

**TEACHING LITERARY TEXTS AT THE SECONDARY
STAGE IN THE SULTANATE OF OMAN:
PLANNING AND PRACTICE**

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Tables	vii
Figures	viii
Appendices	ix
Declaration	x
Abstract	xi
Acknowledgements	xii
Key to transliteration	xiii
Introduction	1–11
1. The background of the study	1
2. Questions raised by the study	6
3. Outline of the chapters	7
4. Importance of the study	9
5. the limitations of the study	10
6. Operational definitions	10
Chapter One	
The Educational Value of Teaching Literature	12–49
1.1 The ancient Arabs' perspective	12
1.1.1 The implication of education in the development of the meaning of <i>adab</i>	13
1.1.2 The relationship between poetry and education from the ancient Arabs' perspective	14
1.1.3 The movement of didactic poetry (<i>naẓm</i>): using a poetic form for educational purposes	16
1.2 The educational value of teaching literature from the modern Arabs' perspective	18
1.2.1 Development of language	22
1.2.1.1 Enrichment of language	22
1.2.1.2 Oral reading	24
1.2.1.3 Verbal and written expression	26
1.2.1.4 Sensitivity to language	28
1.2.2 Moral development	34
1.2.3 Human experience and knowledge	38
1.2.4 Development of national consciousness	40
1.2.5 Enjoyment and pleasure	44
1.3 Conclusion	47

Chapter Two

The Content of the Literary Text Syllabus	50–70
2.1 The selection of the content	50
2.2 Criteria for selecting literary texts	52
2.2.1 Validity	53
2.2.2 Pupils' interests	56
2.2.3 Learnability	59
2.2.4 Utility	60
2.2.5 Universality	61
2.2.6 Consistency	62
2.3 A Model for selecting literary texts	65
2.5 Conclusion	68

Chapter Three

Teaching Literary Texts at Secondary School

Stage in the Sultanate of Oman	71–106
3.1 The available sources.....	71
3.2 Goals for teaching literary texts	73
3.1 The goals: discussion and critique	75
3.2. The content of the literary text curriculum	80
3.2.1 Guidelines for selecting literary texts	81
3.2.1.1 The guidelines: discussion and critique	82
3.2.2 Types of literary texts	84
3.2.3 Suggested activities and questions	86
3.2.3.1 Understanding and comprehension	87
3.2.3.2 Lexicon and semantics	87
3.2.3.3 Discussion and analysis	88
3.2.3.4 Appreciation and criticism	88
3.2.3.5 Individual activities	89
3.2.3.6 Suggested activities and questions: discussion and critique	89
3.3 The approach to teaching	91
3.3.1 Introducing the text	91
3.3.2 Reading the text	91
3.3.3 Discussing the general content of the text	92
3.3.4 Illustrating the text, discussing its underlying ideas and analysing it	92
3.3.5 Appreciation and criticism	93
3.3.6 Individual activities	93
3.3.7 The approach to teaching: discussion and critique	93

3.4 The relationship between literary texts and the other parts of the Arabic language curriculum	95
3.5 The distinction between the texts in muṭāla‘a and nuṣuuṣ	97
3.6 Conclusion	103

Chapter Four

The methodology of the fieldwork	107–143
4.1 The population of the study	107
4.2 Permission for data collection	110
4.3 Instrument of the study	111
4.4 The first questionnaire: problems related to the study of poetry texts	112
4.4.1 The purpose of the first questionnaire	112
4.4.2 Sources of the first questionnaire	113
4.4.3 The first draft of the first questionnaire	114
4.4.4 The validity of the first questionnaire	115
4.4.4.1 The meaning of validity	115
4.4.4.2 Examining the validity of the first questionnaire	117
4.4.4.2.1 The specialists’ responses to the evaluation sheet	119
4.4.4.2.2 The specialists’ comments and suggestions for modifications to the first questionnaire	120
4.4.5 The final version of the first questionnaire	122
4.4.6 Testing the first questionnaire	123
4.4.7 The reliability of the first questionnaire	124
4.4.7.1 The meaning of reliability	124
4.4.7.2 Examining the reliability of the first questionnaire	127
4.4.7.2.1 Reliability analysis using the half-split technique	127
4.4.7.2.2 Reliability analysis using the application and re-application technique	128
4.4.8 The final application of the first questionnaire	128
4.5 The second questionnaire: poetry genres and forms	129
4.5.1 The purpose of the second questionnaire	129
4.5.2 The sources of the second questionnaire	130
4.5.3 The first draft of the second questionnaire	130
4.5.4 The validity of the second questionnaire	131
4.5.4.1 The specialists’ responses to the evaluation sheet	134
4.5.4.2 The specialists’ comments and suggestions for modifications to the second questionnaire	135
4.5.5 The final version of the second questionnaire	137
4.5.6 Testing the second questionnaire	138

4.5.7 The reliability of the second questionnaire	139
4.5.7.1 Reliability analysis using the half-split technique	139
4.5.7.2 Reliability analysis using the application and re-application technique	140
4.5.8 The final application of the second questionnaire	140
4.6 Statistical treatment of the data	141
4.7 Conclusion	41

Chapter Five

Findings from the Problems of Studying Poetry Texts	144–184
5.1 The statistical treatment of the data collected	144
5.2 Findings from the pupils' responses	146
5.2.1 The pupils' point of view	146
5.2.1.1 Problems related to the teacher and teaching procedures	147
5.2.1.2 Problems related to the pupils' role in studying poetry texts	149
5.2.1.3 Problems relevant to the curriculum and school facilities	151
5.2.2 Pupils' comments	153
5.2.3 The statistical differences between male and female pupils	155
5.3 Findings from the teachers' responses	156
5.3.1 The teachers' point of view	156
5.3.2 Teachers' comments	160
5.3.3 The statistical differences between male and female teachers' responses	162
5.4 Findings from the inspectors' and experts' responses	163
5.4.1 The inspectors and experts' point of view	163
5.4.1.1 Problems related to the teacher and teaching procedures	163
5.4.1.2 Problems related to the pupils' role in studying poetry texts	164
5.4.1.3 Problems related to the curriculum and school facilities	165
5.4.2 Experts' and inspectors' comments	167
5.5 Discussion and interpretation of the problems identified	167
5.5.1 The pupils' role	167
5.5.2 The nature of the poetry texts	172
5.5.3 The teacher's role	173
5.5.4 The content of the programme of poetry texts	176
5.5.5 The relationship between literary texts and other parts of the Arabic teaching curriculum	179
5.6 Conclusion	181

Chapter Six

Findings Related to the Poetry Genres and Forms	185–221
6.1 The Arabic poetry genres and forms in the questionnaire	185
6.2 The statistical treatment of the data from the questionnaire on poetry topics and genres	194
6.3 Findings from the pupils' responses	196
6.3.1 The pupils' responses to the poetry genres and forms	196
6.3.1.1 Panegyric poetry	196
6.3.1.2 Satiric poetry	197
6.3.1.3 Elegiac poetry	198
6.3.1.4 Descriptive poetry	199
6.3.1.5 Love poetry	200
6.3.1.6 Meditative poetry	201
6.3.1.7 Boastful poetry	202
6.3.1.8 Nostalgic poetry	202
6.3.1.9 Apology poetry	203
6.3.1.10 Religious poetry	204
6.3.1.11 Exhortation poetry	204
6.3.1.12 Modern poetry genres and forms	205
6.3.2 The statistical differences between male and female pupils' responses	208
6.4 Findings from the teachers' responses	210
6.5 Findings from the inspectors and experts' responses	213
6.6 A comparison of the suitable poetry between teachers and inspectors and experts	215
6.7 A comparison between the poetry genres and forms preferred by the pupils and those seen as appropriate by teachers, and inspectors and experts	216
6.8 A comparison between the pupils' poetry preferences and the set poetry texts	218
6.9 Conclusion	220
Conclusion, Suggestions and Recommendations	222–242
1 General conclusion	222
2 Suggested remedies and improvements	227
3 Suggestions for future educational studies	241
Bibliography	243–250
Appendices	251–293

TABLES

5.1	Percentages of pupils who selected scale 3 for the items on the teacher and teaching procedures	147
5.2	Percentages of pupils who selected scale 3 for the items on the pupils' role in studying poetry texts	150
5.3	Percentages of pupils who selected scale three for the items on the curriculum and school facilities	151
5.4	The significance of the difference between the totals of male and female pupils' responses to the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts	155
5.5	Percentages of male and female teachers who selected scale 3 for the problems of studying poetry texts	157
5.6	The significance of the difference between the totals of male and female teachers' responses to the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts	162
5.7	Percentages of inspectors and experts who selected scale 3 for the items on the teachers and teaching procedures	164
5.8	Percentages of inspectors and experts who selected scale 3 for the items on the pupils' role in studying poetry texts	165
5.9	Percentages of inspectors and experts who selected scale 3 for the items on the curriculum and school facilities	166
6.1	Male and female pupils' responses to panegyric poetry	196
6.2	Male and female pupils' responses to satiric poetry	197
6.3	Male and female pupils' responses to elegiac poetry	198
6.4	Male and female pupils' responses to descriptive poetry	199
6.5	Male and female pupils' responses to love poetry	200
6.6	Male and female pupils' responses to meditative poetry	201
6.7	Male and female pupils' responses to boastful poetry	202
6.8	Male and female pupils' responses to nostalgic poetry	203
6.9	Male and female pupils' responses to apology poetry	203

6.10	Male and female pupils' responses to religious poetry	204
6.11	Male and female pupils' responses to exhortation poetry	205
6.12	Male and female pupils' responses to the modern poetry genres and forms	205
6.13	The significance of the difference between the totals of male and female pupils' responses to the questionnaire on poetry genres and forms	208
6.14	The significance of the differences between the means of male and female pupils' poetry preferences	209
6.15	The percentages of male and female teachers who considered the poetry genres and forms appropriate for secondary school pupils	210
6.16	The percentages of experts and inspectors who considered the poetry genres and forms appropriate for secondary school pupils	213
6.17	Poetry genres and forms that are rejected by most pupils but seen as appropriate by most teachers, inspectors and experts	216
6.18	The genres of the set poetry texts compared with the pupils' preferences	218

FIGURES

2.1	A model for selecting literary texts	67
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APPENDICES

1.	Numbers of the Arabic teachers and pupils in both scientific and literary divisions in the secondary schools in the Governate of Muscat	252
2.	Licence from the Ministry of Higher Education to carry out the fieldwork	253
3.	Letter from the Office of Research and Development to the Director General of Education in the Governate of Muscat	255
4.	Letter from the Directorate of Educational Supervision to the head teachers of the secondary schools	257
5.	Names and occupations of the specialists who judged the validity of the questionnaires	259
6.	The letter of instructions for the referees and the evaluation sheet for the questionnaire on the problems	260
7.	The final version of the first questionnaire – the problems of studying poetry texts at the secondary stage – and the covering letters	264
8.	The letter of instructions for the referees and the evaluation sheet for the questionnaire on the poetry genres and forms	269
9.	The final version of the second questionnaire – the poetry genres and forms – and the covering letters	273
10.	Male and female pupils' responses to the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts	278
11.	Male and female teachers' responses to the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts	280
12.	Inspectors and experts' responses to the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts	282
13.	Male and female pupils' responses to the questionnaire on the poetry genres and forms	283
14.	Male and female teachers' responses to the questionnaire on the poetry genres and forms	286
15.	Inspectors and experts' responses to the questionnaire on the poetry genres and forms	289
16.	The statistical significant differences between male and female pupils' responses to the questionnaire on the poetry genres and forms	291

DECLARATION

**I, THE UNDERSIGNED, HEREBY DECLARE THAT THIS
THESIS IS WRITTEN BY MYSELF AND ANY
REFERENCES MADE TO THE SOURCES
ARE DULY ACKNOWLEDGED**

Abdullah Musallam Ali Al-Hashmi

ABSTRACT

This study is an investigation into some questions regarding the teaching of Arabic literary texts in secondary schools in the Sultanate of Oman. Literary texts carry a significant weight in the Arabic curriculum at the secondary stage and are expected to achieve multiple goals. The study examines the teaching of literary texts in general and focuses on the teaching of poetry texts in its fieldwork. The introduction outlines the scope of the study and raises the relevant questions. Chapter one investigates the educational value of teaching literature. It describes the ancient and modern Arab educationists' perspectives on the aims of teaching literature and discusses the different aspects of its value to society and the individual, including the development of language, moral education, human experience, knowledge and enjoyment. Chapter two discusses the selection of the content of the literary texts syllabus. The various criteria for the selection are discussed with special reference to those set by some modern Arab educationists. The discussion covers principles relevant to the nature of the subject, pupils and society. Chapter three analyses the constituent elements of the literary texts syllabus at the secondary stage: the goals, the content and the teaching approach. Chapter four outlines the procedures followed in the fieldwork of the study. It describes how the questionnaires were compiled, tested for validity and reliability, and then applied. In chapter five, the findings from the first questionnaire – the problems of studying poetry texts – were presented and discussed. Different types of problems in studying poetry texts were revealed, in both planning and practice. The reasons for such problems were discussed in five categories: (1) the pupils' role; (2) the nature of the poetry texts; (3) the teacher's role; (4) the content of the programme of poetry texts; and (5) the relationship between literary texts and other parts of the Arabic teaching curriculum. Chapter six presents and analyses the findings from the second questionnaire – the poetry genres and forms. It appeared that secondary stage pupils prefer certain types of poetry genres that are not necessarily congruous with those seen as appropriate by their teachers and the inspectors and experts. In reverse, the set texts did not always match the pupils' poetry preferences. The thesis is wound up with suggested remedies and improvements as well as recommendations for further studies in this aspect of education.

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KEY TO TRANSLITERATION

(a) Consonants	
ء	'
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	'
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
هـ	h
و	w
ي	y
ا	a, except in contrast state (iḍāfa) when it is <i>at</i>

(b) Short vowels		
<i>fatḥa</i>	—	a
<i>kasra</i>	—	i
<i>ḍamma</i>	—	u

(c) Long vowels		
<i>fatḥa and alif</i>	ا	ā
<i>kasra and yā'</i>	ي	ī
<i>ḍamma and wāw</i>	و	uu

(d) Diphthongs	
<i>fatḥa and yā'</i>	ay
<i>fatḥa and wāw</i>	aw

Introduction

This introduction highlights the topic of the present study and raises the relevant questions. It also explains the importance of the study and outlines the content of its chapters. The introduction concludes by giving brief definitions of the terms frequently used throughout the thesis.

1. The Background of the Study

Teaching literature is seen as an important part of all stages of the Arabic teaching curriculum. From the very beginning of their schooling, children have to learn by heart different poetic extracts called *anāshīd* (songs) or *maḥfuuzāt* (poetic texts known by heart) which are included in the set reading textbooks. The *anāshīd* and *maḥfuuzāt* are written in simple language and cover topics of the cultural and natural environments in which the children live, such as family, friendship, nature, school, the nation, etc. The light rhythm in which the *anāshīd* and *maḥfuuzāt* are composed is intended to make them easy for reading and singing by individuals and groups. Clearly, the teaching of such texts is meant to improve the children's reading ability, to enhance their enjoyment of poetical language and, at the same time, to instil in them some social, cultural and moral values.

The language, rhythm and topics of the *anāshīd* and *maḥfuuzāt* become more complex as children progress in their schooling. At the preparatory stage, children are taught a variety of poetry and prose extracts from different periods. Arabic poetry genres such as *wasf* (description) and *rithā'* (elegy) are introduced at this stage. The poetry extracts, though still linguistically easy, vary in their metrical

forms and represent the well-known traditional forms of Arabic prosody, for example *al-ṭawīl*, *al-kāmil*, *al-wāfir* or *al-basīṭ* meters.

At the secondary stage, the literary texts are included in a separate textbook called *al-Muṭāla‘a wa al-nuṣuuṣ* (reading comprehension and literary texts), which is a part of the literature syllabus in addition to literary history and literary criticism. The literary texts represent the different periods of the history of Arabic literature – from pre-Islamic to the modern times – and cover various topics and genres.

Clearly, literary texts have strong presence in the curriculum during all the stages of education, especially in the secondary school, where they are treated as a separate part of the Arabic curriculum. The teaching of literary texts at this level is intended to achieve multiple aims as listed in the following statements from the late twentieth-century works on teaching Arabic literature (for example, Yuunus & al-Nāqa, n.d: 221–223; Samak, 1979: 692–693; Quura, 1981: 233–234; Ibrāhīm, 1984: 253–261; al-Sayyid, 1988: 585–586; Aḥmad, 1988: 270–276; Madkuur, 1991: 206–207; Ismā‘īl, 1991: 268–270; Shaḥāta, 1992: 180–181):

1. enable pupils to appreciate the beauty of the language, to enjoy the beauty of an idea, style and discourse, which can expand their literary imagination;
2. develop the capacity of the pupils to understand, criticise and analyse literature, to extract features of beauty from the ideas, style, sensory images and rhythm and to expand critical thinking;
3. encourage pupils to invest their time in reading literature for solving social and personal problems and for amusement;

4. link pupils with the literary heritage of their language, including aesthetic, social and moral values;
5. improve the pupils' ability to recite poetry and prose with expression;
6. increase the richness of the pupils' language in vocabulary, sentence structure and style to improve reading and understanding as well as enhance creative writing and speech;
7. polish the pupils' characters and cultivate their minds with upright values and lofty sentiments;
8. expand the pupils' intellectual horizons, deepen their understanding of life and give them the opportunity to grasp the factors that make up the present and affect the future from the experiences depicted in the range of literary texts;
9. connect the pupils with the history, traditions and motives which contribute to their national pride, to help them understand their community and participate effectively in solving its problems.

Clearly, the literary texts syllabus in secondary schools is expected to serve different aims in the linguistic, literary, moral and national spheres. These aims are excessively ambitious and impractical and the ability of the literary texts syllabus to achieve all these aims is doubtful. However, these different aims demonstrate the importance of teaching literary texts at both the theoretical and practical levels.

Nevertheless, those interested in teaching literary texts at the secondary stage in Oman accept that several mistakes have been made in this area, and that these impede the achievement of the aims of literature education. With regard to the syllabus, the set texts are selected without the input of the teachers and their pupils – who interact with the texts and study them. Most of the questions and activities

which follow the texts cover linguistic difficulties and provide no more than superficial analysis of the figures of speech without enough attention to the appreciation of the literary qualities of the texts concerned.

When teaching texts, teachers stop at illustrating the superficial meaning and highlighting some figures of speech at the level of rhetorical definitions. Most of them do not give the pupils enough opportunity to participate in the lesson. In addition, most teachers ignore the activities associated with the literary texts, such as the non-class activities and the memorisation of the required extracts. It appears that this situation creates resentment against literature in the pupils and reduces their desire to study it.

Recent written works in the field show that some of these mistakes are apparent in the teaching of literary texts in the rest of the Arab world. Madkuur (1991: 212) notices that most of the texts in secondary schools are difficult to comprehend and analyse. Aḥmad (1988: 45) emphasises that the texts are not chosen to meet the pupils' needs or to accord with the problems and future needs of society.

Aḥmad (1988: 375) also observes that most teachers do not give their pupils enough time to think and form literary judgements. Moreover, he reports that most teachers ignore literary appreciation, the integration of the units of the texts and analysis of the figures of speech.

Furthermore, fieldwork in Egypt and Jordan reveals that the literary texts syllabus has suffered some problems in both planning and practice. In his

“Evaluative Study of the Literary Curriculum for the Third Secondary Year in Jordanian and Egyptian schools”, Mājid al-Ashmar (1979) points out that most of the selected texts are poetry and that the curriculum in both countries neglects stories, plays and other texts which encourage pupils to give their opinions, besides addressing their needs and intellectual problems. He has also found that the pupils’ level of literary appreciation in both countries is very low.

In his research “An Evaluation of the Literature and Texts Syllabus of the First Secondary Year in the Azhar Institutes” in Egypt, Shawqī Abuu ‘Arāyis (1983) shows that:

1. the content of the literature and texts curriculum has not achieved its goals;
2. it does not consider the needs and problems of the pupils and their society;
3. it needs reorganising and integrating;
4. most of the literary texts are difficult to study and analyse;
5. the content is geared to the historical facts more than the literary aspects of the texts;
6. most of the pupils and teachers have agreed to reduce some of the topics, such as the *mu‘allaqāt* and biographies, and add new topics, such as stories, plays and modern literary genres.

In his research on “A Proposed Curriculum in Teaching Literature and Literary Texts for the First Secondary Year” in Egypt, Muḥammad Aḥmad (1987) has found that the experts questioned are not satisfied with the literature curriculum and that there is no balance between prose and poetry in the set texts.

In his study “Analysing and Assessing the Values and Attitudes in the Textbooks of Language and Literary Culture for the Secondary Stage in Jordan”, Jamāl al-Shā’ir (1997) reveals that those textbooks display the following weaknesses:

1. The content is not coherently organised.
2. The terminology is neither unified nor consistent.
3. The content is apparently irrelevant to the community’s concerns.

2. Questions Raised by the Study

The above observations and findings from previous studies raise the following questions concerning the teaching of literary texts at the secondary stage in the Sultanate of Oman:

1. What is the value of teaching literature in secondary schools?
2. What principles should be considered when selecting literary texts for secondary school pupils?
3. How are literary texts treated in the sources written by the specialists in teaching literature at the secondary stage in the Ministry of Education? This question leads to the following questions:
 - (a) What are the stated goals for teaching literary texts?
 - (b) What are the principles used to select the set texts?
 - (c) What is the suggested approach for teaching literary texts?
 - (d) To what extent does the perspective on teaching literary texts as found in the above sources comply with the nature of literary texts and their value in education?

4. What problems, if any, are associated with the study of poetry texts at the secondary stage according to pupils, Arabic teachers, inspectors and curriculum experts in the Sultanate of Oman?
5. Which poetry topics and genres are most preferred by secondary-stage pupils in the Sultanate of Oman?
6. According to Arabic teachers, inspectors and experts, which poetry topics and genres are most appropriate for secondary-stage pupils in the Sultanate of Oman?
7. To what extent do the set poetry texts match the preferences of secondary-stage pupils?

This study will seek to investigate the above questions.

3. Outline of the Chapters

The answers to the above questions and further discussion are covered by the six chapters of the present thesis. The questions raised are of two types: theoretical (questions 1–3) and practical (questions 4–7). They are discussed in chapters one to three, and four to six respectively. The answers to the practical questions 4–7 were obtained from fieldwork.

Chapters One and Two give theoretical background for the discussion carried out in the remaining chapters. The educational value of teaching literature, which is the theme of the first question, is investigated in chapter one. The chapter analyses the reasons why literature was considered pedagogical by the early Arabs as well as by modern Arab educationists. It also discusses the value of teaching literature in society and to the individual, including the development of language, moral education, human experience, knowledge and enjoyment.

Question 2, the content of the literary texts syllabus, is dealt with in Chapter Two. Various criteria for selecting literary texts and relevant issues are listed and discussed. A working model with specific principles for selecting literary texts for secondary school pupils is then suggested.

Chapter Three presents an outline of the teaching of literary texts in the Sultanate of Oman in answer to the third and associated questions. It describes the constituent elements of the literary text curriculum, its goals, content and teaching method. The chapter also clarifies the relationship between literary texts and other parts of the curriculum and explores the subtle distinction between texts used in *muṭāla‘a* (reading comprehension) and those in *nuṣuuṣ adabiyya* (literary texts).

Chapter Four describes the procedures in the fieldwork which I carried out to investigate the practical questions. The chapter describes the population from which the data were gathered and mentions the permissions needed to access the schools. The questionnaires distributed as part of the study are described in detail with regard to their purposes, sources, validity, reliability, first and final versions and their final application. The chapter concludes with the statistical procedures used to analyse the findings.

Chapter Five presents the findings from the questionnaire about the problems of the study of poetry texts at the secondary stage, this being the answer to question 4. The findings from the three groups of samples – pupils, teachers, and inspectors and experts – are presented and analysed, together with additional comments. The chapter also discusses the reasons for the problems identified.

Chapter Six deals with questions 5–7 by analysing the findings from the questionnaire about poetry genres and forms. The chapter first gives a brief definition of each genre in the questionnaire. The findings are then presented in three main sections: pupils, teachers, and inspectors and experts. Then the pupils' poetry preferences are compared with the genres selected by the teachers, inspectors and experts as appropriate for the pupils as well as the set poetry texts, following which similarities and differences are identified.

The conclusion includes a general summary of the issues and findings discussed and presented throughout the thesis. It also gives suggested remedies and improvements for the current situation of teaching literary texts at the secondary stage in the Sultanate of Oman. The thesis ends with recommended educational studies in the field of teaching literary texts.

4. Importance of the Study

This study gains its importance from being the first to investigate the situation of teaching literary texts in the Sultanate of Oman. It includes an assessment of the teaching of literary texts in secondary schools in the Sultanate of Oman with regard to the texts themselves and the teaching process, to improve the teaching of these texts and to tackle the problems that might impede it. In particular, it is hoped that it will be useful in clarifying the following:

1. the real value of teaching literary texts;
2. principles for selecting suitable literary texts for secondary school pupils;
3. the teaching of literary texts in the Omani secondary schools in its goals, content and teaching approach;

4. the poetry preferences of the Omani secondary school pupils;
5. the problems facing secondary school pupils in studying literary texts, the causes of these problems and suitable suggestions to solve them; and
6. suggestions for new educational studies in this field.

Needless to say, the previous points should enable those in charge of teaching Arabic literature to observe effectively the teaching of literary texts in secondary schools.

5. Limitations of the Study

1. General secondary schools under the auspices of the Ministry of Education; therefore it excludes Islamic, vocational and private schools.
2. Literary texts set for the secondary school pupils; therefore it does not deal with the texts set for reading comprehension, literary criticism or the history of Arabic literature.
3. Boys' and girls' schools in the Governate of Muscat. (details are given in Chapter Four, section 4.1)

6. Operational definitions

- *Secondary stage*: that which follows the preparatory stage in the Omani educational system. It consists of three years, the first of which is general and the second and third of which are divided into literary and scientific divisions. The usual age of the pupils at this stage is 15 to 17. In the Omani educational system boys and girls are taught in separate schools.
- *Literary texts*: the poetry and prose extracts that are included in the literary textbooks set for secondary school pupils in the Sultanate of Oman.

- *Problems of studying literary texts*: difficulties that impede the effective study of literary texts at the secondary stage, including mistakes made by the education authority, which plans the literary texts syllabus, and the Arabic teachers in the secondary schools.
- *Non-class activities*: learning activities that are done by pupils whether as individuals or in groups, under the teachers' supervision, to help achieve the set goals, widen the pupils' knowledge of the subject and increase their interests in it. These activities encompass those performed in or out of school.
- *Literary preferences*: literary topics and genres that the secondary stage pupils prefer and in which they are interested.
- *Behavioural objectives*: statements of intent, much more precise than goals, and quite specific as to the learned behaviours the pupil is expected to be able to exhibit as a result of the teaching (Rowntree, 1981:22).
- *Goals*: broad statements of educational intention, which describe what pupils are expected to acquire as a result of the teaching and learning interaction with a specific school subject.

The Educational Value of Teaching Literature

This chapter investigates the educational value of teaching literature from the perspective of ancient and modern Arab's educationists. The first part analyses the reason why literature was considered pedagogical by the early Arab leaders and scholars. The second part outlines the aims of modern Arab educationists in teaching literature. Finally, the chapter discusses the value to society and the individual of teaching literature, including the development of language, moral education, human experience, knowledge and enjoyment.

1.1 The Ancient Arabs' Perspective

From the dawn of Arab history, literature was perceived to possess educational value for future generations. It was used to instil tribal pride in the minds of the people. Children were required to learn by heart the famous poems that celebrated their tribe's exploits and reviled the enemy. For example, the children of the Arab tribe Taghlib were forced to learn by heart the famous *Mu'allaqah* of 'Amr b. Kulthum (lived in the 6th century AD), although this keenness brought them vilification from the tribe's rivals (see al-Bustānī, 1979a: 161–162). The educational value of literature in general and poetry, in particular, as considered by the early Arabs, is revealed in analysis of (1) the development of the Arabic word for literature (*adab*); (2) some sayings by early Arab leaders and scholars; and (3) the movement of didactic poetry in the Abbasid period. These three items are discussed in details in the following three sections.

1.1.1 The Implication of Education in the Development of the Meaning of *Adab*

The Arabic word for literature, *adab*, has developed through the different periods of Arab history. In the pre-Islamic period, *adab* shifted from the meaning of inviting people to a banquet to inviting them to perform noble actions and practice good behaviour. The relationship between the two meanings originated in the nature of life in the desert. Harsh living conditions and shortages of food and water required people to be generous and to co-operate with one another. Since inviting people to a feast was a noble action that showed generosity, encouraging them to continue practising such good behaviour was also necessary.

In the Islamic period, *adab* evolved to mean educating people to be knowledgeable, noble-mannered and well-behaved. This may be seen in the tradition of the Prophet Muḥammad: “*Addabanī rabbī fa aḥsana ta’dībī*” (My Lord educated me and He educated me well). Such an education could be obtained from poetry, for ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23 AH/644 AD) advised his son: “*wa iḥfaḏ maḥāsīn al-shi’r yaḥsun adabuk*” (Learn by heart good poetry so that you might be well-mannered) (Aḥmad, 1979: 33). This educational meaning was enhanced in the Umayyad period by the emergence of the word *mu’addib* (teacher/educator). The *mu’addib*’s job was to educate the children of the caliphs and the upper class to have good manners by teaching them the *ayyām* and *akhbār* (wars and stories) of the Arabs and Arabic poetry.

In the Abbasid period, *adab* was extended to include other kinds of knowledge, especially the language-related sciences such as syntax, morphology,

rhetoric and prosody. Recently, *adab* has acquired two meanings. The first is politeness and courtesy, which is related to its educational aspect. The second is the equivalent of the English word "literature" which means, in its broadest sense, fictional and other compositions designed to express emotions and analyse and advocate ideas.

1.1.2 The Relationship between Poetry and Education from the Ancient Arabs' Perspective

Early Arab leaders and scholars gave poetry a special role with regard to its educational value. In addition to giving his son the above-mentioned advice, the caliph 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb wrote to the people in the main cities of the Islamic empire, ordering them to teach their children swimming and horsemanship, proverbs and good poetry (al-Jāḥiẓ, vol.2, n.d.: 182). Furthermore, poetry comes, in order of importance, after the Holy Qur'ān in the two pieces of advice which the caliphs Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik (d. 99 AH/717 AD) and Hāruun al-Rashīd (d. 194 AH/809 AD) gave to the *mu'addibs* of their sons (see 'Āshuur & Khulayfāt, 1988: 212–213). They included the basic principles of the kind of instruction that the two caliphs wanted for their sons. In addition, there was an emphasis on the moral values to be acquired and the type of behaviour that the *mu'addibs* needed from them to nurture the sons' abilities and help them reach a high level of education. The Muslim scholar, Ibn Sīnā (d. 429 AH/1037 AD) in his book *al-Siyāsa*, outlined the primary knowledge and skills necessary for children once they are physically and mentally ready to learn. Good poetry which awakened the child's desire to learn, warned him of ignorance, fostered generosity and urged him to respect his parents

was one of the most important kinds of knowledge that children needed in their early education (see Ma'ruuf, 1987: 113).

The Arabic word used for teaching poetry is *riwāya* (narration) and the imperative verb form used in the above pieces of advice is *rawwi*. *Riwāya* does not only mean teaching; it also suggests training the child to be a *rāwī* (i.e. narrator). This implies encouraging the child to memorise as much poetry as possible.

It may be concluded from the perspective of the ancient Arabs that teaching poetry was intended to achieve three aims. First, poetry was seen as a vehicle for moral education. It included wisdom and values and called for noble manners. It was believed that poetry had the power to shape one's character and conduct. Second, poetry was considered to be an elevated form of expression in which ideas and images were presented in a select beautiful language. Therefore, poetry was an example of a high level of linguistic skill that could be imitated in speech and writing. Memorising a large amount of poetry was considered a condition for developing into a good writer or speaker. From Ibn Khaldun's point of view (d. 808 AH/1406 AD), memorising the words of the Arabs is the only way to achieve what he calls "*malakat al-lisān al-'arabī*" (the talent of Arabic tongue). Memorising their words, he explains, helps one to recognise their patterns of speech and puts one on the same footing with those brought up in the time of the ancient Arabs (see Ma'ruuf, 1987: 114). Third, Arabic poetry was seen as a repository of Arab history (*ayyām & akhbār*). It narrated the stories of the Arabs and described their way of life. It was, therefore, a means to acquaint children with the history of their ancestors.

In addition, having a large amount of Arabic poetry memorised and ready to recall enables one to quote in speech or writing the verse appropriate to the situation. Such an ability is still seen in Arab culture as a sign of good education and wit. It also qualifies one to be a *munshid*, a reciter of poetry at social gatherings in the evening. The *munshid* was highly regarded in Arab society.

1.1.3 The Movement of Didactic Poetry (*Naẓm*): Using a Poetic Form for Educational Purposes

The Abbasid period witnessed the emergence of recording knowledge in writing, starting with language and religion which were motivated by the necessity to preserve the Holy Qur'ān. Poetry was related to this movement in three ways. The language of poetry was considered to represent standard Arabic usage. Scholars looked to poetry to deduce the rules of Arabic grammar. Poetry was a means of explaining certain words used in the Holy Qur'ān. Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68 AH/687–8 AD), the famous Companion of the Prophet Muḥammad, advised people to extract the meaning of obscure words in the Holy Qur'ān by examining how they were used in Arabic poetry.

The expansion of knowledge and the fact that poetry was easy to memorise, saw the emergence of didactic poetry (*naẓm*) in that period. Didactic poetry was composed in the various fields of knowledge of the time including astronomy, medicine, history, zoology, Islamic sciences such as *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and language-related sciences such as *naḥw* (syntax), *ṣarf* (morphology), *'arūḍ* (prosody) and *balāgha* (rhetoric). Even myths and stories were rewritten in *naẓm* to make them easy to memorise. Abān b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Lāḥiqī (d. 200 AH/815

AD) who was famous for his *naẓm* in different fields, composed a poem on *Kalīla wa dimna*, which included animal tales translated from Persian, and another one on the myth of *Sindibād*, which was translated from an Indian book. (For details see: Haddāra, 1981: 380–393; Stern, 1960: 2)

In addition to making knowledge easy for rote learning, it appears that *naẓm* also encouraged poetry readings at social gatherings, which help in making knowledge available for everyone. This might account for the rewriting of entire books with their details in *naẓm* despite the fact that they were written originally in prose. Furthermore, the popularity of *naẓm* reflected the Arab nation's fondness for metrical language.

The main points of a certain subject are first condensed and then put in a *manẓuuma* (knowledge composed in a metrical form). The poetic metre used for *naẓm* is usually *rajaz* because of its flexibility and metrical variation and irregularity. Such *manẓuuma* is then regarded as *matn* (the main body) of that subject and usually interpreted and commented on by some scholars, including sometimes the writers themselves.

Traditionally, a student who was interested in a particular subject first had to memorise the relevant *manẓuuma* and then study it under a scholar who would explain it in detail. Memorising the basic principles of a subject was based on the theory that the learner needed to keep them in mind and recall them as necessary. The traditional system of education in the Sultanate of Oman, where the present study took place, began in the Qur'anic schools with literacy after memorising short

chapters from the Holy Qur'ān. In the past, education for most people ended with learning how to read the Holy Qur'ān and write simple letters. Children who wanted to continue their education then had to memorise *Mulḥat al-i'rāb*, a *manẓūma* in Arabic grammar written by al-Ḥarīrī (d. 516 AH/1192 AD). The next stage was to join a scholar to have it explained. Learning Arabic grammar in this way was considered to be the essential foundation of education because grammar was seen as a vehicle for studying other fields, namely Islamic knowledge. Memorising *Alfiyyat ibn Mālik* – a *manẓūma* of thousand verses written by Ibn Mālik (d. 672 AH/1274 AD) – and reading one of its commentaries could follow for those who want to deepen their study of grammar. Alternatively, a student could turn to Islamic sciences such as *'aqīda* (Islamic faith) and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), starting with memorising the appropriate *manẓūma*. Memorising the *Mulḥa* and various relevant *manẓūmāt* is still required for students of Islamic sciences. Omani scholars have provided *manẓūmāt* in different fields of knowledge, especially Arabic syntax, morphology, prosody and Islamic faith (*'aqīda*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and its foundations (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). Some Omani scholars educated in the traditional system are still writing *manẓūmāt*, despite the fact that most students are no longer interested in such methods.

1.2 The Educational Value of Teaching Literature from the Modern Arabs' Perspective

Literature forms an important part of the Arabic teaching curriculum at the different stages of education in the Arab world. This demonstrates that Arab educationists

believe in the vital educational value of literature, inherited from the earlier Arab scholars as described above.

Late twentieth-century works on teaching Arabic have dealt with the teaching of literature, and its aims in particular, as an important part of the Arabic teaching programme (Yuunus & al-Nāqa, n.d: 221–223; Samak, 1979: 692–693; Quura, 1981: 233–234; Ibrāhīm, 1984: 253–261; al-Sayyid, 1988: 585–586; Aḥmad, 1988: 270–276; Madkuur, 1991: 206–207; Ismā‘īl, 1991: 268–270; Shaḥāta, 1992: 180–181).

Ibrāhīm (1984: 253–261) summarises the role of teaching literature from three aspects.

Firstly, the study of literature is, in his view, a learning process intended to effect desirable changes in the learners' characters by three types of influence: the cognitive, the emotional, and the practical. Ibrāhīm explains that literature offers learners new knowledge and experience (the cognitive influence) and, at the same time, affects their feelings (the emotional influence). These impacts on the learners' intellect and emotions may alter their beliefs and be demonstrated in their behaviour (the practical influence). Ibrāhīm supports the above points by providing examples of the effect of poetry and prose extracts on people's sentiments as well as the important role played by literature in creating some major events that influenced the history of the human race in general and that of the Arabs in particular.

Secondly, literature is a linguistic material which can be exploited to improve the learners' reading ability, training them in the comprehension of meaning, enriching their language, and developing their literary appreciation.

Thirdly, literature is a vehicle of knowledge which depicts life, including human nature and the natural environment. Ibrāhīm says that literature provides learners with social, moral, political and historical experiences from its descriptions of different aspects of human society.

Apart from Ibrāhīm, most late twentieth-century works on teaching Arabic literature describe its goals in broad statements (see the Introduction to the present thesis). These statements are similar to those about the goals for teaching literary texts in secondary schools in the Sultanate of Oman, which will be discussed and criticised in Chapter Three.

It seems that works of the above type attempt to justify the inclusion of literature in education by gathering all the possible results of the study of literature, regardless of the time required to achieve them on the one hand, and their relevance to the nature of literature on the other. Most of those statements are useful in defending the place of literature in education and can be utilised as general principles in planning the programme of teaching Arabic literature. However, it is difficult for teachers to translate these statements into behavioural objectives that could be achieved with organised teaching and at the same time observed and assessed as learning outcomes.

This problem was recognised by Aḥmad (1988: 270–276) in his study: *Manhaj muqtaraḥ fī al-adab wa al-nuṣuuṣ li al-ṣaff al-awwal al-thānawī* (i.e. A Proposed Curriculum in Literature and Texts for the First Secondary Year). Aḥmad noticed that the guidebook for teaching Arabic in Egyptian schools stated five broad goals for teaching literature, which were inappropriate for actual teaching. He made

a list of objectives as a prerequisite for his proposed curriculum. The list was divided into three categories, using Bloom's Taxonomy for instructional objectives. To demonstrate the validation of the list, Aḥmad gave it to a number of referees and modified it in accordance with their suggestions. The final version of the list consisted of 19 cognitive objectives, 16 affective objectives and 8 psychomotor objectives. The objectives in the list were based on the following goals:

1. acquiring background knowledge of the text and its author;
2. extracting new vocabulary, ideas, figures of speech and images embodied in the text;
3. eliciting some literary characteristics that are apparent in the text;
4. developing an interest in reading Arabic literature;
5. acquiring criteria for particular preferences and dislikes in literature;
6. developing moral values;
7. acquiring experience of human society; and
8. improving oral reading.

However, some of the statements were irrelevant to the study of literature, for example, the psychomotor objective which stated that pupils should be able to recall the text from memory and write it down correctly in beautiful handwriting. Developing beautiful clear handwriting should not be an objective of a literary lesson. Some objectives were also very broad and could be achieved by most school subjects, such as the statement which indicates that pupils should be proud of belonging to the nation and should glorify the exploits of the Arabs. In addition, no

statements regarding the criticism and appreciation of the texts were articulated clearly in the list.

Regardless of the difficulties inherent in the aims of teaching Arabic literature as described above, one can find some important educational values that are relevant, whether directly or indirectly, to the teaching of literature. Some of them are inferred from the value of teaching literature as perceived by the earlier Arab scholars. These aspects are discussed in the following sections. The discussion will be limited to (1) how literature can further an educational value; and (2) the extent to which that value is relevant to the nature of teaching literature in schools.

1.2.1 Development of Language

Officially, teaching literature is a part of the programme of teaching Arabic. Therefore, it is not surprising that literature is seen as a vehicle for achieving linguistic aims. Literature is considered to play a significant part in the improvement of the pupils' linguistic competence in different ways: increasing vocabulary, improving oral reading, improving written and oral composition, and enhancing sensitivity to language.

1.2.1.1 Enrichment of Language

With regard to the enrichment of language, Arab educationists refer to an increase in the meaning and usage of vocabulary and expressions. In the literature lesson, pupils should come across new vocabulary and groups of words and add them to their lexicon. Although new vocabulary can be obtained from a variety of sources, literature constitutes a valuable one as Yorke (1977: 327) states:

It seems common sense that any language activity whether it be watching television, listening to radio, talking, reading a newspaper, or reading a novel or a poem is likely to throw up vocabulary with which one is not familiar. Because the new word occurs in a context and is maybe repeated in a variety of contexts one may begin to pick up its meaning especially if one is interested in the topic in which it is embedded. Literature is only one source of new vocabulary but because of its rich contexts and the strong motivations of the fully engaged reader it might be a fruitful one.

In addition, teaching literature may differ from the other sources outlined above because it lends itself to an organised and planned experience. However, using literature as a means of acquiring new vocabulary may create dangers in the selection of texts and the teaching performance. Ibrāhīm (1984: 260) warns that the desire to enrich the pupils' "treasure of vocabulary" should not lead to selecting texts on the basis of lexical difficulty. With regard to teaching performance, teachers should not plan the literature lesson on the basis of increasing vocabulary. The danger here is that such action may result in distorting the genuine function of the literature lesson and turn it into a useless and boring word puzzle. So, how can the study of literature contribute to the enrichment of pupils' language in terms of words and expressions?

Words form the smallest lexical units in the text. Recognising the meaning of words and phrases is the basic activity required to understand the message. The location and role of some new words make it inevitable that pupils will explore that role without knowing the meaning of these new words. The discussion of these words in the context in which they occur in the text cannot pass without influencing to some extent the pupils' linguistic competence. The words may appear in oral or written expression or the pupils may recall their meaning when they meet them again

in a new context. Again, what is special about vocabulary caught during the treatment of literary texts is the literary context in which these words appear.

Most of the vocabulary acquired from literary texts should be caught rather than taught. In other words, pupils, at different rates and to fulfil different needs, will spontaneously catch new words and phrases (Yorke, 1977: 328) as pupils deal with a diversity of contexts in various literary texts. However, it may be argued that there seems little reason why teachers cannot refer to selected words or phrases with the aim of increasing their pupils' treasury of language. Three conditions need to be stressed here. The first is that the desire to introduce new vocabulary and phrases to pupils should not spoil the exploration of the literary qualities of the text during the instructional process. The second is that the new words should be carefully chosen on the basis of their usefulness to pupils. In other words, those words and phrases should be frequently used so that pupils will meet them again in their reading, both within and out with the school, and use them in their written and oral composition. The third is that those words or phrases should have a conspicuous role in the text and pupils need to deal with them separately to grasp the message or to be affected by a certain aspect of the text.

1.2.1.2 Oral Reading

Teaching literature is generally considered a vehicle for improving reading ability, the skill of which is a prerequisite for the study of any literary work. It will be clear in the discussion of the other values that literature may perform an essential role in developing pupils' capability in silent reading. The impact of teaching literature on the pupils' reading ability is not confined to the improvement in comprehension,

analysis and criticism in silent reading, but also enhances more efficiently the standard of oral reading.

Reading aloud is necessary for some literary forms, especially those which are written to be read aloud, such as poetry and speeches (*khutba*). Reading poetry and speeches aloud requires certain skills. In addition to the articulation of the words, the reader needs to represent the meanings and feelings implied in the text and attract the listeners' attention to convey the message and invite them to share the experience.

In poetry, for example, sound patterns are "devised by the poet to intensify the images and thus to heighten emotion and vitalise meaning" (Loban et al., 1961: 354). Therefore, the correct enunciation of the words should be accompanied by the precise connection between the syllables, so that the rhythmical effect of the sounds is articulated. The effort required for pronouncing the poetical sound patterns of a verse is far greater than that for reading sentences of conventional prose. This is simply because the union of the syllables is more important in poetry than in prose. In Arabic poetry, this ability is made difficult by the short vowels at the end of most words (*al-kalimāt al-mu'raba*) which are affected by the grammatical rules and which affect in turn the connection between the last syllable of a word and the first syllable of the succeeding word. The readers need to be aware of the grammatical rules in order to put the right vowel at the end of each word if necessary. Although short vowels are not usually written in printed texts, this problem can be overcome by adding them to each word (*shakl/dabṭ al-kalimāt*) so that the effort required for reading the text is reduced to the precise connection between the syllables.

Having enunciated the syllables correctly, the readers need to convey the meaning and feeling embodied in the text. This may be accomplished by cadence and tone. The voice should rise and fall in accordance with the meanings and feelings inspired by the text while it is being read. Successful readers can exemplify the theme of a text in their reading and take listeners into its world of thoughts, feelings and images.

In addition to training pupils in oral fluency, reading the text with expression is important in different ways. Firstly, it helps pupils understand the meaning of the text from the correct pronunciation of words and phrases. Secondly, the practice of reading with expression trains the pupils' ears to listen sensitively to the poetic language. It familiarises pupils with the poetic metre and trains them to recognise any dissonance in the verse. Thirdly, this sensitivity to the musical patterns of poetry assists pupils to "sense the significance of the rhythmical language, woven inextricably into the total meaning as the servant of thought and feeling" (Loban et al., 1961: 354). In short, this sensitivity is an important ability that helps pupils develop literary appreciation.

Considering oral reading from this angle, literature, specifically poetry and speeches, can play a major role in the development of pupils' ability in reading aloud.

1.2.1.3 Verbal and Written Expression

Literature is seen as a factor in furthering pupils' ability in oral and written expression in two ways. One is the role of literature in the enrichment of language, for it provides pupils with a variety of vocabulary and structures for them to use

themselves. Although other language forms may also provide these tools, the speciality of literature, however, lies in its unique use of language. The close study of a given literary text helps pupils to follow how linguistic features are used and fused to impart thoughts and emotions in an inseparable form. The scrutiny of various literary forms exposes pupils to numerous ways of expressing ideas and feelings and describing real and imaginary situations. This exposure familiarises pupils with a variety of vocabulary, structures and styles of expression, from which they can select the appropriate tools to express themselves.

In this respect, Ibrāhīm (1984: 260) emphasises that pupils should not only imitate other people's styles of writing. They should rather assimilate the variety of styles that they experience and then create their own writing style.

In addition, "sensitivity to language" – which may be the direct result of the close study of literature – may help pupils to be aware of their own use of language. In other words, it may enable them to practise linguistic control with the aim of using language precisely and correctly in accordance with its system and rules.

It is perhaps worth mentioning here that enriching pupils' use of language with appropriate vocabulary and styles of writing can be caught only during the exploration of literary works rather than taught directly in literary lessons.

Literature may also serve as a source of topics for oral and written discussion. The spiritual and material aspects of life, as expressed in the thoughts, emotions, experiences, characters and images depicted in literature, are seen through the eyes of the writer. Through the literary work, the writer imparts an individual set of attitudes

and feelings about the world, to which pupils may be encouraged to respond. O'Brien (1985: 73) stresses that expressing an individual response to the literary work is a natural result of the experience itself. She writes: "There is an urge to tell others of what excites pleasure and interest, to share new ideas, new questions that the work provokes."

It is perhaps true that literature helps to develop linguistic competence on the one hand, and invites individual responses and stimulates pupils' appetites for discussion and writing on the other. However, discussion and composition should not divert pupils from the consideration of the text. Improving speech and writing skills should not be the central objectives of the literary lesson, but should be limited to serve the objectives of exploring the text and furthering its appreciation. Teachers can treat literary texts as sources for lively topics of conversation, but such conversation should be undertaken in lessons designed for the improvement of speech and writing.

