 |
| 11 | What values seem to prevail among Ibo people? | 38 | 2 |
| 12 | Is the place of leisure, music and poetry important in this society? | 38 | 2 |
| 13 | Give few examples of words and expressions from the text which , for you, see to differ from standard English? | 38 | 4 |
| 14 | What do you think the author's aim in using them? | 38 | 5 |
| 15 | Pick up the words and sentences that Achebe uses , particularly adjectives and similes , to portray his hero. | 38 | 4 |
| 16 | what effect is aimed for in drawing such portrait? | 38 | 5 |
| 17 | in what way does the evocation of Unoka differ from the portrayal of Okonkwo? | 39 | 4 |
| 18 | Locate the words and expressions that mark the difference. | 39 | 4 |
| 19 | How would you qualify this passage? Is there any authorial instruction here? | 39 | 5 |
| 20 | How could we divide this passage? | 39 | 4 |
| 21 | Give a title for each section | 39 | 2 |
| 22 | Imagine a conflict between father and son later in the novel. Narrate the incident in 20 -30 lines | 39 | 6 |
| 23 | What do you think is special importance in traits of each character? | 39 | 4 |
| 24 | Would you think those elements are likely to contribute to plot development? | 39 | 5 |

| | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 25 | is the author insisting on specific aspects ? which ones? | 39 | 4 |
| 26 | Does this introductory passage give clues of important events to occur later? | 39 | 5 |
| 26 | Total | | |

| | Novel level I | | |
|----|---|------|---------------|
| | Ebla from A Crooked Rib by Nurrudin Farah | | |
| | Questions | Page | taxonomy code |
| 1 | Look up the following words in the dictionary: To belittle a want, squabbles... | 42 | 2 |
| 2 | Use them in sentences | 42 | 6 |
| 3 | Why does Ebla want to escape? | 43 | 2 |
| 4 | What type of society does she belong? | 43 | 2 |
| 5 | How do we know it? | 43 | 4 |
| 6 | What are the main chores a young girl is required to do? | 43 | 2 |
| 7 | Is maternity seen by Ebla as: blessing, fatality, burden? | 43 | 2 |
| 8 | Make a list of the words that justify your answer from the text? | 43 | 4 |
| 9 | In paragraph 5 , pick up the verbs that express the desire to leave? | 43 | 4 |
| 10 | Find an alternative title to the text | 43 | 2 |
| 11 | Imagine a follow up of the passage I which you answer one of the interrogations raised in the last paragraph? | 43 | 6 |
| 12 | Find out other feminist writers who have given different image of women in both traditional and modern contexts | 43 | 5 |

| | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 13 | The bride price is specific feature of traditional marriage , comment on this in your own community | 44 | 6 |
| 14 | Note the succession of questions in paragraph 2, what effect are they meant to achieve? | 44 | 4 |
| 15 | What aspect of her domestic life as a woman does Ebla resent most? | 44 | 4 |
| 16 | What feelings does Ebla express through her attempt at explaining the sexual discrimination she undergoes in society? | 44 | 5 |
| 17 | Give examples of similes in the text | 44 | 4 |
| 18 | What do they stress? | 44 | 5 |
| 19 | comment on the use of word 'divine' in relation to the word 'emancipation' | 44 | 4 |
| 20 | What effect is achieved through the repetition of the word 'escape' in the 4 th paragraph? | 44 | 5 |
| 21 | what does the interior monologue achieve in the passage? | 44 | 5 |
| 22 | Can you predict the thematic development of the novel from this beginning? | 44 | 5 |
| 22 | Total | | |