1.2.1.4 Sensitivity to Language

Literature is a linguistic artefact, for it uses language to convey its message to readers. Readers can communicate with the literary work only by decoding its linguistic symbols. Literature, of course, shares this characteristic with other language forms. However, the language of literature is, to some extent, different from that used in non-literary forms. Generally speaking, in non-literary works, the focus is on the clear and accurate communication of a message. In contrast, words in literary works are arranged in a special way to influence the message. They are carefully selected and grouped attractively to appeal to both the mind and the

emotion at the same time. The function of vocabulary in a literary work is not limited to the lexical meaning, for it is affected by the characteristic rhythms, indications and implications of words and phrases. The literary work owes its effect to the way in which linguistic devices are interwoven to communicate the experience implied in that work. The selection and location of each word are crucial, so that its replacement or movement may influence the entire message. As an example, Van Peer (1988: 274–275) quotes the following passage translated from the Holy Qur’ān:

The life to come holds a richer prize for you than this present life.
You shall be gratified with what your Lord will give you.
 Did he not find you an orphan and give you shelter?
 Did He not find you in error and guide you?
 Did He not find you poor and enrich you?
 Therefore, do not wrong the orphan, nor chide away the beggar. But proclaim the
 goodness of your Lord.

On the language of the above lines, Van Peer comments: “As may be observed, the language used in the example is highly symmetrical, making it easier to remember, and hence less prone to alteration”.

When studying a text, readers usually identify the meaning of individual words, work out the relationship between them, draw inferences about implied meanings and fill in the gaps between what is explicitly stated (see Montgomery et al., 1992: 7). In literature, however, because the message is not stated explicitly and at the same time the form is meant to be expressive and impressive, readers need to make, consciously or unconsciously, a special effort to grasp the theme of a given text.

Since the form is linguistic, the interpretation should be dependent primarily on the examination of the language of the text, because, as Brumfit and Carter (1996: 16) point out “what is said is bound up very closely with how it is said”. Readers need to examine the choice of words and structures used in the text and the arrangement of ideas and images. It is important, in this respect, to focus on the value of these tools and the way in which they are exploited to create a particular impression. Readers should also scrutinise the rhythmical qualities and rhetorical devices that are used throughout the text. After studying the valuable linguistic features separately, readers should investigate how these features are integrated to convey the unique message.

Dealing with literary texts in this way requires “sensitivity to language”. In other words it demands “a heightened awareness of the way language can be used to explore and express realities other than that which is communally accepted as the most socially convenient” (Widdowson, 1977: 74). Such sensitivity includes an awareness of the subtleties of language use at various levels, as Barratt (1985: 12) explains:

Sensitivity would be, at one level, to sound, rhythm, tone (i.e. where literature most approaches music); at another level, sensitivity to association, imagery and description (where it most approaches art); at another level, sensitivity to the author’s voice – to tone, stance, implications, indirections, ironies, methods of statement making or dialoguing, style (i.e. listening hard to what is really being said and how it is said).

This sensitivity is vital if the literary text is to be studied effectively and linked to its nature of a linguistic art form. The development of such a sensitivity is pivotal for the teaching of literature, bearing in mind the varied results expected from

the study of literature in schools. As will be explained in the following sections, the other desired effects rely on the interpretation of the message implied in the literary text, which cannot be achieved without sufficient recognition of the means used to convey that message, as Wilson (1980: 133–134) says:

The identity of what for analytic purposes is called “form” and “content” in literature means that, for example, nobility of thought or action can only be realised in nobility of language (language is all the author has to work with), and failure or unsureness in “form” is exactly reflected in a failure or unsureness in the realisation of the nobility aimed at.

Gurrey (1946: 14) states that the “contemplation of the words” includes a “recognition of the full content and also a distinct awareness that the words express that content”. He demonstrates that such contemplation “is a vivid consciousness that everything that has been imagined, thought, and conceived has also been fully and perfectly expressed in those words”. He (1946: 15), then, asserts that the sensitivity to words is the experience “required for the true appreciation of literature” and this is the real “literary experience”.

Considering sensitivity to language – which is the result of the close examination of the constituent elements of the literary work – as the basis for literary appreciation may be said to go against the nature of literature. Widdowson (1992: 71) confirms that some may argue that “to subject a poem to analysis, and to be explicit about its language, is to diminish its effect and deny its mystery”. They assert that analysis, as Moody (1968: 20) says, “destroys the enjoyment of any piece of writing”. Appreciation, according to the opponents of analysis, can arise naturally

from exposure to literature and can develop spontaneously through some inexplicable imaginative process (see Widdowson, 1977: 75; Widdowson, 1992: 87).

Yet any good piece of literature is composed of different elements that are effectively interwoven to convey integrated thoughts and feelings. The writer, as Cadden (1986: 12) states, “will have toiled long to craft these diverse elements in just the right way”. The analysis of these details in depth may allow for full appreciation of the literary text by understanding “the creative effort that went into its making” (Cadden, 1986: 12). Widdowson (1992: 71) emphasises that analysing poetry “increases the effect by stimulating an engagement with the poem and extending the range of possible response”. He explains that,

The very attempt to be explicit, to provide textual warrant for a particular reading, makes one all the more aware of the dimensions of meaning which must always remain mysterious. Nothing makes us more perceptive and appreciative of the unaccountable than the attempt to account for it.

Moody (1968: 20) holds the same opinion and justifies it as follows:

The more we understand exactly how any human achievement has been brought about, from the writing of a poem, the climbing of a mountain, the running of a mile in four minutes, to the building of a dam, or a new nation, the more our appreciation of human life will be extended and deepened.

Furthermore, analysing the elements of literary work may help teachers identify the behavioural objectives of their lessons and organise the teaching process accordingly. This approach may also allow teachers to specify detectable and

observable performances, which may be used as signs for appraising the pupils' achievement in studying poetry.

It is necessary to stress here that analysing the text does not mean denying its unity and integrity. It is, rather, an attempt to clarify "the limits of what is explicable" (Widdowson, 1992: 87) in the text and use them as a means to perceive its integrity and appreciate its unity, provided that integrity and unity cannot be reached without proper examination of the constituent elements. Analysis, as Widdowson (1992: 87) confirms, "always involves a reconstitution of some kind, dismantling something in order to reassemble it in a different form". Moreover, analysis should be confined to the effective elements that influence the construction and message of the text.

It is perhaps obvious from the above discussion that teaching literature may help greatly the development of linguistic skills, that is, improving oral reading, speech, writing and sensitivity to language. However, it seems that the vital ability of listening is ignored. Yet, it is very important, because literature may be listened to as well as read. In short, literature may be received in spoken forms as well as written.

In Arab culture, special assemblies called in Arabic *umsiyāt* (plural of *umsiya*) *shi'riyya* (poetic evenings) are held for poets to read their new poems. These assemblies are usually organised by public and government institutions. The popularity of such activities has led to the organisation of similar assemblies for reading short stories (*umsiyat al-qışṣa al-qaṣīra*) and for literary criticism (*umsiya*

naqdiyya), where the literary works (poetry or short stories) are first read and then commented on by an expert on literary criticism. Poetry is also still read for the celebration of special religious and social occasions, such as the birthday of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, graduation ceremonies in academic institutions and the official opening of new social services.

These are all examples of literary recitations where the work is heard instead of read. The listeners, as members of society, need to take part by responding effectively to the literary work presented to them. It is the schools' task to foster such a response. The sensitivity to and appreciation of language that pupils may acquire from the study of literature should not be confined to the written word, but should also include the spoken word. As explained in section 1.2.1.2 of this chapter, the Holy Qur'ān, poetry and speeches owe their fascination to the exploitation of linguistic rhythm which, as Loban et al. (1961: 355) expressed it, "appeals to the ear as well as to the mind". It is, therefore, very important for the programme of teaching literature to develop appreciation of and response to verbal and written literature simultaneously. Furthermore, oral literature requires a faster response than written literature, because once the text is spoken, it disappears. In contrast, written literature is available to readers whenever they want to read it. This means that the skills for appreciating and responding to oral literature require more effort, and so more training is needed to achieve the desired sensitivity to its language.

1.2.2 Moral Development

Throughout history, literature has been perceived to have a moral effect on its readers. In ancient Brahmanic, Greek and Roman civilisations, memorising the

works of the great poets was seen as a means of shaping character and conduct (see Wilson, 1980: 124–125).

As explained in the first section of this chapter, this perception was also held by the early Arab leaders and scholars. It was believed that poetry called upon man to be noble in deeds and manners. The different genres of Arabic poetry included wisdom, the praise of noble manners and the condemnation of evil. From the dawn of the history of Arabic literature, it was usual to find references to wisdom here and there in a poem. However, in a few cases large portions of poems were devoted to wisdom and advice such as the poem by ‘Abd Qays b. Khafāf al-Burjumī, in which he advises his son to adhere to noble manners and the final part of the *mu‘allaqa* of Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā (see Aḥmad, 1979: 48; al-Bustānī, 1979a: 80–86). In the Abbasid period, whole poems giving wisdom occurred in the works of Abuu al-‘Atāhiya (d. 211 AH/827 AD) who was known as the poet of asceticism and wisdom (*shā‘ir al-zuhd wa al-ḥikma*). Poetry of repentance (*shi‘r al-tawba*) then followed, especially in the works of mystics (*mutaṣawwifa*) (see al-Bustānī, 1979b: 30).

Other genres of Arabic poetry, whether they embody wisdom or not, can also be morally educational. The poet in panegyric (*madḥ*) highlights the noble characteristics of the person being praised; in self-glorifying (*fakhr*), the poet claims superior behaviour and refuses to have evil and bad manners attributed to him; and in satire (*hijā’*), evil ways and bad manners are condemned. Good poetry appeals to the heart and the mind at the same time and this is what distinguishes it from direct didactic instruction, which is perhaps the central function of religious education.

Wisdom and repentance, whether by implication or as the main topic, are presented as a reminder to people to do what is right and behave nobly. Wisdom and admonition in poetry are not usually presented directly as commands and interdictions, but as general principles of an event, emotion or thought depicted in the poem. The poet also tries to compare the piece of wisdom to a natural phenomenon to make it more comprehensible and memorable, or present it as a general basis for human behaviour. Consider, for example, the following verse from al-Mutanabbī (d. 354 AH/965 AD):

No one can achieve everything he wants,
Winds blow against what ships crave.

In this verse, the impossibility of being able to achieve all one's desires is compared to the ship which sometimes encounters a headwind, which hinders its progress.

Furthermore, literary works, especially fiction and drama, may "present examples of good behaviour that is rewarded or of bad behaviour that is punished" (Chedzoy, 1977: 475). In their imagination, readers interact emotionally with the series of events that lead to the reward for good behaviour and the punishment of bad behaviour, and so they are indirectly encouraged to admire the former and condemn the latter. Literary works also represent different characters that readers may find in real life. The depiction and analysis of characters in literary works enable readers, by exercising their imagination to "enter into the mental life of other human beings and so learn a new sympathy with them and understanding of them (Chedzoy, 1977: 476). Chedzoy (1977: 477) asserts that such imaginative experience:

Frees the reader from the little world of his own self and introduces him to the perceptive positions of innumerable other human beings. This process extends his sympathies and, as a concomitant, makes him less self-centred, more intuitively understanding of others. Such an effect which extends the range of his human sympathies is essentially a moral one. It militates against selfishness and in favour of a generosity of spirit towards his fellow human beings.

It is arguably difficult to deny the influence of literature on readers' moral development. However, literary works cannot be more than, as Yorke (1977: 341) demonstrates,

... helpful means towards achieving developmental objectives, with no suggestions that they provide the only routes towards these objectives, or that they are the best means for everyone. It is obviously possible for a person to be a balanced, sensitive and developed personality without reading literature, or even being literate.

In addition, moral development cannot be the central purpose of literature lessons in schools. Planning a programme based on the power of literature to further the moral development of pupils could impede the exploration of literary qualities and turn the lesson into pedantic instruction.

It may be concluded that although the moral value of literature is undeniable, it can be considered only a marginal purpose for the programme of teaching literary texts. The statement regarding the role of literature in increasing vocabulary can be repeated here: moral development can be caught rather than taught in the literature lesson.

1.2.3 Human Experience and Knowledge

Thoughts and emotions about various aspects of human life – events, people and natural phenomena – are expressed in literary works. Literary works take readers into experiences beyond the limits of time and place. Events that influence human life, such as birth, marriage, crime, war, death etc., examples of people of different backgrounds and peculiarities in addition to “most of the sights and sounds, smells, tastes and touch sensations available to human beings are recorded in literary expression, and the assiduous reader has only to extract them and collate them into systems of knowledge” (Chedzoy, 1977: 444).

In literary works, readers are taken into worlds that are not their own; where their role is to monitor the events without having to participate physically in them, although an emotional and intellectual response is inevitable. Such a literary experience is asserted to be swifter and safer than the real version (see: Chedzoy, 1977: 444). The literary work enables the mind to travel across time and place “more swiftly than the most modern means of transport” (Chedzoy, 1977: 444).

In addition, Chedzoy (1977: 447–448) points to what he considers a secondary but useful function of literature in “filling in the ‘bare-bones’ of information provided by other disciplines”. He demonstrates that literature can contribute to pupils’ general knowledge in “giving [them] a sense of the felt life of human beings in a variety of times and places” (Chedzoy, 1977: 447). In this respect, ‘Abdallāh al-Ṭā’ī’s novel *al-Shirā’ al-kabīr* may be studied to supplement the pupils’ information about the life of the Omani people during the seventeenth century AD and their struggle against the Portuguese occupation, which pupils also

study in history lessons. Another example is al-Mutanabbī's poem *'Alā qadr ahl al-'azm*, which imparts useful information about the tactics and weaponry used by the Arab armies in the tenth century AD.

The experiences and knowledge described above are available in other forms, such as non-literary texts, films and television programmes. However, what distinguishes literature, which is a linguistic form, is that it requires readers to work out the verbal signs in which the experience is communicated and on which readers rely for their comprehension and thus contemplation of the experience. While studying the text and interacting with it, readers enter, through their imagination and by the means of language, the experience presented to them and assimilate it into their total world view. In the other forms, however, particularly films and television programmes, the experience is presented using pictures, movement and sound effects, which makes it easier to imagine than when it is conveyed in a literary work.

However, using literary works for extracting factual data should be done with great care. It is important to notice that, as Moody (1968: 2) states,

the writer of literature is not tied to fact in quite the same way as the historian, the economist or the scientists, whose studies are absolutely based on what has actually happened, or on what actually does happen, in the world of reality.

The literary writers "have more scope to comment on the facts, to arrange them in unusual ways, and to speculate not only on what is, but on what ought to be, or what might be" (Moody, 1968: 3). The writers of literature utilise a historical or social event as a foundation on which they build deep thoughts, emotions and

interpretations and collate them into new events that may lead to a different conclusion from what actually happened. In poetry, events are usually distorted, that is, exaggerated to highlight what the poet considers valuable for his or her purposes, or diminished to eliminate what is contradictory. In addition, the poet selects and highlights the moving and memorable events that inspired the poem. In al-Mutanabbī's panegyric mentioned above, for example, the poet focuses on the events that highlight the exaggerated bravery and cleverness of Sayf al-Dawla al-Ḥamdānī (d. 356 AH/967 AD) and at the same time al-Mutanabbī attempts to contrast it with the cowardice of his enemies.

The literature produced at a particular time and in a particular place is undoubtedly a valuable source for researchers in different fields of knowledge. However, treating literature in this way will certainly distort the aims of teaching the appreciation of a text. Instead of exploring the literary form which bestows its uniqueness on a piece of literature, the focus will be diverted to looking for ideas that support facts. The programme of teaching literature may provide pupils with techniques for reading a literary text, which is inevitably required for its use as a source of information about its time and place. That is to say, school time should be concentrated on the aims of reading, analysing and appreciating literature. Pupils who achieve such aims will be able to use literary materials successfully in their speciality after leaving school.

1.2.4 Development of National Consciousness

From the early years of Arabic literature, poets were the spokespersons of the tribes. The poets glorified their tribes by narrating their exploits, defending their rights and

refuting the slander spread by their enemies. In the life of the ancient Arabs, poets were, as expressed by Lyall “a defence to the honour of them all, a weapon to ward off insult from their good name, and a means of perpetuating their glorious deeds and of establishing their fame for ever” (from a translation of a statement by Ibn Rashīq, quoted in Nicholson, 1930: 71). Therefore, it was not surprising that an Arab tribe used to celebrate the emergence of a poet among its members. Poetry gained its supreme position among the ancient Arabs by its ability to survive through the oral tradition of an illiterate society. The use of poetry as a conveyor of tribal tradition and exploits from ancestors to descendants gave poetry an educational importance. As mentioned in section 1.1.2 above, new generations used to memorise good poems to preserve their forefathers’ boasts and be tied to them.

The linking of generations by the instillation of tribal pride has been extended in the modern period. The tribe is dissolved into the whole nation and what was recognised as a function of poetry is generalised to literature. Among the important aims of teaching Arabic literature, Aḥmad (1979: 50) states two in relation to the development of national awareness. One is to link pupils to their literary heritage and strengthen the bonds between the members of the nation. This aim, according to Aḥmad, springs from the fact that literature is a means to preserve the national heritage and introduce it to the new generation. The second aim is to develop the pupils’ consciousness of the whole Arab world and the unity of the Arab nation, since Arabic literature is a common feature in the different Arab countries and a means of unification. This is because Arabic is the language used to produce that literature, and the form and characteristics of Arabic literature throughout the Arab world have remained generally the same throughout history. Therefore, pupils are

exposed not only to the literature of their own country, but also to that of other Arab countries.

Generally speaking, it can be concluded that the educational role of literature in developing national consciousness is that literature may help to “connect the Arabs vertically with Arabic speakers in previous times, and horizontally across the Arabic speaking world in modern times” (Suleiman, 2000: 19). Vertically, literature may help acquaint pupils with the factors that unified their nation in facing the major problems in the past and “impart a feeling of pride in the nation and its achievements” (Suleiman, 2000: 7). Horizontally, literature can warn pupils of the major challenges currently confronting their nation and highlight the bonds of their national identity. In this respect, Suleiman’s statement (2000: 20–21) about the role of poetry in the national enterprise can be applied to literature in general. Suleiman states that poetry

... is an instrument of motivation and task-orientation. It is meant to arouse the feelings and emotions of the hearers to impel them towards action in the service of the nation. In the overall scheme of Arab nationalism poetry, may, therefore, be seen as a means of enunciation, dissemination and motivation. It therefore crosses the divide between the rational and emotional to create a unity of vision and effect that hardly, if ever, accrues to prose.

Of course, in Arabic literature poetry has its distinctive virtues. First, it has the “ability to be transmitted by word of mouth” (Suleiman, 2000: 4). This is what preserved Arabic poetry throughout the pre-writing period, whereas most works in other literary genres such as oratory were lost. Second, according to Suleiman (2000: 19)

Arabic poetry is a thoroughly historically rooted genre in its own cultural and literary milieu. This gives poetry a degree of cultural and historical authenticity that is not available to the novel and the short story, in spite of their involvement in the cause of Arab nationalism.

Third, it is perhaps well known that Arabic poetry, throughout history to the present time, has brought to public attention the major events that affect the nation.

The role of literature to develop national consciousness does not seem to be unique to Arab educationists. The Sub-Committee on the Study of Scottish Literature in Schools has reported that it is unfortunate that Scottish pupils are required to study English literature instead of Scottish literature. The Sub-Committee (Scottish Central Committee on English, 1976: 2) states:

One of the ways in which any society attempts to lead its young to an understanding of what they are as individual and social beings is by introducing to them the literature of their own country, from its nursery and folk tales to the achievements of its best writers past and present.

It is beyond the scope of the present study to define and prove the undeniable influence of literature on sustaining national identity. Nevertheless, there arises the question of the extent to which the programme of teaching literature targets the development of national awareness. In answer, it may be said that focusing on the way in which a literary work represents a certain national phenomenon or underpins a specific national ideology is to concentrate on the theme of the text at the expense of its literary qualities. This kind of investigation requires a background knowledge of the relevant social history to create an understandable picture and use it to highlight national consciousness. The study of the literary work in such an inquiry

will be reduced to utilising its content as evidence for the national phenomenon. Furthermore, the aim of developing national consciousness is an objective in other school subjects. Geography, history and national education (*al-tarbiya al-waṭaniyya*) are perhaps more effective than literature in this respect. These school subjects can achieve national consciousness faster and more easily, for they demonstrate distinctly how the nation is inter-connected by geographical, historical, social, cultural and economic factors, whereas literature deals with such matters in a suggestive manner.

This is not to deny the role of literature instruction on promoting national awareness. Rather it is to confirm that such aims can be only marginal in the teaching of literature as a language based-programme and they do not distinguish literature from other school subjects. In other words, national consciousness may only be caught while literature is taught and the programme of teaching literature cannot target such aims directly.

1.2.5 Enjoyment and Pleasure

Literature is considered a source of enjoyment (see Madkuur, 1991: 206; Shaḥāta, 1992: 181). One of the aims of teaching literature is that pupils should be able to get pleasure through the enjoyment of the beauty of thought, discourse, style and rhythm in literary works (Madkuur, 1991: 206).

Teachers of school subjects try to provide pupils with some pleasure to create a lively and motivated atmosphere. However, “pleasure is not intrinsic to learning: learning can occur, as we all know, without there being any pleasure generated in the

teacher or the learner” (Yorke, 1977: 309). Yet, regarding pleasure as an aim of teaching is a different issue.

The first issue to be considered is what kinds of enjoyment can literature offer. Collie and Slater (quoted in Mbokani, 1991: 61) assert that it may provide its readers with,

... a fresh insight into issues which are felt to be close to the heart of people’s concerns; the delight of encountering one’s own thoughts or situations encapsulated vividly in a work of art; the other, equal delight of finding those same thoughts or situations illuminated by a totally new, unexpected light or perspective ...

In his attempt to define the pleasure provided by literature, Yorke (1977: 306) reiterates the kinds of enjoyment stated in the above quotation and adds other kinds, paying heed to the vagueness that surrounds such pleasures. He writes:

...Pleasure is never content and context free and the pleasures we get from literature are multiple rather than singular, and probably come from such psychological satisfactions as recognising creatures like ourselves or in similar situations, or feeling certain of our needs or stresses relieved, or our desires discussed and defined; or at a more conscious level, the satisfaction of our curiosity about other people, places or times, or our need for information, or our delight in language, or just our need to relax and escape from present concerns.

In addition, one of the pleasures of the teaching of literature may be found in Ibrāhīm’s (1984: 252) consideration of the literature lesson to be the preferred opportunity in which pupils can escape the restriction of definitions and rules in the other school subjects that are intellectually demanding. The literature lesson, Ibrāhīm stresses, provides pupils with the opportunity to deal with human nature

presented in literary works and grants them the freedom to think and express opinions. In this regard, Ibrāhīm points to a kind of relaxation that literature can offer in a busy school day. Relaxation which consists in providing pupils with the opportunity to discuss human thoughts, emotions and imaginary situations that, owing to their nature, encourage a range of opinions.

Four points arise from the above quotations with regard to the possible pleasure in reading literature. Firstly, they are personal. In other words, each person seeks to fulfil an individual need for enjoyment by reading, which cannot be enjoyment for everybody, for there are certainly some people who do not find any pleasure in this occupation. Secondly, some of the pleasures mentioned above may be found in other sources such as films and television programmes. Thirdly, regarding the literature lesson as an opportunity for pleasure and enjoyment implies that, as may appear from Ibrāhīm's perception, literature is "a brief holiday within the hard workday world of the timetable, and student and teacher come to it with no great expectation of gain, or effort, or investment of mental capital" (Yorke, 1977: 352). Yet, studying literature is intellectually demanding (see section 1.2.1.4 of this chapter). Fourthly, such enjoyment is, as Yorke (1977: 317) states, "unpredictable and often undetectable". In education, it is important for aims to be predictable and detectable. Aims should be translated into observed behaviours. To predict and detect such pleasure, there is a need for clear signs that pupils are enjoying the study of a literary work. That is not to say pleasure cannot be obtained by reading literature. The problem consists in placing pleasure among the aims that should be achieved at the end of the programme of teaching literature. Nevertheless,

enjoyment offered in the reading of literature may be exploited to enhance pupils' desire to read literary works within and outwith the school.

1.3 Conclusion

It is perhaps obvious from the above discussion that throughout history literature has been considered a source for vital educational values. Teaching literature is expected to influence both the character and the intellect of learners. It is believed that literature can provide them with various pedagogical experiences. Both the content and form of literature are believed to include educational material. To distinguish between the content and form of literature is unrealistic and done only for analysis.

Regarding the content of literature, the representation of human thoughts and feelings connected with events and characters in human society can widen the intellectual horizon of the learners and offer them a deeper insight into the nature of the human kind and its relationships. The experiences depicted in literature can help to develop the learners' sense of morality and teach them behaviour considered acceptable by society. Such experiences may broaden their understanding of their own society and culture and enhance their feeling of national citizenship. The literature description of these experiences may stimulate the learners' desire for their own expression and offer them a wide range of topics for written and spoken activities. Finally, it may be treated as a useful source of social, historical and geographical information.

With regard to the pedagogical experiences related to the literary form, literature is used as a repository for vocabulary and examples of good language usage. It can also be a means of teaching learners the art of the correct and expressive oral reading of poetry and prose. Literature is perceived as a source of

elevated linguistic expression that may be imitated in speech and writing. It can be used as an exercise to develop sensitivity to language. In short, literature may provide learners with the material required for the exploration and appreciation of the way in which language is handled to convey particular impression.

The above aims demonstrate the importance of literature and defend its inclusion in the curriculum at all stages of education. However, it has been argued in this chapter that the content-related values of literature cannot be targeted as ends for the programme of teaching literature for three reasons. First, such aims can be achieved by other means, for example, the other subjects taught at school. Taking into account that a special effort is required to recognise the message implied in literature, these aims may be reached more easily by those other means. Second, undue concentrating on such aims may influence the selection of the material of the literary texts syllabus and divert it to that which serves the content at the expense of the form. Third, such concentration can hinder the exploration of the literary qualities to which literature owes its uniqueness.

However, the content and form of literary work are inseparable. On the one hand, the message that the writer wants to communicate to readers influences the choice of the form. On the other hand, the way in which the message affects readers and prompts them to respond to it and share the writer's experience is dependent on the form in which the message is conveyed. Having said that, one clearly cannot deny the role of teaching literature in furthering the content-related aims of literature. However, those aims may be caught while literature is being taught. In other words, they may be achieved indirectly during the programme of teaching literature, though they cannot be the main aims of its structure.

The aims that are arguably more related to the nature of literature are those which develop sensitivity to language. This is because, firstly, literature is a linguistic product and, as it is shown in different places in this chapter, language is the tool of writers and readers to convey the message and to grasp it. That is to say, even if teaching literature targeted the content-related aims, these aims could not be achieved without proper awareness of the medium, which is linguistic. Secondly, in literary works linguistic features are exploited and interwoven with thoughts, images and feelings to impress the reader. This distinguishes to some extent the language used in literary works from other forms of language and requires a special effort to understand the implied message. Thirdly, since literature is a part of the language curriculum, it is expected that teaching literature is intended to achieve particular language-related aims. Section 1.2.1 of this chapter has attempted to show that literature can play its own part in enriching the learners' language and improving their ability to explore and appreciate the literary qualities of written and heard literature.

It is maybe necessary to point out here that, to the best of my knowledge, there has been no attempt to assess the effect of teaching literature on pupils' abilities and distinguish that of teaching literature from the role of the other means with regard to the various aims mentioned above, whether they are content or form-related. The study of such influences requires a series of empirical research in which each aim is investigated separately and the subjects are exposed to literature only and isolated from the other means that might help to achieve that aim. Furthermore, the effect of teaching literature needs to be compared with the effect of the other means. All these studies are beyond the scope of the present research.

The Content of the Literary Texts Syllabus

This chapter discusses the selection of the content of the literary texts syllabus. First, the process is slotted into the planning of the whole curriculum. The chapter then outlines various criteria for selecting literary texts and highlights relevant issues. A working model is then suggested. The chapter concludes with specific principles for selecting literary texts for secondary school pupils.

2.1 The Selection of the Content

The selection of the content of the curriculum must be prepared and designed, taking into account the individuals and groups that control the educational system and benefit from it. “There has always been more to learn than any student could learn in twice the time at his disposal” (Taba, 1962: 263). What should be included and what should be excluded form a difficult task for the curriculum planners. Taba (1962: 263) shows that the selection of the content is a central decision in “curriculum making, and therefore a rational method of going about it is a matter of great concern”.

The selection of the content is not an isolated process, but rather, an important step in the extensive planning of the curriculum. The content forms the second of the four fundamental questions that Tyler suggests should be answered in connection with any curriculum (quoted in Lawton, 1981: 107; Saylor et al., 1981: 13):

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organised?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

Taba (1962: 12) extended Tyler's four questions to a seven-step model for curriculum planning, in which the selection of the content is the third:

1. diagnosis of needs;
2. formulation of objectives;
3. selection of content;
4. organisation of content;
5. selection of learning experiences;
6. organisation of learning experiences; and
7. determination of what to evaluate and of the ways and means of doing it.

Therefore, the selection of the content should presumably correspond with the other steps, that is build upon the earlier steps and facilitate those which follow. The selection also needs to consider the individuals and groups that participate in the educational system. To avoid spontaneity and arbitrariness, curriculum planners need to specify rational criteria for selecting the content of the educational programme. These criteria should, as Taba (1962: 267) states,

encompass and integrate the implications from the views regarding the functions of school in society, from the study of the needs and requirements of the society, from the



studies of the learners and the learning process, and from the analysis of the nature of knowledge and of the subject matter.

Taba (1962: 267–289) suggests a list of criteria that should be applied when selecting the content: (1) validity and significance; (2) consistency with social realities; (3) balance of breadth and depth; (4) provision for a wide range of objectives; (5) learnability and adaptability to experiences of students; and (6) appropriateness to the needs and interests of the students. Mujāwir and al-Dīb adopt Taba's list and suggest that the content must be:

1. connected to the major problems in the society;
2. able to achieve the educational objectives;
3. congruous with the pupil's attitudes and problems;
4. consistent with pupils' problems; and
5. consistent with the pupils' level of maturity (see Makkī et al., 1986: 19).

Sa'āda & Ibrāhīm (1991: 363) used the above lists to develop a seven-criteria list comprising: (1) validity; (2) significance; (3) students' interests; (4) learnability; (5) utility; (6) universality; and (7) consistency.

2.2 Criteria for Selecting Literary Texts

There have been numerous literary works produced throughout the long history of Arabic literature. It would be impossible to study all of them or even a representative sample of all the literary genres and phenomena that have appeared throughout that time. Some Arab educationalists have attempted to formulate specific principles for the selection of literary texts (see Aḥmad, 1979: 84–87; Ibrāhīm, 1984: 265–267; Zāfir & al-Ḥammādī, 1984: 253–254; Ismā'il, 1991: 272–

274). These principles are based on three main issues: (1) the pupils' interests and maturity; (2) the content of the text; and (3) the aims of teaching literary texts.

Clearly, the lists of criteria mentioned in section 2.1 are suggested as general guidelines for selecting the content of the curriculum. The following sections examine six criteria, using those items which are relevant to the literary texts syllabus from the above lists. The principles suggested by Aḥmad, Ibrāhīm, Zāfir & al-Ḥammādī, and Ismā'īl will be discussed under those criteria. The discussion covers the selection of the content of literary texts syllabus generally and it does not refer to the literary texts syllabus set for the Omani secondary stage pupils, which will be dealt with in chapters Three and Six.

2.2.1 Validity

The content is considered valid if it is connected with the aims that it is meant to achieve. The closer the connection, the higher the level of validity. This is because the aims are the foundation of the educational programme and the yardstick by which its success is measured.

The aims of the literary texts syllabus in general were discussed in Chapter One. It was revealed that the main aim was to develop a sensitivity to and appreciation of the literary usage of language. Therefore, the selected texts should be compatible with that requirement so that the teacher can organise the lessons to enable the pupils to acquire that ability. However, in order to expose pupils to examples of texts of varying literary merit, should 'low-level' texts which, for instance, embody well-known ideas, recycled images or artificial figures of speech be included? It may be claimed that by studying these kinds of text, pupils have the

opportunity to distinguish between high and low literary texts with their various literary characteristics. This purpose seems reasonable and educational. Nevertheless, exposing pupils to good-quality literature is perhaps preferable in the school. Its study can help pupils develop sensitivity to good literary qualities and enable them to identify poor-quality writing when they meet it. Al-Shāyib (1946: 139) confirms that to develop good appreciation, readers need to avoid popular literature and at the same time interact with excellent literature. He emphasises that popular literature might contribute to spoiling the development of good appreciation. Therefore, it is better to exploit the limited time allocated to literature in schools in introducing good-quality writing that helps pupils achieve the desirable literary appreciation and develop a positive attitude towards literature.

Ibrāhīm (1984: 267) emphasises that the selected texts should comply with the aims of the curriculum. He states:

If the curriculum is intended to expose pupils to the various poetry genres in the pre-Islamic period, to describe political life in the Umayyad poetry, differentiate between scientific and literary prose in the Abbasid period, to highlight aspects of innovation in modern poetry, or any other aim, it is necessary that the selected texts insure the achievement of all these aims. (My translation)

It may appear that the above quotation is about selecting extracts as examples of literary phenomena and characteristics, which belong to the history of literature. Nevertheless, the quotation comes among the principles of selecting literary texts. Clearly, the aims are all relevant to the history of literature and the texts should be consistent with them. Two other principles in Ibrāhīm's list (1984: 266–267) are related to the history of literature. He advocates that the selected texts should

represent their period, including its social, ethical and political aspects. He also states that the selected texts should together form a clear picture of their period, including its literary characteristics and relevant history.

Considering the relationship between the selected texts and the history of literature, the above principles are irrelevant to the aims of the literary texts syllabus. However, it may be necessary to expose pupils to texts from the different periods of Arabic literature. The aim should be to select suitable works that help pupils appreciate the writings of the various periods. The extent to which these texts represent their period is not the purpose of the literary texts syllabus.

Ibrāhīm (1984: 267) also states that some texts should be selected with the aim of achieving self-education and moral values. This principle springs from regarding literary texts as vehicles of moral education, which was arguably rejected as a direct target of the programme of teaching literature (see Chapter One, section 1.2.2).

The Arab educationalists referred to the aims of teaching literary texts as an important principle in selecting the content of the literary syllabus. However, their aims are irrelevant to the real value of teaching literature in schools, for their selection of the texts is directed towards historical exemplification and moral education rather than training pupils to appreciate high-quality literature containing an impressive message.

2.2.2 Pupils' Interests

Education is designed to achieve a desirable change in the learners' behaviour, that is, to help them acquire a new behaviour or skill, improve an existing one or change an undesirable behaviour or skill. The learners' abilities, interests and needs should be considered when planning the curriculum to guarantee a certain level of motivation if learning is to be effective. The ignorance of pupils' needs and interests will inevitably lead pupils to feel that the subject is irrelevant and will reduce their desire to participate in the instructional process. Taba (1961: 289) states that to ignore the pupils' interests "means overlooking potent motivation and courting the possibility of ineffective learning".

However, the learners' interests should be taken with sufficient precautions for three reasons.

1. Learners' interests are personal, that is, individuals have their own interests, which differ to some extent from those of others.
2. The pupils' interests are limited by their short experience of life, especially in the early stages of education.
3. Pupils' interests are changeable and unstable in two ways: (a) individual interests develop as a result of personal growth; and (b) interests differ from one generation to the next, owing to the social, cultural and global changes.

To resolve difficulties of the above kind in teaching literature, it is necessary to survey the pupils' interests in terms of the topics and genres which they prefer to study and compile the syllabus in accordance with the results. That is not to say the pupils' literary preferences must control the content of the literary syllabus nor that texts may be included merely because they are of interest to the pupils. Rather, it is

to insure that anything contrary to the pupils' interests is excluded and that the selected texts match as closely as possible the pupils' literary preferences. To allow pupils who have special literary interests to pursue them and fulfil their special needs, there should be a separate section containing texts from which pupils can choose. The survey of the pupils' literary interests should be continual to guarantee that the content is adjusted and updated in accordance with the changes in them. In addition, the syllabus should pay special attention to the improvement in the pupils' interest in certain aspects of the teaching of literature so that their interest is widened and their literary experience is enriched. In this respect, Taba (1962: 289) emphasises:

since one important task of education is to promote personal growth, the interests and needs of the learners themselves should be subject to growth: students can and do become interested in ideas, in the joy of discovery, and in applying their mental power.

In motivating pupils' interests Zāfir & al-Ḥammādī (1984: 254) regard texts connected with special social, religious and political occasions as important ingredients of the literary syllabus. It is claimed that such texts help to promote natural learning because pupils can recognise their value and function. In addition, the first principle Ibrāhīm (1984: 265–266) suggests for selecting literary texts is that the texts should be connected to a particular occasion. He argues that the occasion is important because

1. it demonstrates that literature expresses and portrays life;
 2. the occasion is useful in introducing the text and motivating pupils to study it;
- and

3. it is not possible to understand some of the ideas implied in the text without knowing the occasion on which the text was written.

In short, the occasion is regarded as a stimulus of the pupils' interest in studying the literary text.

Nevertheless, selecting literary texts on this basis can bring disadvantages. First, it may deprive pupils of a huge number of excellent literary works that are not related to a specific event, such as poetry on nature and meditation. Second, it may instil in pupils the attitude that literature is no more than a reflection of social, religious and political occasions. Third, relying on the occasion on which the literary work was produced to understand the theme of the text gives the background information more importance than it deserves. That is to say, the necessity for background information differs from one text to another and it should not be treated as a condition for the understanding of the text.

Furthermore, Ibrāhīm's justification that special events can be used to introduce the discussion implies that this is the best technique to start the literary lesson and motivate pupils to study the text. It also suggests that texts that are not connected to special occasions are not capable of stimulating the pupils' desire to study. However, this is only one among more useful techniques, especially those in which instructional media are utilised to encourage pupils to explore the text, for instructional media can attract the pupils' attention and stimulate more than one sense simultaneously.

In conclusion, it may be said that the pupils' motivation to study literary texts may be achieved by selecting texts that comply with their literary preferences, which are supposed to reflect their religious and social interests. Moreover, the pupils' interest may be enhanced by giving them an opportunity to select for themselves the texts that they like to satisfy individual needs. One of the main contributions of this thesis is to explore matters related to this issue in Omani schools (see Chapter Six).

2.2.3 Learnability

The content must be suitable for the pupils' level of maturity, so that they can interact with it and achieve the required aims. To ensure that the content is not too advanced, the curriculum planners need to assess the pupils' competence and build upon their educational attainment. Of course, the planning of any syllabus needs to allow for the introduction of new skills, ideas and information, which are inevitably beyond the pupils' powers to master. Applying this criterion means that it is important, as Taba (1962:283) states, "to view learning experiences as steppingstones toward an end outcome". The function of these stepping stones is to connect the current level of ability with the new aims, so that the new learning happens smoothly and efficiently.

There are several aspects of learnability that may help the planners of the literary texts syllabus to determine the type of texts that should be included. The first and most important is the pupils' linguistic competence, such as reading ability, vocabulary, structures, etc. Because the message of the literary work cannot be grasped without sufficient consideration of the linguistic features, the linguistic level of the texts must not exceed the pupils' capability. In this respect, Aḥmad (1979: 84)

emphasises that the selected texts should be suitable for the pupils' abilities and experiences in vocabulary, style, thought and imagery. He advocates that the planners should avoid texts that are full of complex imageries, deep philosophical thoughts and difficult vocabulary. Brumfit & Carter (1996: 31) also emphasise that the "literary syllabus can start only when a certain level of language or reading competence is presupposed". In this connection Beach & Marshall (1991: 23) state that

whether students like or understand the literature they read depends in good measure on whether they already possess a body of appropriate knowledge about language and literary conventions (knowledge that is required, largely, through earlier experience of reading). In a very real sense, then, they must already know something about the concerns of the text before they can begin to consider what the text means.

The second consideration is the pupils' maturity in contemplation and their ability to understand human experience, because the comprehension of most literary works depends on these two abilities. Pupils, as Beach & Marshall (1991: 23) demonstrate, "bring to their reading a developing understanding of social conventions and relationships – an intuitive grasp of 'how things work in the world'".

2.2.4 Utility

This criterion refers to the usefulness and relevance of the content to the pupils' lives. The pupils' satisfaction with the effects of the instructional programme on their present and future lives is one of the significant factors that motivate them to learn its materials and interact with them. Because the ultimate purpose of education is to prepare pupils to be active and useful members of their society, all curricula

must include information, skills and attitudes that are designed to help them to fulfil the requirements of their society and challenge its problems. Personal development is of the utmost importance in the educational system, which should be aimed at aiding all pupils to establish continued learning skills on the one hand and pursue their interests on the other. It is also the function of school education to enable pupils to develop particular interest and help them pursue it for future specialisation. Therefore, the selected texts should comply with these utilities as general values for schooling and relate to the pupils' social and personal lives in the future.

One possible way to justify the usefulness of the literature syllabus is to select what Aḥmad (1979: 84) and Zāfir & al-Ḥammādī (1984: 254) call the lively and attractive texts. These texts treat important topics that correspond with the pupils' experiences and needs and deal with the problems that challenge their society. Thus, their relevance can stimulate the pupils' desire to study literature and use it to understand the world around them. Although this is not the main purpose of the literary syllabus, such texts may convince pupils, parents and social authorities of its practical aspect and highlight its importance. The Palestinian problem, for example, has been one of the important challenges to the Arabs in recent times. Since much has been written about this problem, different sections of society may well wish to include examples of the excellent literature that deals with it.

2.2.5 Universality

This criterion demands that the content of the curriculum should aim at dissolving the barriers between countries and cultures and help pupils to recognise the problems

and issues that concern human beings in other parts of the world. The more the content deals with universal issues, the more important it is to pupils.

Literary works usually depict human experiences, for the message embodied in literature usually reflects human thoughts, feelings and imagination. For this reason, literary works may be said to concern all human beings. This is perhaps what accounts for the eternity of some famous literary works and their being accepted as international literature. At the same time literary works are considered a means to understand national identity as distinct from other human identities. Nevertheless, the understanding of human nature and the recognition of national identity offered in literature should not be sources of conflict in the curriculum in general and in the literary texts syllabus in particular. Universality is not against nationalism, though it is against racism. That is to say, each nation has its own identity and attempts to instil it into each generation by education. However, pupils can also be brought up to respect other nations and accept their rights as human beings. The danger is to instil in pupils the sense of being a superior race or nation and at the same time despising other human beings. In compiling the literary syllabus, it is important to balance texts that deal with national topics with those which treat universal issues.

2.2.6 Consistency

This criterion demands that the content should comply with the social and cultural ideology and principles of the society. Education is a social enterprise and society cannot accept youngsters being taught principles that contradict its ideology. Different experiences from different points of view are depicted in literature. Therefore, the planners of the literary texts syllabus should be aware of the themes

that may be regarded as inappropriate or harmful from the religious or cultural perspectives.

In Arabic literature, there are several works that are considered contradictory to Islamic teachings, especially those which deal with sexuality and immorality, although many of these works are considered excellent literature from the artistic point of view. The poetry of *khamriyyāt* (description of wine), *shu‘uubiyya* (political and literary movement among Arabs and Persians, in which each race aimed to highlight its virtues over those of the other), *firaq* and *madhāhib* (Islamic sects and schools of thought and law), *hijā’ muqdhī’* (slandorous satirical poetry), *ghazal ṣarīḥ* and *ghazal fāḥish* (explicit and obscene love poetry) are examples of poetry genres that are unacceptable for study in schools.

Chedzoy (1977: 40) identifies “four ways in which the experience of certain literary works might be held harmful to young readers”:

1. the kinds of experiences that are harmful to the child who is not mature enough to understand them, such as sexual activity;
2. “that in which literary works suggest possibilities of evil to individuals”;
3. that which “comes with the description of evil or undesirable behaviour in a literary work”; and
4. that in which “the reader is given direct access to the experience and motivation of an evil character”.

The danger about the last three ways is the possibility of imitation and admiration of evil behaviour or character.

Chedzoy (1977: 41) then argues that even if the description of the corruption of these mechanisms is accepted, it is, however, “obvious that a beneficial effect could be deduced from [them]”. He asserts that “cognitive knowledge of all kinds is morally neutral. It may be used for good or evil purposes”. He also confirms that “there is no obvious reason why the representation of evil behaviour should invoke imitation”. He adopts John Milton’s opinion that “there is no knowledge of good without the knowledge of evil”. Chedzoy (1977: 42) then concludes by advocating a free literary education:

Literary experience offers a choice of human response for the contemplation of the young reader. It does not confine itself to received attitudes or to approved responses. It describes and participates in human motivation over the whole field of value judgements. The good teacher of literature does not proselytise but helps the pupil to explore, realise and understand the phenomena the writer presents. Such a free exploration of the human condition inevitably conflicts with the views of those who hold that certain kinds of experience should be withheld from children as it is liable to corrupt them.

Although the first mechanism identified by Chedzoy suggests that it is appropriate to expose older pupils to literature that depicts sexual activities, the mechanisms, whether dealt with at a lower or advanced educational level, are unacceptable in Muslim society, for they are contrary to Islamic teachings. It is not allowed to expose pupils to such kinds of experience even for the aim of creating a “free literary education”. Ibrāhīm (1984:259–260) warns the planners of the literary texts syllabus of selecting texts that motivate pupils to evil conduct or that evoke trivial desires. He asserts, though he does not provide any evidence, that there have been many incidents in which pupils have indulged in bad behaviour, motivated by

what they have read in literature. It is obvious from Chedzoy's argument that the risk of instilling undesirable behaviour and attitudes in pupils, by introducing evil or undesirable experiences, is undeniable. In addition, there is literature in which the different aspects of life are depicted but in a way that does not oppose the ethical values of society. Moreover, it seems that the "free literary education", which Chedzoy advocates, relies on the exploration of the experience conveyed in the literary work. This, as argued in the preceding chapter, cannot be the main purpose of literary education, for it spoils the exploration of the literary qualities. A free opportunity should be given to pupils in exploring the aesthetic and artistic values of the literary work and expressing their response to the elements of the text.

Since society cannot accept that its youngsters are taught anything that is contrary to its religious or cultural convictions, the planners of the literary texts syllabus must choose texts that are appropriate and at the same time can achieve the required aims.

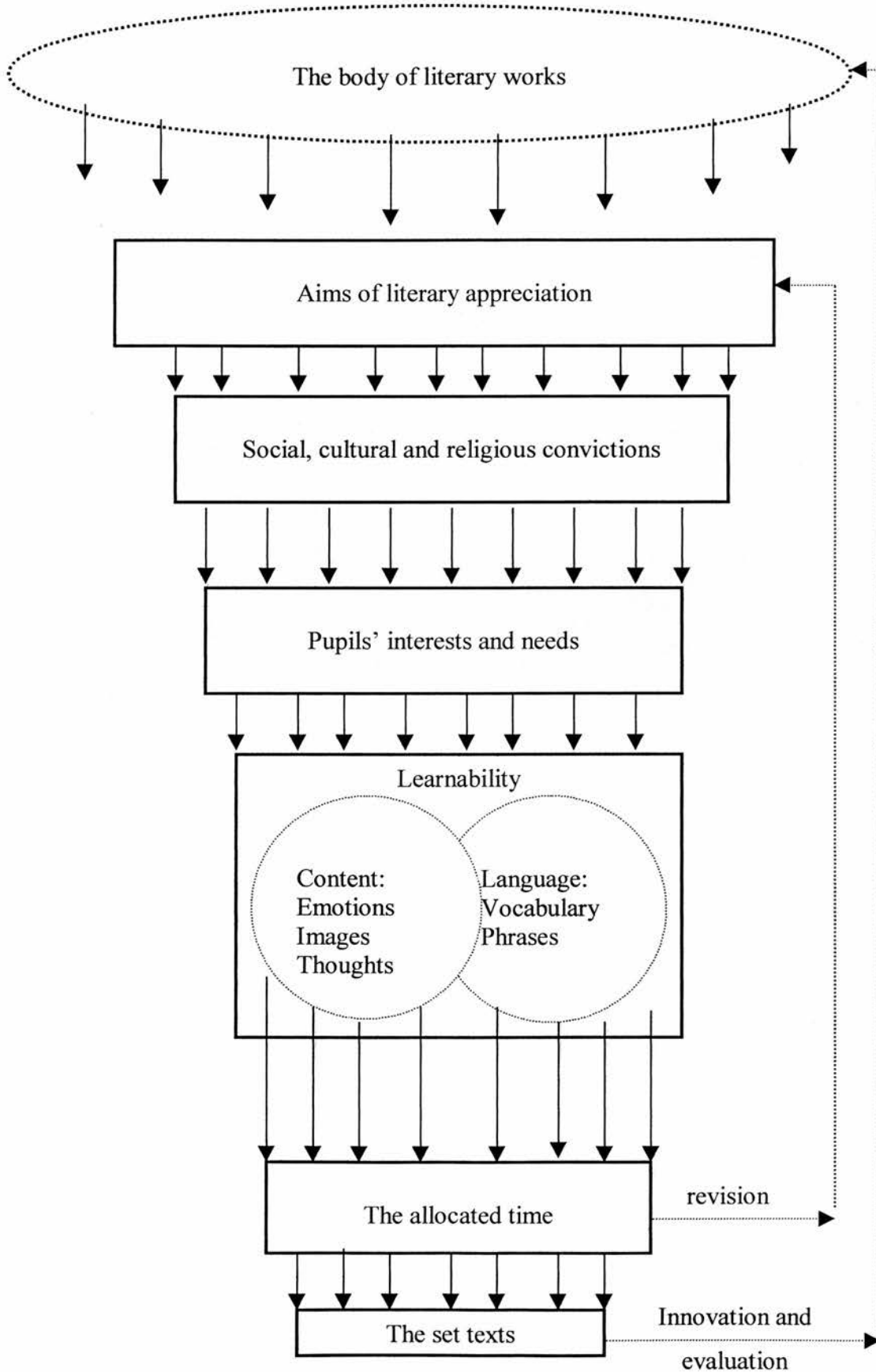
2.3 A Model for Selecting Literary Texts

The above discussion shows that there are various criteria and principles which the planners of the literary syllabus should apply when selecting literary texts. The criteria need to be applied as a set of screens through which the possibilities are passed to ensure that only texts that, as Taba (1962: 267) states,

are valid in the light of all pertinent considerations find their way into the curriculum. An exclusive use of any one criterion or of a limited set of criteria involves a danger of an unbalanced curriculum. To produce an effective as well as efficient curriculum it is necessary to retain only that content and those learning experiences which survive the sifting process after the application of all relevant criteria of a good curriculum.

In the light of the above criteria, a model for selecting literary texts may be formulated. The model is composed of a series of screenings to which the body of literature is exposed to select appropriate literary texts. Figure 2.1 exemplifies the model and summarises the selection of the content of the literary texts syllabus. At the first stage, it is assumed that the entire body of literature has passed through the first screening, which is the extent to which the text might help to achieve the aims of literary appreciation. It is expected that texts poor in content or in form will be eliminated at this stage. At the second screening, the texts are examined for their consistency with social, cultural and religious convictions. Texts that are contrary to the social ideology must be excluded. The next screening is the pupils' interests and needs. This screening should be based on a careful and valid survey of the pupils' preferences on the one hand and their needs on the other. It is important to ensure that all the texts which proceed to the next screening comply with these requirements. The fourth screening is learnability. The two aspects of the texts should be examined carefully to ensure that they are appropriate for the pupils' capability. The ideas and images included in the texts should be within the scope of the pupils' understanding. The language also should not exceed their linguistic competence. This screening will exclude texts that contain peculiar and complicated imagery or difficult and complex vocabulary and phrases. The fifth screening is to assess the time needed to study the text. Texts that can be studied within the allocated time should pass this screening.

Figure 2.1
A model for selecting literary texts



At the end of these screenings, the planners are expected to be left with a larger number of literary texts than are required for the pupils in the intended school year. Therefore, the texts must be re-examined more closely at each screening to produce smaller, but more appropriate selection. After this careful and systematic process, the planners can make satisfactory decision. When the last selection is made, it is necessary to ensure that the selected texts are different in period, genre and topic.

As indicated in the diagram, the syllabus must be subjected to continual innovation, necessitated by two factors. The first is the new writing which enters the body of literature and widens the domain of the selection. Innovation here is important because of the need to expose pupils to the latest developments in literature. The second is the change in the pupils' interests from one generation to the next. In other words, the preferences of this generation will not necessarily be those of the next. Innovation must also rely on the evaluation of the content and on the usefulness of the texts in achieving the aims. The field evaluation of the content may prove that some of the texts are unsuitable for study although they are seen to be appropriate by the planners.

2.5 Conclusion

Several factors affect the selection of the content of the literary texts syllabus which is designed for a specific group of pupils in a particular society to serve specific aims. The real educational value of teaching literary texts influences the selection, and excludes texts that do not help the acquisition of literary appreciation. The pupils are considered in two ways. First, texts must be selected in the light of their

interests and needs. Second, texts must be congruous with their competence and maturity. Society also influences the content of the literary syllabus: texts that include ideas and thoughts contrary to the social ideology must be excluded.

The above discussion shows that both the content and form of the literary text should be considered when compiling the literature syllabus. The pupils' interests, utility, universality and consistency are related to the content of the text, and validity and learnability to its form. Although literary texts are meant to instil in pupils sensitivity to and appreciation of the literary use of language, the message conveyed strongly influences the type of texts to be set for them. It has been explained in Chapter One that the content and form of literature are inseparable and the teaching of literary texts concentrates more on the form than on the content. However, the selection cannot be made on literary merit only. This is because the message, which is usually impressive and affective, contains human feelings and thoughts concerning the various aspects of life and living. These feelings and thoughts spring from the writer's perspective, which may be inconsistent with some people's points of view. The first hurdle to be surmounted is social and cultural ideology and convictions. If the message passes this hurdle, it then faces the pupils' interests, level of maturity and preferences. Themes that are compatible with social ideology and pupils' interests are to be sifted according to their utility and universality. It is important that the set texts deal with different themes and cover both national and universal topics to ensure diversity and freshness and at the same time provide pupils with a variety of experiences. That is not to favour the theme of the text at the expense of its literary merit. The selected texts must pass all the criteria mentioned above. Any text that does not comply with the criteria must be excluded.

Since the discussion of the above criteria is general, it is perhaps helpful to extract the principles from it and summarise them in specific statements. The principles may be divided into two groups: those which should be found in each text, and those which should be found in the set texts together. Each text must:

1. avoid difficult words;
2. include easy words and phrases for pronunciation and comprehension;
3. avoid artificial figures of speech;
4. contain beautiful imagery that at the same time evokes the pupils' imagination;
5. avoid artificial imagery;
6. avoid unfamiliar imagery;
7. include beneficial ideas;
8. avoid promoting values that are contrary to social and religious convictions;
9. contain true emotions that provoke the pupils' feelings;
10. stimulate pupils' thinking;
11. include motivations that evoke the pupils' literary appreciation;
12. be suitable for the pupils' linguistic competence;
13. relate to the pupils' environment and experiences; and
14. be suitable for the allocated time.

At the same time, the set texts together must:

1. be drawn from different periods;
2. deal with various topics;
3. cover different literary genres;
4. treat live topics that evoke pupils' interest;
5. be within the scope of the pupils' interests and literary preferences; and
6. be suitable for the allocated time.

Teaching Literary Texts at Secondary School Stage in the Sultanate of Oman

This chapter presents an outline of the teaching of literary texts in the Sultanate of Oman. The chapter commences with an outline of the sources on which this chapter relies. It then describes the constituent elements of the literary texts syllabus, its goals, content and the teaching methods associated with it. The chapter also clarifies the relationship between literary texts and other parts of the curriculum since literary texts form only one component of the programme of Arabic language teaching. Lastly, the chapter explores the subtle distinction between texts used in *muṭāla'a* (reading comprehension) and those included in *nuṣṣuṣ adabiyya* (literary texts), because both are featured in the same textbook and are ostensibly similar.

3.1 The Available Sources

Since the main topic of this study is the teaching of literary texts at secondary school stage in the Sultanate of Oman, it is pertinent here to outline the present status of this subject in terms of goals, content and teaching methods. In the absence of any field studies in this domain, the only reliable sources of the necessary data are the textbooks of literary texts set for the three years of the secondary stage, the Arabic language syllabus (*Minhāj al-luġha al-'arabiyya li al-marḥala al-thānawiyya*) (henceforth the syllabus), and the Arabic language teacher's guidebook for that stage (*Dalīl al-mu'allim fī māddat al-luġha al-'arabiyya li al-marḥala al-thānawiyya*) (henceforth the teacher's guidebook). These three sources are authored by a special

committee in the Department of Curriculum Development and revised by the Arabic language unit at the Ministry of Education.

The textbooks, one for each secondary year, are composed of various prose and poetry texts and divided into two main parts, *muṭāla‘a* and *nuṣuuṣ*. Most texts are followed by a brief biography of the writer or poet, the background to the text and five sets of questions and activities (see section 3.3.3).

The Arabic language syllabus is written as a guide for the authors of textbook and, moreover, it is meant to assist teachers to achieve the stated goals of the curriculum (see Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta‘līm, 1995a: 3). It comprises guidelines for the content, goals, activities and methods of evaluation, which must be adhered to in producing Arabic language textbooks for the secondary stage. It, therefore, starts with the teaching plan for Arabic language, the principles underlying the design of the curriculum, and the aims of Arabic teaching at this stage. It then outlines the goals, contents and teaching guidelines for each field of the Arabic language at the secondary stage; *muṭāla‘a* (reading comprehension), *nuṣuuṣ adabiyya* (literary texts), *naḥw* (syntax), *ṣarf* (morphology), *dilāla* (semantics), *naqd adabī* (literary criticism), *balāgha* (rhetoric), *‘aruuḍ* (prosody), *tārīkh al-adab al-‘arabī* (the history of Arabic literature) and *ta‘bīr* (composition). Finally, it concludes with general directions concerning curriculum evaluation.

The third source, the Arabic language teacher’s guidebook, is written to help teachers to reach both general and specific goals in the above fields and to improve

their implementation of the curriculum at a practical level (see Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim, 1995b: 5). It is composed of the following:

1. Broad goals for Arabic language teaching and a general teaching plan for each of its different fields, as well as the specific goals for each field.
2. Suggested teaching approaches and general principles to be employed in teaching each field.
3. Related recommendations aimed at improving Arabic language teaching, including non-class activities for practising standard Arabic in everyday life.
4. Necessary instructional planning for teachers regarding content analysis, identification of behavioural objectives and evaluation; some examples are given.
5. Proposed additional reading.
6. Analysis of the specific behavioural objectives of the second part of the textbook of literary criticism, rhetoric and prosody for the second secondary year.
7. Answers to most of the questions in the rhetoric and prosody sections for the second and third secondary years.

Items 6 and 7 are included in the teacher's guidebook, because they are considered to be especially challenging for the teachers.

3.2 Goals for Teaching Literary Texts

The goals for the teaching of literary texts at the secondary stage are stated in both the syllabus (Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim, 1995a: 30–33) and the teacher's guidebook (Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim, 1995b: 75–78). The difference between the goals in the syllabus and the teacher's guidebook may be described as a formal one. This is manifested in two ways. Firstly, while the teacher's guidebook presents a list of eighteen goals, there are only thirteen stated goals in the syllabus.

This results from either a process of expansion or, if we take the syllabus as our basis, we may consider the difference a matter of contraction. Whether we are dealing with a case of expansion or contraction, the fact remains that it is confusing to deal with two formally different statements of the same goals. Secondly, the goals are expressed in different ways in the two documents. This is inevitable, owing to the generality with which the goals are stated in the syllabus.

A translation of the goals as they are stated in the teacher's guidebook is given below, for the purposes of subsequent discussion and critique of these goals.

1. Connecting the pupil with the heritage of his Muslim Arab nation during its different periods by studying examples of poetry and prose texts chosen from these periods. The aim here is to help him assimilate that heritage, acquire the intrinsic ethical, social, human and artistic values that are useful for himself and his developing Omani society. It is also meant to assist him appreciate the outstanding literary characteristics of the historical periods of Arabic literature and understand the various components which make up the literature syllabus of this stage.
2. Linking the pupil with the Holy Qur'ān, the books of Ḥadīth (traditions of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad) and the literary works of the poets and writers whose texts are selected. This linking should result in motivating the pupil to go back to the original sources and to develop his interest in reading literature.
3. Familiarising the pupil with the biographies of a group of Arab and Muslim literary figures whose texts are studied at this stage.
4. Imparting to the pupil knowledge of important historical, political and social events in the history of the Arab and Muslim nation, including those which relate to its leaders, scholars, thinkers and literary figures.
5. Enriching the pupil's language by promoting the acquisition of vocabulary, grammar and style.
6. Improving the pupil's skills in using Arabic dictionaries through activities that demand looking up words in dictionaries.

7. Acquainting the pupil with Arabic genres, including *waṣīyya* (advice), *risāla* (letter), *khuṭba* (oratory), *ta'bīr* (composition), and poetry, to promote his interest in finding out more about these genres.
8. Developing the pupil's skill of reading texts correctly.
9. Training the pupil in a range of cognitive tasks, including comprehension, thinking, analysis, deduction, linking, judgement, conclusion, appreciation and criticism.
10. Improving the pupil's ability to memorise texts.
11. Widening the pupil's intellectual horizons, and motivating him to expand his knowledge independently.
12. Enhancing the pupil's aesthetic awareness and his ability to express himself in a polished and distinctive style.
13. Promoting the pupil's ability to respect other people's opinions while, at the same time, proceeding to assess these attitudes with the aim of adopting or rejecting them.
14. Sharpening the pupil's sensibility and cultivating his individuality by acquainting him with noble meanings and emotions.
15. Providing the pupil with knowledge of experiences which can shed light on the different aspects of human life, and the impulses which motivate people's behaviour and attitudes.
16. Arousing the pupil's sentiments and feelings through the study of intentions, passions and feelings.
17. Expanding his imagination through images and ideas contained in the texts.
18. Improving the pupil's ability in oral expression.

3.2.1 The Goals: Discussion and Critique

As is perhaps obvious from the above, the goals may be divided into three categories. The first is a language-oriented group to which we may assign goals which emphasise that the teaching of the set literary texts should enrich the language of the pupil in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and figures of speech. The second category is related to the study of literary history and criticism. Its aim is to enable the pupil to extend his knowledge of the lives and creative works of literary figures as well as

the distinct literary characteristics of the different periods of Arabic literature, and to acquaint himself with the styles typical of the various Arabic literary genres. The remaining group of goals focuses on developing various skills of thinking and acquiring positive, but critical attitudes towards other people's points of view and feelings. This group may also include goals concerning social and aesthetic values which the pupil needs to adopt.

Before discussing the difficulties associated with the above statement of goals, it may be useful to consider the extent to which the content of the literary texts syllabus matches the stated goals. This question is important, since the goals are meant to be achieved through the teaching of the set texts with the help of the suggested questions and activities. In other words, the content should be consistent with the stated goals.

A quick survey of the textbooks prescribed for secondary stage pupils reveals that the majority of the texts deal with different topics and embody moral and social values. The texts are extracted from the work of different literary figures and cover different periods of Arabic literature. Moreover, the texts represent a variety of Arabic literary genres with their characteristics, styles, and modes of construction. These features of the textbooks correspond to goals 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7. The suggested sets of questions and activities that follow each text are perhaps meant to serve goals 5, 6, 9, 10 and 11. These sets introduce new vocabulary and ways of expression, require reference to dictionaries and assign extracts for rote-learning. The sets also include questions that, to some extent, require thinking skills, such as those mentioned in goal 9.

It may be said that some goals are served by some aspects of the content of the textbooks. Of course, this does not necessarily entail that the content can or does lead to achievement of the goals, because there are other factors which influence the teaching process, such as the teacher, the teaching method, the instructional media, the class conditions and so forth. In other words, whether the goals of teaching literature are accomplished depends on how the curriculum as a whole is implemented.

Nevertheless, certain difficulties are inherent in the above statements of the goals of teaching literary texts. In the first place, most of these goals seem to be extremely idealistic. They seem to constitute broad philosophical aims, rather than pedagogic goals that are limited, realistic, and achievable. This leads to a second difficulty: many of the above goals are hard to put into operation, leaving the teacher unable to implement them in practice. The twelfth goal, for example, implies that by studying the set literary texts, the pupils will manage to develop an individual literary style. Yet, there is no evidence that students who study literature at university generally become good writers as a result of their exposure to literary texts during a specialised course. It is, therefore, excessively ambitious to expect pupils at the secondary stage to achieve that goal after studying literary texts at an unspecialised stage of learning. Other examples of extreme idealism and ambition may be seen in goals 14, 16 and 17; it is difficult to demonstrate how the literary texts syllabus can directly cultivate the pupil's character, arouse his noble feelings and expand his imagination.

The third difficulty is that the above statements do not distinguish literary texts from other subjects. Goals 9, 11, 13 and 15 are applicable to most school subjects, because they too provide opportunities for comprehending, analysing, deducing, linking, judging, concluding, and criticising. Most subjects develop the pupil's knowledge and raise issues for discussion and research. Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 14, 16 and 17 may be found among the goals of the history of literature as stated in the teacher's guidebook (see Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim, 1995b: 206, 207, 221–223). The same may be said of goal 7, which is one of the main goals of literary criticism (see Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim, 1995b: 129), as well as goals 5, 6, 8 and 18 which may be fulfilled by other fields of language learning such as grammar, semantics and rhetoric.

It is important to stress here that the connection between the goals of literary texts and other subjects does not mean that these goals cannot be achieved through the medium of literary texts; on the contrary, the study of literary texts can serve effectively to achieve these goals. These goals also underpin the strong relationship between the study of literary texts and the other language fields. However, no distinction is drawn in the list of goals between the study of literary texts and other disciplines, especially those concerned with language learning.

The fourth difficulty results from the fact that the above goals seem to treat literary texts as a means of enrichment of knowledge, language acquisition and moral development. Enrichment of knowledge is embodied in goals 1, 2, 3, 4 and 11. It is clear from these goals that literary texts are meant to serve as sources of information about the history of Arabic literature including its genres and the lives and works of

literary figures. Language acquisition is emphasised in goals 5, 6 and 8, in which we are told that the teaching of the set literary texts should enable the pupils to use dictionaries, improve their reading ability, expand their range of vocabulary and grammar, and improve their writing styles. Moreover, goals 1, 13, 14, 15 and 16 emphasise the role of literary texts in developing ethical and social values, cultivating the pupils' characters and assisting the acquisition of critical but respectful attitudes towards other people's points of view. On the whole, then, the literary texts syllabus aims at teaching literary texts not in their own right, but as a means to some other ends, such as cognitive, linguistic and moral objectives.

Neglecting the real goals of teaching literary texts and at the same time targeting different goals that may be served by other subjects may lead to a fifth difficulty: a lack of the precise purpose of the literary texts syllabus. This difficulty may cause confusion for both syllabus planners and teachers. Syllabus planners will be left bewildered, not knowing exactly on what they should focus when selecting the content and planning the instructional activities. Relying on the above statements of goals, teachers will be unable to decide which goals should be the basis of lessons that they are to prepare. In other words, the numerous ambitious goals set for the literary texts syllabus are not only unachievable, but also too many for a school subject. The final purpose of teaching any school subject should be clear and accurate, so that all instructional activities can be planned with that aim in view. Setting many purposes can only create confusion and lead the teaching in different directions, which will result in achieving none of those purposes.

The literary text as an art-form conveys a message through a linguistic mode. It has two main components: the form, which is linguistic, and the content, which is made up of human experience, values, emotions and sometimes facts. Broadly speaking, the language is distinguished by the use of literary style in which linguistic features such as rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, metaphor, simile, figures of speech, etc., are utilised and combined in a special way to reinforce the message conveyed and to link with other linguistic features across the entire text so that a unity and consistency of effect is created. It is the pervasiveness of such features that makes the language of a literary text figurative, imaginative, provocative and, therefore, more literary than other language forms. Hence, a special approach is needed in studying a literary text, if one is to recognise the message embodied in its literary context. The literary texts syllabus should therefore focus on the integration of what is said (the message), how it is said, and why it is said in that way (the mode), and to complete the circle, how the message and the mode affect the reader. Considered from this angle, the above goals may be said to fail to emphasise these dimensions of the literary text. The essential qualities of the literary text are ignored and its real educational value as a creative work is not properly articulated.

3.3 The Content of the Literary Texts Syllabus

Given the nature of the available sources as listed in section 3.1 of this chapter, a description of the content of the literary texts syllabus is limited to giving an outline of the guidelines used for selecting literary texts, the types of text prescribed and the suggested questions and activities for studying these texts.

3.3.1 Guidelines for Selecting Literary Texts

The authors of the syllabus give guidelines for selecting literary texts at the secondary stage. These guidelines are meant to serve as standards that enable the authors of the textbooks to choose texts of the appropriate kind. According to these guidelines, which are given in translation here for the purposes of subsequent discussion, the selected texts should:

1. Achieve the goals for teaching Arabic generally and those for teaching literary texts specifically.
2. Include enough passages from the Holy Qur'ān and an abundant number of Ḥadīths dealing with different social and intellectual issues in order to emphasise the elevated level of expression characteristic of the Holy Qur'ān and some of the Ḥadīths.
3. Include texts from different areas of the Arab world with special emphasis on Omani literature.
4. Exemplify the range of topics dealt with in poetry and the different genres used in prose literature, including; maqāma¹, maqāla (essay), story, proverb, ḥikma (aphorism), ḥiwār (dialogue), risāla (letter) and drama in order to show variety of style.
5. Embody beneficial content, good ideas, high values, beautiful images that conform to Islamic ideology and the Arab nation's present and future aspirations and, at the same time, avoid texts with content and ideas that deviate from the principles of Islam and the traditions of the Arab nation.
6. Reflect the intellectual and artistic characteristics of the literary works by author and period.
7. Include texts from female Arab writers and poets who tackle issues of special importance for women.
8. Include examples of literature that glorify heroism, altruism and the love of public welfare as well as literature which deals with the problem of Palestine, the sacredness of Jerusalem to the Arabs and Muslims and their determination to liberate the Holy Places and establish freedom in Palestine.

¹ Maqāma is an imaginative narrative written in rhymed prose. (see Brockelmann, 1991: 107–115)

9. Give good examples of literary works from little-known literary figures in the history of Arabic literature, alongside works from well-known authors.
10. The content and the linguistic and intellectual level of the texts should be suitable for secondary stage pupils in terms of their preferences and psychological, intellectual and emotional make-up as well as in terms of what they have learned in the primary and preparatory stages.
11. Enhance the pupil's love for and pride in his mother tongue by engendering in him appreciation of its precision, beauty, and the musical qualities of its expressions as well as its ability to change and develop.
12. Literary texts in the first secondary year should present a general perspective on the outstanding characteristics of the development of Arabic literature – poetry and prose – through its different periods, from the pre-Islamic period to the present.
13. In the second year of the secondary stage, texts should give a clear picture of the literary characteristics of pre-Islamic, Early Islamic, Umayyad, Abbasid and Andalusian literature in a way that represents the historical, social and intellectual phenomena of these periods in line with the goals of the literary curriculum and the plan of literary texts in the second year of the secondary stage.
14. In the third secondary year, texts should give a clear outline of literature in the Crusade, Mameluke and Modern periods, besides literature of the *mahjar* (Arab immigrants living in the new world) in a way that represents the historical, social and intellectual phenomena of these periods in line with the goals of the literary curriculum in the third secondary year as well as the plan of literary texts applicable to it.

3.3.1.1 The Guidelines: Discussion and Critique

The above guidelines seem to focus on the content of the literary texts and how they represent various Arabic literary genres and periods as well as the work of their authors. The suitability of the texts for the pupils' level is also taken into account in these guidelines. The selected texts are required to exemplify, on the one hand, the genres studied in the literary criticism curriculum, and, on the other hand, the periods dealt with in the history of literature.

The guidelines rely on the historical and social context of the text. Like the goals, they regard the literary text as a repository of factual data from which evidence for social, historical and intellectual phenomena can be inferred. The emphasis on the informational dimension of the text may lead the author to look for texts that represent these phenomena regardless of their literary merit. The literary text is not merely a historical or social document or a direct representation of any historical or social situation. In fact, it is a creative work in which ideas, emotions, values, images and figures of speech are interwoven and arranged in an impressive and beautiful language aimed at evoking an aesthetic response. However, literary texts can also be traditional and repetitive. The above guidelines do not exclude texts that embody well-known ideas, recycled images or exaggerated and artificial figures of speech.

According to the guidelines, the literary texts should serve as examples of genres, authors and historical periods. They should be selected to reflect the historical development of Arabic literature through the ages and to exemplify the literary genres as taught in the curriculum of literary criticism. If literary texts are studied for these purposes there seems little reason why they are not included directly in the history of Arabic literature or literary criticism.

Despite the fact that guideline 10 refers to the pupils' preferences based on their psychological, intellectual and emotional make-up, the guidelines taken together do not seem to pay sufficient attention to the differences between male and female pupils with regard to their literary preferences in terms of topics and genres.

Neither do the guidelines give details of which preferences are taken into consideration in producing the content of the literary texts syllabus.

3.3.2 Types of Literary Texts

It is clear from the above statements of goals and guidelines that literary texts are assumed to vary with regard to genres, topics and historical periods.

The issues treated in the texts cover the four environments in which Omani people live: local, regional, national and global. Regarding the first, pupils are introduced to texts composed by Omani poets, including “Khayr al-mursalīn al-malja”² by Ibn Shaykhān al-Sālimī and “Aqim ‘alā al-‘ilm”³ by ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Alī al-Khalīlī in the first year, “Dharīnī wa khuluqī”⁴ by al-Imām Rāshid b. Sa‘īd al-Yaḥmadī in the second year, and “Yā baḥr”⁵ by Hilāl b. Sa‘īd b. ‘Urāba in the third year. With respect to the regional environment, texts reflecting the society and culture of the Arabian Gulf are selected. These may be exemplified by “Jisr al-maḥabba wa al-ikhā”⁶ by Ghāzī al-Quṣaybī and “Baḳāyā safīnat ghawṣ”⁷ by Mubārak b. Sayf Āl-Thānī which are studied in the third secondary year. The third

² In this poem “The Best of the Prophets is the Refuge”, the poet describes his longing for al-Ḥijāz, Mecca and Madina and the tomb of the Prophet Muḥammad therein.

³ This poem, “Keep on Seeking Knowledge”, includes an aphorism which the poet advises human beings to adhere to.

⁴ This poem, “Leave Me and My Morals”, starts with an aphorism and then describes the poet’s bravery and how he defeated his enemies.

⁵ “O sea!” is poem which includes a dialogue between the poet, who is angry at the sea which has engulfed his house, and the sea which excuses its action.

⁶ This poem, “The Bridge of Love and Brotherhood”, is about King Fahd’s Bridge which links Bahrain to Saudi Arabia.

⁷ “The Remains of a Pearl Diving Ship” is a free verse poem in which the poet appears to talk to a diving ship and calls on it to remember the time of pearl diving.

group of topics deals with issues concerning Omani individuals as members of Arab and Muslim society and culture; the Palestine problem and the unity of the Islamic nation are but two examples. This environment is represented by the following texts: “Innanā lāji’uun fī kull quṭr”⁸ by Abuu Salmā in the first year, and “Filiṣṭīn”⁹, by ‘Alī Maḥmuud Ṭāhā, “Waṣiyyat lāji”¹⁰ by Hāshim al-Rifā’ī, “Hādhā al-sharq”¹¹ by Mīkhā’īl Nu‘ayma and “Umma wāḥida”¹² by Sayyid Quṭb in the third year.

The global environment raises issues that are important to human beings in general such as life and death, love of nature and brotherhood. Issues of this kind are treated in “Ta‘ab kulluhā al-ḥayāh”¹³ by Abuu al-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī in the first year, “Waṣf al-ṭabī‘a fī al-shi‘r al-andalusī”¹⁴ in the second year, and “Min aghānī al-

⁸ This poem, “We are Refugees in every Country”, illustrates the deprivation and exile which the Palestinian refugees suffer.

⁹ In this poem, “Palestine”, the poet calls on the Arabs to fight to free Palestine and describes the nobility of dying on its land.

¹⁰ This poem, “A Refugee’s Advice”, is an exhortation by a Palestinian refugee who was exiled from his land after his eldest son was martyred. The refugee exhorts his remaining son to go back to fight for his land.

¹¹ “The East” is a short article in which the writer glorifies the East, by which he means the Middle East and the holy places, and declares his belief in the ability of the East to turn into the world’s centre of power, and tells us what he wants for the East.

¹² “One Nation” is a prose text in which the author attempts to convince the reader that the bond of belief is the best bond to unite people.

¹³ “Life is Trouble” is an extract from a poem in which the poet declares his view of life and death.

¹⁴ These are four extracts from different poems titled “The Depiction of Nature in Andalusian Poetry”. They describe the beautiful Andalusian countryside.

ru‘āh”¹⁵ by Abuu al-Qāsim al-Shābbī, “al-Ṭīn”¹⁶ by Īlyā Abuu Māḍī and a prose piece by Ibn Khaldūn called “al-Insān madaniyy bi al-ṭab”¹⁷ in the third year.

The genre of the texts studied also varies. Pupils are required to study different types of poetry and prose. Apart from one text in free verse, all the poems are in classical form and deal with traditional topics, such as eulogy, description, apology, aphorism, love and didactic poetry. Prose texts are also of different types; they include letters, oratory, advice and essays as well as extracts from the Holy Qur’ān and Ḥadīth. This diversity of genre implies differences in style, since each genre demands its own style. Stories, drama and maqāmāt are not included in the literary texts studied, despite the fact that they are mentioned in the guidelines among the literary genres that should be represented.

However, in general terms, it may be commented that the variety of set texts offers the teacher the opportunity to expose his pupils to different learning experiences with regard to literary texts.

3.3.3 Suggested Activities and Questions

Each text in both *muṭāla‘a* and *nuṣuuṣ* is followed by at least five sets of questions and activities intended to assist in the teaching and learning of the texts. The authors of the textbooks emphasise that these questions and activities are only suggestions

¹⁵ The poet wants this poem to be a song for shepherds, glorifying nature and praising work in the early morning, so he titles it “A Song of shepherds”.

¹⁶ “Clay” is a poem in which the poet reminds humans of their origin and calls on them to live as brothers and avoid arrogance.

¹⁷ “Man is Social by Nature” is a prose text extracted from Ibn Khaldūn’s famous *Muqaddima* (Introduction). In it, he attempts to show humans’ need for each other.

and examples. This obliges the teacher to select what is appropriate for his pupils, and his objectives and to include additional activities if needed (Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim, 1995b: 48, 52, 67, 83, 85, 86).

The five sets of questions are grouped as follows (1) understanding and comprehension; (2) lexicon and semantics; (3) discussion and analysis; (4) criticism and appreciation; and (5) individual activities. Composition activities are confined to *muṭāla'a* and rote learning to *nuṣuuṣ*. The subsections below give more details about the proposed questions and activities.

3.3.3.1 Understanding and Comprehension

Questions and activities included in this set test the general understanding of the theme of the text and the ideas embodied in it (Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim, 1995b: 44, 83). Hence, the majority of the answers to the questions can easily be found in the text. Pupils are also asked to extract the main ideas of the text and to explain some phrases and sentences.

3.3.3.2 Lexicon and Semantics

This set of questions is meant to help the pupils understand the meanings of words, phrases and larger expressions, and to train them to use dictionaries and to grasp the meaning by reference to context. As stated in the guidebook (Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim, 1995b, 64, 65, 83, 84), this set is composed of three subsets. The first includes illustrations of some words and expressions aimed at eliminating any vagueness that may hinder understanding of the text. The second contains multiple choice questions asking pupils to select the meaning of single words, phrases or

expressions from one of the explanations provided. The third subset requires the pupil to refer to dictionaries to find the meaning of some individual words. In addition, there is a fourth subset in the textbooks of the second and third years which includes questions asking about differences in the meanings of words and groups of words.

3.3.3.3 Discussion and Analysis

Questions and activities in this set are intended to help the pupils understand detailed ideas and comprehend partial meanings of the text as well as the significance of some important words and phrases (Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta‘līm, 1995b: 85). The most frequently occurring questions are those asking for information or ideas included in the text explicitly or implicitly. Pupils are asked to explain some phrases, to extract evidence of particular ideas or information, and to give any additional information necessary for a better understanding of the text. Moreover, pupils are required to express judgements and opinions concerning ideas, the main issues raised in the text, and the style of writing. Here, questions deal with all aspects of the text including words, phrases, figures of speech, ideas, feelings, metre, rhyme and genre.

3.3.3.4 Appreciation and Criticism

The function of this set, as stated in the guidebook (Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta‘līm, 1995b: 86), is to assist the pupils to grasp points of beauty and elevated expressions, to identify effective figures of speech, and to learn more about literary criticism and rhetoric. This set also aims to train the pupils to criticise and appreciate literary texts. Questions here concern the same aspects mentioned in the section on

'Discussion and Analysis'. Moreover, the pupil's point of view is sought in this set more than in other sets.

3.3.3.5 Individual Activities

This set contains a group of individual activities which has three goals. Firstly, to familiarise the pupil with references and foster his reading habits. Secondly, to expand his knowledge on the topic and the author of the text. Thirdly, to train him in writing small pieces of research (see: Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim, 1995b: 68, 87, 88). However, because these kinds of activity are not assessed in the final examination, both teachers and pupils seem generally to ignore them.

3.3.3.6 Suggested Activities and Questions: Discussion and Critique

Given the aims which the suggested activities and questions are meant to serve, these questions should effectively develop in pupils a group of necessary skills that are considered vital for any effective instructional process in the study of literature, i.e. comprehending, analysing, criticising and appreciating.

However, a quick investigation of the sets of questions and activities, as they are included in the textbooks, reveals three problems. Firstly, the questions and activities included in each set are not always such homogeneous types as they are intended to be. In other words, a question or activity that belongs to a certain set is sometimes placed in another. This mixture is frequently found in the last two sets in particular. The following are examples of this problem:

1. Questions on explaining the literary quality of some expressions, and extracting the dominant feelings and sentiments, should be placed in the set of

‘appreciation and criticism’. However, these types of question are also found in the set of ‘understanding and comprehension’.

2. Questions on suggesting a new title for the text are found in three sets of questions the first, the third and the fourth.
3. Questions on inferring the ideas embodied in the text appear in the first, the third and the fourth sets.
4. Questions on extracting evidence from the text to support a particular idea or fact are found in both the first and second sets.
5. Questions on identifying the stylistic features of the text and demonstrating how these features are employed exist in the third and fourth sets.
6. Questions on specifying the elements of a literary genre occur in the third and fourth sets.
7. Questions on exploring the way ideas are expressed in the text and judging their coherence are also found in the third and fourth sets.
8. Questions on illustrating figures of speech are, likewise, found in the third and fourth sets.

Secondly, it may be argued that the emphasis on extracting information from the text compromises the value of the text as a creative piece of writing, reducing it to a mere source of information. This emphasis seems to be the result of favouring the theme dimension of a text at the expense of other dimensions, for example narrative discourse, style and imagery.

Thirdly, some questions and activities are supposed to link the literary texts to the other parts of the Arabic curriculum through extracting examples of grammatical and rhetorical rules. These types of question may lead the teacher and his pupils

towards a mechanical analysis of the linguistic features included in the text, rather than exploring the extent to which those features bestow upon the literary text its vital quality as an artistic work.

3.4 The Approach to Teaching

The syllabus (see Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta‘līm, 1995a: 46–49) and the teacher’s guidebook (see Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta‘līm, 1995b: 91–101) propose an approach to teaching that consists of six steps, although this approach is set out more fully in the latter than the former.

3.4.1 Introducing the Text

This step is meant to motivate and stimulate the pupils to study the text effectively. It should cover one of the following: (a) the occasion (*munāsaba*) which inspired the writing of the text; (b) the author’s life and his other literary works; (c) the political, social and historical environment of the text; (d) the genre to which the text belongs; and (d) values or principles included in the text.

3.4.2 Reading the Text

The reading of the text may take different forms. If the teacher judges the text to be easy, he may ask the pupils to read it silently. The teacher may, however, read the text aloud if he wishes to demonstrate its oral qualities, such as musical cadences and alliteration. In some cases, the teacher may ask the pupils to follow the text in its written form as he reads it aloud. The focus in this step is on the correctness of reading and general comprehension of the main ideas. It is seen as the teacher’s duty here to make sure that his pupils can read the text correctly, because an accurate

reading can show them how to read and enunciate texts effectively, and help them understand the meaning.

3.4.3 Discussing the General Content of the Text

Three tasks need to be fulfilled here. The first is to discuss the main ideas of the text in order to assess what the pupils understand from the preceding step and to help them perceive the general framework of the text. The teacher may use the comprehension questions that follow each text in the textbook. The second and third tasks may already have been covered by the teacher in the introduction, and, if this is the case, the teacher will omit them here. The second task is to introduce the author of the text to the pupils by highlighting the significant events in his life, his literary product and his position among other literary figures. The third task is to shed light on the occasion which led to the writing of the text and the circumstances that affected it.

3.4.4 Illustrating the Text, Discussing its Underlying Ideas and Analysing it

To discuss the ideas, grammar and semantic import of the text, the teacher divides its meaning into sub-units and adopts the following procedures:

1. Asking one or more pupils to read the unit aloud to hold the pupils' attention.
2. Dealing with the linguistic difficulties by discussing them in relation to the context.
3. Discussing the ideas by asking questions which are relevant to the meaning of the unit being studied, utilising the questions provided in the textbook.

4. Asking the pupils to paraphrase the general meaning of the unit in their own words.

If the teacher feels that the linguistic or intellectual levels of the text were not beyond his pupils' ability, he may choose to curtail or omit some of these procedures.

3.4.5 Appreciation and Criticism

Here the teacher asks his pupils to analyse the text critically by dealing with its rhetorical devices and imagery, as well as by comparing it with other works.

3.4.6 Individual Activities

The teacher may ask his pupils to read other texts by the same author, from the same period or of the same genre. He may also ask them to read more about the author's life or the literary genre to which the text belongs, and to write short essays on any of the issues discussed above. In addition, the teacher may ask his pupils to memorise parts of the text.

Finally, the teacher's guidebook emphasises that the steps mentioned above are only suggestions and that the teacher should add whatever he thinks will be useful for his pupils.

3.4.7 The Approach to Teaching: Discussion and Critique

The above approach can be found in most references that deal with teaching Arabic literary texts (see e.g. Quura, 1981: 247–251; Ibrāhīm, 1984: 268–273; Makkī et al., 1986: 120–121; al-Sayyid, 1988: 597–602; Shaḥāta, 1992: 184–189). These sources appear to agree on the order of the steps in teaching literary texts, and the division of

the text into units in the fourth step. Nevertheless, they differ concerning what should be discussed during the treatment of each unit. One suggestion is to discuss linguistic difficulties, ideas and figures of speech, leaving criticism and appreciation until the theme of the text is understood by the pupils. This is the method adopted in the syllabus and the teacher's guidebook. An alternative method is to deal with criticism and appreciation as part of the treatment of the unit (see e.g. Quura, 1981: 247–251; Shaḥāta, 1992: 184–189). The first method may be more appropriate to the nature of the literary text as an artistic work, because it is very difficult to draw conclusions as to the quality of an artistic product during the treatment of some of its parts.

The general approach set out above does not distinguish between different kinds of literary genres. This does not represent a problem since the approach draws guidelines which are intended as a framework for dealing with literary texts in general, leaving the particular needs of each text to be addressed by the teacher. However, the teacher's guidebook is expected to give the teacher clear practical guidelines and draw his attention to the different procedures required for each kind of text, since prose and poetry, for example, cannot be treated in the same way. Put differently, teachers need to be shown how to employ the above approach in dealing with each kind of text. They need to know the procedure necessary for each step, the appropriate activities needed to improve the pupils' ability to criticise and appreciate the literary text, and the kind of questions they should pose to foster and challenge their pupils' thinking. Instead of doing this, the guidebook does no more than reiterate an approach that already exists in the literature without any modification.

That is not to say that the guidebook should impose an inflexible approach to which the teacher should be restricted. The point here is that this kind of guidance for teachers is necessary given the current state of affairs, in which teachers are not prepared sufficiently to teach the content of the Omani literary texts syllabus. This applies both to the Omani teachers who graduate from the Sultan Qaboos University (see 'Īsān, 1995: 86, 87) and other Arab teachers since they are not familiar with the content of courses taught in Omani schools. Moreover, this problem is exacerbated by, on the one hand, the absence of in-service training and, on the other hand, the lack of necessary reference books and materials needed for further study of the set texts.

Furthermore, in outlining the necessary types of procedures, skills and questions, the guidebook gives alternatives that teachers may utilise in achieving the targeted goals. Teachers can choose and implement what is appropriate for their pupils, on the one hand, and the kind of text on the other. Creative and active teachers can build on these alternatives, improve them and generate their own approaches. This is arguably better than the over-reliance on teachers in terms of finding the suitable approach for teaching each type of text, since teachers vary in their levels of competence, motivation and performance capability.

3.5 The Relationship between Literary Texts and the Other Parts of the Arabic Language Curriculum

Pupils at the secondary stage spend 7 periods per day, 35 periods per week, in studying the general curriculum which, includes Islamic education, Arabic, science, mathematics, social studies etc. Each period lasts 45 minutes. The number of periods

allocated to the literary texts syllabus, which is seen as a part of the Arabic curriculum, varies according to year and division. In the first secondary year, two out of seven Arabic curriculum periods per week are allocated to literary texts. This brings the percentage of the literary texts periods to 28.6% of the periods allocated to the entire Arabic curriculum. In the second and the third years, the literary division spends two out of nine Arabic curriculum periods studying literary texts, and the scientific division one out of five. The percentage of literary periods in the literary division is 22% and in the scientific division is 14% (see Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim, 1995a: 5; Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim, 1995b: 16). The time devoted to the study of literary texts each week demonstrates their importance if compared with the time remaining for the other parts of the Arabic curriculum.

The goals of teaching literary texts as discussed above are related to the goals of Arabic language instruction generally (see section 3.2). As stated in section 3.3.1, literary texts are meant to serve as examples of the periods of Arabic literature which are studied in the history of literature on the one hand, and the genres prescribed in the literary criticism component on the other.

Furthermore, one of the purposes of the questions and activities included in the set of 'appreciation and criticism' is to help pupils understand the rhetorical devices they study in the second and third secondary years (Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim, 1995b: 86). Thus, questions in that set, as well as those in the 'discussion and analysis' set, are designed to train the pupils to elicit instances of similes,

metaphors, alliteration etc. from the text (see e.g. q.2 p.140 1st¹⁸, q.1 p.97, q.9, 3 p.106 3rd). Literary texts are also connected to prosody (*‘aruuḍ*), syntax (*naḥw*) and morphology (*ṣarf*). Pupils are usually asked to identify the metre of a poem (see e.g. q.4 p.190 2nd, q.12 p. 106, q.12 p.227 3rd), *i‘rāb* of some words (see e.g. q.5 p.139, q.7, 13 p.152 1st, q.9 p.117 q.15 p. 124 2nd) or their derivational patterns or forms (see e.g. q.12 p.123, q.14 p.233 2nd, q.5 p.105 3rd).

The connection between the literary texts and the other parts of the Arabic language curriculum is, again, based on considering the text as a representative example of its literary period and genre on the one hand and as a means of language acquisition on the other. This orientation leads to the same problems discussed in sections 3.2.1 and 3.3.1.1 above.

3.6 The Distinction Between the Texts in Muṭāla‘a and Nuṣuuṣ

al-Muṭāla‘a wa al-nuṣuuṣ al-adabiyya textbooks are divided into two parts: *muṭāla‘a* and *nuṣuuṣ*. Each part constitutes a variety of prose and poetry texts. Excluding the texts extracted from the Holy Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth, it appears that what the topics in the first part have in common is that they all belong to the modern period except “*Iḏa bāligha*”¹⁹ by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) in the first year and “*Ibn Baṭṭuṭa fī ‘umān*”²⁰ by Ibn Baṭṭuṭa (d.779/1346) in the second year. These

¹⁸ These examples are taken from the textbooks for the three years of the secondary school: q. refers to question, p. to page and 1st, 2nd, 3rd to the year.

¹⁹ “Memorable Sermon” is a prose text in which the author advises people to fear Allah and be prepared for the day of judgement.

²⁰ “Ibn Baṭṭuṭa in Oman” is a prose text narrates a part of the journey to Oman of the famous Arabic traveller Ibn Baṭṭuṭa.

texts are set to both scientific and literary divisions with the exception of “al-‘Izz b. ‘Abd al-Salām”²¹ by ‘Alī Ṭanṭāwī in the second year which is taught only to the literary division. Most of the texts are in prose, with the exception of the play ‘*Antara* by Aḥmad Shawqī and the poem “Jisr al-maḥabba wa al-ikhā” by Ghāzī al-Quṣaybī. The texts in the second part of the textbook are divided between poetry and prose almost equally. It may be concluded from the chronological order in which they are presented that they are meant to represent the historical development of Arabic literature. This raises the question of the difference between these two parts: *muṭāla‘a* and *nuṣuuṣ*.

The authors of the syllabus (Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta‘līm, 1995a: 24) draw the attention of the teachers and the textbooks’ authors to what they see as a subtle distinction between the two parts. It is stated there that the texts in *muṭāla‘a* serve the aim of intellectual satisfaction and enrichment of knowledge more than developing aesthetic appreciation, which is seen as the aim of *nuṣuuṣ*. In other words, the authors of the syllabus suggest that the teaching of the texts included in the first part should be more focused on evaluating the extent to which the ideas embodied in the text are correct and valuable. In contrast, the treatment of the texts in the second part should focus on identifying the emotional elements and judging their artistic validity with regard to how skilfully the writer portrays his feelings and experiences as well as the extent to which he succeeds in influencing the reader’s personal reaction with the text.

²¹ This prose text explains the role that al-‘Izz b. ‘Abd al-Salām performed in preparing for the battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt (658 AH/1260 AD) in which the Mongols were defeated and after which they were expelled from the Middle East.

To discuss and evaluate the distinction suggested in the syllabus, answers to three questions will be discussed: (1) Does this distinction apply to texts in *muṭāla‘a* and *nuṣuuṣ*? (2) Does it have any impact on the treatment of texts in both parts? (3) Is the pedagogic outcome it is intended to serve actually a desirable one?

Regarding the first question, a quick investigation of the set texts may reveal that the above distinction applies to a number of texts in both parts. On the one hand, intellectual satisfaction and enrichment may be seen as the main purpose of some texts in the first part such as “al-Takāmul al-iqtiṣādī bayn duwal al-khalīj al-‘arabiyya”²² and “al-Ḥaḍāra al-islāmiyya”²³ by Muṣṭafā al-Sibā‘ī in the first year, “al-‘Asal fih shifā’ li al-nās”²⁴, “al-Mahā al-‘arabī fī duwal al-khalīj”²⁵ in the second year of the secondary stage and “Khamsumi’at qal‘a wa ḥiṣn tarwī al-tārīkh fī salṭanat ‘umān”²⁶ and “Fī ajsāminā ḥaras ‘atīd dhū ba’s shadīd”²⁷ in the third. Each of these texts discusses ideas and develops them with explanations and relevant

²² This text “The Economic Integration of the Arabian Gulf States” highlights the economical principles and characteristics shared by the Arabian Gulf states and argues the necessity of establishing an economic union among them.

²³ In this text, “Islamic Civilisation”, the writer defines the characteristics of Islamic civilisation and clarifies its contributions to human civilisation.

²⁴ This text, “Honey is a Medicine for People”, describes the life of bees and the health benefits of honey, linking it with the verses which mention bees and honey in the Holy Qur’ān.

²⁵ “The Arabian Wild Cow in the Gulf” lists the types of wild cow and describes the domestication of the Arabian wild cow in Oman, showing how they are treated in Arabic literature.

²⁶ “Five Hundred Forts and Castles Narrate the History of the Sultanate of Oman” describes the five hundred forts and castles in the Sultanate of Oman.

²⁷ This text, “In Our Bodies is an Ever-ready Guard with Immense Power” explains the lines of defence in the human body.

information. On the other hand, most of the poetry texts in the second part seem to serve the aim of aesthetic appreciation.

The distinction between *muṭāla‘a* and *nuṣuuṣ* does not, however, apply to some texts in both parts. Intellectual satisfaction and enrichment may not be served in a significant way in the following texts: “Iḏa bāligha” by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and “Fī al-ṭarīq ilā birak Sulaymān”²⁸ by Samīra ‘Azzām” in the first secondary year, the play *‘Antara* by Aḥmad Shawqī and the poem “Jisr al-maḥabba wa al-ikhā” by Ghāzī al-Quṣaybī in the third year. Likewise, emotional impact is hardly served in some of the texts such as “Tarbiyat al-banīn wa al-banāt”²⁹ by Rifā‘a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, “al-Insān madaniyy bi al-ṭab” by Ibn Khaldūn, and “Umma wāḥida” by Sayyid Quṭb in the third year. Each of these texts presents an idea and underpins it with evidence from human life experiences.

The second question, concerning how ideas and literary qualities are dealt with in the treatment of texts in each part, may be answered by investigating the teaching approach and the questions suggested for *muṭāla‘a* and *nuṣuuṣ*. Firstly, the teaching approach proposed for *muṭāla‘a* is almost identical to the approach suggested for *nuṣuuṣ* (see section 3.4 of this chapter). The difference may lie in the approach for *muṭāla‘a*, where ideas form the main purpose in the discussion and analysis parts of the approach. In this step, the ideas presented in the text should be discussed, and linked to the religious, political, social and economic environment of

²⁸ This short story, “On the Way to Suleiman’s Ponds”, narrates how a Palestinian couple lost their child and their hopes at the beginning of the Palestinian tragedy.

²⁹ “Educating Boys and Girls” is a prose text in which the writer highlights the difference between males and females in their individual educational needs.

their time. Ideas should be also evaluated in terms of correctness, consistency with their author's beliefs, coherence, and depth (Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa al-Ta'lim, 1995b: 51). On the other hand, the approach for *nuṣuuṣ* texts does not refer to the literary quality or to the emotional impact of the texts.