Appendix C : Exam Questions Analysis

| Question number | Year | Question | code |
|-----------------|------------------|--|------|
| 1 | 1 | How does William Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation reflect the major principles of Puritanism ? | 5 |
| 2 | 1 | What are the major characteristics of early colonial literature in America? | 1 |
| 3 | | Explain by making reference to two major works of the period? | 4 |
| 4 | 1 | How does Anne Bradstreet, in her 'the Prologue' of <u>The Tenth Muse</u> react to the puritan harsh patriarchal order? | 5 |
| 5 | 5 t h s | Joseph Conrad 's Heart of Darkness is about darkness and about ways that people deal with darkness. In an essay, and with specific supporting evidence from the novella, explain what Conard means by the 'darkness', and explain how the novella suggest the different ways that people deal with this darkness? | 5 |
| 6 | 5 t h S | James Joyce's "the Dead" is the final story in the Dubliners. Joyce said of the collection of stories, "My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country[Ireland] and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis". In a well-structured essay, explain how the theme of paralysis is developed in Joyce's 'The Dead'? | 4 |
| 7 | 5 t h S | Passage+ Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness(1902) is a journey to the dark soul of mankind. Develop this statement with reference to the passage above. Support your answer by referring to the novella. | 4/5 |
| 8 | 5 t h S | Examine the nature of Paul Morel's relationship with women in D.H Lawrence's Son's and Lovers (1913). Argue with reference to the novel. | 5/4 |
| 9 | 5 t h S | Study the theme of paralysis in James Joyce's Dubliners (1914). Support your ideas with reference to the short stories you have studied as well as some scholarly works that analyze the work. | 4 |

| | | | |
|----|------------------|--|---|
| 10 | 5 t h S | “Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness is considered as a bridge between Victorianism and modernism” comment. | 5 |
| 11 | 5 t h S | “heart of darkness is considered as a voyage to the subconscious side of the individual” discuss. | 5 |
| 12 | 4 t h S | Early colonial literature in the American colonies was devoted either to promotion and advertizing or religious and daily spiritual issues of the colonists. Discuss this statements by referring to two major works of the period. | 5 |
| 13 | 4 t h S | “The prologue” of <u>The Tenth Muse</u> Anne Bradstreet gets an ambivalent attitude towards gender relations in colonial America. While reading the poem one feels that she shows both submission to and defiance of the patriarchal established order. Discuss. | 5 |
| 14 | 4 t h S | Analyze the following literary passage taken from William Bradford’s <u>History of Plymouth Plantation</u> . | 4 |
| 15 | 6 t h | F.S. Fitzgerald said on the Jazz Age: “it was an age of miracles, I was an age of art, it was an age of excess, and it was an age of satire” comment this quotation by referring to the works studied in class. | 5 |
| 16 | 6 t h S | Study the thematic significance of Harry’s flashback in Hemmingway’s “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” argue with reference to meaningful examples from the short story. | 4 |
| 17 | 5 t h S | Write a short essay to explain the following statement: “He[Othello] has formerly proved himself to be one of the finest of men, yet Ego has unleashed suspicion and unfounded jealousy in his mind, so Othello is being eaten up by the worst instincts in man” (John jack and Martin Coyle, How to Study Shakespeare Play . 1985:83) | 5 |
| 18 | 5 t h S | “... Othello is going to be consumed by jealousy, but at his point he resists the notion of evil. He desperately clings on to a sense of civilized values. He retains the belief that if Desdemona is false then the whole cosmos must be in a state of disorder, with heaven mocking itself. What we have here is something as simple as an | 5 |

| | | | |
|----|------------------|--|-----|
| | | trying to remain decent and honest in corrupt world” (John jack and Martin Coyle, How to Study Shakespeare Play . 1985:83). Comment the above statement with reference to the play. | |
| 19 | 5 t h S | Othello and Macbeth are among Shakespeare’s fascinating tragic heroes. Compare these two protagonists with reference to both Othello and Macbeth. | 5/4 |
| 20 | 6 t h S | In less than 30 lines, write a dissertation on the following topic: Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre (1847) is classified as a buildings roman. Explain with reference to the novel. | 5/4 |
| 21 | 6 t h S | In less than 30 lines, write a dissertation on the following topic: Othello’s jealousy, Desdemona’s naivety and her blind love to Othello cause her demise. Comment. | 5 |
| 22 | 2 n d s | Read the following poem and answer the question: Death Be Not Proud By John Donne. 1. Explain the underlined sense devices in the underlined. | 4 |
| 23 | 2 n d S | 2. What are the poet’s arguments to support his view that death should not be proud. | 4 |
| 24 | 2 n d S | Read the following poem and answer the questions. Holy Thursday by William Blake. 1. Explain how children progress from weakness to meekness and beauty to strength. | 4 |
| 25 | 2 n d S | 2. Find in the text five sense or sound devices and explain them. | 4 |
| 26 | 5 t h S | Write a dissertation answering the following question: the British modernist novels provide a profound insight to the complex life of the individual. To what extent does this statement apply to the novels that you have studied ? Support your answer with some examples; | 3/5 |