Secondly, regarding the suggested questions and activities, the same sets of questions are found in both *muṭāla'a* and *nuṣuuṣ*. These sets include similar types of questions which serve the same functions mentioned in section 3.3.3.

With respect to the third question, it may be said that since ideas are found in literary and non-literary texts, this distinction is untenable. It may, however, be possible to uphold the distinction between *muṭāla'a* and *nuṣuuṣ* texts if it is anchored in specific pedagogic reasons.

The statement of goals for *muṭāla'a* and *nuṣuuṣ* does not seem to highlight the purposes that each part is meant to achieve nor does it distinguish between the two parts. Both parts are meant to improve reading ability and accurate pronunciation (1st *muṭāla'a*, 8th *nuṣuuṣ*), to promote recognition of different styles in Arabic writing (6th *muṭāla'a*, 7th *nuṣuuṣ*), to train pupils in free discussion and to develop their self-confidence (8th *muṭāla'a*, 13th *nuṣuuṣ*). They also aim at increasing pupils' ability to use references and dictionaries (14th *muṭāla'a*, 2nd, 11th *nuṣuuṣ*) to enrich their language (15th *muṭāla'a*, 5th, 6th *nuṣuuṣ*), as well as improving their skills of analysing, deducing, linking, judging, concluding, appreciating and criticising (2nd, 3rd, 4th *muṭāla'a*, 9th *nuṣuuṣ*). Moreover, both parts are intended to highlight the links between the Muslim and Arab world and

Oman (11th *muṭāla‘a*, 1st *nuṣuuṣ*), to develop the pupils’ literary abilities to express their ideas and feelings (12th *muṭāla‘a*, 12th *nuṣuuṣ*), and to present to them human experiences in order to broaden their intellectual horizons (9th *muṭāla‘a*, 15th *nuṣuuṣ*).

Furthermore, discussing and evaluating ideas in terms of correctness, depth, relevance to the environment and consistency with the author’s beliefs should not be the main function of *muṭāla‘a* as a part of the Arabic language curriculum. To illustrate this point, let us take the text “Khamsumi’at qal‘a wa ḥiṣn tarwī al-tārīkh fī salṭanat ‘umān”. This text is a good example of the non-literary texts included in *muṭāla‘a*. It presents facts about the main Omani forts. If this text is studied merely for its ideas, which are factual data, there seems little reason why it is prescribed. Pupils usually study such facts in the history curriculum. Evaluating these ideas in terms of correctness requires either comparing them to other information about the forts from other sources, or visiting the forts to make sure that the facts given in the text are true.

Assessing the consistency of the ideas with the author’s beliefs and the environment requires a great deal of knowledge about the author’s ideology and philosophy of life as well as of the predominant ideologies and knowledge of the time to which the text belongs. These should not be the aims of language-based instruction. Providing factual information and examining its correctness are the aims of other curricula such as geography, history or science.

It may be said in conclusion that the distinction between texts in *muṭāla‘a* and *nuṣuuṣ* on the basis of ideas and literary qualities is not a valid or workable one for five reasons. First, *muṭāla‘a* includes texts that are supposed to be, according to the distinction, included in *nuṣuuṣ* and vice versa. Second, most texts embody ideas and, to some extent, literary qualities. Third, there is considerable similarity between the goals of the two parts. Fourth, texts in both parts are treated in the same way. Fifth, studying ideas, in the way described in the syllabus, should not be the main function of *muṭāla‘a* as a literature-based language syllabus.

However, the different kinds of text in *muṭāla‘a* and *nuṣuuṣ* may be divided into two parts according to ideas and literary qualities for pedagogic purposes. Ideas should not be evaluated in terms of depth, correctness, and consistency with their author's beliefs as proposed in the teacher's guidebook. Interest in the ideas should serve the aim of exploring the way in which these ideas are presented and developed across the text. The pupil should be able to develop an awareness of how linguistic features are used to convey ideas, explain them, support them and integrate them into the text as a whole. These aspects are more relevant to the functions of a language-based curriculum than correctness, depth and consistency with the author's beliefs.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, elements of the literary texts syllabus have been outlined and discussed: the goals, the content and the teaching approach, as well as the relationship between the literary texts and the other parts of the Arabic language curriculum. It should be clear that the Arabic language curriculum planners are aware of the importance of the programme of teaching literary texts. As has been

seen in this chapter, the teacher is informed not only of the goals that he should work to achieve, but also of the guidelines that the textbook's authors should use in selecting the texts and the aims beyond the suggested questions and activities. The teacher is also offered an approach that he may implement in teaching literary texts. These aspects are necessary if the literary texts instructional programme is to be successful and effective.

Nevertheless, discussion in this chapter has revealed certain difficulties inherent in the above aspects as laid out in the syllabus and the teacher's guidebook.

With regard to the goals, it has been argued that they are expressed in idealistic and excessively ambitious terms. This makes them inapplicable in the classroom. Moreover, the goals do not distinguish literary texts from the other parts of the language curriculum, such as history of literature and literary criticism.

The guidelines seem to focus on the extent to which the text represents: (1) the social and historical context, (2) the literary characteristics of the period in question, (3) the genre of the text, and (4) the author's literary work as a whole. Although these aspects are important in selecting literary texts, the literary merit of the text as an artistic work is ignored.

The suggested questions and activities in the textbooks are aimed at developing the necessary skills for studying literary work. However, these aims are not achieved in the textbooks. The questions and activities seem to divert the discussion towards the theme of the text on the one hand and towards a mechanical

analysis of the linguistic features on the other. This diversion of focus may spoil the exploration and appreciation of the literary qualities of the text.

Concerning the approach to teaching literary texts, the teacher's guidebook does not offer the teacher the necessary guidelines to deal with different types of texts, nor does it outline the skills and activities required for the effective teaching and studying of the literary texts.

Teaching literary texts, as a language-based programme, is linked to the other parts of the language curriculum. This linkage secures the integration between the different parts of the language curriculum. However, the connection is rooted in the assumption that, on the one hand, literary texts are representative of their historical period, author and genre and, on the other, that they are sources of examples of grammatical and rhetorical rules.

The statements of the above elements, i.e. the goals, guidelines and approach to teaching, in the teacher's guidebook and the syllabus seem to draw the attention of the teacher towards superficial analysis and discussion of the literary texts. This formal treatment focuses on the background information about the text, the historical period and the author. In such situation, pupils do not feel that literary texts syllabus has any function beyond providing representative examples of what they study in the other parts of the language curriculum. A concentration on the discussion of facts and linguistic rules mainly may exclude the unique function of the literary texts syllabus and lead to it being treated in the same way as other subjects.

This situation may lead to some undesirable results. Firstly, it constitutes inappropriate use of the time available for acquiring skills for comprehension, criticism and appreciation. Secondly, it diverts the focus of the lesson from the exploration of emotional elements and literary qualities, which may generate various stimulating discussions of conflicting opinions, towards a mechanical treatment of linguistic features. Thirdly, literary texts are subordinated to the history of literature, which may lead to the selection of texts that exemplify particular literary characteristics, regardless of their quality and suitability to the pupils. Fourthly, such an approach may render the literary text lesson tedious for the pupils and therefore unpopular.

The Methodology of the Fieldwork

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the procedures of the fieldwork carried out to investigate the questions raised in this study. The chapter begins with a description of the population from which the data has been gathered. Next, the permissions necessary for conducting the field study are outlined. A summary of the aims of the study and the questions raised in it along with the instruments used to gather the data is then given.

The two questionnaires distributed as part of the study are described in detail with regard to their purposes, sources, validity, reliability, first and final versions and their final application. A summary of the various techniques for estimating the validity and reliability of an instrument is included in the report on the first questionnaire. Finally, the chapter gives an overview of the procedures applied in the statistical analysis of the data.

4.1 The Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of four types of subject:

(1) Male and female third-year pupils in the literary and scientific divisions registered in the secondary schools in the Governate of Muscat during the academic year of 1999/2000. Schools in Yetī and Qurayyāt were excluded. Although schools in these two areas are under the auspices of the Directorate General of Education in

the Governate of Muscat, they are situated in mountain villages and differ considerably in facilities and services from other schools in Muscat.

Pupils in the third year of secondary school are in their 12th and final school year. The Omani educational system consists of three stages: the elementary stage (6 years), the preparatory stage (3 years) and the secondary stage (3 years). Pupils in their third year of secondary school are usually 18 years of age.

Throughout their schooling, but in particular at the preparatory and secondary stages, pupils study poetry of several types drawn from different periods of Arabic literature (see section 1. in the Introduction). By the third year of secondary school, pupils are expected to be able to form their own opinions concerning the teaching of literary texts, since they will have experienced different teaching techniques during their time at school, from various teachers and at different levels. It is intended that the two questionnaires used in this study will tap into this knowledge for the purposes of evaluating the teaching process.

Secondary school pupils in the Governate of Muscat come from different areas of the country. Families prefer to live in Muscat because of the employment of their members. Most of these families return to their home villages or towns at the weekends. Pupils in Muscat schools have better educational facilities than in the other areas. They also have access to public and commercial libraries as well as cultural events, which are seldom held elsewhere. It is, therefore, assumed that these pupils are representative of the pupils in the other areas on the one hand and are the best to answer the questionnaires used in the present study on the other.

During the academic year of 1999/2000, the total number of male and female pupils in Muscat's secondary schools was 4558. There were 2149 male pupils: 783 in the literary division and 1366 in the scientific division. The number of female pupils was 2409: 907 in the literary division and 1502 in the scientific division (see Appendix 1. for details).

(2) Teachers of Arabic (male and female) in the secondary schools in the Governate of Muscat during the academic year 1999/2000. Some of these subjects are Omani teachers, but the majority come from other Arab countries including Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. They are qualified to teach Arabic at the preparatory and secondary stages, including Arabic grammar (*naḥw* and *ṣarf*), reading comprehension (*muṭāla'a*), literary texts (*nuṣuuṣ adabiyya*), literary history (*tārīkh adab*), literary criticism (*naqd adabī*), prosody (*'aruuḍ*), rhetoric (*balāgha*) and composition (*ta'bīr*). During the academic year 1999/2000, there were 159 Arabic teachers in the secondary schools of Muscat: 77 male and 82 female (Appendix 1. shows the number of teachers in each school).

(3) Arabic inspectors in the Directorate General of Education in the Governate of Muscat. During the academic year 1999/2000, there were 13 inspectors.

(4) Experts in Arabic curriculum development in the Directorate General of Curriculum Development (a section of the Ministry of Education). The number of experts during the academic year 1999/2000 was 8. The inspectors and experts

involved in this study, like teachers, come from various Arab countries, particularly Egypt, Jordan and Sudan.

4.2 Permission for Data Collection

To carry out the field study three permissions had to be obtained. The first was issued by the Ministry of Higher Education. The certificate of permission confirms that the researcher is a student and needs to carry out fieldwork (see Appendix 2.). Before obtaining this certificate of permission, I was required to bring a letter from my supervisor explaining what kind of data was needed and where it should be collected. I received this letter on 2 October 1999 and took it to the Ministry of Higher Education, obtaining the certificate in question on 4 October. The second permission was from the Office of Research and Development (*al-maktab al-fannī li al-dirāsāt wa al-taṭwīr*) in the Ministry of Education. This office sent a letter to the Director General of Education in the Governate of Muscat. This letter, dated 9 October 1999, constitutes the second permission (see Appendix 3.).

The certificate from the Ministry of Higher Education allowed for the examination of the validity of the questionnaires by specialists (see sections 4.4.4.2 & 4.5.4 below). I, therefore, waited until 16 October 1999 to apply for the third necessary permission. On that date I obtained a letter from the Directorate of Educational Supervision (*dā'irat al-ishrāf at-tarbawī*) at the Directorate General of Education in the Governate of Muscat. This letter is addressed to the head teachers of the secondary schools. It includes a brief introduction to the work undertaken and requests that they assist me in carrying out my research (see Appendix 4.).

4.3 Instrument of the Study

This study aims to evaluate the suitability of the poetry texts chosen for secondary stage pupils in the Sultanate of Oman, and to identify any problems facing pupils and/or teachers in relation to the study and teaching of poetry texts. The following questions are considered:

1. What problems, if any, are associated with the study of poetry texts at the secondary stage in the view of pupils, Arabic teachers, inspectors and curriculum developers in the Sultanate of Oman?
2. Are there any significant differences between male and female pupils in terms of their consideration of the problems?
3. Which poetry genres and forms are most preferred by secondary stage pupils in the Sultanate of Oman?
4. According to Arabic teachers, inspectors and curriculum developers which poetry genres and forms are most appropriate for secondary stage pupils in the Sultanate of Oman?
5. Are there any significant differences between male and female pupils in terms of their poetry preferences?
6. To what extent do the set poetry texts match the preferences of secondary stage pupils?

Two questionnaires were distributed with the aim of eliciting the views of the subjects on the above questions. The first questionnaire deals with problems related to the study of poetry texts, while the second is aimed at eliciting poetry genres and forms. In the remaining sections of this chapter, the construction and application of each questionnaire is discussed, with emphasis on the following issues:

1. Identification of the aims of the questionnaires.
2. The primary sources of the items selected.
3. Outlines of the first draft.
4. Evaluations of the validity of the questionnaires.
5. The final versions of the questionnaires.
6. Analysis of reliability of the questionnaires.
7. The sample used to collect the data in the final application.

4.4 The First Questionnaire: Problems Related to the Study of Poetry Texts

4.4.1 The Purpose of the First Questionnaire

The aim of the first questionnaire is to identify the difficulties that are faced by both teachers and pupils at the secondary stage in relation to the study of poetry texts. Any obstacles to the learning experience weaken the desire of both teachers and learners to work towards the desirable learning outcomes. If these concerns appear to be caused by the curriculum and/or the pupils, they lower the teacher's incentive to create a successful instructional environment. If the learner perceives that the curriculum and/or the teacher is at the root of the problems he encounters, this may reduce his confidence in the benefits of this particular part of the curriculum. This may lead the learner not only to ignore the instructional activities associated with the subject, but also to waste other learners' time and disturb the entire teaching process. Consequently, the learner's level of attainment may stagnate or decline and the desired goals may not be achieved. Therefore, identifying any problems in a particular area of the curriculum must be seen as very important and beneficial to the

curriculum planners and developers. They can then tackle the obstacles to the effective teaching and learning of a subject, in this case poetry texts, in order to avoid re-creating them when designing a new curriculum or improving an existing one.

4.4.2 Sources of the First Questionnaire

Certain items in the questionnaire originated in earlier work on the teaching of Arabic literature, such as Ibrāhīm, 1984: 289–290; Makkī et al., 1986: 111; Madkuur, 1991: 208–212; Shaḥāta, 1992: 182.

Madkuur (1991: 208–212) asserts that three factors hinder the effective teaching of literary texts in general.

1. The selected texts themselves: they are full of vague words and trite images, and their topics do not motivate the pupils to learn them for they are not within the scope of the pupils' interests.
2. The use of the historical approach in teaching literature, which leads to
 - (a) the study of literary texts being overwhelmed by the study of the history of literature;
 - (b) the predominance of poetry compared with other genres; and
 - (c) a lack of literary appreciation at the secondary stage.
3. The teaching of rhetoric and literature separately, although rhetorical studies become meaningless if they are not applied in the evaluation of literary works.

Some of the problems covered by the questionnaire were derived from other studies of the teaching of Arabic literature, particularly in Egypt and Jordan. The problems in these countries are probably similar to those encountered in other Arab countries, including Oman, since the content of the curriculum of literary texts in

much of the Arab world seems to be similar (see Makkī et al., 1986). The previous studies revealed the following problems:

- The pupils' needs and preferences are neglected in the selection of the content of the literary curriculum.
- The pupils' level of literary appreciation is very low.
- The selected literary texts are difficult to study and analyse.
- More attention is given to the historical background of the selected texts than to their literary aspects. (For more details, see the Introduction to the present study.)

Further difficulties were found when analysing the syllabus of teaching literary texts at the secondary stage in the Sultanate of Oman (see Chapter Three).

4.4.3 The First Draft of the First Questionnaire

The first draft of the questionnaire included 34 items, each item indicating a potential problem. A four-point scale, below, was used to give the subjects an opportunity to choose an appropriate degree of agreement regarding each problem:

4 = I strongly agree (*uwāfiq bidaraja kabīra*);

3 = I agree to some extent (*uwāfiq bidaraja mutawassiṭa*);

2 = I disagree to some extent (*uwāfiq bidaraja ḍa'īfa*);

1 = I do not agree (*lā uwāfiq*).

Two covering letters were attached to the questionnaire. The first was addressed to the pupils and the second to the teachers, inspectors and experts. The aim of the questionnaire was explained in the first paragraph of the letters. The subjects were then asked to fill in the questionnaire by considering whether and to

what extent each item constituted a problem in relation to the study of poetry texts, and to tick the appropriate point on the scale to indicate their opinion. In the covering letter addressed to the pupils, examples of the meaning of the first degree of agreement 'I strongly agree' and the last 'I do not agree' were given. At the end of the questionnaire, all subjects were asked to add any problems they had experienced that were not mentioned in the questionnaire.

4.4.4 The Validity of the First Questionnaire

4.4.4.1 The Meaning of Validity

"Validity is defined as the extent to which the procedure actually accomplishes what it seeks to accomplish or measures what it seeks to measure" (Fox, 1969: 367). An instrument is considered valid if it satisfactorily serves the purpose for which it is designed. In other words, lack of validity means that the instrument is not suited to the aim it is meant to achieve and, therefore, the data it gathers and the results it produces are judged to be meaningless.

There are several different types of validity: face, content, concurrent, predictive, and construct. These types are classified according to whether they are logical (internal) or criterion-related (external). Logical validity includes content and face validity and is evaluated primarily through judgements issued by specialists in the field in question. Criterion-related validity includes concurrent and predictive validity, and is demonstrated by comparing the results obtained from an instrument with the results obtained from external criterion. The final type, construct validity, is estimated through both judgement and external criteria (Fox, 1969: 368; Gay, 1981: 110–116; Van Dalen, 1979:136–138). When appraising the validity of an instrument

for a specific study, it is important to check one or more of the above types of validity (Gay, 1981: 111; Van Dalen, 1979: 136).

As the current study is concerned with translating opinions drawn from the questionnaires into statistical data for manipulation, the most suitable procedure for determining its validity is likely to be internal or logical validity. The other types of validity are inappropriate for questionnaires, because external criteria are unavailable. The questionnaires used in this study do not measure a specific performance, attitude or behaviour, but, rather, are aimed at collecting empirical data gathered from the field of teaching literature.

Internal validity includes, as mentioned above, face and content validity. Face validity is based upon a superficial examination of the nature of the instrument. It basically indicates the degree to which the instrument is designed to achieve what it purports to achieve. It is considered the weakest procedure with which to appraise the validity of an instrument. However, where the data being sought is relatively fixed and finite such as the data sought by our questionnaires, "... face validity argument holds better than others" (Fox, 1969: 369).

Content validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures the content area that it is designed to measure. This may best be evaluated by specialists (Gay, 1981: 112); experts in the field are asked to examine carefully the items included in an instrument and evaluate them in terms of their suitability for the purpose they are meant to achieve.

Scates and Yeomans offer a list of types of evidence which may be used to judge the validity of a questionnaire and its parts (quoted in Good, 1966: 224–225):

1. Is the question on the subject?
2. Is the question perfectly clear and unambiguous?
3. Does the question get at something stable, which is typical of the individual or of the situation?
4. Does the question pull or have extractive power? Will it be answered by a large enough proportion of respondents to have validity?
5. Do the responses show a reasonable range of variation?
6. Is the information consistent, in agreement with what is known, and in agreement with the expectancy?
7. Is the item sufficiently inclusive?
8. Is there a possibility of obtaining an external criterion to evaluate the questionnaire?

This list is utilised in estimating the validity of the two questionnaires, as will be demonstrated in the following sections.

4.4.4.2 Examining the Validity of the First Questionnaire

In order to estimate the internal validity of the first questionnaire, the first draft was given to 7 specialists in Arabic literature and 7 specialists in Arabic teaching methods at the Colleges of Arts and Education at Sultan Qaboos University and the College of Education for Teachers' Training in Rustāq, during the period 10 to 31 October 1999. The aim of the questionnaire was explained to the specialists and they were asked to judge the questionnaire and its items in view of the following issues:

1. The comprehensiveness of the questionnaire i.e. did it cover the full range of potential problems and difficulties faced by pupils at the secondary stage in relation to the study of poetry texts?

2. The precision of the instructions;
3. The clarity of the purpose of the questionnaire;
4. The suitability of the four-point scale;
5. The validity of the questionnaire for achieving its aim;

The specialists were also requested to:

6. Add any other problems that are not included at this stage;
7. Delete inappropriate items, giving a reason for the deletion;
8. Provide the researcher with any other relevant information or suggestions regarding the teaching of literary texts at the secondary stage in the Sultanate of Oman.

(Appendix 6. includes the letter addressed to the referees and the evaluation sheet)

In order to help organise the responses of the specialists, they were also asked to fill in a short evaluation sheet, which was composed of 6 items. They were asked to use a four-point scale to indicate their verdict as to issues 1 to 5 above. The four-point scale used for the evaluation sheet distributed to the specialists was as follows:

- 4 = I strongly agree (*uwāfiq bidaraja kabīra*);
 3 = I agree to some extent (*uwāfiq bidaraja mutawassiṭa*);
 2 = I disagree to some extent (*uwāfiq bidaraja ḍa'īfa*);
 1 = I do not agree (*lā uwāfiq*).

Replies were received from 8 of the 14 referees (Appendix 5. shows the names and occupations of the referees). Their responses are discussed below.

4.4.4.2.1 The Specialists' Responses to the Evaluation Sheet

The following is a summary of the findings obtained from the responses of the specialists to the items on the evaluation sheet:

8 specialists chose point 4 'I fully agree' for items 1, 3, and 4. This means that the 8 specialists considered the statements of the problems (item 1), the instructions (item 3) and the purpose of the questionnaire (item 4) to be sufficiently clear and accurate.

For item 2, the comprehensiveness of the questionnaire in dealing with potential problems in the study of poetry texts at the secondary stage, 5 specialists chose point 4 and 3 specialists chose point 3 'I agree to some extent'. The recorded mean¹ for the responses is 3.6, which indicates a high degree of agreement compared to 4, the highest mean that may be obtained provided that all respondents chose point 4. What may be inferred here is that, from the specialists' point of view, the questionnaire does include the most common problems related to the study of poetry texts.

With regard to the fifth item, the suitability of the four-point scale, 6 specialists chose point 4, 1 chose point 3 and 1 chose point 2 'I disagree to some extent'. This indicates that the majority of the specialists agree that the four-point scale is suitable. In addition, the computed mean of responses is 3.6 which points to a high degree of agreement as explained above.

¹ "The mean is the arithmetic average of the scores and is the most frequently used measures of central tendency. It is calculated by adding up all of the scores and dividing that total by number of scores. By the very nature of the way in which it is computed, the mean takes into account, or is based on, each and every score." (Gay, 1981: 284)

Only 7 specialists responded to the sixth item, the validity of the questionnaire on achieving its aims. One specialist in Arabic teaching methods from the Sultan Qaboos University, College of Education, left this item blank, commenting that the validity cannot be judged merely by reading the questionnaire. He claimed that validity should be assessed using a special statistical analysis. This view would be correct if one or more of the criterion-related types of validity had been used to estimate the validity of the questionnaire. Here, however, the validity in question covers face and content, both of which are data-free types of validity. Nevertheless, it may be said that the majority of the specialists believe that the questionnaire is valid, i.e. that it is suitable for the purpose it is designed to achieve.

4.4.4.2.2 The Specialists' Comments and Suggestions for Modifications to the First Questionnaire

As stated in the above section, the majority of the specialists indicated that the four-point scale was suitable. The specialist in Arabic teaching methods who chose point 2 suggested that it would be better to use a three-point instead of a four-point scale. It was, therefore, decided to consult a specialist in educational measurement and statistics, as to the most appropriate kind of scale and the best way to process the data after administration of the questionnaire.

The statistical specialist advised that it is always better to use an odd-point scale, with three or five points, keeping the middle point clear. The middle point refers to a neutral point of view that the subjects can use if they are not sure of what to choose for a certain item (for example, "not sure" or "do not know"). Following this discussion, the four-point scale was replaced with a three-point scale, since this does not divide the levels of agreement and disagreement into two degrees for each.

In this research, the three-point scale is considered easier to follow than a five-point scale, especially for pupils who may be confused by the two levels of agreement ('I strongly agree/I agree to some extent' & 'I disagree to some extent/I disagree') in a five-point scale.

Another expert in Arabic teaching methods suggested adding a statement about the lack of texts drawn from international poetry in translation. This suggestion was not implemented, because a lack of translated poetry in the curriculum is not seen as directly relevant to this research. In this researcher's opinion, even when translated poetry is focused on and exemplified in the curriculum, it should not be predominant or constitute a greater part than national poetry. Furthermore, a programme that fails to develop an appreciation of national literature is unlikely to develop an appreciation of translated works. However, the second questionnaire does ask the pupils for their preferences with regard to various types of poetry, including poetry in translation.

A third specialist in Arabic teaching methods suggested changing the statement in item 26, "teachers do not prepare for the lessons in poetry texts" to "teachers are incompetent in illustrating poetry texts". This suggestion was implemented, as the latter statement is more general and implies the first, which focuses only on the preparation for the poetry lesson. The problem is not exclusive to the preparation; it also encompasses the teacher's general lack of competence in teaching poetry texts.

It may be inferred from the above discussion that the specialists' responses were highly positive and that the questionnaire is face and content valid. The instructions and the purpose as set out in the covering letters are clear and accurate, the items are stated clearly and the questionnaire includes the most important statements concerning problems related to the study of poetry texts at the secondary stage.

4.4.5 The Final Version of the First Questionnaire

As stated above, the four-point scale was replaced by a three-point scale as follows:

- 3 = I agree (*muwāfiq*);
- 2 = I am not sure (*ghayr muta'akkid*);
- 1 = I do not agree (*ghayr muwāfiq*).

The middle point (I am not sure) is a neutral point, intended to give the respondents an opportunity to express their hesitation about a topic or a genre. It is also meant to make them feel that such uncertainty is acceptable and they are free to choose whatever point they want.

The covering letters of the questionnaire addressed to all groups of subjects were modified following the change to a three-point scale. The three points were exemplified and explained in order to make it easier for the subjects to respond to the items. They were asked to put a tick under point 3 (I agree; *uwāfiq*) if they considered the item a real problem in relation to the study of poetry texts. The tick should be placed under point 1 (I do not agree; *lā uwāfiq*), if they felt that the item did not constitute a real difficulty in the study of poetry. If they could not decide

whether the item represented a problem or not, they could select point 2 (I am not sure; *ghayr muta'akkid*). At the top of the pupils' covering letter, blanks were left for the school's name, the class and the division (literary/scientific) in order to classify the pupils according to their sex and division. A blank for the school's name was also put at the top of the teacher's covering letter to specify the sex of the teacher. Identifying the gender of both pupils and teachers is aimed at finding the extent to which responses are affected by gender. The items of the questionnaire are divided into three categories. The first is related to the teacher and the teaching procedures. This category includes statements concerning problems that may result from the teachers' performance in the poetry lesson. The items reflect mistakes that result from the misunderstanding of the nature of poetry texts and some procedures needed to secure motivated instructional process. The second category consists of items relevant to pupils' role in studying poetry texts. This category is composed of wrong procedures that result in abandoning the pupils' right to participate effectively in the poetry lesson. The procedures are shared between the curriculum and the teaching process. The third includes statements that indicate mistakes caused by the prescribed curriculum and insufficient school facilities. At the end of the questionnaire, a space was provided for adding any problems not included so far. (See Appendix 7. for the final version of the first questionnaire)

4.4.6 Testing the First Questionnaire

During the period 1 to 5 November 1999, the final version of the questionnaire was distributed among a random sample ($n = 50$) of male and female pupils in literary and scientific divisions at two secondary schools: *Hafṣ b. Rāshid* male school and *Nasība b. Ka'b* female school. It was also given to 8 teachers at both schools. The

aim behind this test application was to verify the clarity of the items and instructions of the questionnaire.

This application appeared to indicate that the items and instructions were sufficiently comprehensible. All subjects answered the questionnaire and some of them added comments regarding the teaching and studying of literary texts. No signs of ambiguity were detected.

4.4.7 The Reliability of the First Questionnaire

4.4.7.1 The Meaning of Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the results obtained by an instrument. It can be defined as “the accuracy of the data in the sense of their stability, repeatability, or precision. A perfectly reliable data-collection instrument is the one which, if administered twice under the same circumstances, would provide identical data” (Fox, 1969: 353). A reliable instrument should lead to approximately the same results each time it is applied under similar conditions. If the relationship between data obtained by an instrument in two different applications under similar circumstances is very distant or non-existent, it may be said that the instrument has a low reliability or is unreliable. An unreliable instrument yields inconsistent results each time it is applied to the same subjects under the same conditions.

Four techniques could be used to estimate the reliability of an instrument (Fox, 1969: 352–360; Van Dalen, 1979: 138–141; Gay, 1981: 116–122). The first is the test-retest (or application and re-application) method where the same test (instrument) is applied to the same subjects on two different occasions under the

same circumstances. The results of the two applications are then compared (correlated). The interval time between the two administrations should be sufficient to ensure that the subjects have forgotten their first responses, but should not be so long that actual change would be expected. This procedure requires only one form of the instrument.

The second method is the equivalent or alternate form reliability, in which two equivalent forms of an instrument are applied to the same subjects and the scores resulting from the two forms are compared (correlated). This technique involves encountering the difficulty of developing an instrument of two equivalent forms; this is a significant challenge, especially with respect to questionnaires seeking information or studies of reactions to specific situations.

The third is the split-half procedure, which requires only one form and one administration. The data obtained is then separated into two halves: usually, and preferably, one including the odd items, and the other the even items. This method presumes that the two halves are consistent with each other. As the correlation is based on only half the number of items rather than the full number of the whole instrument, the Spearman-Brown Prophecy Formula should be used following the split-half technique to estimate the reliability of the full instrument. "It uses the actual reliability obtained by correlating scores on the two halves of the instrument to prophesy what reliability would be of the total instrument" (Fox, 1969: 358). This technique uses the following simple formula:

$$r_{\text{total instrument}} = \frac{2r_{\text{split-half}}}{1+r_{\text{split-half}}}$$

The fourth and final method is the rationale equivalence reliability which “is not established through correlation but rather estimates internal consistency by determining how all items on a test relate to all other items and to the total test” (Gay, 1981: 121). “It is applicable to those instances in which the response to an item can be graded as right or wrong” (Fox, 1969: 360).

Reliability is expressed numerically using the correlation coefficient which falls between 1.00 and 0. Fox (1969: 353) illustrates how

correlation of +1.00 would indicate perfect reliability; correlations at or close to 0.00 would indicate no reliability, and correlations at intermediate points between 0.00 and 1.00 would indicate intermediate levels of reliability. Of course perfect reliability is seldom achieved, and it is the intermediate correlations which are found in practice.

Reliability is affected by errors of measurement resulting from several factors. Gay (1981: 117) summarises the causes of errors of measurement as follows:

Errors of measurement can be caused by characteristics of the test itself (ambiguous test items, for example, that some students just happen to interpret correctly), by conditions of administration (directions not properly followed, for example), by the current status of the persons taking the test (some may be tired, others unmotivated), or by a combination of any of the above.

He (1981: 117) adds: “High reliability indicates that these sources of error have been eliminated as much as possible.”

Since it would be difficult to construct two equivalent forms of the questionnaires used in the current study, their reliability will be assessed using the split-half and the test-retest techniques.

4.4.7.2 Examining the Reliability of the First Questionnaire

As stated in section 4.4.6 above, the test application was successful. In order to save time and effort, the data obtained were treated as a first application in an application and re-application reliability technique. The second application was conducted during the period 24 to 30 November 1999. The interval between the two applications was approximately 21 days. This period of time was considered sufficient to ensure that the subjects would forget the first administration, and changes were not expected regarding the respondents' opinions about problems related to the study of poetry texts. Excluding teachers who refused to take part in the second application and a few pupils who were absent during the second administration, 44 subjects responded to both applications. The data was processed using Microsoft Excel.

4.4.7.2.1 Reliability Analysis Using the Half-Split Technique

The questionnaire was divided into two halves and the correlation was computed between the totals of the 17 odd items and those of the 17 even ones from the first application, which is usually considered the most realistic and stable of the two. The reliability coefficient was ($r = 0.61$). This correlation is based, as illustrated above, on only half the number of the items in the questionnaire, not the full number. Applying the Spearman-Brown Formula in order to predict the reliability coefficient of the total questionnaire resulted in the following:

$$r = \frac{2 \times 0.61}{1 + 0.61}$$

$$r = 0.75$$

4.4.7.2.2 Reliability Analysis Using the Application and Re-application Technique

The correlation between the two totals of responses of 39 subjects in both applications, excluding 5 subjects who responded carelessly to the second application, was calculated using the Pearson Correlation. The reliability coefficient was ($r = 0.77$).

In the light of the correlation coefficients obtained using the half-split and the test-retest procedures ($r = 0.75$ and $r = 0.77$), it may be said the questionnaire has a strong level of reliability. The scores fall between 0.7 and 0.9, which may be considered a strong and marked reliability. The test-retest coefficient demonstrates the stability of the results and the half-split coefficient confirms the internal consistency reliability. This suggests that the data gathered using the questionnaire are sufficiently stable and consistent.

4.4.8 The Final Application of the First Questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed during the period 6 to 15 December 1999 among the following groups:

1. A random sample of 210 male secondary school pupils. 158 pupils responded to the questionnaire, i.e. 7.3% of the total number of male pupils.
2. A random sample of 240 female secondary school pupils. 220 female pupils responded to the questionnaire, i.e. 9% of the total number of female pupils.

The pupils' sample makes up 8.3% of the entire pupils' population in Muscat as given in section 4.1;

3. A random sample of 62 teachers of Arabic at the secondary stage. 49 teachers replied to the questionnaire (25 male and 24 female teachers), i.e. 31% of the entire population of the teachers of Arabic at the secondary schools in Muscat (see section 4.1);
4. 13 Arabic language inspectors from the Directorate General of Education in the Governate of Muscat. 11 inspectors returned the questionnaire;
5. 8 experts on Arabic curriculum development from the Directorate of Arabic Curriculum Development in the Ministry of Education. 6 experts filled in the questionnaire.

4.5 The Second Questionnaire: Poetry genres and Forms

4.5.1 The Purpose of the Second Questionnaire

Generally speaking, the learner is seen as the pivot of the instructional process, which is designed to develop his character. Therefore, the learner's interests and needs constitute important criteria that should be considered when developing the content of any curriculum (see Chapter Two, section 2.2.2). Neglecting to engage the learner's interest leads to the loss of an important motivation in any successful instructional programme. In other words, if the content being taught is not of interest to the learner, he will not work actively towards the intended goals.

The second questionnaire, concerning poetry genres and forms, has two main aims. The first is to establish which poetry genres and forms are preferred by secondary stage pupils. The second is to identify which poetry genres and forms are

appropriate for secondary stage pupils from the point of view of Arabic teachers, inspectors and curriculum developers. The responses to the questionnaire will, therefore, facilitate a comparison between, on the one hand, the poetry genres and forms preferred by the pupils and those seen as suitable for them by teachers, inspectors and experts and, on the other, the poetry genres and forms currently set at the secondary stage.

4.5.2 The Sources of the Second Questionnaire

The items on the questionnaire cover the main Arabic poetry genres and forms that have developed during different periods in the history of Arabic literature. The selection was compiled from some written works dealing with the history of Arabic literature, such as al-Samra et al. (1990/91); al-Samra et.al (1985/86); al-Bustānī (1979a/b); Farruukh (1978).

4.5.3 The First Draft of the Second Questionnaire

The first version of this questionnaire consisted of 48 items. Each item was concerned with a single poetry genre or form. Each genre in Arabic literature may be divided into sub-genres according to the purpose of the poem. Panegyric, for example, is a general genre that includes sub-genres with different purposes and characteristics: for example, panegyric of caliphs, scholars, friends and family members. Pupils may prefer certain sub-genres over others. Therefore, the general genres were given first, followed by the sub-genres. The final five items were devoted to narrative poetry (*al-shi'r al-qaṣaṣī*), epic poetry (*al-shi'r al-malḥamī*), dramatic poetry (*al-shi'r al-masrahī*), free verse (*shi'r al-taf'īla/ al-shi'r al-ḥurr*) and translated poetry (*al-shi'r al-mutarjam*).

A four-point scale was used in this questionnaire. The criterion for pupils was their personal preference; for teachers, inspectors and experts it was suitability. In the pupils' covering letter, the instructions were to select a point on the following scale on the basis of their attitude towards the item:

4 = I prefer it to a great extent (*ufaḍḍiluhu bidaraja kabīra*);

3 = I prefer it to some extent (*ufaḍḍiluhu bidaraja mutawassiṭa*);

2 = I do not like it very much (*ufaḍḍiluhu bidaraja ḍa'īfa*);

1 = I do not like it at all (*lā ufaḍḍiluh*).

The meanings of the first and the last points on the scale were explained in the covering letter.

Teachers, inspectors and experts were asked to choose one of the points below, according to their opinion on the suitability of the item for secondary stage pupils:

4 = suitable to a great extent (*munāsib bidaraja kabīra*);

3 = suitable to some extent (*munāsib bidaraja mutawassiṭa*);

2 = not very suitable (*munāsib bidaraja ḍa'īfa*);

1 = not suitable at all (*ghayr munāsib*).

4.5.4 The Validity of the Second Questionnaire

As explained in section 4.4.4.1, the best techniques for estimating the validity of a questionnaire are face and content validity, which are subsumed under internal or logical validity. The first draft of the second questionnaire was given to the same specialists who judged the validity of the first questionnaire (see section 4.4.4.2). The specialists were asked to evaluate the second questionnaire and its constituent

parts and offer their comments and alterations, taking into account the following issues:

1. The comprehensiveness of the questionnaire for the poetry genres and forms;
2. The clarity and accuracy of the instructions;
3. The clarity of the purpose of the questionnaire;
4. The suitability of the four-point scale for pupils;
5. The suitability of the four-point scale for teachers, inspectors and experts;
6. The validity of the questionnaire for achieving its aim;

The specialists were also requested to:

7. Add appropriate genres that were not included in the questionnaire at this stage;
8. Delete inappropriate items, giving a reason for the deletion;
9. Provide any appropriate information and suggestions regarding the teaching of literary texts at the secondary stage. (See Appendix 8. for the letter of instructions for the referees and the evaluation sheet of the second questionnaire)

To help organise the specialists' responses to the questionnaire about poetry genres and forms, they were provided with a short evaluation sheet consisting of 6 items covering issues 1 to 6 above. The four-point scale used in the attached evaluation sheet was as follows:

- 4 = I fully agree;
- 3 = I agree to some extent;
- 2 = I disagree to some extent;
- 1 = I do not agree.

Of the 14 specialists, 9 commented on the questionnaire and 8 of them filled in the attached evaluation sheet (Appendix 5. shows the names and occupations of the referees). The specialist who refused to fill in the questionnaire commented that pupils did not have the ability to identify their preferences, and asserted that pupils and teachers were not the right sources of information about this issue. Nevertheless, he advised that I consult previous studies in the field to identify appropriate poetry genres and forms for secondary stage pupils. With this suggestion, he undermined his own argument, since both studies consulted pupils to identify their literary preferences. Furthermore, since the studies were carried out in Egypt – one in 1945 and the other in 1980 – it is hardly reasonable to assume that their results are directly applicable to Omani pupils in 1999. The findings were from the Egyptian studies of pupils in a different society at a different time. Thus, the results may not even be applicable to pupils in Egypt today, because so many socio-cultural changes have taken place since that time. In addition, these studies were aimed at identifying general literary topics, and so their results are not directly relevant to the present research on poetry genres and forms.

This view throws doubt on the pupils' ability to specify their poetry preferences. Third-year secondary pupils have studied or read at least most, if not all, of the types of poetry listed in the questionnaire and there seems to be no reason why they should be incapable of making a choice from that list. Such an attitude distrusts the teachers' ability to identify their pupils' needs and interests. Yet teachers deal directly with pupils when implementing the curriculum and are expected to know their educational needs and demands. Pupils and teachers can be used as essential participants in the planning and development of any school

curriculum (see Saylor et.al, 1981: 99, 117). This view may account for depriving pupils and teachers of their natural right to select from a variety of texts, instead of having to study compulsory texts that may not be suitable for everyone. If high placed educationists follow this line, then both teachers and pupils may be reluctant to pass judgement on the educational system or suggest improvements to it. This is because they think that their opinions are not going to be taken seriously, which is why some teachers refused to co-operate in some stages of the fieldwork of the present study.

The two subsections below present a summary and discussion of the specialists' responses and comments.

4.5.4.1 The Specialists' Responses to the Evaluation Sheet

With regard to the first item, the comprehensiveness of the questionnaire on poetry genres and forms, 5 specialists chose point 4 (I fully agree) and 3 selected point 3 (I agree to some extent). The mean of the responses here is 3.6, which is high compared to the highest possible mean of 4. It may be inferred, then, that the specialists agree that the questionnaire covers the most common poetry genres and forms.

For items 2 and 3, 7 specialists chose point 4 'I fully agree' and 1 selected point 3 'I agree to some extent'. The calculated mean of their responses is 3.8. It may, therefore, be concluded that the majority of specialists believe that the instructions and the purpose of the questionnaire were stated clearly and precisely.

Items 4 and 5 relate to the appropriateness of the four-point scale. Regarding the fourth item, 4 specialists selected point 4, 3 chose point 3 and 1 selected point 1 'I do not agree'. For item 5, 3 specialists chose point 4, 4 selected point 3 and 1 selected point 1. The calculated mean for both items is 3, which brings the responses to point 3 'I agree to some extent'. This suggests that the specialists do not fully agree on the suitability of the four-point scale.

7 specialists gave responses to item 6, the validity of the questionnaire for achieving its aim. 6 selected point 4 and one selected point 3. One specialist in Arabic teaching methods from the Sultan Qaboos University, College of Education, left this item without a direct response. He commented that validity should be determined by using special statistical techniques and that it could not be judged through the reading of the questionnaire. This view would be correct if one or more of the criterion-related types of validity were used to estimate the validity of the questionnaire. However, the validity to be measured here is logical validity, which is a data-free type of validity. Nevertheless, it may be said that the majority of the specialists believed that the questionnaire is suitable for accomplishing its intended purpose.

4.5.4.2 The Specialists' Comments and Suggestions for Modifications to the Second Questionnaire

The following is a summary of the most important suggestions made by the specialists:

1. Divide item 3 into two items.

2. Include item 4, poetry praising the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, under item 2 instead of 4, i.e. make it the first item after the general topic: panegyric.
3. Add new items about patriotic poetry (*al-shi'r al-waṭanī*), political poetry (*al-shi'r al-siyāsī*), enthusiastic poetry (*shi'r al-ḥamāsa*) and occasional poetry (*shi'r al-munāsabāt*).
4. Change the four-point scale to a three-point scale.

The first and the second of these suggestions were implemented. Item 3 originally listed the panegyric of friends and family members as one topic, but it was subsequently thought to be preferable to divide it into two items, as each topic has its own characteristics.

In line with the third suggestion, patriotic poetry (*al-shi'r al-waṭanī*) and political poetry (*al-shi'r al-siyāsī*) were added to the list. The suggestion regarding enthusiastic poetry (*shi'r al-ḥamāsa*) was, however, not implemented, because this comes under the items related to boastful poetry (*shi'r al-fakhr*) and exhortative poetry (*shi'r al-istinhād*). *al-Ḥamāsa*, on the other hand, is not an actual topic in Arabic poetry. It is a collection of poems started by the Abbasid poet Abuu Tammām (d. 231 AH/846 AD), whose *ḥamāsa* is still the most famous collections in the history of Arabic literature. Neither was *shi'r al-munāsabāt* added to the questionnaire, as this is a general topic that may be said to subsume most topics of Arabic poetry.

The suggestion about changing the four-point scale to a three-point one was discussed with the same specialist in educational measurement and statistics mentioned above in section 4.4.4.2.2. As a result of this discussion, the four-point

scale was replaced with a three-point scale, because this is considered clearer and easier to follow; on the three-point scale, the respondents need only select a negative or positive response, rather than having to distinguish between two degrees of suitability or preference.

Following the above discussion, it appears that the specialists' responses were highly positive and that the questionnaire, therefore, is face and content valid. The instructions and the purpose of the questionnaire are clearly and precisely described in the covering letters and the items cover the most important Arabic poetry genres and forms.

4.5.5 The Final Version of the Second Questionnaire

After the implementation of the suggestions made by the specialists, the number of items has been increased from 48 to 53. The four-point scale was replaced with a three-point scale. The criterion for pupils is preference; for teachers, inspectors and experts it is suitability, as follows:

For pupils:

3 = I prefer it (*ufaḍḍiluh*)

2 = I am not sure (*ghayr muta'akkid*)

1 = I do not like it (*lā ufaḍḍiluh*)

For teachers, inspectors and experts:

3 = Suitable (*munāsib*)

2 = I am not sure (*ghayr muta'akkid*)

1 = Not suitable (*ghayr munāsib*)

The middle point (I am not sure) is, as stated in section 4.4.5, a neutral point, intended to give the respondents an opportunity to express their hesitation about a topic or a genre. It is also meant to make them feel that such hesitation is acceptable and they are free to choose whatever point they want.

Following the change to the scale, each point on the three-point scale was exemplified in the covering letter in order to make the instructions easier to follow. The pupils were asked to choose point 3 (*uḥaḍḍiluh*) if they preferred the genre or the form and if they enjoyed reading it. They were asked to select point 1 (*lā uḥaḍḍiluh*) to indicate that they did not prefer the genre or form and disliked reading it. On the other hand, teachers, inspectors and experts were instructed to choose point 3 (*munāsib*) if they expected that the genre or form would be of interest to secondary stage pupils and that it would be appropriate for use in the classroom. If they thought the opposite, they should select point 1 (*ghayr munāsib*). Point 2 was left for those who felt that it was difficult to decide what to answer on a certain genre or form. As with the first questionnaire on the problems related to the study of poetry texts, blanks were left at the top of the pupils' covering letter for the school's name, the class and the division; and a space was also left at the top of the teacher's covering letter for the school's name. At the end of the questionnaire, a space was provided for any genre and form not included at this stage. (Appendix 9. shows the final version of the second questionnaire)

4.5.6 Testing the Second Questionnaire

During the period 1 to 5 November 1999, the final version of the questionnaire was distributed among a random sample (n = 60) of male and female pupils in literary

and scientific divisions at two secondary schools: *Hafṣ b. Rāshid* male school and *Nasība b. Ka‘b* female school. It was also given to 8 teachers in both schools. The aim behind this application was to verify the clarity of the items and instructions in the questionnaire.

This application indicated that the items and the instructions were clear, as no signs of ambiguity were found. All subjects answered the questionnaire, and the results showed a reasonable variation of responses.

4.5.7 The Reliability of the Second Questionnaire

Since the test application was successful, it was treated as the first application in test-retest reliability. The second administration was carried out during the period 24 to 30 November 1999. The interval between the two applications was approximately 21 days. This period of time was considered sufficient to ensure that the subjects would forget their responses from the first administration, while changes were not expected in the respondents' opinions on the genres and forms of poetry. Excluding teachers who refused to carry out the second application and a few pupils who were absent during the second administration, 57 subjects responded to both applications. The data were processed using Microsoft Excel.

4.5.7.1 Reliability Analysis Using the Half-Split Technique

The questionnaire was divided into two halves, and the correlation was computed between the totals of the 27 odd items and the totals of the 26 even ones in the first application (N= 57), which is usually considered the most realistic and stable. The reliability coefficient was ($r = 0.80$). This correlation is based, as illustrated above, on only half, rather than the full number, of the items in the questionnaire. Applying

the Spearman-Brown Formula to predict the reliability coefficient of the total questionnaire resulted in the following:

$$r = \frac{2 \times 0.8}{1 + 0.8}$$
$$r = 0.89$$

4.5.7.2 Reliability Analysis Using the Application and Re-application Technique

The correlation between the two totals of responses of 43 subjects in both applications, excluding the subjects who responded carelessly to the second application, was calculated using the Pearson Correlation. The reliability coefficient was ($r = 0.73$).

Taking into account the correlation coefficient obtained using the half-split and the test-retest procedures ($r = 0.89$ and $r = 0.73$), it may be concluded that the questionnaire has strong reliability. The scores fall between 0.7 and 0.9 which is considered strong and marked reliability. The test-retest coefficient demonstrates the stability of the results and the half-split coefficient confirms the internal consistency reliability. This indicates that the data gathered using the questionnaire on the genres and forms is sufficiently stable and consistent.

4.5.8 The Final Application of the Second Questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed during the period 6 to 15 December 1999 among the same groups mentioned above in section 4.4.8 as follows:

1. A random sample of 180 male secondary school pupils. 152 pupils responded to the questionnaire, i.e. 7% of the total number of male pupils;

2. A random sample of 240 female secondary school pupils. 225 female pupils answered the questionnaire, i.e. 9.3% of the total number of female pupils.

The pupil's sample (N= 377) makes up 8.3% of the entire population of the secondary stage pupils in Muscat (see section 4.1).

3. A random sample of 62 Arabic teachers in the secondary stage. 50 teachers replied to the questionnaire (25 male teachers and 25 female teachers), i.e. 31% of the entire population of teachers of Arabic in Muscat secondary schools (see section 4.1).
4. 13 Arabic language inspectors in the Directorate General of Education in the Governate of Muscat. 11 inspectors returned the questionnaire.
5. 8 Experts on Arabic curriculum development in the Directorate of Arabic Curriculum Development in the Ministry of Education. 6 experts filled in the questionnaire.

4.6 Statistical Treatment of the Data

The data was processed using Microsoft Excel. Frequencies of responses and their percentages were used to rank the items according to the responses of each group of subjects. Differences among groups were found by applying the T. test.

4.7 Conclusion

The previous sections explain the procedures followed in the field study. The aim was to ensure that the data collected were as valid, reliable and consistent as possible. This was important to make sure that the data would reflect the opinions of the pupils, teachers, inspectors and experts regarding the problems of studying poetry texts and the suitability of poetry genres and forms for secondary school pupils.

Below is a summary of the procedures followed in the fieldwork:

1. The purpose of the fieldwork was to collect opinions on two issues from those connected with teaching literary texts at the secondary stage in the Sultanate of Oman: (a) the problems of studying poetry texts; and (b) the poetry genres and forms preferred by the secondary-stage pupils and seen as appropriate for them by Arabic teachers, inspectors and experts in the field.
2. Four groups of people were identified: (a) male and female secondary stage pupils; (b) male and female secondary stage teachers of Arabic; (c) Arabic inspectors; and (d) experts in Arabic curriculum development. The schools in the Governate of Muscat were chosen to represent schools throughout the country. Muscat is the capital and its population includes families from all parts of the country who have taken up employment there.
3. Open-ended questionnaires seemed to be the most suitable instruments for this fieldwork. Therefore, two questionnaires were compiled: one on the problems of studying poetry texts and the other on the poetry genres and forms. The aim of each questionnaire was specified and the relevant written works were reviewed to construct the questionnaires. The result was the first draft of the questionnaires and their covering letters.
4. Three permits had to be obtained to access the schools: (a) a certificate from the Ministry of Higher Education describing the type of data required; (b) a letter from the Ministry of Education addressed to the Director-General of Education in the Governate of Muscat; and (c) a letter from the Director-General to the head teachers of the chosen secondary schools.
5. The validity of the questionnaires was judged by referees. Both questionnaires were distributed among a group of specialists in Arabic literature and Arabic curriculum and teaching. The specialists' verdicts were considered and both

questionnaires modified accordingly. They were thus considered valid for collecting the data in question.

6. Both questionnaires were then tested on a sample of pupils and teachers to demonstrate the clarity of the instructions and the purposes of the questionnaires.
7. The reliability of the questionnaires was assessed using two techniques: the test-retest (application and re-application) and the half-split methods. The analysis showed that the questionnaires had a high level of reliability, which meant that the data collected from them were satisfactorily stable and consistent.
8. The questionnaires were distributed among random samples of pupils and teachers and given to the inspectors and experts for their opinions on the issues raised.
9. The data were then processed using Microsoft Excel and the findings were analysed.

The findings from the two questionnaires will be presented, analysed and discussed in chapters five and six.

Findings from the Problems of Studying Poetry Texts

The main subject of this chapter is the presentation of the findings from the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts at the secondary stage. The chapter commences with a description of the statistical analysis used for this purpose. The findings are then presented and analysed in three main categories: pupils, teachers, and inspectors and experts. The additional comments made by the three groups of respondents are also reported. The reasons for the identified problems are then discussed.

5.1 The Statistical Treatment of the Data Collected

The aim of the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts at the secondary stage was to identify the problems encountered by third-year secondary pupils in their study of poetry texts from the point of view of the pupils themselves, Arabic teachers, Arabic inspectors and experts on Arabic curriculum development. The findings were divided into three sections: (1) pupils; (2) teachers; and (3) inspectors and experts.

The frequencies and percentages of the responses recorded at the three scales (I agree; I am not sure; I do not agree) were computed for each item. The items were ranked according to the percentages of the number of subjects who chose scale 3 (I agree) for each item. If 50% or more of the respondents chose scale 3, then the item

represented a problem in studying poetry texts at the secondary stage from the respondents' point of view. In other words, the choice of scale 3 by 50% of the respondents meant that most of them considered the item a problem since the remaining 50% of the responses were divided between scales 2 (not sure) and 1 (I do not agree) (see Appendices 10, 11 and 12).

Pupils and teachers were divided into male and female. The recognition of the problems may differ according to sex. It was noted that the situation in the girls' schools seemed to be better than that in the boys' schools. The instructional process as a whole in the girls' schools seemed to be taken seriously and the relationship between pupils and teachers was to some extent co-operative. Most of the girls usually prepare for the lessons and carry out the non-class activities assigned by teachers¹. Therefore, the statistical significance between the responses of males and females in the two groups (pupils and teachers) was sought by applying the *t* test.

The *t* test is a statistical test of significance used to determine whether an observed difference between two means is a real or a chance difference. The difference is considered significant if the probability (*p*) that it occurs by chance is 5 times or fewer in 100 cases. In other words, if a difference between two means is significant at a level of 5% ($p = <0.05$), the probability of the occurrence of that difference by chance is 5% and, in contrast, the probability of that difference being a real one is 95% (for more details, see, for example, Gay, 1981: 312; Jābir & Kāzīm, 1989: 319–320).

¹ These are the present writer's own observations, though there are no field evidence to support them.

Two null hypotheses were constructed for comparing the means of the totals of the pupils and teachers' responses to the questionnaire on the problems. The null hypothesis indicates that no difference exists between the two means, and that the difference, if it occurs, is attributed to chance (for details on the use of the null hypothesis, see, for example, Gay, 1981: 311, 312). The null hypothesis is examined using a test of significance: *t* test in this study. If the *t* value is significant at a 0.05 level of significance (probability level) or less ($p = <0.05$), it may be concluded that the null hypothesis is false and may be rejected. The difference, then, may be attributed, in this study, to the sex of the respondent. The two null hypotheses used in this study to test the difference between male and female groups are as follows:

1. There is no statistically significant difference ($p = <0.05$) between the means of the totals of male and female pupils with regard to their responses to the questionnaire on problems.
2. There is no statistically significant difference ($p = <0.05$) between the means of the totals of male and female teachers with regard to their responses to the questionnaire on problems.

5.2 Findings from the Pupils' Responses

5.2.1 The Pupils' Point of View

The items in the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts relate to three main aspects of the teaching of this subject: (1) the pupils' role in studying the poetry text; (2) the teacher and teaching procedures; and (3) the programme of teaching poetry texts and school facilities. The findings will be presented separately for each aspect.

5.2.1.1 Problems Related to the Teacher and Teaching Procedures

Table 5.1 below shows the percentages of the male and female pupils who selected scale 3 (I agree) for the problems of studying poetry texts, which are related to the teacher and the teaching process.

Table 5.1
Percentages of pupils who selected scale 3 for the items on the teacher and teaching procedures

Item no.	Item	Male	Female	Male and female pupils
1	The predominance of the teacher-centred methods on teaching poetry texts	55.6	68.4	63.1
13	Concentrating on facts and information, rather than training the pupils to read, understand, criticise and appreciate the text	57.0	66.4	62.4
7	Concentrating on some superficial issues in studying the text, such as meanings of words and phrases	66.7	46.8	55.1
5	Studying the text without a suitable introduction to arouse the pupils' interest	54.8	54.4	54.5
14	Seldom referring to external sources in the study of the text and the poet	50.3	54.3	52.7
11	Repeating figurative and vague sentences when judging a text	49.7	51.9	50.9
3	Treating prose and poetic texts in the same way, regardless of their differences	40.0	47.0	48.7
6	Illustrating the language difficulties and general meanings	55.8	41.1	47.3
4	Treating the text as a representative historical document	48.4	39.7	43.4
9	Stopping at the formal analysis when dealing with figures of speech	51.9	36.2	42.9
10	Seldom illustrating the aesthetic impact of the figures of speech	46.2	38.7	41.9
8	Not linking the units of the text	35.5	37.3	36.6
12	Discussing the text for didactic purposes	39.9	34.1	36.5
2	Ignoring critical and appreciative study	37.8	27.9	32.0
15	The lack of teacher's competence in illustrating the text	24.7	28.9	27.1

It appears that six items were chosen by male and female pupils as one group. Agreement on those items as problems of the study of poetry texts might highlight different questions of the teaching of poetry texts.

1. It seems that most pupils felt that the nature of the poetry texts was neglected. Items 13 (62.4%) and 7 (55.1%) implied that the lessons concentrated on the facts and information in the text as well as the analysis of some of its superficial aspects, such as the meanings of words and phrases.
2. Most of the pupils agreed on the predominance of the teacher's role during the study of poetry texts as indicated in item 1 (63.1%). This highlights the lack of the pupils' role in the poetry text lessons as will be explained in the following section.
3. Items 5 (54.5%) and 14 (52.7%) suggested that teachers did not seem to be well prepared for the poetry text lessons. Most pupils noticed that the teachers did not help in the discussion of the text (item 5) and that they did not consult other sources for a better understanding and analysis of the topic (item 14).

Table 5.1 also shows that male pupils were concerned about two items (6 and 9) that were not included in the list of the problems agreed on by male and female pupils as one group. These items refer to the neglect of the nature of poetry by a superficial illustration of the texts. This means that the discussion of the poetry texts was reduced to explaining language difficulties and general meanings and the superficial analysis of the figures of speech. Similar difficulties could be suggested in items 13, 7 and 11, which were agreed on by most male and female pupils.

Although male and female pupils considered the items discussed above as problems concerning the teachers and their performance, they appeared to agree that

item 15, the lack of teacher's competence, was not a problem at the secondary stage. Only 27.1 % of both male and female pupils selected scale 3 (I agree) for item 15. This may seem strange, for the items mentioned above concerned the teacher's performance in the classroom and suggested that the teachers lacked the required competence for teaching poetry texts. The reason was probably the lack of the pupils' understanding of "competence", which is a technical term. Another reason could be the teachers themselves, who tended to blame the educational system and show the pupils that it stands behind the uselessness of the programme of teaching poetry texts. This generated an odd situation in which the pupils highlighted the problems of the teaching process, but at the same time, seemed to free the teachers from any blame for these problems.

5.2.1.2 Problems Related to the Pupils' Role in Studying Poetry Texts

Table 5.2 shows the percentages of the male and female pupils who selected scale 3 (I agree) for the problems of studying poetry texts with regard to the pupils' role. It may be noted from the table that the most of the male and female pupils selected five items as problems concerning the pupils' role in the study of poetry texts at the secondary stage. Item 26 (60.3%), highlighted the pupils' recognition of their right to participate in the selection of the poetry texts that they study. Item 17, not training pupils to read the text aloud (59.7%), referred to the fact that teachers did not give sufficient attention to oral reading in the classroom, which is a very important procedure in teaching poetry. This item may also reflect the pupils' fondness of oral reading when studying poetry texts. Item 24, lack of encouragement to talented pupils in creative writing (59.7%), highlighted the fact that most pupils related creative writing to the teaching of poetry, and at the same time, implied that the

teachers were not making sufficient effort to satisfy their pupils' needs in this area. Items 19 and 20 indicated the passive role of the pupils in the poetry text lessons. It seems that the pupils were not taking part in two of the important activities in studying poetry texts. The opportunity to discuss the poet's feelings (item 20) and pass judgement on the text (item 19) was away from the pupils. It seems that they could not participate fully in studying poetry texts when the method of teaching was teacher-centred in their view (see section 5.2.1.1).

Table 5.2

Percentages of pupils who selected scale 3 for the items on the pupils' role in studying poetry texts

Item no.	Item	Male	female	Male and female pupils
26	Not giving the students any chance to select the poetry texts that they study	54.1	64.8	60.3
17	Not training students to read the text aloud	56.4	62.0	59.7
24	Lack of encouragement to talented students in creative writing	54.6	50.7	52.3
20	Seldom giving the students the chance to discuss the poet's feelings	54.8	49.3	51.6
19	Seldom giving the students the chance to express their opinions on the judgement of the text	52.5	50.5	51.3
21	Seldom permitting the students to deduce the elements of the literary work	47.1	47.0	47.0
22	Giving the students ready interpretations and judgements which they should repeat when discussing the text	50.0	44.0	46.5
18	Seldom teaching the students to deduce the meanings from the context	46.5	38.1	41.6
23	Ignoring the home activities that are related to the poetry text lessons	40.1	39.2	39.6
16	Requiring the students to memorise the text without sufficient understanding and appreciation	34.6	42.2	39.0
25	Seldom requiring the students to prepare for the poetry text lesson	43.0	31.8	36.5

The remaining items were obviously not considered problems of studying poetry texts. However, items 23 (selected by 39.6%) and 25 (selected by 36.5%) were related to the pupils' extra curricular activities regarding the studying of poetry texts. Perhaps it was the pupils' desire to escape such activities that influenced them in not highlighting these two items as problems in this area.

5.2.1.3 Problems Relevant to the Curriculum and School Facilities

Table 5.3 includes the percentages of the male and female pupils who selected scale 3 (I agree) for the problems of studying poetry texts, which are related to the curriculum and school facilities.

Table 5.3
Percentages of pupils who selected scale three for the items on the curriculum and school facilities

Item no.	Item	Male	Female	Male and female pupils
32	Asking the students to memorise numerous poetry extracts	67.7	76.7	72.9
29	Insufficient illustration in the prescribed textbooks	54.4	73.1	65.3
30	The questions in the textbook do not represent the skills needed for studying the text	54.8	59.2	57.3
28	Unsuitability of the set texts for students' preferences	48.1	58.8	54.3
31	The questions in the textbook do not cover the activities necessary for comprehending, criticising and appreciating the text	55.1	52.5	53.6
34	The unavailability of reference books needed for students interested in extending their study of the text	51.9	44.7	47.7
27	Separating the study of rhetoric from the study of literature	60.1	38.9	44.1
33	The time allocated to poetry texts is insufficient	40.4	45.6	43.4

It is clear from table 5.3 that five items were selected by most male and female pupils as problems in studying poetry texts. These items suggest that pupils were dissatisfied with the content of the textbooks, that is, the prescribed texts and related activities. Most pupils highlighted item 28, the set texts were inconsistent with the pupils' poetry preferences. This implies that the genres and topics of the prescribed texts did not arouse the pupils' interest.

Concerning the questions, most pupils agreed that the questions did not test the skills needed for an effective study of poetry texts (item 30 selected by 57.3%) and that they were insufficient for comprehension, criticism and appreciation (item 31 selected by 53.6%).

A lack of satisfactory illustration of the set texts by the textbook was reflected in 65.3% of the pupils selecting item 29 as a problem. There are three possible reasons for this:

1. The teachers do not give the pupils – or help them to extract – enough interpretation of the meanings contained in the texts (this is what the pupils added to the questionnaire, see section 5.2.2).
2. The questions and exercises for each text were insufficient to assist the pupils to derive their own interpretation of it.
3. The teachers might have told their pupils that the textbook should contain an adequate illustration of the text.

It may be noted from table 5.3 that the highest problem highlighted by both male and female pupils was the numerous extracts assigned for rote learning (item 32 chosen by 72.9%). The selection of this item signifies that pupils were tired of rote

learning, which included memorising not only poetry extracts, but also the meanings of new words and even their judgement of the text.

Male pupils in particular referred to items 27 and 34. Item 27 (selected by 57% of male pupils) states that rhetoric and literature were taught separately. Rhetoric is contained in a separate textbook and analysing figures of speech takes a fairly long time in the poetry text lessons. By choosing this item, male pupils probably thought that isolating the study of literary texts from that of rhetoric accounted for the difficulty they faced in studying both literary texts and rhetoric.

Item 34 was selected by 51.9% of the male pupils. It indicated that the reference books needed for further study of texts and poets were not available. Libraries in the secondary schools suffer a lack of important reference books for the subjects studied in the curriculum. However, this problem, again, reflects the vagueness surrounding the study of poetry texts. Pupils felt that with the availability of such references, they might have an alternative source of interpretation rather than being dependent on the teacher and the questions in the textbook.

5.2.2 Pupils' comments

At the end of the questionnaire, most pupils added statements concerning the problems listed. Most of the statements concentrated on the set texts, the questions on the texts and the teaching process. Some of these remarks were a repetition of the items in the questionnaire, but differently expressed.

Some pupils wrote that the texts were (1) too numerous; (2) long; (3) difficult; (4) included complex words that are hard to pronounce and, therefore, to memorise; and (5) irrelevant to the pupils' lives.

In these statements, the pupils highlighted two important factors that could impede the effective study of poetry texts. The first was that the prescribed texts were unsuitable. This was because of their large number and great length so that they could not be studied in the allocated time, as well as the complexity that made them hard to understand and appreciate. The second was that pupils seemed to be uncertain of the purpose of studying poetry texts, which was why they felt that the prescribed texts were irrelevant to their lives. Some pupils commented that the texts were being studied merely for an examination, so they neither enjoyed nor appreciated this kind of study. This again reveals the pupils' awareness of the real function of studying poetry texts, that is appreciation, which is destroyed by the way in which the texts are approached.

The pupils stated that the questions on the poetry texts were difficult and did not cover all the relevant aspects. This observation highlights the fact that these questions were not related to the real purpose of studying poetry. This has been discussed in section 3.3.3 of Chapter Three of this study.

The pupils recorded the following statements about the teaching process:

1. Illustration of the texts was accelerated owing to the lack of time.
2. Texts were not fully illustrated.

3. Pupils were not given the opportunity to take part in revealing the aesthetic impact of the text.
4. Pupils' opinions on the interpretation of the text were ignored.
5. There was no assistance in answering the questions in the textbook.
6. There was insufficient illustration of some words and phrases.

These additional statements demonstrate some of the implications mentioned in section 5.2.1.1 concerning the pupils' view of the teachers' performance in the classroom.

5.2.3 The Statistical Differences between Male and Female Pupils

The *t* test was applied to see if there was a statistically significant difference between male and female pupils according to their sex. Table 5.4 gives the means and the *t* value of the totals of the male and female pupils' responses.

Table 5.4

The significance of the difference between the totals of male and female pupils' responses to the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts

Group	n	Mean	Standard deviation	<i>t</i> value	Level of significance (<i>p</i>)
Male	114	78.7	15.5	- 0.13	0.897
Female	162	78.9	11.4		

It appears from the table that there was no significant difference ($p = <0.05$) between male and female pupils in their responses. The means, 78.7 for the totals of the male pupils' responses and 78.9 for the totals of the female pupils' responses are obviously similar. This similarity is demonstrated by the result of the *t* test, for the *t*

value is not significant at the level of 0.05 or less. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis stated above in section 5.1. It can be concluded, therefore, that male and female pupils generally have similar opinions of the problems of studying poetry texts at the secondary stage.

5.3 Findings from the Teachers' Responses

5.3.1 The Teachers' Point of View

Male and female teachers together selected only six items as problems of the study of poetry texts in the three categories. To reduce the repetition of comments, all the items in the three categories are shown with the male and female teachers' responses in table 5.5 and are analysed together.

It appears from table 5.5 that four of the selected items are related to the curriculum and school facilities. Most teachers chose scale 1 (I do not agree) for most of the remaining items (see appendix 11). This is probably because the teachers wanted to distance themselves from being the cause of any problem in relation to the study of poetry texts.

However, items 17 and 11, both selected by 51% of the teachers, concern the quality of the teaching process. Item 17 states that pupils were seldom trained in oral reading and item 15 mentions the vague and figurative statements that were repeated when judging poetry texts. Teachers who chose these items might have perceived that they were problems of the study of poetry texts, but again they might have felt that the curriculum accounted for such difficulties.

Table 5.5

Percentages of male and female teachers who selected scale 3 for the problems of studying poetry texts

Item no.	Item	Male teachers	Female teachers	Male and female teachers
(1) The teacher and the teaching process				
11	Repeating figurative and vague sentences when judging a text	56	45.8	51.0
1	The predominance of the teacher-centred methods on teaching poetry texts	52	41.7	46.9
14	Seldom referring to external sources in the study of the text and the poet	52	37.5	44.9
3	Treating prose and poetic texts in the same way, regardless of their differences	52	29.2	40.8
9	Stopping at the formal analysis when dealing with figures of speech	56	25.0	40.8
4	Treating the text as a representative historical document	44	33.3	38.8
13	Concentrating on facts and information, rather than training the pupils to read, understand, criticise and appreciate the text	44	33.3	38.8
7	Concentrating on some superficial issues in studying the text, such as meanings of words and phrases	48	25.0	36.7
10	Seldom illustrating the aesthetic impact of the figures of speech	48	25.0	36.7
2	Ignoring critical and appreciative study	36	33.3	34.7
8	Not linking the units of the text	56	12.5	34.7
12	Discussing the text for didactic purposes	40	25.0	32.7
6	Illustrating the language difficulties and general meanings	48	8.3	28.6
5	Studying the text without a suitable introduction to arouse the pupils' interest	32	8.3	20.4
15	The lack of teacher's competence in illustrating the text	20	8.3	14.3
(2) The pupils' role in studying poetry texts				
17	Not training students to read the text aloud	48	54.2	51.0
26	Not giving the students any chance to select the poetry texts that they study	40	45.8	42.9
18	Seldom teaching the students to deduce the meanings from the context	60	16.7	38.8

Item no.	Item	Male teachers	Female teachers	Male and female teachers
19	Seldom giving the students the chance to express their opinions on the judgement of the text	48	25.0	36.7
21	Seldom permitting the students to deduce the elements of the literary work	40	33.3	36.7
20	seldom giving the students the chance to discuss the poet's feelings	40	29.2	34.7
22	Giving the students ready interpretations and judgements which they should repeat when discussing the text	48	16.7	32.7
24	Lack of encouragement to talented students in creative writing	44	16.7	30.6
25	Seldom requiring the students to prepare for the poetry text lesson	44	16.7	30.6
16	Requiring the students to memorise the text without sufficient understanding and appreciation	48	8.3	28.6
23	Ignoring the home activities that are related to the poetry text lessons	40	8.3	24.5
(3) The curriculum and school facilities				
29	Insufficient illustration in the prescribed textbooks	64	79.2	71.4
32	Asking the students to memorise numerous poetry extracts	64	66.7	65.3
34	The unavailability of reference books needed for students interested in extending their study of the text	60	70.8	65.3
30	The questions in the textbook do not represent the skills needed for studying the text	52	58.3	55.1
28	Unsuitability of the set texts for students' preferences	56	41.7	49.0
31	The questions in the textbook do not cover the activities necessary for comprehending, criticising and appreciating the text	48	50.0	49.0
33	The time allocated to poetry texts is insufficient	31	62.5	46.9
27	Separating the study of rhetoric from the study of literature	40	29.2	34.7

Regarding item 17, not training students to read the text aloud, the time allocated for poetry texts did not permit teachers to include such training in addition to dealing with the pupils' weakness on reading. By choosing item 11, repeating figurative and vague sentences when judging a text, teachers might have been pointing to the judgements implied in the questions in the textbooks, not to the judgements they provided when dealing with poetry texts.

Four of the six selected items concern the curriculum and school facilities. Items 29 (71.4%), 32 (65.3%) and 30 (55.1%) refer to problems in the content of the curriculum. Item 29 points to the lack of sufficient illustration in the textbook, which is connected to the difficulty implied in item 30: the questions in the textbook do not represent the skills needed for the study of the poetry texts. Both items suggest that teachers needed more guidance towards a more effective teaching of the poetry texts. This suggestion is demonstrated by item 34 (65.3%): the unavailability of reference books needed for the extra study of the text. Selecting these items implied that teachers currently found it difficult to teach poetry texts effectively. This was because teachers did not find a satisfactory source of the illustration necessary to guide their pupils to a successful study of the text.

Item 32 (65.3%) refers to the large number of texts assigned for rote learning. Selecting it as a problem might indicate that teachers encountered difficulties in following up their pupils on memorising the verses prescribed for rote learning. It might also suggest that teachers felt sorry for their pupils having to memorise numerous poetry extracts.

Female teachers individually highlighted item 33, that the time allocated for literary texts was insufficient. This is an important problem that results from the numerous and lengthy poetry texts required by the curriculum. Female teachers were perhaps aware that achieving the goals required in teaching poetry texts needed more time than was available in the current educational system.

Furthermore, table 5.5 shows that the number of items selected by 50% or more of male teachers was twelve, which was double the number of items selected by both male and female teachers. All six extra items concern the quality of the teaching process. There are three possible reasons why teachers selected those items:

1. Teachers were instructed to identify problems of the study of poetry texts in general, not the problems that they themselves had encountered.
2. Although perhaps they faced such difficulties, they attributed their existence to the insufficient time allocated, which did not allow them to tackle those problems.
3. Perhaps some teachers responded carelessly to the questionnaire.

5.3.2 Teachers' Comments

As revealed in the preceding section, the teachers' responses to the questionnaire tended to distance them from any blame for the problems highlighted. This is demonstrated by the comments the teachers added at the end of the questionnaire regarding pupils, the content of the curriculum, and the syllabus of teaching poetry texts.

Pupils, from some teachers' point of view, (1) lacked the necessary experience; (2) lacked the necessary enthusiasm to study; (3) did not read outside the classroom; and (4) did not appreciate the aesthetic impact of the texts.

The prescribed texts, according to the teachers' comments, are difficult, too long, irrelevant to the environment and do not evoke the pupils' enthusiasm to study.

The statements on the syllabus of teaching poetry texts refer to (1) the inadequate time allocated for the study of poetry texts; (2) the absence of a teacher's guidebook for teaching literary texts, and (3) the absence of workshops and in-service training.

The statements on the pupils show that teachers felt that pupils do not perform their role in the study of poetry texts. This was because, first of all, the pupils did not possess the necessary experience to study the texts. Although the meaning of "the necessary experience" is not clear, it is the teacher's task to exploit what is available, whether in the classroom and the materials provided or in the pupils to make teaching and learning as successful as possible. Arousing enthusiasm in the pupils and assisting them to appreciate the literary work is part of the teachers' job alongside the curriculum.

The difficulties of the texts matched those highlighted by the pupils. This means that both agreed that the texts were difficult and inappropriate for pupils at the secondary stage.

Teachers also expressed their dissatisfaction with the programme of the study of poetry texts. The programme assumed that teachers were capable of leading the teaching and studying of poetry texts without guidance. Yet teachers need both the guidance to a proper way of working towards the required goals and the in-service training that refreshes their knowledge and updates their skills in the latest developments in the field.

The inadequate time allocated for the poetry texts was highlighted by female teachers. It can be expected that long and difficult texts require more time for study.

5.3.3 The Statistical Differences between Male and Female Teachers' Responses

The *t* test was applied to see if there was a statistically significant difference between male and female teachers according to their sex. Table 5.6 shows the means and the *t* value of the totals of the male and female teachers' responses.

Table 5.6

The significance of the difference between the totals of male and female teachers' responses to the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts

Group	n	Mean	Standard deviation	<i>t</i> value	Level of significance (<i>p</i>)
Male	25	72.4	19.6	1.7	0.086
Female	24	64	13.4		

Clearly there is no significant difference ($p = <0.05$) between the male and female teachers in their responses to the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts at the secondary stage. The means, 72.4 for the totals of the male

teachers' responses and 64 for the totals of the female teachers' responses, appear to be different. However, the result of the *t* test shows that this difference is statistically insignificant at the level of 0.05 or less. This leads to the acceptance of the second null hypothesis stated in section 5.1 above. It can be concluded, therefore, that the male and female teachers' opinions of the problems of studying poetry texts at the secondary stage are generally similar.

5.4 Findings from the Inspectors' and Experts' Responses

5.4.1 The Inspectors' and Experts' Point of View

5.4.1.1 Problems Related to the Teacher and Teaching Procedures

The percentages of the inspectors and experts who chose scale 3 for the items concerning the teacher and teaching process are shown in table 5.7. It is clear that 50% or more of inspectors and experts identified ten of the fifteen items as ones causing problems. It seems that two issues were highlighted in the selected items. The first concerns the purpose of teaching poetry and is found in five items: 13 (76.5%), 2 (70.6%), 6 (58.8%), 10 (58.8%) and 7 (52.9%). The problem suggested in these items was that the purpose of teaching poetry was overturned and language difficulties, facts and information were the outcome. This leads to the second issue: a lack in the teacher's competence in teaching poetry texts. This is clear in the selection of item 15 (58.8%). Such incompetence is also demonstrated in items 1 (64.7%), 3 (52.9%) and 8 (52.9%). These items refer to teaching procedures that damage the exploration of the literary qualities of the text and are a consequence of the incompetence in giving instruction successfully to achieve the aims of the programme of teaching poetry texts.

Table 5.7

Percentages of inspectors and experts who selected scale 3 for the items on the teachers and teaching procedures

Item no.	Item	%
13	Concentrating on facts and information, rather than training the pupils to read, understand, criticise and appreciate the text	76.5
2	Ignoring critical and appreciative study	70.6
1	The predominance of the teacher-centred methods on teaching poetry texts	64.7
14	seldom of referring to external sources in the study of the text and the poet	64.7
6	Illustrating the language difficulties and general meanings	58.8
10	Seldom illustrating the aesthetic impact of the figures of speech	58.8
15	The lack of teacher's competence in illustrating the text	58.8
3	Treating prose and poetic texts in the same way, regardless of their differences	52.9
7	Concentrating on some superficial issues in studying the text, such as meanings of words and phrases	52.9
8	Not linking the units of the text	52.9
4	Treating the text as a representative historical document	47.1
9	Stopping at the formal analysis when dealing with figures of speech	47.1
11	Repeating figurative and vague sentences when judging a text	47.1
12	Discussing the text for didactic purposes	47.1
5	Studying the text without a suitable introduction to arouse the pupils' interest	41.2

5.4.1.2 Problems Related to the Pupils' Role in Studying Poetry Texts

The percentages of the inspectors and experts who chose scale 3 for the items concerning the pupils' role in studying poetry texts are shown in table 5.8. The findings show that all the items were selected by more than 50% of the inspectors and experts. This means that most inspectors and experts regarded the eleven items

as problems in studying poetry texts. It seems that most inspectors and experts agreed that the pupils' role in the poetry texts lessons was ignored.

Table 5.8

Percentages of inspectors and experts who selected scale 3 for the items on the pupils' role in studying poetry texts

Item no.	Item	%
19	Seldom giving the students the chance to express their opinions on the judgement of the text	76.5
24	Lack of encouragement to talented students in creative writing	76.5
17	Not training students to read the text aloud	70.6
20	Seldom giving the students the chance to discuss the poet's feelings	64.7
16	Requiring the students to memorise the text without sufficient understanding and appreciation	58.8
18	Seldom teaching the students to deduce the meanings from the context	58.8
21	Seldom permitting the students to deduce the elements of the literary work	58.8
22	Giving the students ready interpretations and judgements which they should repeat when discussing the text	58.8
23	Ignoring the home activities that are related to the poetry text lessons	52.9
25	Seldom requiring the students to prepare for the poetry text lesson	52.9
26	Not giving the students any chance to select the poetry texts that they study	52.9

5.4.1.3 Problems Related to the Curriculum and School Facilities

Table 5.9 shows the percentages of the inspectors and experts who chose scale 3 for the items concerning the curriculum and school facilities.

Table 5.9

Percentages of inspectors and experts who selected scale 3 for the items on the curriculum and school facilities

Item no.	Item	%
27	Separating the study of rhetoric from the study of literature	70.6
33	The time allocated to poetry texts is insufficient	70.6
34	The unavailability of reference books needed for students interested in extending their study of the text	70.6
29	Insufficient illustration in the prescribed textbooks	58.8
32	Asking the students to memorise numerous poetry extracts	58.8
28	Unsuitability of the set texts for students' preferences	52.9
30	The questions in the textbook do not represent the skills needed for studying the text	52.9
31	The questions in the textbook do not cover the activities necessary for comprehending, criticising and appreciating the text	52.9

It may be noted from table 5.9 that the eight items were chosen by more than 50% of the inspectors and experts. In selecting those items, they appeared to identify problems in the content, the instruction plan for teaching literature and the school facilities. Most inspectors and experts seemed to refer to the content of the texts as inappropriate because it did not stimulate the pupils' interest (item 28 selected by 52.9%). The questions and activities associated with the texts were inappropriate and insufficient as suggested in items 30 (52.9%) and 31 (52.9%). Regarding item 27 (70.6%), it seems that inspectors and experts believed that rhetoric and literature should be taught together, for separating them caused a difficulty in studying poetry texts. In addition, most inspectors and experts considered that the number of extracts assigned for rote learning was beyond the pupils' capability, and therefore, it formed one of the problems faced in studying poetry texts (item 32, selected by 58.8%).

Regarding the instruction plan, 70.6% of inspectors and experts selected item 33, and agreed with some of the pupils and teachers that the time allocated for the study of poetry texts was insufficient. In item 34 (70.6%), concerning school facilities, most inspectors and experts believed that the absence of reference books on poetry impeded successful studying, because teachers and pupils could not find alternative sources to the textbooks.

5.4.2 Experts' and Inspectors' Comments

One inspector added a statement at the end of the questionnaire. He wrote that the teachers were incapable of teaching their pupils the necessary skills for studying poetry texts. This statement confirmed the selection of some of the items by inspectors and experts regarding the problems of the teaching process, as may be seen in the preceding sections.

5.5 Discussion and Interpretation of the Problems Identified

The findings obtained from the above analysis of responses of the samples have revealed that there are several types of problems related to the study of poetry texts at the secondary stage in the Sultanate of Oman. The factors and reasons for these problems are complicated and may be attributed to the linked facets of the subject and their influence on it. The following sections explore those factors and reasons, connect them to the problems and discuss them.

5.5.1 The Pupils' Role

It was seen in the above sections that most pupils, inspectors and experts indicated that the pupils' role in studying poetry texts was ignored. Some pupils also referred

to this indifference in their comments at the end of the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts. The relevant items considered problems by pupils, inspectors and experts were 16, 17, 19, 20, 21 and 22. These items concern the reading and discussion of the elements of the poetry text, which should be done by the pupils.

The neglect of the pupils' activities in the poetry text lessons may be the result of several factors. One is the large number of set texts. This leads to the teacher being forced to rush through each text to cover the syllabus before the examination. Texts are consequently not given enough time for illustration and discussion. Teachers may think that giving pupils the opportunity to discuss and judge the texts would waste time and prevent the completion of the syllabus by the expected date.

The second factor is perhaps the large size of the classes, which usually contain between 30 and 40 pupils. Such a large class precludes teachers from giving individual pupils the opportunity to take part in the lesson. Hearing and discussing different opinions inevitably takes a long time. Taking into account the short time allocated for poetry texts compared with their number, even the teachers could not comment on the whole list of texts.

The third factor may be the teachers' view that the pupils' role is to listen and absorb what is being taught to them. This is because teachers do not trust their pupils' ability to analyse and appreciate literature. Consequently, teachers neglect their pupils' right to participate in the poetry lessons. Yet, pupils are the pivot of the

teaching-learning relationship. It is designed to create a desirable change in their behaviour and attitudes. So, it is necessary to encourage them to take an effective part in the instruction, especially at the secondary stage in which pupils tend to hold independent opinions as a result of the development of self-awareness. Poetry texts provide many opportunities for different opinions to be generated and discussed.

The fourth factor is perhaps the pupils' disinclination to participate in the classroom. This may be the result of lack of motivation or the difficulty which pupils encounter in studying poetry texts. Motivation is very important, for without it learning cannot be achieved. It generates the pupils' activity and arouses their desire to learn. It also stimulates their response to a particular event and controls their behaviour to meet a certain need (Sa'āda & Ibrāhīm, 1991: 236). One of the major factors that reduces pupils' motivation is that they do not know the real value of studying poetry texts. They study poetry, as some pupils made it clear in their comments, merely to pass the final exam. Consequently, these pupils feel that the poetry lesson is useless and meaningless in their lives. This is what made one pupil write the following question at the end of the questionnaire: "Why do we have to study poetry, since it has no purpose in our lives?"

On the other hand, the difficulty of the text causes vagueness which may dominate the discussion of the poetry texts. This situation leads to boredom and again weakens the pupils' desire to take part in the lesson.

Another reason for the pupils being reluctant to join in the class discussion is the way in which poetry texts are approached. The relevant aspects discussed are

usually the linguistic difficulties and the background information of the poem and its poet as well as the formal analysis of the figures of speech. Shaḥāta (1992: 183) summarises the common approach used in teaching literary texts as follows:

The teacher in the literary texts lesson usually reads the text and then starts explaining the new words. He then explains the text verse by verse if it is a poem or paragraph by paragraph if it is a prose extract. The pupils listen and try to understand what is being taught to them. Very few pupils, prompted by talent and the attempt to absorb what is being said, may try to discuss it with the teacher. The discussion is, however, short and does not permit the pupil to show his individuality. (My translation)

Shaḥāta then comments:

It appears that this approach is boring and that it depresses the pupil's effectiveness and individuality in recognising what is being taught to him. It also neither trains the pupil to be independent, nor gives him the opportunity to express his understanding in his own words. It is obvious that such an approach kills literary appreciation. (My translation)

Furthermore, pupils find that the poetry lessons, like other lessons, provide information, facts and rules, which differ from one lesson to another according to the texts. With regard to this point, a pupil put the following question at the end of the questionnaire: "Why do we study scientific subjects in Arabic?" This question is irrelevant to the problems of studying poetry texts. However, it points to the way in which other texts are treated. Factual data and information seem to be the main purpose of the study rather than the skills related to style and discourse, which should be the focus.

The fifth factor is perhaps the teachers' lack of confidence in the judgements and opinions that they give. The feeling of uncertainty could result from the lack of preparation, leading to vague judgements and superficial treatment of the text. The ill-prepared teacher may prevent his pupils from participating in the lesson, fearing that the discussion might reveal his weakness.

Relevant to the pupils' role in studying poetry texts is rote learning. Item 32, asking pupils to memorise numerous poetry texts, was selected as a problem by 72.9% of the pupils and 58.8% of the inspectors and experts. In their comments at the end of the questionnaire, some teachers referred to imposing specific extracts for rote learning as a problem. The reason for such a mistake is assuming that rote learning is the main purpose of teaching poetry texts. Shaḥāta (1992: 182) confirms that the predominance of rote learning in this subject is mainly responsible for the pupils' resentment and negative attitudes towards poetry. Although rote learning is important in teaching poetry texts, comprehension and appreciation are more so. They are preconditions for rote learning. Unfortunately, it seems that they are being sacrificed for the sake of rote learning.

Although rote learning did not appear to be a problem in itself, the extracts assigned for memorisation were too long and difficult, and were imposed on the pupils, who are not allowed to select what they liked to memorise. In addition, some pupils wrote that the teachers ordered them to memorise the prescribed extracts, but then they neglected to encourage them in rote learning. Some pupils added that they were asked to write only two or three verses in the final examination, which carried only a small number of marks.

The situation of rote learning appears to be very peculiar. It is given priority in the objectives of teaching literary texts (see Chapter Three, section 3.2) and pupils are required to memorise extracts even without understanding and appreciation. Yet, rote learning is neglected in the classroom performance and in the evaluation of the learning output.

5.5.2 The Nature of the Poetry Texts

Some of the items that were selected as problems were linked to the nature of poetry texts (items 2, 6, 7, 10 and 13). It appears from the selection of these items that the opportunities to explore the literary qualities of the text is not taken and the advantage of discussion is diverted to background information, linguistic difficulties and the superficial analysis of the figures of speech. There are several possible reasons for this situation.

One reason perhaps is the misunderstanding of the nature of the poetry text and its treatment as a source of facts and information on the one hand, and analysing its linguistic features superficially and mechanically on the other. This is clear from the statements of the goals for teaching literary texts and the directions for selecting the content of the poetry text programme as explained in Chapter Three sections 3.2 and 3.3.1. This situation directs the discussion of the poetry text towards deducing evidence for historical and social events instead of appreciating its aesthetic impact.

It also encourages teachers to be content with the formal superficial analysis of the figures of speech, believing that this is sufficient appreciation of the literary qualities of the text. In this connection, Ibrāhīm (1984: 275) observes:

Teachers believe that appreciation is essential in literary studies. Nevertheless, they treat it within the scope of rhetorical terms. When discussing a verse, for example, the teachers say that this verse includes a simile (*tashbīh*), metaphor (*isti'āra*) and/or metonymy (*kināya*), but they do not clarify the kind of aesthetic impact that the simile, metaphor or metonymy bestows on the meaning of the verse. This approach is close to scientific and philosophical methods and it has no relation to aesthetic appreciation. (My translation)

The second reason could be the focus on the superficial analysis in the questions in the textbooks and in the final examination. The textbook questions were discussed in Chapter Three section 3.3.3. Such questions draw the attention of teachers and pupils towards the formal treatment of literary texts because this is what will be tested in the pupils' examination.

5.5.3 The Teacher's Role

The instructional process that takes place in the classroom is primarily the teachers' responsibility. It is their duty to ensure that the situation in the classroom is organised to lead the pupils towards the required targets. Some of the problems mentioned in the two preceding sections refer to activities in the teachers' role. However, the questionnaire on the problems includes items that are more relevant to the teachers' role in the poetry lessons, such as 1, 5, 14 and 15. A large number of pupils (63.1%), inspectors, and experts (64.7%) highlighted item 1, the predominance of the teacher-centred method in teaching poetry texts, as a major problem. Both groups also selected item 14, the lack of reference to external sources in the study of the text and the poet, as a problem. Item 5, studying the text without a suitable introduction to arouse the pupils' interest, was also selected by most pupils (52.7%). Although item 15, the lack of the teachers' competence in illustrating the

text, is rejected by 61.4% of the pupils (see appendix 10), it was chosen by 58.8% of the inspectors and experts. Some pupils added statements about the teaching process at the end of the questionnaire. The statements highlighted some failings in this area, such as the incomplete treatment of the texts and ignoring the pupils' need for assistance in answering the questions in the textbook (see section 5.2.2 above).

Some of the reasons mentioned in the two preceding sections may account for the occurrence of wrong procedures in the poetry text lessons. However, there are other possible reasons more relevant to the teachers' role. The first is perhaps the numerous tasks that teachers are required to perform during the school day. Besides the teaching load, they have to share in the enforcement of school discipline as well as leading the pupils' to non-class activities. This makes the teachers' school day extremely busy and forces them to take some tasks home with them. This may affect their preparation of the next day's lessons.

The second reason is the shortage of advice in the teacher's guidebook. As explained in Chapter Three, the teacher's guidebook does not contain the necessary instructions and suggestions for an effective teaching of literary texts. The suggested teaching approach does not distinguish between various types of literary text, nor does it draw the teachers' attention towards the specific skills needed for appreciation and criticism.

Two factors may increase the necessity for clear and specific instructions and suggestions in the teacher's guidebook. The first is that the Arabic teachers come from different Arab countries, where the literary texts they teach are different from

those in the Omani curriculum. The second is that the reference books required for a deeper understanding of the texts are unavailable in the libraries of most Omani secondary schools.

The third reason is that teacher-training seldom includes the analysis of literary texts. The programme of teacher-training in Sultan Qaboos University is shared between the College of Education, where trainees study the professional courses, and the College of Arts where trainees study the academic courses. Trainees study the historical development of Arabic literature, concentrating on the literary topics and genres and the emergence of their characteristics. The programme neither trains students in analysis, criticism and appreciation, nor does it expose the trainees to the methods and schools of studying literary texts. What is more, the literature studied has no connection with the literature in the Omani school curriculum.

In the professional course, trainees take two modules in the methodology of Arabic teaching. However, there is no special focus on teaching literature. As a result of the deficiency in the skills of analysis, criticism and appreciation, teachers who graduated from Sultan Qaboos University (1990 to 1993) recommended that trainees should be required to take special modules in analysing literary texts (Jāmi'at al-Sultān Qābuus; Kulliyyat al-Tarbiya wa al-'Uluum al-Islāmiyya, 1994: 4-6).

The fourth reason is the unavailability of in-service training for Arabic teachers. Such training is necessary for teachers to update and refresh their knowledge and skills in their field. For teachers who come from other Arab

countries, in-service training may help to introduce the Omani curriculum as well as acquaint them with its goals and suitable teaching approaches. Some teachers mentioned the unavailability of in-service training as one of the problems in their additional comments at the end of the questionnaire.

5.5.4 The Content of the Programme of Poetry Texts

The poetry programme contains the prescribed poetry texts and their associated questions and activities. The respondents to the questionnaire on the problems highlighted item 26, not giving the pupils any chance to select the texts that they study, and item 28, the prescribed texts do not meet the pupils' poetry preferences. Furthermore, some pupils commented that the texts were irrelevant to the pupils' lives, they were difficult, long and included words that are difficult to pronounce, understand and memorise (see section 5.2.2). Similar statements were also made by some of the teachers (see section 5.3.2). The respondents also selected items 30 and 31, indicating that the assigned questions and activities were insufficient for the subject. In addition, the respondents pointed to item 29, the absence of illustration in the prescribed textbook.

One reason why the pupils' poetry preferences are ignored is perhaps the assumption that the literature selected by the experts in Arabic literature and the curriculum should suit pupils at different educational stages.

Another reason is, maybe, the desire to give pupils the largest possible number of texts, the assumption being that otherwise pupils would not be able to achieve the set goals of the teaching of literary texts. This assumption ignores the

limited time allocated for literary texts against the time required for exploring the qualities of the text and promoting effective learning. It seems that the focus is on quantity rather than quality. The result of imposing a large poetry syllabus is that teachers, under pressure of limited time, focus the discussion on the superficial aspects of literary texts. Some pupils pointed to this fact in their comments. They wrote that teachers rushed through the illustration of the texts. Some pupils added that some teachers did not complete the discussion of some texts and left it to the pupils, prompted by the desire to complete the syllabus even if the required targets were not achieved.

The problem is not confined to neglecting the pupils' poetry preferences when compiling the syllabus. Pupils are not even allowed to select from a variety of texts. Instead, pupils must study all the prescribed texts, whether they like them or not. Beach & Marshall (1991: 386) confirm that

one of the major problems with poetry instruction is that students are often asked to read poems in which they have little or no interest. While almost any poem requires reading and rereading, poems that are not interesting or accessible may discourage adolescents from reading them even once.

There are a number of reasons why pupils are denied the right to choose their subjects of study. One is the centralisation of education. The education authority controls all aspects of instruction, from setting the philosophy of education to evaluating the effect of the education curriculum on the learners. All pupils have to study the same texts because they are all going to take the same final examination.

Another reason is perhaps the education authority's lack of confidence in the teachers and their pupils. Therefore, it is reluctant to allow them to select the literary texts fearing that they might take a careless approach and not complete the study of the required number or texts-types.

With regard to the shortage of questions and activities, it seems that the authors of the textbooks presume that the teachers are capable of making up the difference. This is why the authors emphasise that the questions and activities set for each text are merely suggestions and the teachers are free to modify them and add whatever they consider suitable for their pupils. However, it appears from the pupils' comments that instead, the teachers seemed to neglect the questions and leave their students to answer them without sufficient help, which may suggest that the teachers themselves cannot answer the questions.

The above assumption may also account for the fact that the teacher's guidebook outlines a general approach to teaching, leaving teachers free to fulfil the requirements of each type of text and the specific skills necessary for analysis and appreciation in their own way.

Finally, there remains item 29, the absence of sufficient illustration of the texts in the textbook, which all samples of the respondents highlighted as a problem, especially pupils and teachers. The selection of this item implies that the textbook should include sufficient illustration of the prescribed texts. It may also suggest that the pupils are not being given a satisfactory interpretation by the teachers, and that the teachers' experience does not enable them to provide a sufficient interpretation.

The inspectors and experts found that the teachers were incapable of producing a satisfactory illustration of the texts.

Providing pupils and teachers with an interpretation of the texts is neither a practical nor reasonable solution to such a problem. The literary text owes its uniqueness to the multiple interpretations it may evoke in the readers as well as to the different responses it invites from them. Clearly, the planners of the literature programme assume that providing teachers and pupils with interpretations could limit the serious study of the literary texts. In other words, teachers may rely on the ready-made illustration provided, which will result in extinguishing the analysis and discussion of different points of views. However, there are other methods which teachers can be trained to use and which are better than leaving both teachers and pupils in desperate need of illustration of some aspects of the literary texts. These alternatives needed to be activated, bearing in mind the current situation in which teachers are not properly trained to teach the Omani curriculum and the unavailability of in-service training and reference books needed for further study of the texts.