| | | | |
|----|------------------|--|---|
| | | | |
| 27 | 5 t h S | Joseph Conrad's position towards imperialism and the western civilizing mission is ambivalent. Explain this statement with reference to the works you have studied. | 5 |
| 28 | 1 s t S | There are some criteria which distinguish literary texts from non-literary ones. What are they? Explain briefly two of them | 1 |
| 29 | 1 s t S | Explain what a conflict in a narrative is. Provide an example from a literary text that you know? | 1 |
| 30 | 1 s t S | A plot in a narrative text can be divided into different phases. What are they? define tow of them with examples from any literary text that you have read? | 1 |
| 31 | 3 r d S | Find out the following elements of fiction in the text below: exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, character(s), setting. | 4 |
| 32 | 5 t h S | Discuss the representation of women in heart of darkness | 5 |
| 33 | 3 r d S | Discuss the significance of the heroic code of comitatus in 'Beowulf', considering specifically the action of Beowulf , Wigalf as young warrior, and the cowardly retainer at the dragon fight | 5 |
| 34 | 3 r d S | Discuss the summoning of Everyman, as a morality play and the reasons of its popularity during the middle ages | 5 |
| 35 | 3 r | "most surviving medieval plays are religious in one way or another, they narrate the life of the Christ, or enact miracles, or stage | 5 |

| | | | |
|----|------------------|--|-----|
| | d S | allegories of sin and repentance” Peter Womack. Discuss this question in relation to the most Known English medieval plays and drama that you know. | |
| 36 | 3 r d S | Explain why and how does William Shakespeare’s dramatic play Macbeth departs from many of its preceding medieval English plays in terms of subject-matter. | 5 |
| 37 | 3 r d S | The genre of ‘Beowulf’ and the themes it explores go perfectly well with Anglo-Saxon mentality and ethics . Comment and illustrate with relevant examples. | 5/4 |
| 38 | 4 t h S | Many of John Donne’s lyrics unconventional and witty arguments. The speaker is often willing to argue almost any position in order to achieve his end. Thus a penchant for various figures of speech is long encountered. Explain by giving some examples from poems that you know. | 4 |
| 39 | 2 n d S | Answer the following question in a well-written essay: the tradition of ancient Germanic tribes, which have apparently inspired the poet of the epic Beowulf, glorified royal generosity and blood-revengeance. Explain this by referring to the most vivid examples of these behaviors in the epic. | 5/4 |
| 40 | 2 n d S | Answer the following question in a well structured essay. Define Romanticism by highlighting some of its distinctive characteristics and themes. | 1 |
| 41 | 2 n d S | Analyse the following passage | 4 |
| 42 | 2 n d S | How does St. John serve as a foil to Mr. Rochester? | 5 |

| | | | |
|----|------------------|--|-----|
| 43 | 1 s t S | Discuss the main features of romantic poetry. (please make reference to the poems studied in class) | 1 |
| 44 | 1 s t S | Discuss Rudyard Kipling's view of imperialism in his short story "Lispeth" | 4/5 |
| 45 | 1 s t S | Discuss the main romantic features of Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" | 4 |
| 46 | 1 s t S | In what ways is Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" an allegory? | 4/5 |
| 47 | 1 s t S | Analyse the following passage taken from Charlotte Brontë's <u>Jane Eyre</u> . | 4 |
| 48 | 1 s t S | How does Miss Temple serve as a foil to Mr. Brocklehurst? What main impact will each one have on Jane | 5 |
| 49 | 1 s t S | Compare and contrast Shakespeare's sonnets 18 and 130. Which one is your favourite? Explain. | 5 |
| 50 | 1 s t S | In what ways is Wordsworth's 'The Daffodils' a glorification of the "inwards eye"? | 5 |
| 51 | 1 s t S | Identify the following lines (poet and poem's title) | 1 |

| | | | |
|----|------------------|---|---|
| 52 | 1 s t s | Then analyse them(base your analysis on the theme and the main figures of speech) | 4 |
| 53 | 1 s t S | Read the following sonnet, then answer the questions(sonnet 19 William Shakespeare): To whom do you think the poem is dedicated | 2 |
| 54 | 1 s t S | Briefly summarize the argument of the sonnet | 2 |
| 55 | 1 s t S | Discuss three distinct figures of speech used by the poet 4 | |
| 56 | 1 s t S | Identify the following: Rhyme scheme, rhyme, alliteration, assonance | 4 |
| | | | |