5.5.5 The Relationship between Literary Texts and Other Parts of the Arabic Teaching Curriculum

This relationship is clearly stated in item 27, separating the study of rhetoric from that of literature. However, it is also implied in items 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11. These items refer to the mistaken idea of limiting the discussion of the poetry texts to the formal analysis of language difficulties and figures of speech. This may be seen as a means to link the study of the poetry texts with the material studied in the other parts of the

Arabic curriculum, such as grammar and rhetoric. Item 27 was selected as a problem by 60.1% of the male pupils as well as 70.6% of the inspectors and experts; item 6 by 55.8% of the male pupils and 58.8% of the inspectors and experts; item 7 by 55.1% of male and female pupils and 59.2% of the inspectors and experts; item 9 by 51.9% of the male pupils and 56% of the male teachers; and item 11 by 50.9% of the pupils and 50% of male and female teachers. As mentioned before, items 6, 7, 9 and 11 concern the poor quality of the teaching process, which may be attributed to the misapprehension of the real function of the poetry texts. However, the selection of these items implies, at the same time, a problem in the relationship between poetry texts and the rest of the Arabic curriculum.

The relationship between the poetry texts on the one hand and the history of Arabic literature and literary criticism on the other hand may also influence the selection of the prescribed texts. The desire to include numerous representative texts for the various genres of Arabic poetry drawn from different periods of Arabic literature can result in a large corpus of poetry. At the same time, it may lead to emphasising the developmental characteristics of the genres during the different periods at the expense of the study of individual texts.

The reason for the recognition of this relationship is again the misunderstanding of the real aims of teaching poetry texts. The relationship between the poetry texts and Arabic rhetoric (*al-balāgha*) might be due to the predominance of logical approaches in the study of the latter. The function of this study is to recognise the aesthetic elements of the literary work and evaluate the writer's ability to convey his ideas and emotions in a beautiful and evocative language. This aim

was established by ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 471 AH/ 1078 AD). The deviation took place in the seventh century AH/the thirteenth century AD, when Arabic rhetoric was treated using mechanical and logical approaches. In that period rhetoric was divided into three separate branches: *al-ma‘ānī*, *al-bayān* and *al-badī’*. Classification and the setting of rules and terms became the main objectives of its study. In other words, rhetoric was turned into a mechanical science that provided terms, methodology of identification of tropes, rules and examples. Consequently, rhetoric and literature were separated and the only connection between the two was that the latter supplied the former with examples and the former was used in a superficial analysis of the latter.

In the Arabic teaching programme, rhetoric and literature are taught separately. In rhetoric lessons, pupils have to study the rhetorical terms and rules with some illustrations drawn from the literary works of different periods. In literature lessons, pupils are required to recall their knowledge of rhetoric and apply it in order to deduce and analyse the figures of speech used by the author of the text. Yet pupils are not encouraged to utilise that knowledge in the evaluation of the text and the appreciation of its aesthetic impacts.

5.6 Conclusion

The findings obtained from the questionnaire on the problems revealed that there were different problems in the teaching of poetry texts. It appeared from the pupils’ point of view that, firstly, they recognised that they were deprived of taking an active part in the poetry lessons. Secondly, they thought that the study of poetry texts was being directed to non-literary aims. Thirdly, they seemed to be dissatisfied with the

content of the set textbooks, regarding them as inappropriate in their length and level of difficulty and contrary to the pupils' preferences. They also highlighted the insufficiency of the questions and activities set for the poetry texts.

The findings showed also that the teachers' responses to the questionnaire were generally very low. The analysis revealed that teachers identified six problems, implying that they did not consider that their pupils faced the problems listed in the questionnaire. However, it appeared from the findings that four of the six problems related to the curriculum and school facilities. This could mean, as said before, that the teachers wanted to distance themselves from being the cause of any problem in the field, and so they tended to put the blame on the curriculum and the school facilities. It also seems that the teachers wanted to show the situation as free from mistakes and difficulties, perhaps because most of the items related to teaching procedures.

The statistical analysis of the results demonstrated that there were no significant differences between male and female pupils and teachers. It may be inferred that the study of poetry texts in boys' and girls' schools is generally similar, according to the pupils and their teachers. This is possibly because there is no difference in the syllabus studied, the teaching methods and the examination procedures between boys' and girls' schools.

Unlike the teachers, inspectors and experts highlighted twenty-nine items as problems in studying poetry texts. This means that they considered the pupils to be encountering serious difficulties in this subject. Inspectors and experts are

responsible for monitoring the standard of teaching and looking for weaknesses and strengths. They work together to study the situation and suggest improvements. The items selected by inspectors and teachers also confirmed the difficulties identified by pupils. One might ask why inspectors and experts do not use their position in making sufficient efforts to overcome the problems. The investigation of this question is beyond the scope of the present study. It requires a close analysis of the relationship between inspectors and experts on the one hand and the teachers in the schools on the other, the extent to which the former provide the latter with the necessary supervision and the extent to which the latter benefit from such supervision and implement it. However, it may be said for the moment that the inspectors and experts are only supervisors. Although they can provide the solutions, they have no power to ensure their practical implementation.

The reasons for the problems identified by the respondents, as seen in section 5.3 above, may be attributed to various circumstances influencing the studying and teaching of poetry texts.

1. The school system does not seem to allow teachers to give their pupils enough opportunity to take part in the reading of the poetry texts. It also impedes the teachers from preparing well for the poetry lessons. This may be related to the large number of pupils in each class and the heavy teaching load besides the other duties that teachers are expected to perform.
2. The pupils themselves are reluctant to participate in the poetry lessons, perhaps because they are not convinced of the function of poetry in education and in life.

3. The teachers may be incapable of teaching poetry texts effectively. The inadequate teacher's guidebook and pre-service training and the unavailability of in-service training may be factors in this situation.
4. The literary syllabus as a whole is perhaps inappropriate. It is planned for all pupils, regardless of differences in preferences, sex and region. It also draws the attention of both pupils and teachers towards non-literary ends for the studying of the literary texts.
5. The relationship between the poetry texts and the other parts of the Arabic curriculum is confusing and pushes the teaching process towards concentrating on background information and formal analysis of the text.

The solution to such problems requires co-operation from all the authorities responsible for the programme of teaching literary texts. Firstly, the curriculum needs to be planned in accordance with the actual demands and preferences of the pupils. The content should be flexible and it should allow for a choice of options. The curriculum needs to be modified and improved from time to time according to results derived from fieldwork. Teachers should be supplied with the necessary advice, instructions and suggestions regarding teaching approach, activities and instructional media. They should also have access to regular in-service training. Both teachers and curriculum planners are required to work towards creating an atmosphere of encouragement and co-operation in the classroom. Teachers, in particular, need to utilise any source available that can help successful teaching, for they are the ones who are ultimately responsible for the success or failure of their instruction. Suggested remedies and improvements are offered in section 2. of the Conclusion of the present thesis.

Findings Related to the Poetry genres and Forms

This chapter analyses the findings from the questionnaire about poetry genres and forms and commences by giving a brief definition of each genre. The second section outlines a statistical analysis of the data. The findings are then presented in three main sections according to the three groups of respondents to the questionnaire: pupils, teachers and inspectors and experts. Then the selection of the genres by the pupils and that of the teachers, inspectors and experts as appropriate for the pupils are compared and similarities and differences highlighted. Finally, the pupils' poetry preferences as revealed from the findings are compared with the set poetry texts.

6.1 The Arabic Poetry Genres and Forms in the Questionnaire

This section outlines the general characteristics of the Arabic poetry genres and forms in the questionnaire.

6.1.1 Panegyric Poetry

Panegyric poetry (*shi'r al-madīh*) is one of the well-known genres of Arabic poetry. It is addressed mainly to rulers and those in authority for their generous patronage of panegyric poets. Panegyric poets usually praise their addressees for possessing noble manners and lofty virtues, which are often exaggerated, though the addressee may not deserve such praise. The post-Islamic period witnessed the emergence of the court poets (*shu'arā' al-balāṭ*) who devoted most of their poetry to defending the caliph's right to rule and satirising his opponents. Among the famous poets of this

type are Jarīr (d. 114 AH/733 AD), al-Akḥṭal (d. 92 AH/710 AD), al-Farazdaq (d. 112 AH/730 AD), Bashshār (d. 167 AH/783 AD), Abuu Nuwās (d. 200 AH/815 AD), Abuu Tammām (d. 231 AH/846 AD), al-Buḥturī (d. 284 AH/898 AD), al-Mutanabbī (354 AH/966 AD), Ibn Hānī (d. 363 AH/974 AD), Aḥmad Shawqī (d. 1932 AD) and many more. Besides the panegyric of caliphs, there was also the panegyric of local governors (*wulāh*), ministers (*wuzarā'*) and military leaders (*quwwād*), for these people needed to defend their positions and were capable of granting handsome rewards to the poets. This is because "the poets were the leaders of public opinion; their utterances took the place of political pamphlets or of party oratory for or against the Government of the day" (Nicholson, 1930: 241).

In the early Islamic period, Muslim poets addressed panegyrics to the Prophet Muḥammad as the most distinguished personality of the time. Panegyrics of the Prophet developed and became a distinct genre in the poetry of mystics (*mutaṣawwifa*).

6.1.2 Satiric Poetry

In satiric poetry (*shi'r al-hijā'*), poets express their discontent with a person or group of people. In the pre-Islamic period, satire stemmed from the tribal bigotry, for the poets were the defenders of the tribes. They aimed at weakening the enemies' morale and attacking their standing. Satire accompanied the tribal feuds and was an element of war just as important as actual fighting (see Nicholson, 1930: 73). Satire, in this sense, developed notably in the Umayyad period, which witnessed a revival of tribalism and an evolution of conflicting political parties. As a result of this situation, a new poetry genre known as *naqā'id*, the plural of *naqīda*, (that is,

polemic poetry) was developed, especially between the three famous poets Jarīr, al-Farazdaq and al-Akhṭal. The *naqīḍa* was composed mainly of boasting (*fakhr*) and satire (*hijā'*). In the following periods, tribal and political satire declined. However, the satire of rivals in society was developed, disseminated, and even reached rulers and those in authority. In this type of satire, the poet ridicules or lampoons the victim and emphasises his inferiority. Among the famous satirists are Bashshār, Abuu Nuwās, al-Buḥturī, Di'bil al-Khuzā'ī (d. 246 AH/860–61 AD), Ibn al-Ruumī (d. 283 AH/896 AD) and al-Mutanabbī.

6.1.3 Elegiac Poetry

Elegiac poetry (*shi'r al-rithā'*) is usually composed to express grief for the deceased. An elegy is a lament in which the outstanding characteristics of the deceased are highlighted. Elegiac poetry is like panegyric, but it is written for the departed. In addition, some poets transfer the effects of the calamity to the whole nation and describe the gap that the deceased may have left in the lives of its people. Most elegies also include words of wisdom and contemplation on the nature of life and death. Among the well-known elegiac poets are al-Khansā' (d. 24 AH/645 AD), al-Mutanabbī, al-Buḥturī, Abuu Tammām, Ibn al-Ruumī, Abuu al-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī (d.449 AH/1057 AD), Abuu al-Ḥasan al-Tihāmī.

Although elegies are usually composed about the deceased, some have referred to cities and kingdoms, whose loss or destruction caused poets to express their sadness in poetry. Examples are Ibn al-Ruumī's elegy on Baṣra after it was devastated by the Zanj (blacks) and Abuu al-Baqā' al-Rundī's three elegies on the loss of Andalusia.

6.1.4 Descriptive Poetry

This genre evolved under the influence of the environment and its ecological components. Mountains, rivers, plants, animals, birds, beautiful places, inventions, people at work, etc. attract poets and evoke poetical descriptions in them. The description often goes beyond what is physical and visible to delve into human and abstract characteristics. The description of *aṭlāl al-ḥabība* (i.e. the traces of the abandoned encampment of the beloved) and the journey used to constitute the *muqaddima* (preface) to the traditional Arabic poem are examples of this type of poetry. Among the famous Arabic descriptive poets are al-Shanfarā, Dhū al-Rumma Ghaylān (d. 117 AH/735 AD), Abū Nuwās and Ibn al-Rūmī.

6.1.5 Love Poetry

This is a well-known poetry genre that has constituted a good portion of the traditional Arabic poem from early times. Throughout the history of Arabic poetry, it has been possible to distinguish three types of love poetry (*shi‘r al-ghazal*). The first is explicit love poetry (*al-ghazal al-ṣarīḥ/ al-ḥissī*), in which the poet depicts the physical attributes of the beloved and expresses his yearnings to see her. The second type is virtuous or platonic love poetry (*al-ghazal al-‘udhrī al-‘afīf*), in which the poet describes his yearnings for the beloved and pain he suffers as a result of being unable to be with her. This poetry is ascribed to ‘Udhra (an Arab tribe of Banī ‘Āmir), which was known for its poets who devoted their poetry to virtuous love. Examples are Qays b. al-Mulawwaḥ (Majnuun Laylā) (d. between 65 AH/685 AD and 80 AH/699 AD), ‘Urwa b. Ḥizām (d. 30 AH/650 AD), Jamīl b. Mu‘ammar (Jamīl Buthayna) (d. 82 AH/701 AD) and Qays b. Dhariḥ (Qays Lubnā) (d. 70 AH/689 AD). The third type of love poetry is that composed for the love of God (*al-ghazal al-ṣuufī al-ḥubb al-ilāhī*), which grew among the *mutaṣawwifa* (mystics). In

this poetry, the poet addresses his love and longing for God or Mecca, which is usually referred to as of a symbolic woman. Muḥyī al-Dīn b. al-‘Arabī (d. 543 AH/1148 AD), ‘Umar b. al-Fāriḍ (d. 632 AH/1235 AD) and ‘Umar b. ‘Abdallāh al-Suhrawardī (d. 632 AH/1234 AD) are famous for such poetry.

6.1.6 Meditative Poetry

Meditative poetry (*shi‘r al-ta‘ammul*) expresses deep thought on life. This poetry is the expression of the poets’ views about life, what that means to them and the memories these evoke. These poets contemplate the human soul, human behaviour, natural phenomena and the universe, searching for a new understanding of them. This kind of poetry appeared as a genre in the modern period in the works of al-‘Aqqād (d. 1964 AD), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Shukrī, al-Shābbī (d. 1934 AD) and the poetry of the *mahjar* (the Arab immigrants in America). However, it can also be found in the works of some early poets, especially Abuu al-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī.

6.1.7 Boastful Poetry

Boastful poetry (*shi‘r al-fakhr*) is the genre in which the poet praises and glorifies himself, his tribe or his nation. In this poetry, the poet paints an idealistic picture of himself or his tribe or nation, claiming exploits and noble virtues. Boastful poetry was used to refute the slanders of the enemies in the early years of Arabic literature, notably in the Umayyad period where the *naqā’iḍ* between the three poets, Jarīr, al-Farazdaq and al-Akḥṭal were composed mainly of boasting and satire. It is rare to find a poet who does not glorify himself in his poetry. However, there are some exaggerated boastful poems such as the *mu‘allaqa* of ‘Amr b. Kulthuum (lived in the 6th century AD) and some poems of al-Mutanabbī. Other outstanding boastful poets

are Bashshār, Abuu al-‘Alā’, Abuu Firās (d. 323 AH/935 AD) and al-Bāruudī (d. 1904 AD).

6.1.8 Nostalgic Poetry

Nostalgic poetry (*shi‘r al-ḥanīn*) expresses the yearnings for places or happy times which evoke pleasant and unforgettable memories. The theme of nostalgic poetry usually includes the poet’s longing for that particular time or place and the hope to return to it. The poet often remembers every small pleasant memory and tries to highlight it by describing its effect on him. The best-known themes of this kind of poetry are nostalgia for youth and childhood and nostalgia for one’s homeland. This last theme is covered in the poetry of al-Bāruudī, Aḥmad Shawqī, and that of the *mahjar* poets. The Omani poet, Abuu Muslim al-Bahlānī (d. 1339 AH/1921 AD) has also composed a great deal of nostalgic poetry.

6.1.9 Apology Poetry

Apology poetry (*shi‘r al-i‘tidhār*) usually describes the poet’s remorse for having done something wrong to a particular person, usually someone in authority or a friend. This type of poetry imparts the writer’s feelings of regret and an explanation of the error, imploring the addressee for forgiveness. The famous apologies in Arabic poetry are those of al-Nābigha al-Dhubayānī (d. about 600 AD) to al-Nu‘mān b. al-Mundhir, the King of Ḥīra (d. 602 AD); that of Ka‘b b. Zuhayr (d. 24 AH/654 AD) to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad; those of Abuu Nuwās to the Abbasid Caliph, al-Ma’mūn (d. 218 AH/833 AD); and those of al-Buḥturī to the Abbasid minister, al-Fatḥ b. Khāqān (d. 247 AH/861 AD).

6.1.10 Religious Poetry

Three genres may be classified under religious poetry (*al-shi'r al-dīnī*): asceticism, wisdom, preaching and repentance. Praise of the Prophet, praise of scholars and poetry addressed to God may also be included under this heading. However, the literary characteristics of poems of this type are perhaps closer to panegyric and love poetry than to religious poetry.

Although large amounts of wisdom are found in pre-Islamic poetry, after the coming of Islam wisdom was connected with asceticism and often found in the same poems. Wisdom poetry expresses the benefits of the trials that the poet has experienced in life. The moral drawn from these trials is used as the basis of advice on good behaviour. Wisdom appears in most of the works of the Arabic poets, notably in that of al-Mutanabbī, Abuu al-'Alā' al-Ma'rrī and al-Bāruudī. In asceticism and preaching, the poet tries to convince readers of the triviality of life, to urge them to abandon their evil desires, to adhere to Islamic teachings, and to prepare for the Day of Judgement. Among the most famous of such poets are Abuu al-'Atāhiya (d. 211 AH/826 AD), Ṣāliḥ b. 'Abd al-Qudduus (d. 167 AH/783 AD), al-Ṭughrā'ī (d. 515 AH/1122 AD) and al-Bāruudī. Repentance poetry (*shi'r al-tawba*) is the genre in which poets express regret for their evil deeds, articulate their desire to return to the right path and implore God for mercy. One of the well-known representatives of this kind of poetry is Abuu Nuwās.

6.1.11 Exhortation poetry

The theme of exhortation poetry (*shi'r al-istinhād*) is to urge the addressees to rise and fight for their land and integrity. The poet depicts the unsatisfactory situation and upbraids the addressees for their weakness and disunity. This genre is found in

the poetry of the pre-Islamic era, the Crusades, Andalusia, and notably of modern times as a result of colonialism and the occupation of Palestine. Such poetry may be found in the works of Laqīṭ al-Iyādī (d. 380 AD), Ibn al-Qaysarānī (d. 1154 AD), Ibrāhīm Ṭuuqān, Hāshim al-Rifā'ī, and Hāruun Hāshim Rashīd.

6.1.12 Modern Poetry Genres and Forms

Seven types of poetry writings will be dealt with under this category. They developed in Arabic poetry during the modern period as a result of exposure to western literature. Two of these types are genres: political and patriotic poetry, while the others: free verse, narrative, epic, and dramatic poetry, may be regarded as forms more than genres. Narrative, epic, and dramatic poetry as well as other genres, whether traditional or modern could be written in both traditional and free verse forms, however they have their special characterisations as will be seen in the following sections. Translated poetry is also categorised under modern poetry.

6.1.12.1 Patriotic Poetry

Patriotic poetry (*al-shi'r al-waṭani*) is a genre to express the glory and pride of the country or the whole nation. It appeared as a result of the growth in patriotic trends in the modern period during the movements for independence. Patriotic poetry is used in patriotic songs (*anāshīd* – plural of *nashīd*), in which the country is glorified and its people are roused to unite in serving their country and maintaining their honour. Among the patriotic poets are Ḥāfiṣ Ibrāhīm, al-Shābbī, al-Ruṣāfī, al-Zihāwī, Fadwā Ṭuuqān and Samīḥ al-Qāsim.

6.1.12.2 Political Poetry

In political poetry (*al-shi'r al-siyāsī*), the poet deals with social, economical and political issues that concern his country. Usually, the addressed in the poem is

criticised by the use of irony to ridicule the government. Political poetry is found in the works of al-Bāruudī, Aḥmad Shawqī, Nizār Qabbānī and Aḥmad Maṭar.

6.1.12.3 Narrative poetry

Narrative poetry (*al-shi'r al-qaṣaṣī*) comprises a story narrated in a poetic form. This genre is known in this sense mainly in modern Arabic poetry. However, it may be found in the works of a number of early poets, such as Imru' al-Qays (d. 550 AD), al-Ḥuṭay'a (d. 41 AH/661 AD) and Abuu Nuwās.

6.1.12.4 Epic Poetry

Epic poetry (*al-shi'r al-malḥamī*) is an old poetry genre that was found in ancient civilisations such as those of Greece, Persia and India. However, it remained unknown in Arabic poetry until the modern period. The epic poem is a long poem which narrates major events that happened in a particular period of the nation's history. It usually focuses on the life of a national hero and includes many subordinate characters and stories. Among the modern Arabic epics are *Nabiyy al-ḥurriyya* (The Prophet of freedom) by Maḥmuud Ḥasan Ismā'īl and *Malḥamat al-samāwāt al-sab'* (The Epic of Seven Heavens) by Kāmil Amīn.

6.1.12.5 Dramatic Poetry

Dramatic poetry (*al-shi'r al-masraḥī al-tamthīlī*) is a story composed in verse for staging as a theatre play. It usually consists of six elements: characters, dialogue, topic, time and place, plot and solution (al-Samra et al., 1986, 37). Aḥmad Shawqī and 'Azīz Abāza (d. 1973 AD) are the best-known modern dramatic poets.

6.1.12.6 Free Verse

Free verse (*al-shi'r al-ḥurr/ shi'r al-taf'īla*) existed in Arabic poetry in 1947. Unlike traditional poetry in which the foot (*taf'īla*) or the multiple feet are reiterated equally in every line throughout the entire poem, free verse is based on one foot that is repeated one or more times in the line to create a harmonious rhythm in the whole poem. In addition, free verse is composed of a variety of rhymes (*qāfiya*), unlike traditional poetry, in which all the verses end with the same rhyme. Among the famous poets of this genre are Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, Nāzik al-Malā'ika and Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabuūr (d. 1931 AD).

6.1.12.7 Translated Poetry

As its name implies, translated poetry (*al-shi'r al-mutarjam*) is not genuine Arabic poetry. It is translated from the works of foreign poets. Some poems are translated in both meaning and form into Arabic, but in most cases the translation does not go beyond the meaning. Among the translators of foreign poetry are Rifā'a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and 'Alī Maḥmuud Ṭāhā.

6.2 The Statistical Treatment of the Data from the Questionnaire on Poetry Genres and Forms

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the questionnaire on poetry genres and forms had two main aims. The first was to establish which poetry genres and forms were preferred by secondary school pupils. The second was to identify which poetry genres and forms were appropriate for these pupils from the point of view of Arabic teachers, and inspectors and curriculum experts. Therefore, the findings were divided into three groups: (1) pupils; (2) teachers; (3) inspectors and experts.

The frequencies and percentages of the responses recorded on three scales (I prefer it, I am not sure, I do not prefer it [for pupils]; suitable, I am not sure, not suitable [for teachers, inspectors and experts]) were computed for each genre and form. The genres and forms were ranked according to the percentages of the number of respondents who chose scale 3 for each item (see appendices 13, 14 and 15). Choosing scale 3 meant that the poetry genre or form was preferred by the pupils and seen as appropriate for them by teachers, and inspectors and experts. The choice of scale 3 by 50% or more of the respondents meant that the item was considered as a preference by most of the pupils and as appropriate by most of the teachers, and inspectors and experts.

Pupils (as mentioned in Chapter Four) were divided into male and female. Since the sex of the pupils may influence their interests, the statistical significance between the responses of males and females pupils was investigated by applying the *t* test (see Chapter Five, section 5.1).

The null hypothesis used in this study to test the difference between the male and female pupils is as follows:

There is no statistically significant difference ($p = < 0.05$) between the means of the totals of male and female pupils with regard to their responses to the questionnaire about poetry genres and forms.

6.3 Findings from the Pupils' Responses

The findings are presented in two sections. The first gives the percentages of the pupils who selected scale 3 for the poetry genres and forms and the second contains the analysis of the statistically significant difference between the responses of male and female pupils to the questionnaire.

6.3.1 The Pupils' Responses to the Poetry Genres and Forms

The responses are divided in accordance with the general genres and their sub-genres as follows:

6.3.1.1 Panegyric Poetry

Table 6.1 shows the percentages of the male and female pupils who chose panegyric poetry and its sub-genres as their poetry preferences.

Table 6.1
Male and female pupils' responses to panegyric poetry

No.	Item	Male pupils	Female pupils	Male and female pupils
1	Panegyric (in general)	43.4	43.0	43.2
2	Panegyric of the Prophet	94.7	93.3	93.9
3	Panegyric of rulers, ministers and leaders	12.2	5.9	8.5
4	Panegyric of family members	36.9	45.0	41.7
5	Panegyric of friends	40.5	52.7	47.8
6	Panegyric of scholars	57.9	38.4	46.4

It is clear from the table that except for panegyric of the Prophet, scholars and friends, pupils did not seem to favour this kind of poetry, even though it is one of the most widely known genres of Arabic poetry. This is perhaps because it usually contains exaggerated praise of the addressee and artificial feelings of the poet, regardless of whether the addressee is worthy of such characterisation and whether the poet really believes it.

Panegyric of the Prophet was at the top of the poetry preferences list of both male and female pupils. This is due to religious factors, for Muslims believe that the Prophet was the holiest man. Therefore, no description of his noble characteristics can match his real attributes. Furthermore, no poet would compose a panegyric of the Prophet without sincerely believing that he deserved to be praised.

6.3.1.2 Satiric Poetry

Table 6.2 shows the percentages of the male and female pupils who chose satiric poetry and its sub-genres as their poetry preferences.

Table 6.2
Male and female pupils' responses to satiric poetry

No.	Item	Male pupils	Female pupils	Male and female pupils
7	Satire (in general)	23.8	27.8	25.9
8	Satire of enemies	57.0	51.8	53.9
9	Satire of rivals in the society	28.5	31.7	30.4

The only satiric poetry seen as a preference was that of enemies. Perhaps this is because such satire is considered acceptable, the general feeling being that enemies deserve to be lampooned. Satiric poetry in general and the satire of rivals in society

are rejected. This is may be due to the nature of satire, for it pours scorn on other human beings and implies exaggerated hatred and resentment.

6.3.1.3 Elegiac Poetry

Table 6.3 shows the percentages of the male and female pupils who chose elegiac poetry and its sub-genres as their poetry preferences.

Table 6.3
Male and female pupils' responses to elegiac poetry

No.	Item	Male pupils	Female pupils	Male and female pupils
10	Elegiac poetry (in general)	36.8	48.4	43.6
11	Elegy for rulers, ministers and military leaders	13.9	14.0	13.9
12	Elegy for family members	50.7	50.9	50.8
13	Elegy for friends	46.1	54.7	51.2
14	Elegy for scholars	39.5	27.0	32.0
15	Elegy for cities and kingdoms	32.7	27.9	29.8

It appears from table 6.3 that two types of elegy were preferred by most of the pupils: that for friends (51.2%) and that for family members (50.8%), though these are not large percentages. This probably because they are felt to be honest and sincere. The elegies for people in authority (rulers, ministers, and military leaders) come last in the list of preferences (13.9%). This indicates that the pupils do not like this type of elegy, perhaps because it embodies distorted emotions and is usually written to secure personal advantage. The elegy for cities and kingdoms, which is one of the finest in Arabic poetry, was also chosen by only a small proportion of pupils (29.8%). The reason could be that this kind of elegy was unknown to the pupils, since it is not part of their literary texts syllabus.

6.3.1.4 Descriptive Poetry

Table 6.4 shows the percentages of male and female pupils who chose descriptive poetry and its sub-genres as their poetry preferences.

Table 6.4
Male and female pupils' responses to descriptive poetry

No.	Item	Male pupils	Female pupils	Male and female pupils
16	Description (in general)	55.7	55.5	55.6
17	Description of nature	77.0	75.8	76.3
18	Description of buildings and constructions	23.2	10.3	15.8
19	Description of people at work	42.4	21.6	30.0
20	Description of travel	58.7	50.2	53.6
21	Description of battles	80.0	51.1	62.7
22	Description of inventions	47.0	20.3	31.1

It is clear from table 6.4 that most pupils (55.6%) chose descriptive poetry as one of their preferred poetry genres and forms. In particular, pupils selected description of nature (76.3%), travel (53.6%) and battles (62.7%) in this category. This is perhaps because of the imagination and contemplation required to appreciate this type of poetry that takes readers into another world and makes them feel part of it. This selection also reflects the pupils' love of nature (description of nature and travel). But it also implies that they, especially the male pupils (80%), liked reading about battles with all the adventure, heroism and danger they depicted.

Description of buildings and other architecture constructions (15.8%), people at work (30%) and inventions (31.1%) were selected as the least preferred genres. These are not well-known genres in Arabic poetry and perhaps the pupils expect them to lack good literary qualities.

6.3.1.5 Love Poetry

Table 6.5 shows the percentages of male and female pupils who chose love poetry and its sub-genres as their poetry preferences.

Table 6.5
Male and female pupils' responses to love poetry

No.	Item	Male pupils	Female pupils	Male and female pupils
23	Love poetry (in general)	64.2	60.0	61.7
24	Platonic (virtuous) love poetry	54.1	61.6	58.6
25	Love of God	68.4	57.0	61.6
26	Explicit love poetry	55.0	38.5	45.2

According to the table, this kind of poetry was chosen as a preference by most pupils (61.7%). This is to be expected, since love poetry is one of the best-known genres in Arabic poetry, and it is a traditional introduction to most poems especially in the early periods of Arabic literature. 'Love of God' poetry is selected as the top sub-genre of love poetry (61.6%), which is motivated by religious factors. The second sub-genre is the poetry of platonic love (58.6%). This preference may be based on the fact that the pupils like reading this type of poetry, because of its true emotions and because it expresses platonic feelings towards the beloved. On the other hand, explicit poetry, which describes the beloved in some intimate detail, is

rejected by most of the pupils (selected by 45.2%). This is not surprising, since Omani society is conservative and this type of writing is considered unacceptable and contrary to religious and moral values. However, most male pupils (55%) appeared to prefer reading explicit love poetry, which is probably their natural reaction to social prohibition.

6.3.1.6 Meditative Poetry

Table 6.6 shows the percentages of male and female pupils who chose meditative poetry and its sub-genres as their poetry preferences.

Table 6.6

Male and female pupils' responses to meditative poetry

No.	Item	Male pupils	Female pupils	Male and female pupils
27	Meditative poetry (in general)	65.3	61.3	62.9
28	Meditation on the soul	64.7	65.9	65.4
29	Meditation on life and the universe	79.6	77.8	78.5

This poetry was preferred by both male and female pupils. This is perhaps because it offers a vivid experience in which readers are drawn into a deep contemplation of abstract realities. Pupils at this stage of their development, become more aware of abstract thinking and start questioning their relationship with other entities around them (see Sian & Ugwuegbue, 1988: 242, 252; Biehler & Snowman, 1982: 127), so they may seek answers in this type of poetry and similar writings.

6.3.1.7 Boastful Poetry

Table 6.7 shows the percentages of male and female pupils who chose boastful poetry and its sub-genres as their poetry preferences.

Table 6.7
Male and female pupils' responses to boastful poetry

No.	Item	Male pupils	Female pupils	Male and female pupils
30	Boastful poetry (in general)	39.5	45.7	43.2
31	Self-glorification	29.1	37.3	34.0
32	Glorifying the tribe	53.3	43.8	47.6
33	Glorifying the nation	76.5	61.1	67.3

Glorifying the nation was the only genre selected by most pupils (67.3%) according to the table. The other genres were rejected, perhaps because of the arrogance and selfishness usually expressed in them. Glorifying the nation boosts the morale of the entire population and celebrates national achievements. This may also account for the male pupils' selection (53.3%) of poetry of glorifying the tribe, for the tribe forms a small segment of the nation.

6.3.1.8 Nostalgic poetry

Table 6.8 includes the percentages of male and female pupils who chose nostalgic poetry and its sub-genres as their poetry preferences.

Table 6.8

Male and female pupils' responses to nostalgic poetry

No.	Item	Male pupils	Female pupils	Male and female pupils
34	Nostalgic poetry (in general)	65.1	77.0	72.2
35	Nostalgia for one's homeland	78.9	76.3	77.4
36	Nostalgia for the past	70.5	80.9	76.7

From table 6.8, it appears that nostalgic poetry was greatly preferred by most pupils. This poetry genre is one of the best-known in Arabic literature and it usually contains truthful emotions and depicts yearnings for beautiful places and memorable times.

6.3.1.9 Apology Poetry

Table 6.9 shows the percentages of male and female pupils who chose apology poetry and its sub-genres as their poetry preferences.

Table 6.9

Male and female pupils' responses to apology poetry

No.	Item	Male pupils	Female pupils	Male and female pupils
37	Apology (in general)	42.3	41.2	41.6
38	Apologies to rulers and those in authority	12.5	7.2	9.3
39	Apologies to friends	69.7	65.2	67.0

From table 6.9 it is clear that pupils did not seem to enjoy reading apology poetry in general, particularly apologies to rulers and those in authority. The reason may be that, like other genres composed for rulers and the elite, this kind of poetry

tends to contain exaggerated and artificial feelings and ideas. However, the pupils appeared to like reading apologies to friends (67%). This is perhaps because pupils at this stage of their lives are trying to shape their emotions towards their friends and they may regard such poetry as useful guidance.

6.3.1.10 Religious Poetry

Table 6.10 shows the percentages of male and female pupils who chose religious poetry and its sub-genres as their poetry preferences.

Table 6.10

Male and female pupils' responses to religious poetry

No.	Item	Male pupils	Female pupils	Male and female pupils
40	Asceticism and wisdom	66.4	65.3	65.8
41	Preaching and didactic poetry	78.3	70.1	73.4
42	Repentance	85.5	80.6	82.6

The three genres of religious poetry were preferred by most of the pupils according to the table. Religion has a strong influence in Omani society, hence the popularity of this kind of poetry, which also responds to the pupils' need for guidance at this crucial stage of development, in which they are approaching adulthood.

6.3.1.11 Exhortation poetry

Table 6.11 contains the percentages of male and female pupils who chose exhortation poetry and its sub-genres as their poetry preferences.

Table 6.11

Male and female pupils' responses to exhortation poetry

No.	Item	Male pupils	Female pupils	Male and female pupils
43	Exhorting (in general)	42.0	45.0	43.8
44	Exhorting rulers	37.7	35.6	36.5
45	Exhorting the tribe	52.6	42.8	46.8
46	Exhorting the nation	66.4	47.7	55.4

Exhorting the nation and the tribe according to the table were preferred by most male pupils. Female pupils, however, did not seem to be interested in any type of exhortation poetry. Exhorting rulers was probably rejected for the same reason as that of rejecting the other genres associated with rulers and those in authority. The male pupils' interest in exhorting the nation and the tribe may be because they feel responsible for the defence of the nation and their concept of patriotism is possibly stronger, so they like reading poetry of this kind.

6.3.1.12 Modern Poetry Genres and Forms

Table 6.12 shows the percentages of male and female pupils who chose the modern poetry genres and forms as their poetry preferences.

Table 6.12

Male and female pupils' responses to the modern poetry genres and forms

No.	Item	Male pupils	Female pupils	Male and female pupils
47	Patriotic poetry	67.8	51.1	57.8
48	Political poetry	44.1	21.2	30.5
49	Narrative poetry	50.7	47.1	48.5
50	Epic poetry	37.7	22.5	28.7
51	Dramatic poetry	41.7	48.2	45.6
52	Free verse	36.4	41.9	39.7
53	Translated poetry	31.6	30.9	31.2

Table 6.12 shows that only patriotic poetry was preferred by most male and female pupils. Perhaps they felt that they needed to strengthen their concept of patriotism, or that they should support this kind of poetry as a part of their patriotic duty.

One reason for the rejection of the other genres is perhaps the pupils' unfamiliarity with them, since they are new to Arabic poetry and have not yet taken their place as distinctive genres. Another reason for rejecting free verse and translated poetry is possibly their peculiarity in metre. Pupils may have difficulty in appreciating the metres of free verse. Perhaps translated poetry is considered odd in form, for most of it is not in the Arabic poetical style, coming as it does from a different culture.

The pupils' poetry preferences, as found in the above presentation, may be divided into three groups:

1. Religious: panegyric of the Prophet; repentance; preaching and didactic; love of God; asceticism and wisdom; and panegyric of scholars.
2. Social and nationalistic: nostalgia for the homeland; apologies to friends; patriotic poetry; exhorting the nation; satire of enemies; glorifying the nation; elegies of friends; and family members.
3. Contemplative: meditation on the universe and life; nostalgia for the past; meditation on the soul; platonic love; description of nature; description of travel; and description of battles.

The above preferences may be related to different factors. The first is religious and is motivated by Omani conservatism. The second is social and

national, which is possibly encouraged by the feeling of affiliation to society in general and the need for friendship. Sian & Ugwuegbue (1988: 228) emphasise that “during the adolescence the need to belong to, and identify with, a group becomes very strong”. The other possible reason is the nationalist education which the pupils receive in various school subjects and through the media.

The third factor is the pupils’ cognitive and emotional development. There are several developmental characteristics that could have influenced the selection of the contemplative group of poetry preferences. Firstly, pupils, as they move up the educational ladder, become more capable of abstract thinking. They tend to think more deeply and analytically about issues outside themselves and move “into the world of ideals, of theories and of possibilities” (Sian & Ugwuegbue, 1988: 243). These changes may influence their selection of poetry preferences and motivate them to seek genres that nourish their needs in these areas. Poetry of meditation, description and nostalgia that take the pupils contemplatively and imaginatively into realities such as life and death, past and future, nature, the human soul, the universe, etc. may help them think more deeply about these realities and find some answers to questions concerning them. In addition, poetry of meditation, description and nostalgia usually deal with human and universal issues. The emotions and thoughts presented in these genres are usually general and long-lasting. Poetry of this kind evokes in readers emotions that they find in everyday life, but which they cannot express in the same way as the poet. In other words, readers find in such poetry their thoughts and emotions concerning many issues and aspects of life expressed in a beautiful and artistic form. This may also account for the rejection of some genres that deal with temporary and personal issues such as the panegyric of rulers and

those in authority. These genres embody feelings and thoughts that are exclusive to the poets themselves and are often false and exaggerated. These emotions and thoughts are also attributed to the person being praised and readers may not share these emotions or empathise with them. However, there are old panegyric poems that have survived into modern times, because the objects of praise were virtues and human values, not people as such (see al-Shāyib, 1946: 181–182).

6.3.2 The Statistical Differences between Male and Female Pupils' Responses

The *t* test was applied to see if there was a statistically significant difference between male and female pupils owing to their sex. Table 6.13 gives the means and the *t* value of the totals of the male and female pupils' responses:

Table 6.13

The significance of the difference between the totals of male and female pupils' responses to the questionnaire on poetry genres and forms

Group	n	Mean	Standard deviation	<i>t</i> value	Level of significance (<i>p</i>)
Male	125	120.55	12.01	3.3	0.00
Female	225	115.44	16.3		

It is clear from table 6.13 that there is a significant difference ($p = 0.00$) between the male and female pupils in their responses to the questionnaire on the poetry genres and forms. The difference between the two means, 120.55 for the totals of the male pupils' responses and 115.44 for the totals of the female pupils' responses, is underpinned by the result of the *t* test, which shows that this difference is statistically significant at a level of 0.00. This level means that the difference is very significant and the probability for it to occur by chance is zero. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis stated in section 6.2 above. The difference was in

the favour of the male pupils. It may be concluded, therefore, that the male pupils generally preferred reading poetry genres more than the female pupils.

Since there is a marked difference between male and female pupils in this area, it may be worth looking at the differences between the means of the poetry genres and forms preferred by the two sexes as presented in the previous section (6.3.1). Table 6.14 shows the results of the *t* test on the genres preferred by male and female pupils and proved statistically different. The results of the *t* test regarding the other genres are given in appendix 16.

Table 6.14

The significance of the differences between the means of male and female pupils' poetry preferences

No.	Item	Group	n	Mean	Standard deviation	<i>t</i> value	Level of significance (<i>p</i>)
42	Repentance	Male	152	2.84	0.40	-1.86	0.05
		Female	222	2.74	0.56		
41	Preaching and didactic poetry	Male	152	2.74	0.54	-2.53	0.01
		Female	224	2.56	0.72		
34	Nostalgic poetry (in general)	Male	149	2.57	0.64	2.51	0.02
		Female	222	2.73	0.54		
33	Glorifying the nation	Male	149	2.64	0.69	-2.53	0.01
		Female	221	2.45	0.76		
21	Description of battles	Male	150	2.73	0.58	-5.81	0.00
		Female	225	2.29	0.81		
25	Love of God	Male	152	2.55	0.72	-2.15	0.03
		Female	223	2.38	0.78		
47	Patriotic poetry	Male	152	2.52	0.75	-3.47	0.00
		Female	225	2.22	0.87		
46	Exhorting the nation	Male	149	2.54	0.70	-3.21	0.00
		Female	214	2.29	0.76		
20	Description of travel	Male	150	2.42	0.76	-1.96	0.05
		Female	225	2.25	0.83		
13	Elegies for friends	Male	152	2.18	0.75	2.38	0.02
		Female	225	2.38	0.84		

It appears from table 6.14 that there are statistically significant differences between the male and female pupils in ten genres. One statistically significant difference is in favour of the female pupils: nostalgic poetry (in general). The statistical significance for the other nine genres is in favour of male pupils. This implies that nostalgic poetry was preferred by female pupils more than male pupils. However, poetry of repentance, preaching, glorifying the nation, description of battles, love of God, patriotism, exhorting the nation, description of travel and elegies for friends were more greatly preferred by the male pupils.

6.4 Findings from the Teachers' Responses

Table 6.15

The percentages of male and female teachers who considered the poetry genres and forms appropriate for secondary school pupils

No.	Item	Male teachers	Female teachers	Male and female teachers
2	Panegyric of the prophet	96	100	98
21	Description of battles	92	100	96
17	Description of nature	92	96	94
47	Patriotic poetry	92	96	94
35	Nostalgia for one's homeland	92	92	92
40	Asceticism and wisdom	84	100	92
33	Glorifying the nation	88	92	90
41	Preaching and didactic poetry	84	92	88
46	Exhorting the nation	84	88	86
34	Nostalgic poetry (in general)	80	88	84
10	Elegiac poetry (in general)	80	84	82
16	Description (in general)	80	84	82
24	Platonic (virtuous) love poetry	80	84	82
29	Meditation on life and the universe	80	84	82
43	Exhorting (in general)	80	84	82
51	Dramatic poetry	76	88	82

No.	Item	Male teachers	Female teachers	Male and female teachers
1	Panegyric (in general)	80	80	80
25	Love of God	72	84	78
28	Meditation on the soul	64	84	74
36	Nostalgia for the past	60	88	74
42	Repentance	72	76	74
48	Political poetry	76	72	74
8	Enemies satire	60	84	72
12	Elegy for the family members	64	80	72
15	Elegy for cities and countries	68	76	72
27	Meditation poetry (in general)	68	76	72
49	Narrative poetry	60	84	72
39	Apologies to friends	68	72	70
30	Boastful poetry (in general)	68	68	68
44	Exhorting rulers	64	72	68
50	Epic poetry	64	72	68
6	Panegyric of scholars	68	64	66
13	Elegies for friends	60	68	64
20	Description of travel	56	72	64
37	Apology (in general)	60	68	64
14	Elegy for scholars	56	56	56
45	Exhorting the tribe	48	64	56
31	Self-glorification	48	60	54
23	Love poetry (in general)	52	52	52
32	Glorification of the tribe	40	64	52
11	Elegy for rulers, ministers and leaders	52	48	50
52	Free verse	52	48	50
5	Panegyric of friends	56	40	48
38	Apologies to rulers and those in authority	48	48	48
3	Panegyric of rulers, ministers and military leaders	48	44	46
19	Description of people at work	44	48	46
7	Satire (in general)	36	52	44
22	Description of inventions	56	32	44
53	Translated poetry	36	48	42
4	Panegyric of family members	36	40	38
18	Description of buildings and other constructions	36	40	38
9	Satire of rivals in society	20	40	30
26	Explicit love poetry	28	16	22

Table 6.15 lists the poetry genres and forms and the percentages of the responses of male and female teachers who considered them appropriate for secondary school pupils. It appears that only 12 poetry genres and forms were considered inappropriate by most of the Arabic teachers in each group, compared with the 41 that were deemed appropriate. It seems that Arabic teachers want to expose their pupils to most of the well-known Arabic poetry genres and forms. However, what were the reasons for rejecting 12 of them?

The rejection of those genres may be attributed to four reasons:

1. The artificial and exaggerated characteristics of the genre. This is true of apologies to, panegyrics of and elegies for rulers, ministers and those in authority, as well as self-glorification, and glorification of the tribe. These genres are mostly composed in appreciation of the generous patronage of the poet.
2. Ethics. This may apply to satire (in general), satire of rivals in society, as well as explicit love poetry. These genres are contrary to the religious and social values of the country. Ethics may also justify the rejection of self-glorification, and the glorification and exhorting of the tribe, for these genres may imply arrogance and self-praise and evoke tribalism and derision in other people, behaviour which is condemned in Islam.
3. The extent to which the genres are known in Arabic poetry. Description of people at work, panegyric of family members and friends, description of inventions as well as buildings and other constructions have appeared in the works of a few Arab poets throughout the history of Arabic literature.
4. The metre of the poetry. This applies to translated poetry and free verse. Perhaps the Arabic teachers considered translated poetry to be non-Arabic in form and content. Regarding free verse, although it has its special metre which is

relevant to the traditional Arabic form, most of the male teachers might still perceive it as a deviation.

6.5 Findings from the Inspectors and Experts' Responses

Table 6.16 lists the poetry genres and forms and the percentages of the responses of inspectors and experts who considered them appropriate for secondary school pupils.

Table 6.16

The percentages of inspectors and experts who considered the poetry genres and forms appropriate for secondary school pupils

No.	Item	%
2	Panegyric of the prophet	100.0
29	Meditation on life and the universe	100.0
35	Nostalgia for one's homeland	100.0
40	Asceticism and wisdom	100.0
46	Exhorting the nation	100.0
47	Patriotic poetry	100.0
50	Epic poetry	100.0
6	Panegyric of scholars	94.1
14	Elegy for scholars	94.1
17	Description of nature	94.1
21	Description of battles	94.1
33	Glorifying the nation	94.1
49	Narrative poetry	94.1
51	Dramatic poetry	94.1
10	Elegiac poetry (in general)	88.2
12	Elegy for family members	88.2
24	Platonic (virtuous) love poetry	88.2
28	Meditation on the soul	88.2
1	Panegyric (in general)	82.4
13	Elegies for friends	82.4
25	Love of God	82.4
27	Meditation poetry (in general)	82.4
34	Nostalgic poetry (in general)	82.4
39	Apologies to friends	82.4
41	Preaching and didactic poetry	82.4
44	Exhorting rulers	82.4
8	Satire of enemies	76.5
16	Description (in general)	76.5

No.	Item	%
30	Boastful poetry (in general)	76.5
37	Apology (in general)	76.5
42	Repentance	76.5
43	Exhorting (in general)	76.5
48	Political poetry	76.5
15	Elegy for cities and countries	70.6
5	Panegyric of friends	64.7
11	Elegy for rulers, ministers and leaders	64.7
23	Love poetry (in general)	64.7
52	Free verse	64.7
53	Translated poetry	64.7
3	Panegyric of rulers, ministers and leaders	58.8
4	Panegyric of family members	58.8
31	Self-glorification	58.8
22	Description of inventions	52.9
36	Nostalgia for the past	52.9
45	Exhorting the tribe	52.9
20	Description of travel	47.1
38	Apology to rulers and those in authority	47.1
7	Satire (in general)	41.2
9	Satire of rivals in the society	41.2
19	Description of people at work	41.2
32	Glorification of the tribe	41.2
18	Description of buildings and other constructions	35.3
26	Explicit love poetry	23.5

It appears from table 6.16 that only 8 poetry genres and forms were deemed inappropriate for the secondary stage pupils by inspectors and experts, the remainder being regarded as acceptable for study. Inspectors and experts, like teachers, want pupils to experience a wide range of poetry genres and forms. The reasons for rejecting the 8 genres may be similar to those mentioned above as possible justifications for the rejection of certain genres by the teachers.

6.6 A Comparison of the Suitable Poetry between Teachers and Inspectors and Experts

When comparing the responses of teachers on one hand and inspectors and experts on the other, it may be noted that both groups selected the majority of the genres as appropriate for secondary school pupils. However, according to tables 6.15 and 6.16, both groups regarded 6 genres as inappropriate: (1) apology to rulers and those in authority; (2) description of people at work; (3) satire (in general); (4) description of buildings and other constructions; (5) satire of rivals in society; and (6) explicit love poetry. Nevertheless, there were 5 genres deemed inappropriate by teachers but appropriate by inspectors and experts: (1) description of inventions; (2) panegyric of family members; (3) panegyric of friends; (4) panegyric of rulers, ministers and military leaders; and (5) translated poetry. In contrast, only 2 genres, description of travel and glorification of the tribe, were considered appropriate by teachers but inappropriate by inspectors and experts. This is inevitable, owing to the long list of genres considered appropriate for the secondary school pupils. The disparity between teachers in the one hand and inspectors and experts on the other demonstrates that each group has its own perspective of the suitability of poetry texts for the pupils. Moreover, it confirms that there needs to be a certain amount of freedom and flexibility in the selection of poetry texts to meet the different perspectives of those who control the literary texts syllabus and benefit from it.

6.7 A Comparison between the Poetry Genres and Forms Preferred by the Pupils and those Seen as Appropriate by Teachers, and Inspectors and Experts

It has been revealed in section 6.3.1 that most of the male and female pupils agreed in their selection of 24 genres as their poetry preferences. Unlike the pupils, the teachers, inspectors and experts all selected most of the genres as appropriate. Therefore, there seems to have been a disagreement between the pupils and the teachers, inspectors and experts. In other words, some genres not selected by pupils were deemed appropriate by teachers, and inspectors and experts. Table, 6.17 shows the 15 poetry genres and forms that were selected as appropriate by most teachers, inspectors and experts, but were rejected by most pupils:

Table 6.17

Poetry genres and forms that are rejected by most pupils but seen as appropriate by most teachers, inspectors and experts

No.	Item	pupils	Teachers	Inspectors and experts
49	Narrative poetry	48.5	72	94.1
6	Panegyric of scholars	46.4	66	94.1
51	Dramatic poetry	45.6	82	94.1
43	Exhorting (in general)	43.8	82	76.5
10	Elegiac poetry (in general)	43.6	82	88.2
1	Panegyric (in general)	43.2	80	82.4
30	Boastful poetry (in general)	43.2	68	76.5
37	Apology (in general)	41.6	64	76.5
52	Free verse	39.7	50	64.7
44	Exhorting rulers	36.5	68	82.4
14	Elegy for scholars	32.0	56	94.1
48	Political poetry	30.5	74	76.5
15	Elegy for cities and countries	29.8	72	70.6
50	Epic poetry	28.7	68	100
11	Elegy for rulers, ministers and military leaders	13.9	50	64.7

The following conclusions may be drawn from the table:

1. What is deemed suitable for the pupils by the teachers, inspectors and experts is not necessarily seen in the same light by the pupils.
2. It seems that the pupils have their own perspective on the type of genre that they prefer to study, so it is important to consider their point of view on the literary content of the text to which they are exposed.
3. The rejection of poetry genres and forms decreases with age and experience. That is to say, while pupils rejected a long list of genres (29), the teachers rejected 11 genres, and the inspectors and experts rejected only 8 genres as inappropriate.

As said previously, pupils seemed to dislike reading certain types of poetry writing because they lack experience and knowledge of those genres. Most modern poetry genres and forms are rejected because they are new to Arabic literature and are not widely known among non-specialists in Arabic literature. Table 6.17 includes most of modern types of poetry – that is narrative, dramatic, epic, political and free verse. The unfamiliarity with some genres may also account for deeming panegyric and elegy for scholars as well as elegy for cities and countries as inappropriate. In the table are included five general genres: exhortation, elegiac, panegyric, boasting and apology. Most pupils did not consider these genres as preferences perhaps because they were not associated with specific topics and therefore, seemed vague and broad. The rest of the genres included in the table refer to rulers and leaders. The reason behind the rejection is perhaps, as explained before, pupils' expectation of these types to be full of exaggerated praise and artificial emotion.

In contrast, besides the desire to expose pupils to a wide range of Arabic poetry the teachers', inspectors' and experts' broader knowledge and experience of Arabic literature may account for their perception of the genres and forms included in table 6.17 as appropriate for secondary school pupils. Regarding the modern genres and forms, teachers, inspectors and experts may want to acquaint the pupils with these types to expand their experience of the modern poetry writings. The knowledge that not all genres referring to rulers and leaders contain exaggerated praise and artificial feelings may motivate teachers, inspectors and experts to deem these types of poetry suitable for the pupils.

6.8 A Comparison between the Pupils' Poetry Preferences and the Set Poetry Texts

Table 6.18

The genres of the set poetry texts compared with the pupils' preferences

No.	Genre	Texts by poet	Number of texts	%
2	Panegyric of the Prophet	Hassān (1), Ibn Shaykhān, al-Buuṣīrī, Ka'b b. Zuhayr	4	93.9
3	Panegyric of rulers	Zuhayr, Abuu Tammām, Ibn al-Qaysurānī, Lisān al-Dīn	4	8.5
40	Wisdom	Zuhayr, al-Khalīlī (1), al-Bāruudī, al-Muqanna' al-Kindī, al-Imām Rāshid b. Sa'īd, Abuu al-'Atāhiya	6	65.8
23	Love poetry	Ka'b b. Zuhayr, Ibn Ruzayq, Lisān al-Dīn	3	61.7
31	Self-glorification	'Urea b. al-Ward, al-Bāruudī, al-Buḥturī, al-Muqanna' al-Kindī, al-Imām Rāshid b. Sa'īd	5	34
33	Glorifying the nation	Ḥassān (1) & (2), Abuu Salmā	3	67.3
10	Elegy	al-Khansā', Mālik b. al-Rayb	2	50.8

No.	Genre	Texts by poet	Number of texts	%
17	Description of nature	al-Ḥillī, al-Shābbī, Hilāl b. 'Urāba, Ibn Sahl, Ibn Hānī, Ibn Khafāja, Ḥamduuna	7	76.3
18	Description of buildings	al-Buḥturī	1	15.8
21	Description of battles	Abuu Tammām	1	62.7
20	Description of travel	al-Mubārak	1	53.6
27	Meditation	Abuu al-'Alā', ʿIlyā Abuu Māḍī	2	62.9
40	Asceticism	Abuu al-'Atāhiya	1	65.8
45	Exhorting the tribe	Laqīṭ al-Iyādī	1	46.8
46	Exhorting the nation	'Alī Maḥmuud Ṭāhā, Aḥmad Shawqī, Hāshim al-Rifā'ī	3	55.4
47	Patriotic poetry	al-Khalīlī (2), al-Quṣaybī	2	57.8
51	Dramatic poetry	('Antara) Aḥmad Shawqī	1	45.6

One of the aims of the present study is to show how far the poetry text syllabus for the secondary stage is consistent with the pupils' poetry preferences. Table 6.18 shows the 63 poetry texts, grouped into genres, that were set for the three years of secondary education. Because Arabic poems, especially in the past, usually include more than one topic, certain texts are mentioned more than once. The percentage of the pupils who selected the genre as their preference is also given for comparison. Table 6.18 shows that the 36 set poetry texts cover 17 poetry genres and forms. Of those 17 genres, 12 were selected as poetry preferences by most pupils. This means that most of the topics in the set poetry texts were preferred by most of the pupils. The other 5 genres – panegyric of rulers, self-glorification, description of buildings, exhorting the tribe and dramatic poetry – were not preferred by most pupils, as was seen in section 6.3.1. These genres are found in 12 texts. This constitutes 25.5% of the entire number of genres covered in the set texts. This percentage is low compared with that of the preferred genres (74.5%). However, it is a noticeable percentage and it indicates the inconsistency between the syllabus and

the real poetry preferences of the pupils. Furthermore, the panegyric of rulers is repeated in four texts even though it comes at the bottom of the pupils' list of poetry preferences (preferred by only 8.5%). The same is true of self-glorification which is found in 5 texts, although it was selected by 34% of the pupils. It is therefore possible to conclude that although panegyric of rulers and self-glorification are embodied in a significant number of texts studied through secondary school, the syllabus seems to have failed to instil in pupils a positive attitude towards such types of poetry. Moreover, panegyric of rulers comes at the bottom of the list of the genres considered appropriate by teachers.

6.9 Conclusion

The above analysis of the findings from the questionnaire on poetry genres and forms has revealed several important results. First, the pupils are clearly capable of making a rational and genuine selection of the type of poetry that they like to read and wish to see included in the poetry text syllabus. In their selection they were influenced by three main factors: (1) religion; (2) culture and nationalism; and (3) their level of development. These factors highlight the pupils' learning needs not only in the selection of the learning materials but also in the instructional activities, whether inside or outside the classroom.

Second, most genres were considered suitable for the pupils by the Arabic teachers, and inspectors and experts. Those considered unsuitable were rejected for ethical and literary reasons. The selection was based on the desire to expose the pupils to the widest suitable range of Arabic poetry genres and forms to achieve the aims of teaching poetry texts as required by the syllabus. Preferences were also

affected by the teachers', inspectors' and experts' own knowledge and experience of Arabic poetry genres and forms, which was broader than that of the pupils. This difference should also be taken into account. At the same time, teachers, inspectors and experts are expected to choose the genres that suit the pupils' own level of experience and knowledge of the subject. Nevertheless, the findings show that there are differences between the pupils' poetry preferences and those of the teachers, inspectors and experts. This disparity again confirms the necessity of referring to the pupils' selection when planning the poetry text syllabus.

Third, the findings also show that although both male and female pupils had similar poetry preferences in general, there were marked statistical differences between them. Such differences can be attributed only to sex. To meet these differences, the syllabus needs to provide the pupils and their teachers with a certain amount of choice so that they can select what is appropriate for their requirements.

Fourth, the comparison between the pupils' poetry preferences and the genres in the syllabus revealed that although most poetry texts included the genres preferred by the pupils, there were a notable number of genres that were not preferred by the majority of the pupils. This indicates that the poetry text syllabus is to some extent inconsistent with the pupils' poetry interests. Furthermore, the comparison demonstrated that even the teachers' expectations of their pupils' poetry were not met. The conclusion is that the texts are selected without sufficient reference to the pupils, who have to study them, or to the teachers, who are responsible for teaching them in a way that will achieve the required aims.

Conclusion, Suggestions and Recommendations

In this final part of the thesis, the issues and findings discussed are summarised, followed by suggested improvements to the current system of teaching Arabic literary texts at the secondary stage in the Sultanate of Oman as found in the present study. The study is wound up with recommended topics for further studies in this field.

1. General Conclusion

The topic of the present study is to investigate the current situation of teaching literary texts at the secondary school in the Sultanate of Oman. The analysis of the issues raised and the findings from the fieldwork have revealed different important points in this regard.

It has appeared, first of all, that literary texts are perceived as an important ingredient of the Arabic curriculum at the secondary stage. This importance is manifested in different ways:

1. The variety of goals to be achieved as a result of studying the set literary texts syllabus. These goals mean that the literary texts syllabus is seen as capable of helping pupils to gain different educating experiences.
2. Treating the study of literary texts as an opportunity to implement the material studied in the other parts of the Arabic curriculum. For instance, the literary texts may provide examples of the figures of speech that pupils have learned in Arabic rhetoric.

3. The keen interest in the Ministry of Education to inform teachers of the intended goals of teaching literary texts, the guidelines for selecting the texts, a suggested teaching approach, and the aims of the questions and activities assigned as study aids for studying each text.
4. The period allocated for teaching literary texts compared with the other syllabuses.

The manuals written for planners and teachers provide vital information and principles on the planning and implementation of the literary texts syllabus. These manuals are intended to clarify the goals of teaching literary texts at the secondary stage, offering guidelines for selecting appropriate literary texts and suggesting a suitable teaching approach. The clarification of such issues should insure good planning and implementation of the literary texts syllabus.

As shown in Chapter Three, the literary texts syllabus, as stated in the teacher's guidebook and the syllabus, is expected to achieve multiple goals at the various levels of learning outcomes: cognitive, effective and psychomotor, which encompass information, attitudes and learning skills. These goals are adopted from recent work on the teaching of Arabic literature and include the different values of teaching literary texts.

The discussion of the stated goals in Chapter Three has revealed that they are excessively ambitious and impractical, and therefore irrelevant and difficult to achieve and measure. They also do not distinguish the study of literary texts from that of the other parts of the Arabic curriculum at the secondary stage. Furthermore, the natural value of teaching literary texts as artistic products is not clearly stated.

Literature, as seen in Chapter One, is said to help achieve different outcomes, for example linguistic, social, recreational, etc. Yet the real value of teaching literature at the secondary stage is to develop sensitivity to and appreciation of the literary usage of language. This value corresponds with the nature of literary texts as artistic works and distinguishes the literary syllabus from other educational syllabuses, whether within the language curriculum or the whole educational curriculum. Furthermore, since the literary text conveys a message in an artistic form, developing sensitivity to the language used in that way is essential to enable the reader to understand the message and respond to it.

This vital value of teaching literary texts should be taken as the first principle in the selection of the texts. Although the guidelines for selecting literary texts as mentioned in the syllabus (*al-minhāj*) highlight important principles, they ignore the literary qualities of the texts. The content of the literary texts syllabus at the secondary stage, according to the guidelines, is meant to give a clear picture of the literary and social phenomena as well as literary figures and genres throughout the history of Arabic literature. It has been explained in Chapter Two that the content of the literary texts syllabus must be carefully screened for its relevance to literary appreciation, pupils and society.

The texts included in the textbooks are extracted from the different periods of Arabic literature. The topics of the set texts are varied and deal with local, regional, national and global issues. Moreover, some of the topics comply with the pupils' poetry preferences as revealed by the questionnaire on the poetry genres and forms. However, they also include genres that are not preferred by most pupils such as

panegyric of rulers and those in authority. The findings from the questionnaire on poetry genres and forms have demonstrated that most secondary stage pupils prefer the following poetry genres:

1. Panegyric of the Prophet
2. Satire of enemies
3. Elegy for family members
4. Elegy for friends
5. Description (in general)
6. Description of nature
7. Description of travel
8. Description of battles
9. Love poetry (in general)
10. Platonic (virtuous) love poetry
11. Love of God
12. Meditative poetry (in general)
13. Meditation on the soul
14. Meditation on life and the universe
15. Glorifying the nation
16. Nostalgic poetry (in general)
17. Nostalgia for one's homeland
18. Nostalgia for the past
19. Apologies to friends
20. Asceticism and wisdom

21. Preaching and didactic poetry
22. Repentance
23. Exhorting the nation
24. Patriotic poetry

Each literary text in the set textbooks is followed by five sets of questions, which are meant to help secondary pupils and teachers study the text effectively and achieve the goals of teaching literary texts. However, these questions concentrate unduly on the superficial analysis of the theme of the text as well as its linguistic and rhetorical devices. The questions also focus on the extraction of the devices studied in the other parts of the Arabic curriculum, such as grammar, rhetoric and prosody.

These mistakes in the goals, the guidelines, the set literary texts and the questions on them have led to various problems in the teaching of literary texts in secondary schools in the Sultanate of Oman. The questionnaire about the problems has revealed the following examples:

1. The pupils' role in selecting texts for study and rote learning is neglected.
2. Pupils are not given the opportunity to participate effectively in reading, discussing and evaluating the text.
3. The texts are discussed superficially and the focus is on background information, linguistic difficulties and the mechanical analysis of the figures of speech.
4. The content of the literary texts syllabus – the texts and the questions – is insufficient for the educational achievements required.

The analysis and discussion of such problems have revealed various causes, for example:

1. the imbalance between the number of texts and the time allocated for literary texts at schools;
2. the large size of the classes;
3. the teachers' incompetence in teaching literary texts;
4. the misunderstanding of the natural value of teaching literary texts, which is demonstrated in the stated goals, the guidelines and sets of question;
5. treating literary texts as representatives of the historical, social, and literary characteristics of their time;
6. treating literary texts lessons as opportunities to apply grammatical and rhetorical rules studied in grammar and rhetoric;
7. the shortage of advice in the teacher's guidebook;
8. the unavailability of in-service training for Arabic teachers;
9. depriving pupils and teachers of the right to choose from a variety of texts;
10. ignoring the pupils' preferences when selecting the literary texts.

2. Suggested Remedies and Improvements

One of the important contributions of the present study is to suggest improvements in the methods and remedies to the problems of teaching literature in general and poetry texts in particular in the secondary schools in the Sultanate of Oman. The suggestions are derived from (1) the discussion of the issues raised in the study, (2) the findings from the questionnaires; and (3) the factors that lie behind the identified problems as shown in Chapter Five section, 5.3. The suggestions are modified according to the present situation of teaching poetry texts to create a better and more effective standard of instruction.

First, the length and number of the selected texts should be suited to the time allocated. The literature programme needs to concentrate on developing the skills of comprehension, analysis, criticism and appreciation, rather than exposing pupils to a large number of texts and authors. The emphasis on covering a wide range of information and facts will certainly not allow any opportunity to practise the required skills (Sa'āda & Ibrāhīm, 1991: 364).

The acquisition of these skills requires continued training, and is more likely to be achieved by the careful selection of short rather than long texts. In other words, the skills, not the background information about the texts or the authors, should remain with the pupils as learning experience. Pupils need to be able to apply those skills in their future reading of literary works.

Second, the prescribed literary texts should be selected according to specific and tested criteria. These criteria must take into account the emotional, linguistic, social and intellectual make-up of the pupils as well as their literary preferences. The findings from the questionnaire about poetry preferences have revealed that the themes mostly preferred by pupils may be divided into three groups:

- (a) Religious: panegyric of the Prophet; repentance; preaching and didactic; love of God; asceticism and wisdom; and panegyric of scholars.
- (b) Social and nationalistic: nostalgia for the homeland; apologies to friends; patriotic poetry; exhorting the nation; satire of enemies; glorifying the nation; elegies of friends; and family members.

- (c) Contemplative: meditation on the universe and life; nostalgia for the past; meditation on the soul; platonic love; description of nature; description of travel; and description of battles.

The present study has suggested a model for selecting literary texts for the secondary school pupils and provided a list of principles for the same purpose (Chapter Two).

Third, teachers and pupils should be provided with a certain amount of freedom and flexibility to choose what they wish to study from the set texts. This could be achieved by offering a wide range of texts divided into three categories. The first is compulsory for all pupils. The curriculum planners could put in this section what is believed to be necessary for achieving the required level of literary aims. The second section should be left to the teachers and their pupils to select together what they like to study. The third section should contain texts for individual learning where each pupil is required to choose a certain number of texts and study them individually with the help of the teacher. This kind of flexibility and freedom would encourage both teachers and pupils to participate in creating the content of the curriculum. Such participation would give pupils an important opportunity to practise making responsible and independent decisions, thus enhancing their self-confidence and fulfilling their need to exercise responsibility. It is the duty of education to foster these skills in pupils by placing a kind of trust in them: trust “that is rooted in the belief that all young people should be given the chance to demonstrate their capacity for responsible and autonomous behaviour” (Sian & Ugwuegbu, 1988: 230). Moreover, giving pupils the opportunity to choose their learning experiences gives them the opportunity to be active and committed learners,

owing to the fact that these experiences will have a meaning in their own lives. In addition, by experiencing their right to choose, learners will find themselves “belonging” to a social group of their peers and teachers. Instilling in pupils such attitudes about learning is essential to the maintenance of pupils’ curiosity and interest, which lead to further learning (Doll, 1978: 60).

In a centralised educational system, some may object to this flexibility as a recipe for chaos, especially regarding school examinations, which test the pupils’ achievements nation-wide. Yet the flexibility of this kind does not conflict with setting the same examinations for all pupils, because what should be examined are the pupils’ achievements in the abilities and skills that they are supposed to acquire as a result of studying the texts, not the texts themselves.

Fourth, the questions and activities in the textbooks should be revised and improved to comply with the values of teaching literature. The focus should be on the analysis, criticism, and appreciation of literature. All suitable questions and activities necessary for the better understanding of the text should be included. In addition, the questions and activities should not be beyond the capability of the teachers and their pupils.

Fifth, the relationship between literary texts and other parts of the language curriculum should be defined and organised. The function of each part should be clarified and distinguished from the others. This should not affect the integration of the different parts of the language curriculum.

With regard to the relationship between literary texts and literary history, the latter may provide the former with the background information required for the proper understanding of a text. The literary characteristics as well as the social phenomena that influenced the literary movement in a certain period can provide further enlightenment. Literary texts can be used in the study of the history of literature as examples of a particular period.

However, dealing with a text as a representative of its time should not be the aim of the programme of literary texts. In addition, the desire to include numerous representative texts should not result in prescribing difficult texts for young pupils. The pupils' ability and the quality of the study of poetry required should always be borne in mind.

Literary criticism may help to facilitate the study of the literary text by providing the required background, the literary characteristics and the elements of the genre to which the text belongs. Some texts might be highlighted as examples of certain genres. However, the focus, again, should not be on the text as representing a certain genre, but on the aims of studying literary texts.

Concerning the relationship between literary texts and Arabic rhetoric, the latter is considered a vehicle to the study of the former. Arabic rhetoric was established under the umbrella of the study of literary works. It is therefore preferable to return to the original situation where rhetorical devices were used to analyse the literary text and evaluate its literary qualities. Eliciting figures of speech from the text and analysing them mechanically, regardless of their effect on the

meaning, and aiming at finding examples of the rhetorical devices studied in the Arabic rhetoric lessons do not serve the function of studying literary texts.

The same may be said about the relationship between literary texts and Arabic syntax and morphology. These parts of the language curriculum may provide literary texts with important means to explore the text and appreciate its aesthetic elements, since the literary text is basically a linguistic construct. Therefore, analysing the linguistic features of the text should help develop an awareness of the way in which the message is conveyed, not to extract examples for grammatical rules that are studied in the other parts of the language curriculum.

Sixth, the teacher's guidebook should be improved. First of all, goals for teaching literary texts should be revised. Statements that are vague, ambitious and impractical must be eliminated. The statements of the goals need to highlight the real pedagogical outcomes expected from the study of literary texts, emphasising the nature of literary texts and distinguishing them from the other parts of the language curriculum. The value of teaching literary texts has been discussed in Chapter One.

With regard to the method of teaching, teachers should be provided with options for selection or combination according to the different types of texts. Options should include aspects such as:

- (a) appropriate techniques for introducing the text and facilitating the teaching process so that the teacher can hold the pupils' attention and increase their desire to study;
- (b) proper techniques for training pupils in mastering skills in comprehension, analysis, criticism and appreciation;

- (c) different methods for dealing with the components of the literary text, taking into account the content and objectives on the one hand and the pupils' needs, previous experience and educational level on the other; and
- (d) multiple methods of guiding the discussion of the text.

The teacher's guidebook should also include the following:

- (a) a set of sources and poetry books (*dawāwīn*) to which teachers can refer when preparing each text;
- (b) answers to the questions in the textbook;
- (c) ways of implementing the non-class activities; and
- (d) various techniques for formative and summative evaluations.

Seventh, teachers must be well prepared for the literary text lessons. They should clarify the behavioural objectives, specify the teaching approach, prepare the instructional media, identify the teaching experiences and activities, and the methods for formative and summative evaluations. For literary lessons in general and poetry in particular, the most important task the teachers need to fulfil is to read the text and study it thoroughly. Reeves (1958: 13–14) explains this as follows:

[The teacher should] determine what is its [the text] nature, its intention, its unique character; for every good poem is unique, and different from every other. If he reads the poem and thoroughly understands it – if he truly knows it – the poem itself will suggest the right way of teaching It – or right ways, since there may be more than one. Preparation of materials is of the utmost importance. Any teacher who has gone into class unprepared knows this. The part of his lesson is taken up with discovering what sort of a poem he has chosen, and by the time he has discovered this, the class may be puzzled or bored or at a loss to know what is expected of them.

When preparing for the literary text lessons in particular, teachers need to specify the interesting points and identify the appropriate ways of guiding the discussion. For example, will they use the open approach, in which individual pupils articulate their reactions to the point? Or will they use the collaborative approach, where pupils work in groups and select one of them as a representative? Here, teachers also need to specify their own judgements and avoid vague statements.

Serious and organised planning brings freshness to the lessons and helps teachers create different situations, thus avoiding routine and repetition. Good preparation also enables teachers to make proper decisions in unexpected situations (Sa'āda & Ibrāhīm, 1991: 449). These decisions depend on the level of the teachers' experience and fast thinking, as well as the well-prepared plan made earlier.

Eighth, teachers must be ready to give pupils an adequate opportunity to participate in the classroom. In the literary text lessons, pupils need to take part in discussing the various aspects of the text and its author and to be encouraged to express their opinions. This is very important for secondary school pupils, for it fulfils their need for responsibility. If pupils are allowed to demonstrate their capacity for responsible and autonomous judgement, it may result in their feeling worthy of other people's respect and consequently their level of self-esteem will be raised (see Sian & Ugwuegbu, 1988: 229–230). In contrast, failing to attract the pupils' attention and excluding them from participation may weaken their motivation. It also damages their self-confidence and capability to pass judgements. As a result, pupils may become dependent on the evaluations given by teachers or

included in the textbook. Furthermore, the opportunity for criticism and appreciation is lost and the pupils' creativity is stifled.

Ninth, pupils should be given sufficient opportunities for oral reading. According to the findings, the pupils consider the lack of this activity as a problem in studying poetry texts. The relationship between oral reading and literature has been discussed in Chapter One. It has been demonstrated that teaching literature can improve the pupils' oral reading and at the same time stimulate their interest in the text, thus deepening their literary appreciation. Loban et al. (1961: 351) assert that hearing poetry read well is necessary to arouse the pupil's interest and the ability to read it for himself is necessary to "nourish a gradually maturing taste" for it.

There are different occasions within and outside the class in which reading aloud may be implemented to serve the above aims, such as:

- (a) at the beginning of a poetry lesson to stimulate the pupils' attention and arouse their desire to study the poem;
- (b) during the lesson to hold their attention to the text being studied;
- (c) during the lesson to grasp the relationship between theme, emotion and metre.

Choral reading may also be used as an essential activity during the poetry lesson. With the above aims in mind and emphasising "the need for pleasant voice quality and crisp enunciation to bring out the meaning" (Loban et al., 1961: 365), such reading has vital potentiality to encourage pupils who are reluctant to participate in individual oral reading, as Loban et al. (1961: 365) explain:

Choral reading will help bridge the gap between interested listener and solo reader. Here, where attention centres on the group rather than the individual, the reluctant participant can submerge himself until he gains confidence. Adapting his voice to the tempo and rhythm decided upon through general discussion, at first he may effect control only through imitation, but ear and voice are being subconsciously trained. Soon he should be willing to read bit parts, until gradually he loses the fear of his own voice. Then he is ready for individual readings, at first for small groups, perhaps later before the class.

Tenth, an appropriate instructional context that motivates pupils to participate effectively in the learning process must be created. Teachers and curriculum planners can contribute to its creation.

Teachers need to fulfil two tasks. On the one hand, they should acquaint their pupils with the goals of teaching literary texts. This may be accomplished at the very beginning of the school term, when teachers introduce the literary texts programme to their pupils. Teachers should explain the goals, discuss them with the pupils and attempt to convince them of the importance of studying literary texts, using evidence gathered from practical life. Beach & Marshall (1991: 126) explain the importance of this task as follows:

It is important for teachers to know the purposes informing a particular activity, but it is just as important for students to know them. When they are given a reason for taking on a task, students are at the same time given a sense of direction – an idea of what they are meant to accomplish and why. Armed with such knowledge, students can participate more collaboratively in the process of orchestrating the course.

On the other hand, teachers should establish an atmosphere of free-discussion, in which pupils can express their opinions without any exclusion. In this context, pupils are encouraged to develop respectful but critical attitudes towards one

another's opinions. This, of course, should be adjusted to suite the teaching/learning time and conditions, such as the pupils' maturity on issuing judgements and the fact that discussion should not go beyond the set objectives of the lesson.

Curriculum planners can also contribute in two ways. One is to set texts that are close to the pupils' literary preferences, and psychological and social needs. The consistency of the learning material with the pupils' demands makes them aware of its importance and enhances the desirable interaction between pupils and their instruction. The other is to provide pupils and teachers with a certain amount of freedom in selecting the literary texts, so that not all texts are compulsory. It has been demonstrated in the findings of the present study that pupils could make reasonable selection of what they prefer to read and study. The pupils' preferences, as also clarified in the present study, is not necessary compatible with those of their teachers' or the experts' selection.

Eleventh, teachers' preparation programme should give sufficient attention to the teaching of literary texts. This applies to both academic and professional courses.

In the academic course, besides the knowledge of the characteristics of the literary periods and genres, the student teacher should be exposed to various types of literary texts and trained in analysing, criticising and appreciating them. Student teachers need also to take a special module in the theory and practice of reading literary texts to obtain the necessary background and methodology for their study. Furthermore, this should be linked to the literary texts prescribed for the school

pupils. For instance, the texts used as examples for the application of the methods of reading literary texts or of the characteristics of a certain period or genre can be taken from the school literature syllabus.

In the professional course, student teachers should be acquainted with the values of teaching literary texts, the skills required for comprehension, analysis, criticism and appreciation as well as effective teaching approaches. In addition, student teachers should be given sufficient opportunities for using the skills for analysing different types of literary text during their teaching practice.

Twelfth, teachers need to be provided with regular in-service training, which is necessary to refresh their knowledge and polish their skills. Pre-service training equips teachers with the principles to start them in their profession. The in-service training may be seen as an extension of this. Therefore, continual instruction is a vital part of teacher-training, beginning in the college of education and continuing to the end of a teacher's teaching career. The aim is to provide teachers with new knowledge and experience, so that they can keep abreast of the rapid developments in their fields (see 'Adas, 1996: 53, 54).

Thirteenth, teachers should make full use of the knowledge and materials available for the best possible instruction. They can approach the local society and their colleagues to overcome the shortage in the school facilities.

The local society might allow access to private, general or commercial libraries for teachers to extend their knowledge on the topics they teach. They can

also ask their pupils to utilise these sources for homework and background reading. Specialist members of the community may provide further assistance.

Teachers must be encouraged to co-operate with their colleagues in their school, by exchanging experiences, skills and knowledge with them. They may find, for example, colleagues who have more experience. It is, therefore, essential for the teachers to utilise that knowledge-base and refer to their colleagues when necessary.

Generally speaking, successful teachers do not rely on the education authority to update their skills and knowledge and to provide the required teaching resources. They exploit what is available locally and make full use of it to achieve the set targets.

Fourteenth, pupils need to be encouraged to memorise sufficient extracts of literary works. However, this memorisation should be based on principles such as:

- (a) The aim of memorising literary extracts should be explained to the pupils. They need to know that rote learning is not a target in itself, but a means of appreciating and discovering a literary treasure which can help them in written and spoken compositions.
- (b) Pupils should not be asked to memorise any extract before they understand it, appreciate it and feel its beauty. This is because comprehension and appreciation are prior conditions for rote learning.
- (c) Pupils should select what they want to memorise, according to their desire and response to the text. For example, instead of saying, "The pupils should memorise the first ten verses of the poem," it is better to say, "The pupils can choose any ten successive verses from the poem to memorise." Moreover, it is

probably better to leave the pupils free to select the extracts that they wish to memorise, instead of specifying certain extracts and imposing them on the whole class. This is because pupils differ in their level of appreciation and response to the same text. In other words, what is seen as attractive and moving in a text by one pupil is not necessarily considered so by the others. Beach & Marshall (1991: 391) confirm that “if students are asked to memorise poems they value, the process may help them to internalise them – to make them a part of their interior so that they can be reclaimed on command”.

- (d) Asking pupils to accomplish a task without applying a suitable way of checking that they have done it is meaningless. This is because observation enhances the pupils’ desire for achievement. Leaving the matter to the pupils may lead to indifference, resulting in the pupils feeling that memorisation is important only for the final examination. At the end of the term, the pupils find themselves faced with a large number of extracts for rote learning, which certainly leads them to ignore all memorisation tasks. This is what makes pupils fear rote learning and destroys its purpose.
- (e) Marks allocated to rote learning in the final examination should be increased to match the effort demanded in memorisation. At the end of the questionnaire of the problems, some pupils considered the small number of marks compared with the large number of extracts assigned for rote learning to be a problem in studying poetry texts.

Fifteenth, pupils should be encouraged to do different kinds of non-class activities, which may be seen as complementary to the in-class performances. These activities may help teachers guide their pupils towards achieving the set objectives and enhance and extend their interest in the subject, for the time assigned for the

literary lessons is not enough to achieve all the intended goals. These activities also help pupils use their free time in beneficial activities.

Teachers of literary texts may find different types of non-class activities useful for their pupils individually and collectively. The following are examples:

- (a) collecting poems written by different poets and displaying them in the school's literary magazine;
- (b) preparing the recitation of poetry for special national, social or religious events;
- (c) writing essays about certain poets, their lives and works;
- (d) writing responses to certain poems and displaying them in the school's literary magazine;
- (e) Arranging for poetry evenings, when a particular group of pupils have been prepared to recite a famous poem collectively in front of an audience from the local community.

3. Suggestions for Future Educational Studies

The investigation of the issues raised in the present study has demonstrated the need for several educational studies in the field of teaching literary texts at the secondary school stage. The following are examples:

1. the pupils' attitudes towards the teaching of literary texts;
2. the teaching competencies needed for teaching literary texts in secondary schools and the extent to which Arabic teachers possess and implement these competencies;
3. the inspection competencies needed for supervising the teaching of literary texts and the extent to which Arabic inspectors possess and implement these competencies;

4. the relationship between Arabic teachers and inspectors regarding the teaching of literary texts, the extent to which inspectors provide teachers with necessary advice and the extent to which teachers implement it;
5. the goals of teaching literary texts at the secondary stage: pupils', teachers' and inspectors' perspectives;
6. evaluation of the examining procedures currently used to assess the pupils' achievements in literary texts at the secondary stage,
7. the prose genres and topics preferred by secondary school pupils and the extent to which the set prose texts comply with such preferences;
8. the literary non-class activities necessary to complement the class activities, the extent to which teachers utilise such activities in their teaching of literary texts, and the pupils' attitudes towards such activities.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.

Number of Arabic teachers and male and female pupils in both scientific and literary divisions in the secondary schools in the Governate of Muscat

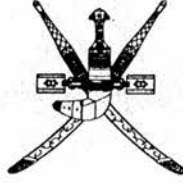
n	Name of the school	gender	district	Number of pupils		Number of teachers
				Scientific division	Literary division	
1	Ruwī	F	Maṭraḥ	191	115	10
2	al-Wādī al-Kabīr	F	Maṭraḥ	123	100	5
3	al-Āmirāt	F	al-Āmirāt	190	108	11
4	Dawḥat al-Adab	F	Buushar	211	115	12
5	Shāṭi' al-Qurm	F	Buushar	196	75	6
6	Nasība b. Ka'b	F	al-Sīb	156	142	12
7	Ḥayl al-'Awāmir	F	al-Sīb	268	168	15
8	al-Mu'bayla al-Januubiyya	F	al-Sīb	167	84	11
9	Ruwī	M	Maṭraḥ	249	157	14
11	Aḥmad b. Sa'īd al-Khalīlī	M	al-Āmirāt	153	126	10
12	Al-Imām Jābir b. Zayd	M	Buushar	336	105	14
13	al-Khawḍ	M	al-Sīb	270		10
14	Ḥafṣ b. Rāshid	M	al-Sīb	209	161	13
15	al-Sīb	M	al-Sīb		177	6
16	al-Mu'bayla al-Januubiyya	M	al-Sīb	149	57	10
Total				4558		159

Appendix 2.

Licence from the Ministry of Higher Education to carry out
the fieldwork

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَكْتَابَةُ عُكْبَانِ
وَزَارَةُ الْعُلُومِ الْعَالِيَةِ



الرقم: ١٠٢٠١
والتاريخ: ١٠/١٠/١٩٩٩

شهادة الى من يهمه الأمر

تشهد دائرة الدراسات العليا بوزارة التعليم العالي بان الفاضل /عبدالله بن مسلم بن علي الهاشمي مبتعث لمواصلة دراسته العليا للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه في مجال مناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة العربية بجامعة أننيرة بالمملكة المتحدة وذلك على نفقة جامعة السلطان قابوس ويقوم حالياً بإعداد بحث بعنوان (تقويم تدريس النصوص الأدبية في المرحلة الثانوية بسلطنة عمان) .

نرجو التكرم مساعدة المذكور في الحصول على المعلومات والبيانات قدر الإمكان .

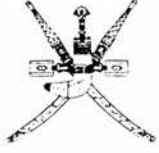
شاكرين ومقدرين كل جهد ومساعدة تقدم للمذكور لتسهيل مهمته .

سعيده بنت عبدالله الصبحي
١٠٤
٩٩
مدير الدراسات العليا



Appendix 3.

Letter from the Office of Research and Development to
the Director General of Education in the Governate of
Muscat



الفاضل / مدير عام المديرية العامة للتربية والتعليم بمحافظة مسقط المحترم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته . . . وبعد . . .

أود إفادتكم بأن الفاضل / عبدالله بن مسلم بن علي الهاشمي يقوم حالياً بأعداد بحث بعنوان « تقويم تدريس النصوص الأدبية في المرحلة الثانوية بسلطنة عمان » للحصول على درجة الدكتوراة في مجال مناهج وطرق التدريس في اللغة العربية من جامعة ادنبره / بالمملكة المتحدة .

عليه أغدو شاكراً تكرمكم بالايعاز إلى المختصين لديكم بمساعدة المذكور أعلاه في تسهيل مهمته للحصول على البيانات والمعلومات التي يحتاجها في بحثه .

شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم معنا .

وتفضلوا بقبول وافر الاحترام والتقدير . . .

سنة ١٤٣٩ هـ

د . سناء بنت سبيل البلوشي
مدير المكتب الفني للدراسات والتطوير



Appendix 4.

Letter from the Directorate of Educational Supervision to
the head teachers of the secondary schools

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



سَلْطَنَةُ عُومَانِ
وَزَارَةُ التَّرْبِيَةِ وَالْعُلُومِ
المديرية العامة للتربية والتعليم بمسقط

دائرة الاشراف التربوي

الفاضل / مدير مدرسة "المدرسة الثانوية" <م> المحترم
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد :

الموضوع : تسهيل مهمة الباحث / عبد الله بن مسلم بن علي الهاشمي

نحيطكم علما بأن المذكور يقوم بإجراء بحث لنيل درجة
الدكتوراه تحت عنوان ، تقويم تدريس النصوص الأدبية في المرحلة الثانوية بسلطنة
عمان، ويرغب في تطبيق أداة بحثه على مجموعة من معلمي مادة اللغة
العربية .
يرجى مساعدته قدر الامكان للحصول على البيانات
والمعلومات التي يحتاجها في بحثه .

وتفضلوا بقبول وافر الاحترام ،،،،،

حليس بن محمد العريمي
مدير دائرة الاشراف التربوي



Appendix 5.

Names and occupations of the specialists who judged the validity
of the questionnaires

n	Name	Occupation	Specialisation	Place of work	Nationality
1	'Alī Aḥmad Madkuur	Full professor and Dean of the College of Education	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University	Egyptian
2	'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣaghīr Muḥammad 'Īsā	lecturer	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University	Egyptian
3	Ṣabir 'Abd al-Mun'im Muḥammad 'Abd al-Nabī	lecturer	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University	Egyptian
4	Aḥmad Muḥammad 'Īsā	Assistant professor	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University	Egyptian
5	Usāma 'Abd al-Laṭīf 'Abd al-'Azīz	lecturer	Arabic Language teaching methods	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University	Egyptian
6	Aḥmad 'Alī Muḥammad	Assistant professor	Arabic Literature	College of Education for Female Teachers Training in Rustāq	Syrian
7	Aḥmad Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīz Kishk	Full professor and the head of the department of Arabic Language and Literature	Arabic Literature	College of Arts, Sultan Qaboos University	Egyptian
8	'Abd al-Ḥalīm Muḥammad Ḥāmid	Associate professor	Arabic Linguistics	College of Arts, Sultan Qaboos University	Sudanese
9	'Alī Muḥammad Ibrāhīm	lecturer	Educational Statistics	College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University	Sudanese

Appendix 6.

The letter of instructions for the referees and the evaluation sheet for the questionnaire on the problems

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته... وبعد،

فيسرني أن أضع بين يديكم هذه الاستبانة التي هي جزء من الدراسة التي أقوم بها للحصول على درجة الدكتوراة من جامعة إندبرة بالمملكة المتحدة، في تقويم النصوص الأدبية المقررة على طلبة المرحلة الثانوية، أملا أن أستفيد من علمكم وخبرتكم فيما يتعلق ببند الاستبانة.

تهدف هذه الاستبانة إلى تحديد المشكلات التي يواجهها طلبة الصف الثالث الثانوي بقسميه العلمي والأدبي في دراسة النصوص الشعرية المقررة عليهم، وسيتم توجيهها - بعد الاسترشاد بآرائكم ومقترحاتكم - إلى عينات من طلبة الصف الثالث الثانوي بشقيه، وعينات من مدرسي اللغة العربية وموجهيها بالمرحلة الثانوية، وخبراء مناهج اللغة العربية وطرائق تدريسها.

وعليه فإنني أرجو التفضل بالنظر في هذه الاستبانة، والتكرم بإضافة أية تعليقات ومقترحات، ترون أهميتها؛ حتى تحقق الاستبانة الهدف المرجو منها، وذلك فيما يتعلق بالأمور التالية:

1. شمول الاستبانة لمشكلات دراسة النصوص الأدبية في المرحلة الثانوية.
2. وضوح عبارات التعليمات.
3. وضوح الهدف من الاستبانة.
4. ملائمة المقياس الرباعي المدرج: موافق بدرجة (كبيرة، متوسطة، ضعيفة)، غير موافق.
5. صدق الاستبانة في تحقيق الهدف الذي وضعت من أجله.
6. إضافة مشكلات آخر ترونها، ولم ترد في الاستبانة.
7. حذف ما ترونه غير مناسب، مع التكرم بذكر السبب ما أمكن.
8. تقديم أية مقترحات تودون إفادة الدراسة بها فيما يخص تدريس النصوص الأدبية بالمرحلة الثانوية بسلطنة عمان.

9. ملء الاستبانة المرفقة الخاصة بالاستبانة الحالية.

هذا، وقد تركت أسطر خالية في نهاية الاستبانة للتعليقات والاقتراحات.

وإنني على يقين بأنكم لن تبخلوا بتقديم آرائكم ومقترحاتكم التي سيكون لها أكبر الأثر في إغناء الدراسة، والسير بها إلى الأهداف المنشودة.

شكرا لكم على حسن تعاونكم من أجل الارتقاء بمستوى تعليم اللغة العربية.

الباحث

عبد الله بن مسلم بن علي الهاشمي

ملاحظة:

الرجاء التكرم بملء البيانات التالية قبل البدء بالنظر في الاستبانة للحاجة إليها:

بيانات أساسية

الاسم: _____

المؤهل العلمي: _____

الوظيفة الحالية: _____

جهة العمل: _____

في نهاية المطاف أرجو التكرم بتعبئة الاستبانة التالية المتعلقة بالاستبانة السابقة
ورسائلها:

م	البند	أوافق بدرجة		
		كبيرة	متوسطة	ضعيفة
1	وضوح عبارات المشكلات ودقتها			
2	شمول الاستبانة لمشكلات دراسة النصوص الشعرية في المرحلة الثانوية			
3	وضوح عبارات التعليمات ودقتها			
4	وضوح الهدف من الاستبانة			
5	ملاءمة المقياس الرباعي المدرج: أوافق بدرجة (كبيرة - متوسطة - ضعيفة)، لا أوافق.			
6	صدق الاستبانة في تحقيق الهدف الذي وضعت من أجله			

شكرا لكم مرة أخرى،

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته.

Appendix 7.

The final version of the first questionnaire – the problems of studying poetry texts at the secondary stage – and the covering letters

استبانة تحديد مشكلات دراسة النصوص الشعرية

في المرحلة الثانوية

المحترم الفاضل/ معلم اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الثانوية
المحترمة الفاضلة/ معلمة اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الثانوية
المدرسة:

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته... وبعد،

فهذه الاستبانة التي أضعها بين يديك هي جزء من دراسة علمية في تقويم النصوص الأدبية المقررة على طلبة المرحلة الثانوية بشقيها الأدبي والعلمي، الهدف منها تحديد المشكلات التي يواجهها طلبة المرحلة الثانوية في دراسة النصوص الشعرية المقررة عليهم.

ولذلك فإنني أرجو الاستفادة من خبرتك في مجال تعليم اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الثانوية، من خلال ملء الاستبانة التالية؛ بوضع علامة (√) مقابل كل بند، بناء على رأيك في مدى كونه مشكلة في دراسة النصوص الشعرية في المرحلة الثانوية؛ فإذا وضعت العلامة في خانة (أوافق)، فإن ذلك يعني أن ذلك البند يمثل - من وجهة نظرك - مشكلة في تدريس للنصوص الشعرية، وإذا وضعت العلامة في خانة (لا أوافق)، فإن ذلك يعني أنك ترى أن ذلك البند لا يعبر عن مشكلة، أما إذا وضعت العلامة في خانة (غير متأكد)؛ فإن ذلك يعني أنك متردد في الحكم على ذلك البند من حيث كونه يمثل - أو لا يمثل - مشكلة في تدريس للنصوص الشعرية. كما ستجد في نهاية الاستبانة فراغا خصص للمشكلات التي تود إضافتها.

ولكم جزيل الشكر على حسن تعاونكم؛ للنهوض بمستوى تدريس اللغة العربية.

الباحث

عبدالله بن مسلم بن علي الهاشمي

استبانة تحديد مشكلات دراسة النصوص الشعرية

في المرحلة الثانوية

أخي الطالب/ بالصف الثالث الثانوي الأدبي/ العلمي المحترم.

أختي الطالبة/ بالصف الثالث الثانوي الأدبي/ العلمي المحترمة.

المدرسة:

الصف: القسم:

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته... وبعد،

فهذه الاستبانة التي أضعتها بين يديك هي جزء من دراسة علمية في تقويم النصوص الأدبية المقررة على طلبة المرحلة الثانوية بشقيها الأدبي والعلمي، الهدف منها تحديد المشكلات التي يواجهها طلبة المرحلة الثانوية في دراسة النصوص الشعرية المقررة عليهم.

المطلوب منك هو أن تتكرم بقراءة بنود الاستبانة، ثم تضع علامة (√) مقابل كل بند، تحت درجة الموافقة التي تراها؛ فإذا وضعت العلامة في خانة (أوافق)، فإن ذلك يعني أن ذلك البند يمثل - من وجهة نظرك - مشكلة تواجهها في دراستك للنصوص الشعرية، وإذا وضعت العلامة في خانة (لا أوافق)، فإن ذلك يعني أنك ترى أن ذلك البند لا يعبر عن مشكلة، أما إذا وضعت العلامة في خانة (غير متأكد)؛ فإن ذلك يعني أنك متردد في الحكم على ذلك البند من حيث كونه يمثل - أو لا يمثل - مشكلة تواجهها أثناء دراستك للنصوص الشعرية. كما ستجد في نهاية الاستبانة فراغا خصص للمشكلات التي تود إضافتها.

وأنا على يقين أنه سيكون لاستجاباتك الموضوعية أثر كبير في الخروج بنتائج علمية رصينة.

شكرا لك على حسن تعاونك.

الباحث

عبدالله بن مسلم بن علي الهاشمي

استبانة تحديد مشكلات دراسة النصوص الشعرية

في المرحلة الثانوية

م	المشكلة	أوافق	غير متأكد	لا أوافق
1	غلبة طرق الحفظ والتلقين في تدريس النصوص الشعرية			
2	قلة الاهتمام بالدراسة النقدية والتذوقية			
3	تناول النصوص الشعرية والنثرية على مختلف أنواعها بطرق متشابهة			
4	معالجة النص على أنه وثيقة تمثل الخصائص التاريخية للعصر الذي قيلت فيه، وليس على أنه نتاج أدبي فني			
5	مفاجأة الطلاب بالنص دون تمهيد مناسب يشوقهم لدراسته			
6	الوقوف بالنص عند مجرد الشرح اللغوي وفهم المعاني الإجمالية			
7	التركيز على بعض المظاهر الشكلية في دراسة النص مثل معاني المفردات والعبارات			
8	قلة الربط بين الوحدات الفكرية للنص			
9	الوقوف بالجوانب البلاغية عند مجرد التحليل الشكلي			
10	قلة التطرق إلى الأثر التعبيري أو الجمالي للصور البلاغية			
11	إطلاق العبارات المجازية التي ليس لها مدلول واضح في الحكم على الأديب والنص، مثل مشرق الديباجة، وجزل الألفاظ			
12	الاتجاه بشرح النص إلى المواعظ الخلقية			
13	التركيز في الشرح على جانب المعلومات أكثر من تدريب الطلاب على مهارات إلقاء النص وتذوقه ونقده			
14	قلة الرجوع في دراسة النص والأديب إلى مراجع أخرى غير الكتاب المقرر			
15	قلة كفاءة المعلم في شرح النص			
16	إجبار الطلاب على حفظ النص دون فهم وتذوق كافيين			
17	قلة تدريب الطلاب على الإلقاء المعبر للنص			
18	قلة تدريب الطلاب على استخراج معاني المفردات من السياق			

م	المشكلة	أوافق	غير متأكد	لا أوافق
19	قلة إعطاء الطلاب الفرصة للتعبير عن آرائهم فيما يتعلق بنقد النص			
20	قلة إعطاء الطلاب الفرصة لمناقشة عاطفة صاحب النص			
21	قلة السماح للطلاب باستنتاج عناصر العمل الأدبي من النص			
22	إعطاء الطلاب تفسيرات وأحكاما نقدية جاهزة للنصوص، يطلب منهم ترديدها عند الحديث عن النص			
23	إهمال الأنشطة المنزلية المتعلقة بحصص النصوص			
24	قلة تشجيع الطلاب ذوي المواهب الأدبية على الكتابة الإبداعية			
25	قلة تكليف الطلاب بتحضير النص في المنزل قبل دراسته في الصف			
26	عدم إعطاء الطلاب أية فرصة في اختيار النصوص التي يدرسونها			
27	الفصل بين دروس البلاغة ودروس الأدب			
28	قلة ملاءمة النصوص المقررة للميول الأدبية للطلاب			
29	خلو الكتاب المقرر من شرح كاف للنص			
30	قلة تمثيل أسئلة الكتاب المقرر للمهارات المطلوبة لدراسة النص الشعري			
31	قلة تغطية أسئلة الكتاب المقرر للأنشطة الضرورية لفهم النص الشعري ونقده وتذوقه			
32	كثرة القطع الشعرية المطلوب حفظها غيبا			
33	قلة الحصص المخصصة للنصوص الأدبية			
34	قلة توافر المراجع اللازمة للتوسع في دراسة النص للراغبين من الطلاب			
35	مشكلات أخرى: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.			

Appendix 8.

The letter of instructions for the referees and the
evaluation sheet for the questionnaire on the poetry
genres and forms

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته... وبعد،

فيسرني أن أضع بين يديكم هذه الاستبانة التي هي جزء من الدراسة التي أقوم بها للحصول على درجة الدكتوراة من جامعة إدنبرة بالمملكة المتحدة، ففي تقويم النصوص الأدبية المقررة على طلبة المرحلة الثانوية، أملا أن أستفيد من علمكم وخبرتكم فيما يتعلق ببند الاستبانة.

تهدف هذه الاستبانة إلى تعرف الفنون والأغراض الأدبية الشعرية التي يفضلها طلبة الصف الثالث الثانوي بفرعيه الأدبي والعلمي، ويقبلون على قراءتها، وسيتم توجيهها - بعد الاسترشاد بأرائكم ومقترحاتكم - إلى عينات من طلبة الصف بشقيه، وعينات من مدرسي اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الثانوية، وعليه فإنني أرجو التفضل بالنظر في هذه الاستبانة، والتكرم بإضافة أية تعليقات ومقترحات، ترون إضافتها؛ حتى تحقق الاستبانة الهدف المرجو منها، وذلك فيما يتعلق بالأمر التالي:

1. شمول الاستبانة للفنون والأغراض الشعرية.
2. وضوح عبارات التعليمات.
3. وضوح الهدف من الاستبانة.
4. ملائمة المقياس الرباعي المدرج:
أفضله بدرجة (كبيرة - متوسطة - ضعيفة)، لا أفضله [للطلبة]
مناسبة بدرجة (كبيرة - متوسطة - ضعيفة)، غير مناسبة [للمعلمين]
5. صدق الاستبانة في تحقيق الهدف الذي وضعت من أجله.
6. إضافة فنون آخر ترونها مناسبة ولم يتم إدراجها في الاستبانة.
7. حذف ما ترونها غير مناسب، مع التكرم بذكر السبب ما أمكن.
8. تقديم أية مقترحات تودون إفادة الدراسة بها فيما يخص تدريس النصوص الأدبية بالمرحلة الثانوية بسلطنة عمان.
9. ملء الاستبانة المرفقة الخاصة بالاستبانة الحالية.

هذا، وقد ترك عمود خاص بالافتراحات والتعليقات في طرف الاستبانة، كما تركت أسطر خالية في نهايتها للغاية ذاتها.

وإنني على يقين بأنكم لن تبخلوا بتقديم آرائكم ومقترحاتكم التي سيكون لها أكبر الأثر في إغناء الدراسة، والسير بها إلى الأهداف المنشودة.
شكرا لكم على حسن تعاونكم من أجل الارتقاء بمستوى تعليم اللغة العربية.

الباحث
عبد الله بن مسلم بن علي الهاشمي

ملاحظة:

الرجاء التكرم بملء البيانات التالية قبل البدء بالنظر في الاستبانة للحاجة إليها:

بيانات أساسية	
الاسم:	_____
المؤهل العلمي:	_____
الوظيفة الحالية:	_____
جهة العمل:	_____

في نهاية المطاف أرجو التفضل بتعبئة الاستبانة التالية المتعلقة بالاستبانة السابقة

ورسائلها:

م	البند	أوافق بدرجة		
		كبيرة	متوسطة	ضعيفة
1	شمول الاستبانة للفنون والأغراض الشعرية			
2	وضوح عبارات التعليمات ودقتها			
3	وضوح الهدف من الاستبانة			
4	ملاءمة المقياس الرباعي المدرج: أفضله بدرجة (كبيرة - متوسطة - ضعيفة)، لا أفضله [للطلبة]			
5	ملاءمة المقياس الرباعي المدرج: مناسب بدرجة (كبيرة - متوسطة - ضعيفة)، غير مناسب [للمعلمين]			
6	صدق الاستبانة في تحقيق الهدف الذي وضعت من أجله			

شكرا لكم مرة أخرى،

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته.

Appendix 9.

The final version of the second questionnaire – the poetry genres and forms – and the covering letters

استبانة تحديد الفنون والأغراض الشعرية المناسبة

لطلاب المرحلة الثانوية وطالبتها

الفاضل/ معلم اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الثانوية المحترم

الفاضلة/ معلمة اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الثانوية المحترمة

المدرسة:

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته... وبعد،

فهذه الاستبانة التي أضعتها بين يديك هي جزء من دراسة علمية في تقويم النصوص الشعرية المقررة على طلبة المرحلة الثانوية بشقيها الأدبي والعلمي، الهدف منها تعرف الفنون والأغراض الأدبية الشعرية المناسبة لطلاب المرحلة الثانوية وطالبتها؛ من حيث إقبالهم على قراءتها، وقدرتهم على دراستها.

ولذلك فإنني أرجو الاستفادة من خبرتك في مجال تعليم اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الثانوية، من خلال ملء الاستبانة الحالية؛ بوضع علامة (√) مقابل كل فن تحت درجة المناسبة التي تراها، بناء على ما تتوقعه من تفضيل الطلبة له، وقدرتهم على تعلمه؛ فإذا وضعت العلامة في خانة (مناسب)؛ فإن ذلك يعني أنك ترى أن الطلبة يفضلون ذلك الفن الشعري، ويقبلون على دراسته، بينما ترى العكس إن وضعت العلامة في خانة (غير مناسب)، أما إذا وضعت العلامة في خانة (غير متأكد)؛ فإن ذلك يعني أنك متردد بخصوص ذلك الفن الشعري، ولا تستطيع الجزم بملاءمته للطلبة أو عدمها. ولك الحق في أن تضيف أية فنون أو أغراض شعرية أغفلتها الاستبانة.

ولكم جزيل الشكر على حسن تعاونكم؛ للنهوض بمستوى تدريس اللغة العربية.

الباحث

عبدالله بن مسلم بن علي الهاشمي

استبانة تحديد الفنون والأغراض الشعرية التي يفضلها

طلاب المرحلة الثانوية وطالبتها

أخي الطالب/ بالصف الثالث الثانوي الأدبي/ العلمي المحترم.

أختي الطالبة/ بالصف الثالث الثانوي الأدبي/ العلمي المحترمة.

المدرسة:

الصف: القسم:

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته... وبعد،

فهذه الاستبانة التي أضعها بين يديك هي جزء من دراسة علمية في تقويم النصوص الشعرية المقررة على طلبة المرحلة الثانوية بشقيها الأدبي والعلمي، الهدف منها تحديد الفنون والأغراض الأدبية الشعرية التي يفضلها طلاب المرحلة الثانوية وطالبتها، ويقبلون على قراءتها.

المطلوب منك هو أن تتكرم بقراءة بنود الاستبانة، ثم تضع علامة (√) مقابل كل فن أدبي، تحت درجة التفضيل المناسبة؛ فإذا وضعت العلامة في خانة (أفضله)، فإن ذلك يعني أنك تميل إلى قراءة ذلك الفن الشعري، وهو من الفنون المفضلة لديك، بينما إذا وضعت العلامة في خانة (لا أفضله)، فإن ذلك يعني أنك لا تميل إلى قراءته ولا تفضله، أما إذا كنت مترددا بين التفضيل وعدمه، ولا تستطيع اتخاذ قرار حاسم فيما يتعلق بفن أو غرض شعري ما؛ فبإمكانك أن تضع العلامة في خانة (غير متأكد). هذا، وقد ترك في نهاية الاستبانة فراغ مخصص للفنون والأغراض الشعرية التي ترى إضافتها.

وأنا على يقين أنه سيكون لاستجاباتك الموضوعية أثر كبير في الخروج بنتائج علمية رصينة.

شكرا لك على حسن تعاونك.

الباحث

عبدالله بن مسلم بن علي الهاشمي

استبانة تحديد الفنون والأغراض الشعرية التي يفضلها
طلاب المرحلة الثانوية وطالباتها

م	الفن	أفضله	غير متأكد	لا أفضله
1	المدح (عموما)			
2	مدح النبي (ﷺ)			
3	مدح الحكام والوزراء والقواد			
4	مدح أفراد الأسرة			
5	مدح الأصدقاء			
6	مدح العلماء			
7	الهجاء (عموما)			
8	هجاء الأعداء			
9	هجاء الخصوم داخل المجتمع			
10	الرتاء (عموما)			
11	رتاء الحكام والوزراء والقواد			
12	رتاء أفراد الأسرة			
13	رتاء الأصحاب			
14	رتاء العلماء			
15	رتاء المدن والممالك			
16	الوصف (عموما)			
17	وصف الطبيعة			
18	وصف المباني والمنشآت			
19	وصف أصحاب المهن			
20	وصف الرحلات			
21	وصف المعارك			
22	وصف المخترعات			
23	الغزل (عموما)			
24	الغزل العذري			
25	الحب الإلهي (غزل المتصوفة)			
26	الغزل الحسي			
27	التأمل (عموما)			
28	التأمل في النفس			

م	الفن	أفضله	غير متأكد	لا أفضله
29	التأمل في الكون والحياة			
30	الفخر (عموما)			
31	الفخر بالنفس			
32	الفخر بالقبيلة			
33	الفخر بالأمة			
34	الحنين (عموما)			
35	الحنين إلى الوطن			
36	الحنين إلى الأيام الماضية			
37	الاعتذار (عموما)			
38	الاعتذار إلى الحكام وأصحاب السلطة			
39	الاعتذار إلى الإخوان			
40	الزهد والحكمة			
41	الوعظ والإرشاد			
42	التوبة			
43	الاستهزاء (عموما)			
44	استهزاء الحكام			
45	استهزاء القبيلة			
46	استهزاء الأمة			
47	الشعر الوطني			
48	الشعر السياسي			
49	الشعر القصصي			
50	الشعر الملحمي			
51	الشعر المسرحي			
52	شعر التفعيلة (الشعر الحر)			
53	الشعر المترجم			
54	فنون شعرية ترى إضافتها: .1 .2 .3			

Appendix 10.

Male and female pupils' responses to the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts

Item	Male pupils						Female pupils						Male and female pupils									
	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	mean
	1	151	84	55.6	39	25.8	28	18.5	215	147	68.4	44	20.5	24	11.2	366	231	63.1	83	22.7	52	14.2
2	156	59	37.8	39	25.0	58	37.2	219	61	27.9	68	31.1	90	41.1	375	120	32.0	107	28.5	148	39.5	1.9
3	155	62	40.0	43	27.7	50	32.3	217	102	47.0	70	32.3	45	20.7	376	183	48.7	100	26.6	93	24.7	2.2
4	155	75	48.4	47	30.3	33	21.3	214	85	39.7	66	30.8	63	29.4	369	160	43.4	113	30.6	96	26.0	2.2
5	157	86	54.8	11	7.0	60	38.2	217	118	54.4	28	12.9	71	32.7	374	204	54.5	39	10.4	131	35.0	2.2
6	156	87	55.8	24	15.4	45	28.8	214	88	41.1	50	23.4	76	35.5	370	175	47.3	74	20.0	121	32.7	2.1
7	156	104	66.7	25	16.0	27	17.3	216	101	46.8	64	29.6	51	23.6	372	205	55.1	89	23.9	78	21.0	2.3
8	155	55	35.5	42	27.1	58	37.4	217	81	37.3	72	33.2	64	29.5	372	136	36.6	114	30.6	122	32.8	2.0
9	158	82	51.9	37	23.4	39	24.7	213	77	36.2	84	39.4	52	24.4	371	159	42.9	121	32.6	91	24.5	2.2
10	158	73	46.2	34	21.5	51	32.3	217	84	38.7	37	17.1	96	44.2	375	157	41.9	71	18.9	147	39.2	2.0
11	155	77	49.7	29	18.7	49	31.6	216	112	51.9	68	31.5	36	16.7	371	189	50.9	97	26.1	85	22.9	2.3
12	148	59	39.9	51	34.5	38	25.7	214	73	34.1	70	32.7	71	33.2	362	132	36.5	121	33.4	109	30.1	2.1
13	158	90	57.0	26	16.5	42	26.6	217	144	66.4	34	15.7	39	18.0	375	234	62.4	60	16.0	81	21.6	2.4
14	157	79	50.3	24	15.3	54	34.4	219	119	54.3	27	12.3	73	33.3	376	198	52.7	51	13.6	127	33.8	2.2
15	158	39	24.7	22	13.9	97	61.4	218	63	28.9	49	22.5	106	48.6	376	102	27.1	71	18.9	203	54.0	1.7
16	156	54	34.6	21	13.5	81	51.9	218	92	42.2	23	10.6	103	47.2	374	146	39.0	44	11.8	184	49.2	1.9
17	156	88	56.4	19	12.2	49	31.4	216	134	62.0	32	14.8	50	23.1	372	222	59.7	51	13.7	99	26.6	2.3

Item	Male pupils					Female pupils					Male and female pupils											
	n.	3	2	1	1%	n.	3	2	1	1%	n.	3	2	1	1%	mean						
		3%	2%	1	1%		3%	2%	1	1%		3%	2%	1	1%							
18	157	73	46.5	23	14.6	61	38.9	218	83	38.1	45	20.6	90	41.3	375	156	41.6	68	18.1	151	40.3	2.0
19	158	83	52.5	20	12.7	55	34.8	220	111	50.5	39	17.7	70	31.8	378	194	51.3	59	15.6	125	33.1	2.2
20	157	86	54.8	24	15.3	47	29.9	219	108	49.3	37	16.9	74	33.8	376	194	51.6	61	16.2	121	32.2	2.2
21	155	73	47.1	26	16.8	56	36.1	217	102	47.0	46	21.2	69	31.8	372	175	47.0	72	19.4	125	33.6	2.1
22	158	79	50.0	34	21.5	45	28.5	218	96	44.0	47	21.6	75	34.4	376	175	46.5	81	21.5	120	31.9	2.1
23	157	63	40.1	26	16.6	68	43.3	217	85	39.2	56	25.8	76	35.0	374	148	39.6	82	21.9	144	38.5	2.0
24	152	83	54.6	20	13.2	49	32.2	217	110	50.7	54	24.9	53	24.4	369	193	52.3	74	20.1	102	27.6	2.2
25	158	68	43.0	28	17.7	62	39.2	217	69	31.8	38	17.5	110	50.7	375	137	36.5	66	17.6	172	45.9	1.9
26	157	85	54.1	28	17.8	44	28.0	216	140	64.8	36	16.7	40	18.5	373	225	60.3	64	17.2	84	22.5	2.4
27	153	92	60.1	28	18.3	33	21.6	216	84	38.9	55	25.5	77	35.6	372	164	44.1	113	30.4	95	25.5	2.2
28	158	76	48.1	46	29.1	36	22.8	216	127	58.8	58	26.9	31	14.4	374	203	54.3	104	27.8	67	17.9	2.4
29	158	86	54.4	28	17.7	44	27.8	219	160	73.1	22	10.0	37	16.9	377	246	65.3	50	13.3	81	21.5	2.4
30	157	86	54.8	30	19.1	41	26.1	218	129	59.2	48	22.0	41	18.8	375	215	57.3	78	20.8	82	21.9	2.4
31	158	87	55.1	32	20.3	39	24.7	219	115	52.5	55	25.1	49	22.4	377	202	53.6	87	23.1	88	23.3	2.3
32	158	107	67.7	18	11.4	33	20.9	215	165	76.7	21	9.8	29	13.5	373	272	72.9	39	10.5	62	16.6	2.6
33	156	63	40.4	41	26.3	52	33.3	217	99	45.6	50	23.0	68	31.3	373	162	43.4	91	24.4	120	32.2	2.1
34	158	82	51.9	36	22.8	40	25.3	219	98	44.7	70	32.0	51	23.3	377	180	47.7	106	28.1	91	24.1	2.2

n.= number of respondents to the item.
2 = number of respondents to scale 2.
% = percentage of respondents.

1 = number of respondents to scale 1.
3 = number of respondents to scale 3

Appendix 11.

Male and female teachers' responses to the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts

Item	Male teachers					Female teachers					Male and female teachers										
	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%
1	25	13	52	3	12	9	36	24	10	41.7	2	8.3	12	50.0	49	23	46.9	5	10.2	21	42.9
2	25	9	36	4	16	12	48	24	8	33.3	3	12.5	13	54.2	49	17	34.7	7	14.3	25	51.0
3	25	13	52	0	0	12	48	24	7	29.2	5	20.8	12	50.0	49	20	40.8	5	10.2	24	49.0
4	25	11	44	2	8	12	48	24	8	33.3	2	8.3	14	58.3	49	19	38.8	4	8.2	26	53.1
5	25	8	32	4	16	13	52	24	2	8.3	2	8.3	20	83.3	49	10	20.4	6	12.2	33	67.3
6	25	12	48	1	4	12	48	24	2	8.3	0	0.0	22	91.7	49	14	28.6	1	2.0	34	69.4
7	25	12	48	2	8	11	44	24	6	25.0	0	0.0	18	75.0	49	18	36.7	2	4.1	29	59.2
8	25	14	56	1	4	10	40	24	3	12.5	5	20.8	16	66.7	49	17	34.7	6	12.2	26	53.1
9	25	14	56	1	4	10	40	24	6	25.0	5	20.8	13	54.2	49	20	40.8	6	12.2	23	46.9
10	25	12	48	1	4	12	48	24	6	25.0	2	8.3	16	66.7	49	18	36.7	3	6.1	28	57.1
11	25	14	56	0	0	11	44	24	11	45.8	3	12.5	10	41.7	49	25	51.0	3	6.1	21	42.9
12	25	10	40	4	16	11	44	24	6	25.0	3	12.5	15	62.5	49	16	32.7	7	14.3	26	53.1
13	25	11	44	2	8	12	48	24	8	33.3	4	16.7	12	50.0	49	19	38.8	6	12.2	24	49.0
14	25	13	52	2	8	10	40	24	9	37.5	3	12.5	12	50.0	49	22	44.9	5	10.2	22	44.9
15	25	5	20	6	24	14	56	24	2	8.3	2	8.3	20	83.3	49	7	14.3	8	16.3	34	69.4
16	25	12	48	0	0	13	52	24	2	8.3	2	8.3	20	83.3	49	14	28.6	2	4.1	33	67.3
17	25	12	48	1	4	12	48	24	13	54.2	3	12.5	8	33.3	49	25	51.0	4	8.2	20	40.8

Item	Male teachers					Female teachers					Male and female teachers										
	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%
18	25	15	60	0	0	10	40	24	4	16.7	6	25.0	14	58.3	49	19	38.8	6	12.2	24	49.0
19	25	12	48	1	4	12	48	24	6	25.0	7	29.2	11	45.8	49	18	36.7	8	16.3	23	46.9
20	25	10	40	2	8	13	52	24	7	29.2	6	25.0	11	45.8	49	17	34.7	8	16.3	24	49.0
21	25	10	40	4	16	11	44	24	8	33.3	0	0.0	16	66.7	49	18	36.7	4	8.2	27	55.1
22	25	12	48	1	4	12	48	24	4	16.7	1	4.2	19	79.2	49	16	32.7	2	4.1	31	63.3
23	25	10	40	2	8	13	52	24	2	8.3	3	12.5	19	79.2	49	12	24.5	5	10.2	32	65.3
24	25	11	44	1	4	13	52	24	4	16.7	4	16.7	16	66.7	49	15	30.6	5	10.2	29	59.2
25	25	11	44	4	16	10	40	24	4	16.7	0	0.0	20	83.3	49	15	30.6	4	8.2	30	61.2
26	25	10	40	2	8	13	52	24	11	45.8	3	12.5	10	41.7	49	21	42.9	5	10.2	23	46.9
27	25	10	40	4	16	11	44	24	7	29.2	6	25.0	11	45.8	49	17	34.7	10	20.4	22	44.9
28	25	14	56	1	4	10	40	24	10	41.7	6	25.0	8	33.3	49	24	49.0	7	14.3	18	36.7
29	25	16	64	0	0	9	36	24	19	79.2	0	0.0	5	20.8	49	35	71.4	0	0.0	14	28.6
30	25	13	52	2	8	10	40	24	14	58.3	5	20.8	5	20.8	49	27	55.1	7	14.3	15	30.6
31	25	12	48	5	20	8	32	24	12	50.0	0	0.0	12	50.0	49	24	49.0	5	10.2	20	40.8
32	25	16	64	1	4	8	32	24	16	66.7	1	4.2	7	29.2	49	32	65.3	2	4.1	15	30.6
33	25	8	32	3	12	14	56	24	15	62.5	3	12.5	6	25.0	49	23	46.9	6	12.2	20	40.8
34	25	15	60	1	4	9	36	24	17	70.8	3	12.5	4	16.7	49	32	65.3	4	8.2	13	26.5

n.= number of respondents to the item.
2 = number of respondents to scale 2.
% = percentage of respondents.

1 = number of respondents to scale 1.
3 = number of respondents to scale 3

Appendix 12.

Inspectors and experts' responses to the questionnaire on the problems of studying poetry texts

item	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%
1	17	11	64.7	0	0.0	6	35.3
2	17	12	70.6	0	0.0	5	29.4
3	17	9	52.9	2	11.8	6	35.3
4	17	8	47.1	0	0.0	9	52.9
5	17	7	41.2	0	0.0	10	58.8
6	17	10	58.8	0	0.0	7	41.2
7	17	9	52.9	1	5.9	7	41.2
8	17	9	52.9	1	5.9	7	41.2
9	17	8	47.1	0	0.0	9	52.9
10	17	10	58.8	0	0.0	7	41.2
11	17	8	47.1	1	5.9	8	47.1
12	17	8	47.1	1	5.9	8	47.1
13	17	13	76.5	1	5.9	3	17.6
14	17	11	64.7	1	5.9	5	29.4
15	17	10	58.8	0	0.0	7	41.2
16	17	10	58.8	0	0.0	7	41.2
17	17	12	70.6	0	0.0	5	29.4
18	17	10	58.8	0	0.0	7	41.2
19	17	13	76.5	0	0.0	4	23.5
20	17	11	64.7	1	5.9	5	29.4
21	17	10	58.8	1	5.9	6	35.3
22	17	10	58.8	0	0.0	7	41.2
23	17	9	52.9	1	5.9	7	41.2
24	17	13	76.5	0	0.0	4	23.5
25	17	9	52.9	0	0.0	8	47.1
26	17	9	52.9	0	0.0	8	47.1
27	17	12	70.6	1	5.9	4	23.5
28	17	9	52.9	0	0.0	8	47.1
29	17	10	58.8	1	5.9	6	35.3
30	17	9	52.9	0	0.0	8	47.1
31	17	9	52.9	0	0.0	8	47.1
32	17	10	58.8	0	0.0	7	41.2
33	17	12	70.6	0	0.0	5	29.4
34	17	12	70.6	1	5.9	4	23.5

n.= number of respondents to the item.

2 = number of respondents to scale 2.

% = percentage of respondents.

1 = number of respondents to scale 1.

3 = number of respondents to scale 3

Appendix 13.

Male and female pupils' responses to the questionnaire on the poetry genres and forms

Item	Male pupils					Female pupils					Male and female pupils											
	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	mean	
1	145	63	43.4	52	35.9	30	20.7	92	43.0	63	29.4	59	27.6	359	155	43.2	115	32.0	89	24.8	2.2	
2	152	144	94.7	6	3.9	2	1.3	209	93.3	14	6.3	1	0.4	376	353	93.9	20	5.3	3	0.8	2.9	
3	147	18	12.2	41	27.9	88	59.9	13	5.9	82	37.4	124	56.6	366	31	8.5	123	33.6	212	57.9	1.5	
4	149	55	36.9	50	33.6	44	29.5	99	45.0	64	29.1	57	25.9	369	154	41.7	114	30.9	101	27.4	2.1	
5	148	60	40.5	47	31.8	41	27.7	117	52.7	61	27.5	44	19.8	370	177	47.8	108	29.2	85	23.0	2.2	
6	152	88	57.9	45	29.6	19	12.5	219	84	38.4	58	26.5	77	35.2	371	172	46.4	103	27.8	96	25.9	2.2
7	151	35	23.2	50	33.1	66	43.7	216	60	27.8	71	32.9	85	39.4	367	95	25.9	121	33.0	151	41.1	1.8
8	149	85	57.0	36	24.2	28	18.8	220	114	51.8	43	19.5	63	28.6	369	199	53.9	79	21.4	91	24.7	2.3
9	151	43	28.5	60	39.7	48	31.8	218	69	31.7	70	32.1	79	36.2	369	112	30.4	130	35.2	127	34.4	2.0
10	152	56	36.8	60	39.5	36	23.7	215	104	48.4	59	27.4	52	24.2	367	160	43.6	119	32.4	88	24.0	2.2
11	151	21	13.9	57	37.7	73	48.3	222	31	14.0	74	33.3	117	52.7	373	52	13.9	131	35.1	190	50.9	1.6
12	150	76	50.7	35	23.3	39	26.0	222	113	50.9	67	30.2	42	18.9	372	189	50.8	102	27.4	81	21.8	2.3
13	152	70	46.1	40	26.3	42	27.6	225	123	54.7	65	28.9	37	16.4	377	193	51.2	105	27.9	79	21.0	2.3
14	147	58	39.5	53	36.1	36	24.5	222	60	27.0	87	39.2	75	33.8	369	118	32.0	140	37.9	111	30.1	2.0
15	150	49	32.7	51	34.0	50	33.3	219	61	27.9	65	29.7	93	42.5	369	110	29.8	116	31.4	143	38.8	1.9
16	149	83	55.7	48	32.2	18	12.1	220	122	55.5	63	28.6	35	15.9	369	205	55.6	111	30.1	53	14.4	2.4

Item	Male pupils						Female pupils						Male and female pupils									
	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	mean
	17	152	117	77.0	22	14.5	13	8.6	223	169	75.8	30	13.5	24	10.8	375	286	76.3	52	13.9	37	9.9
18	151	36	23.8	50	33.1	65	43.0	223	23	10.3	68	30.5	132	59.2	374	59	15.8	118	31.6	197	52.7	1.6
19	151	64	42.4	44	29.1	43	28.5	222	48	21.6	72	32.4	102	45.9	373	112	30.0	116	31.1	145	38.9	1.9
20	150	88	58.7	37	24.7	25	16.7	225	113	50.2	56	24.9	56	24.9	375	201	53.6	93	24.8	81	21.6	2.3
21	150	120	80.0	20	13.3	10	6.7	225	115	51.1	60	26.7	50	22.2	375	235	62.7	80	21.3	60	16.0	2.5
22	151	71	47.0	39	25.8	41	27.2	222	45	20.3	66	29.7	111	50.0	373	116	31.1	105	28.2	152	40.8	1.9
23	151	97	64.2	27	17.9	27	17.9	220	132	60.0	46	20.9	42	19.1	371	229	61.7	73	19.7	69	18.6	2.4
24	146	79	54.1	42	28.8	25	17.1	219	135	61.6	45	20.5	39	17.8	365	214	58.6	87	23.8	64	17.5	2.4
25	152	104	68.4	28	18.4	20	13.2	223	127	57.0	54	24.2	42	18.8	375	231	61.6	82	21.9	62	16.5	2.5
26	151	83	55.0	51	33.8	17	11.3	221	85	38.5	75	33.9	61	27.6	372	168	45.2	126	33.9	78	21.0	2.2
27	150	98	65.3	39	26.0	13	8.7	217	133	61.3	61	28.1	23	10.6	367	231	62.9	100	27.2	36	9.8	2.5
28	150	97	64.7	43	28.7	10	6.7	223	147	65.9	51	22.9	25	11.2	373	244	65.4	94	25.2	35	9.4	2.6
29	152	121	79.6	18	11.8	13	8.6	225	175	77.8	37	16.4	13	5.8	377	296	78.5	55	14.6	26	6.9	2.7
30	152	60	39.5	44	28.9	48	31.6	221	101	45.7	60	27.1	60	27.1	373	161	43.2	104	27.9	108	29.0	2.1
31	151	44	29.1	38	25.2	69	45.7	225	84	37.3	45	20.0	96	42.7	376	128	34.0	83	22.1	165	43.9	1.9
32	152	81	53.3	27	17.8	44	28.9	224	98	43.8	54	24.1	72	32.1	376	179	47.6	81	21.5	116	30.9	2.2
33	149	114	76.5	17	11.4	18	12.1	221	135	61.1	50	22.6	36	16.3	370	249	67.3	67	18.1	54	14.6	2.5
34	149	97	65.1	40	26.8	12	8.1	222	171	77.0	41	18.5	10	4.5	371	268	72.2	81	21.8	22	5.9	2.7
35	152	120	78.9	25	16.4	7	4.6	224	171	76.3	37	16.5	16	7.1	376	291	77.4	62	16.5	23	6.1	2.7
36	149	105	70.5	33	22.1	11	7.4	225	182	80.9	27	12.0	16	7.1	374	287	76.7	60	16.0	27	7.2	2.7
37	149	63	42.3	45	30.2	41	27.5	221	91	41.2	85	38.5	45	20.4	370	154	41.6	130	35.1	86	23.2	2.2
38	152	19	12.5	48	31.6	85	55.9	223	16	7.2	79	35.4	128	57.4	375	35	9.3	127	33.9	213	56.8	1.5

Item	Male pupils					Female pupils					Male and female pupils													
	n.	3%	2%	1%	1%	n.	3%	2%	1%	1%	n.	3%	2%	1%	1%	mean								
39	152	106	69.7	31	20.4	15	9.9	12.1	27	22.8	51	65.2	51	22.8	27	12.1	376	252	67.0	82	21.8	42	11.2	2.6
40	152	101	66.4	42	27.6	9	5.9	11.1	25	23.6	53	65.3	53	23.6	25	11.1	377	248	65.8	95	25.2	34	9.0	2.6
41	152	119	78.3	26	17.1	7	4.6	13.8	31	16.1	36	70.1	36	16.1	31	13.8	376	276	73.4	62	16.5	38	10.1	2.6
42	152	130	85.5	20	13.2	2	1.3	6.3	14	13.1	29	80.6	29	13.1	14	6.3	374	309	82.6	49	13.1	16	4.3	2.8
43	150	63	42.0	58	38.7	29	19.3	20.0	44	35.0	77	45.0	77	35.0	44	20.0	370	162	43.8	135	36.5	73	19.7	2.2
44	151	57	37.7	53	35.1	41	27.2	29.3	65	35.1	78	35.6	78	35.1	65	29.3	373	136	36.5	131	35.1	106	28.4	2.1
45	152	80	52.6	44	28.9	28	18.4	23.4	52	33.8	75	42.8	75	33.8	52	23.4	374	175	46.8	119	31.8	80	21.4	2.3
46	149	99	66.4	32	21.5	18	12.1	18.7	40	33.6	72	47.7	72	33.6	40	18.7	363	201	55.4	104	28.7	58	16.0	2.4
47	152	103	67.8	25	16.4	24	15.8	29.3	66	19.6	44	51.1	44	19.6	66	29.3	377	218	57.8	69	18.3	90	23.9	2.3
48	152	67	44.1	46	30.3	39	25.7	48.6	108	30.2	67	21.2	67	30.2	108	48.6	374	114	30.5	113	30.2	147	39.3	1.9
49	152	77	50.7	48	31.6	27	17.8	25.6	57	27.4	61	47.1	61	27.4	57	25.6	375	182	48.5	109	29.1	84	22.4	2.3
50	151	57	37.7	55	36.4	39	25.8	38.7	86	38.7	86	22.5	86	38.7	86	38.7	373	107	28.7	141	37.8	125	33.5	2.0
51	151	63	41.7	43	28.5	45	29.8	27.7	62	24.1	54	48.2	54	24.1	62	27.7	375	171	45.6	97	25.9	107	28.5	2.2
52	151	55	36.4	57	37.7	39	25.8	29.7	66	28.4	63	41.9	63	28.4	66	29.7	373	148	39.7	120	32.2	105	28.2	2.1
53	152	48	31.6	44	28.9	60	39.5	41.3	92	27.8	62	30.9	62	27.8	92	41.3	375	117	31.2	106	28.3	152	40.5	1.9

n. = number of respondents to the item

2 = number of respondents to scale 2

% = percentage of respondents

1 = number of respondents to scale 1

3 = number of respondents to scale 3

Appendix 14.

Male and female teachers' responses to the questionnaire on the poetry genres

Item	Male teachers					Female teachers					Male and female teachers										
	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%
1	25	20	80	3	12	2	4	25	20	80	4	16	1	4	50	40	80	7	14	3	6
2	25	24	96	0	0	1	8	25	25	100	0	0	0	0	50	49	98	0	0	1	2
3	25	12	48	4	16	9	8	25	11	44	9	36	5	20	50	23	46	13	26	14	28
4	25	9	36	4	16	12	8	25	10	40	9	36	6	24	50	19	38	13	26	18	36
5	25	14	56	1	4	10	0	25	10	40	12	48	3	12	50	24	48	13	26	13	26
6	25	17	68	2	8	6	8	25	16	64	4	16	5	20	50	33	66	6	12	11	22
7	25	9	36	4	16	12	8	25	13	52	8	32	4	16	50	22	44	12	24	16	32
8	25	15	60	4	16	6	16	25	21	84	2	8	2	8	50	36	72	6	12	8	16
9	25	5	20	7	28	13	12	25	10	40	8	32	7	28	50	15	30	15	30	20	40
10	25	20	80	2	8	3	8	25	21	84	3	12	1	4	50	41	82	5	10	4	8
11	25	13	52	3	12	9	12	25	12	48	9	36	4	16	50	25	50	12	24	13	26
12	25	16	64	2	8	7	16	25	20	80	4	16	1	4	50	36	72	6	12	8	16
13	25	15	60	1	4	9	8	25	17	68	5	20	3	12	50	32	64	6	12	12	24
14	25	14	56	3	12	8	16	25	14	56	7	28	4	16	50	28	56	10	20	12	24
15	25	17	68	2	8	6	16	25	19	76	2	8	4	16	50	36	72	4	8	10	20
16	25	20	80	1	4	4	16	25	21	84	3	12	1	4	50	41	82	4	8	5	10

Item	Male teachers					Female teachers					Male and female teachers										
	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%
17	25	23	92	0	0	2	12	25	24	96	1	4	0	0	50	47	94	1	2	2	4
18	25	9	36	6	24	10	8	25	10	40	7	28	8	32	50	19	38	13	26	18	36
19	25	11	44	4	16	10	16	25	12	48	10	40	3	12	50	23	46	14	28	13	26
20	25	14	56	3	12	8	16	25	18	72	3	12	4	16	50	32	64	6	12	12	24
21	25	23	92	0	0	2	24	25	25	100	0	0	0	0	50	48	96	0	0	2	4
22	25	14	56	5	20	6	24	25	8	32	9	36	8	32	50	22	44	14	28	14	28
23	25	13	52	5	20	7	24	25	13	52	8	32	4	16	50	26	52	13	26	11	22
24	25	20	80	3	12	2	24	25	21	84	2	8	2	8	50	41	82	5	10	4	8
25	25	18	72	3	12	4	20	25	21	84	4	16	0	0	50	39	78	7	14	4	8
26	25	7	28	6	24	12	28	25	4	16	7	28	14	56	50	11	22	13	26	26	52
27	25	17	68	2	8	6	28	25	19	76	6	24	0	0	50	36	72	8	16	6	12
28	25	16	64	2	8	7	20	25	21	84	4	16	0	0	50	37	74	6	12	7	14
29	25	20	80	1	4	4	16	25	21	84	4	16	0	0	50	41	82	5	10	4	8
30	25	17	68	2	8	6	24	25	17	68	7	28	1	4	50	34	68	9	18	7	14
31	25	12	48	2	8	11	36	25	15	60	4	16	6	24	50	27	54	6	12	17	34
32	25	10	40	4	16	11	28	25	16	64	2	8	7	28	50	26	52	6	12	18	36
33	25	22	88	1	4	2	24	25	23	92	0	0	2	8	50	45	90	1	2	4	8
34	25	20	80	1	4	4	20	25	22	88	3	12	0	0	50	42	84	4	8	4	8
35	25	23	92	0	0	2	40	25	23	92	2	8	0	0	50	46	92	2	4	2	4
36	25	15	60	3	12	7	32	25	22	88	1	4	2	8	50	37	74	4	8	9	18
37	25	15	60	4	16	6	32	25	17	68	8	32	0	0	50	32	64	12	24	6	12
38	25	12	48	3	12	10	24	25	12	48	9	36	4	16	50	24	48	12	24	14	28

Item	Male teachers					Female teachers					Male and female teachers										
	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%
39	25	17	68	3	12	5	36	25	18	72	6	24	1	4	50	35	70	9	18	6	12
40	25	21	84	2	8	2	28	25	25	100	0	0	0	0	50	46	92	2	4	2	4
41	25	21	84	0	0	4	24	25	23	92	2	8	0	0	50	44	88	2	4	4	8
42	25	18	72	3	12	4	36	25	19	76	4	16	2	8	50	37	74	7	14	6	12
43	25	20	80	1	4	4	44	25	21	84	2	8	2	8	50	41	82	3	6	6	12
44	25	16	64	4	16	5	40	25	18	72	6	24	1	4	50	34	68	10	20	6	12
45	25	12	48	3	12	10	40	25	16	64	6	24	3	12	50	28	56	9	18	13	26
46	25	21	84	1	4	3	40	25	22	88	3	12	0	0	50	43	86	4	8	3	6
47	25	23	92	2	8	0	48	25	24	96	0	0	1	4	50	47	94	2	4	1	2
48	25	19	76	3	12	3	48	25	18	72	3	12	4	16	50	37	74	6	12	7	14
49	25	15	60	5	20	5	40	25	21	84	4	16	0	0	50	36	72	9	18	5	10
50	25	16	64	5	20	4	44	25	18	72	4	16	3	12	50	34	68	9	18	7	14
51	25	19	76	4	16	2	48	25	22	88	2	8	1	4	50	41	82	6	12	3	6
52	25	13	52	6	24	6	44	25	12	48	11	44	2	8	50	25	50	17	34	8	16
53	25	9	36	5	20	11	52	25	12	48	6	24	7	28	50	21	42	11	22	18	36

n. = number of respondents to the item
 2 = number of respondents to scale 2
 % = percentage of respondents

1 = number of respondents to scale 1
 3 = number of respondents to scale 3

Appendix 15.

Inspectors and experts' responses to the questionnaire
on the poetry genres

item	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%
1	17	14	82.4	1	5.9	2	11.8
2	17	17	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
3	17	10	58.8	2	11.8	5	29.4
4	17	10	58.8	2	11.8	5	29.4
5	17	11	64.7	2	11.8	4	23.5
6	17	16	94.1	1	5.9	0	0.0
7	17	7	41.2	4	23.5	6	35.3
8	17	13	76.5	1	5.9	3	17.6
9	17	7	41.2	0	0.0	10	58.8
10	17	15	88.2	1	5.9	1	5.9
11	17	11	64.7	5	29.4	1	5.9
12	17	15	88.2	2	11.8	0	0.0
13	17	14	82.4	3	17.6	0	0.0
14	17	16	94.1	1	5.9	0	0.0
15	17	12	70.6	0	0.0	5	29.4
16	17	13	76.5	4	23.5	0	0.0
17	17	16	94.1	0	0.0	1	5.9
18	17	6	35.3	2	11.8	9	52.9
19	17	7	41.2	2	11.8	8	47.1
20	17	8	47.1	2	11.8	7	41.2
21	17	16	94.1	0	0.0	1	5.9
22	17	9	52.9	1	5.9	7	41.2
23	17	11	64.7	3	17.6	3	17.6
24	17	15	88.2	0	0.0	2	11.8
25	17	14	82.4	0	0.0	3	17.6
26	17	4	23.5	1	5.9	12	70.6
27	17	14	82.4	3	17.6	0	0.0

item	n.	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%
28	17	15	88.2	2	11.8	0	0.0
29	17	17	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
30	17	13	76.5	3	17.6	1	5.9
31	17	10	58.8	1	5.9	6	35.3
32	17	7	41.2	1	5.9	9	52.9
33	17	16	94.1	1	5.9	0	0.0
34	17	14	82.4	3	17.6	0	0.0
35	17	17	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
36	17	9	52.9	3	17.6	5	29.4
37	17	13	76.5	3	17.6	1	5.9
38	17	8	47.1	1	5.9	8	47.1
39	17	14	82.4	1	5.9	2	11.8
40	17	17	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
41	17	14	82.4	1	5.9	2	11.8
42	17	13	76.5	2	11.8	2	11.8
43	17	13	76.5	3	17.6	1	5.9
44	17	14	82.4	1	5.9	2	11.8
45	17	9	52.9	1	5.9	7	41.2
46	17	17	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
47	17	11	64.7	3	17.6	3	17.6
48	17	17	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
49	17	13	76.5	2	11.8	2	11.8
50	17	16	94.1	1	5.9	0	0.0
51	17	17	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
52	17	16	94.1	0	0.0	1	5.9
53	17	11	64.7	0	0.0	6	35.3

n.= number of respondents to the item.

2= number of respondents to scale 2.

% = percentage of respondents.

1= number of respondents to scale 1.

3= number of respondents to scale 3

Appendix 16.

The significance of the differences between the means of male and female pupils' poetry preferences

No.	item	Group	n	Mean	Standard deviation	t value	Level of significance (p)
1	Panegyric (in general)	Male	145	2.23	0.77	-0.85	0.39
		Female	214	2.15	0.83		
2	Panegyric of the prophet	Male	152	2.93	0.30	-0.19	0.85
		Female	224	2.93	0.27		
3	Panegyric of rulers, ministers and commanders	Male	147	1.52	0.71	-0.44	0.67
		Female	219	1.49	0.61		
4	Panegyric of family members	Male	149	2.07	0.81	1.34	0.18
		Female	220	2.19	0.82		
5	Panegyric of friends	Male	148	2.13	0.82	2.35	0.02 *
		Female	222	2.33	0.79		
6	Panegyric of scholars	Male	152	2.45	0.71	-4.98	0.00
		Female	219	2.03	0.86		
7	Satire (in general)	Male	151	1.79	0.79	1.05	0.29
		Female	216	1.88	0.81		
8	Satire of enemies	Male	149	2.38	0.78	-1.70	0.08
		Female	220	2.23	0.87		
9	Satire of rivals in society	Male	151	1.97	0.78	-0.15	0.88
		Female	218	1.95	0.82		
10	Elegiac poetry (in general)	Male	152	2.13	0.77	1.30	0.19
		Female	215	2.24	0.82		
11	Elegy for rulers, ministers and commanders	Male	151	1.66	0.71	-0.57	0.57
		Female	222	1.61	0.72		
12	Elegy for the family members	Male	150	2.25	0.84	0.86	0.40
		Female	222	2.32	0.77		
13	Elegy for friends	Male	152	2.18	0.84	2.38	0.02 *
		Female	225	2.38	0.75		
14	Elegy for scholars	Male	147	2.15	0.79	-2.60	0.01 *
		Female	222	1.93	0.78		
15	Elegy for cities and countries	Male	150	1.99	0.82	-1.60	0.11
		Female	219	1.85	0.83		
16	Description (in general)	Male	149	2.44	0.70	-0.53	0.59
		Female	220	2.40	0.75		

No.	item	Group	n	Mean	Standard deviation	t value	Level of significance (p)
17	Description of nature	Male	152	2.68	0.62	-0.50	0.61
		Female	223	2.65	0.67		
18	Description of buildings and other constructions	Male	151	1.81	0.80	-3.86	0.00 *
		Female	223	1.51	0.68		
19	Description of people at work	Male	151	2.14	0.83	-4.49	0.00 *
		Female	222	1.76	0.79		
20	Description of travel	Male	150	2.42	0.76	-1.96	0.05 *
		Female	225	2.25	0.83		
21	Description of battles	Male	150	2.73	0.58	-5.81	0.00 *
		Female	225	2.29	0.81		
22	Description of inventions	Male	151	2.20	0.84	-5.80	0.00 *
		Female	222	1.70	0.79		
23	Love poetry (in general)	Male	151	2.46	0.78	-0.65	0.51
		Female	220	2.41	0.79		
24	Platonic (virtuous) love poetry	Male	146	2.37	0.76	0.83	0.40
		Female	219	2.44	0.78		
25	Love of God	Male	152	2.55	0.72	-2.15	0.03 *
		Female	223	2.38	0.78		
26	Explicit love poetry	Male	151	2.44	0.69	-4.08	0.00 *
		Female	221	2.11	0.81		
27	Meditation poetry (in general)	Male	150	2.57	0.65	-0.84	0.40
		Female	217	2.51	0.68		
28	Meditation on the soul	Male	150	2.58	0.62	-0.47	0.63
		Female	223	2.55	0.69		
29	Meditation on life and the universe	Male	152	2.71	0.62	0.15	0.88
		Female	225	2.72	0.56		
30	Boastful poetry (in general)	Male	152	2.08	0.84	1.20	0.23
		Female	221	2.19	0.84		
31	Self-glorification	Male	151	1.83	0.85	1.21	0.22
		Female	225	1.95	0.89		
32	Glorification of the tribe	Male	152	2.24	0.88	-1.39	0.17
		Female	224	2.12	0.87		
33	Glorifying the nation	Male	149	2.64	0.69	-2.53	0.01 *
		Female	221	2.45	0.76		
34	Nostalgia poetry (in general)	Male	149	2.57	0.64	2.51	0.02 *
		Female	222	2.73	0.54		
35	Nostalgia for one's homeland	Male	152	2.74	0.53	-0.85	0.38
		Female	224	2.69	0.60		

No.	item	Group	n	Mean	Standard deviation	t value	Level of significance (p)
36	Nostalgia for the past	Male	149	2.63	0.62	1.69	0.09
		Female	225	2.74	0.58		
37	Apology (in general)	Male	149	2.15	0.83	0.72	0.48
		Female	221	2.21	0.76		
38	Apologies to rulers and those in authority	Male	152	1.57	0.71	-0.98	0.34
		Female	223	1.50	0.63		
39	Apologies to friends	Male	152	2.60	0.66	-0.93	0.35
		Female	224	2.53	0.70		
40	Asceticism and wisdom	Male	152	2.61	0.60	-0.92	0.35
		Female	225	2.54	0.69		
41	Preaching and didactic poetry	Male	152	2.74	0.54	-2.53	0.01 *
		Female	224	2.56	0.72		
42	Repentance	Male	152	2.84	0.40	-1.86	0.05 *
		Female	222	2.74	0.56		
43	Exhorting (in general)	Male	150	2.23	0.75	0.29	0.77
		Female	220	2.25	0.77		
44	Exhorting rulers	Male	151	2.11	0.80	-0.50	0.61
		Female	222	2.06	0.80		
45	Exhorting the tribe	Male	152	2.34	0.77	-1.79	0.07
		Female	222	2.19	0.79		
46	Exhorting the nation	Male	149	2.54	0.70	-3.21	0.00 *
		Female	214	2.29	0.76		
47	Patriotic poetry	Male	152	2.52	0.75	-3.47	0.00 *
		Female	225	2.22	0.87		
48	Political poetry	Male	152	2.18	0.82	-5.42	0.00 *
		Female	222	1.73	0.79		
49	Narrative poetry	Male	152	2.33	0.76	-1.35	0.17
		Female	223	2.22	0.83		
50	Epic poetry	Male	151	2.12	0.79	-3.42	0.00 *
		Female	222	1.84	0.77		
51	Dramatic poetry	Male	151	2.12	0.84	0.97	0.33
		Female	224	2.21	0.85		
52	Free verse	Male	151	2.11	0.78	0.18	0.85
		Female	222	2.12	0.84		
53	Translated poetry	Male	152	1.92	0.84	-0.27	0.79
		Female	223	1.90	0.85		
	total	Male	152	120.55	12.01	-3.30	0.00 *
		Female	225	115.44	16.30		

* Statistically significant difference