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On Intercultural Awareness: Where Does it Stand in the Literature Classroom?

The Case of Third Year EFL Learners at the University of Mila

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement of the Master Degree in
Didactics of Foreign Languages

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Dedication

To the memory of my grandmother,

Houssam

This dissertation is dedicated to:

- *My dear parents who have always been by my side wishing me all the best.*
- *My brothers and sisters.*
- *All the members of my family without exception.*
- *All my friends and whoever supported me along my career.*

Hacene

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Abstract

The current study attempts to investigate the place of intercultural awareness in the literature classroom. It aims to determine whether intercultural awareness is emphasised by literature teachers and whether it is promoted through the teaching of literature. Accordingly, within the context of this study, two research questions are raised: (1) Is intercultural awareness emphasised in the literature classroom? (2) Does teaching literature contribute to the promotion of learners' intercultural awareness? In response to the questions, a descriptive method is opted for. To obtain the necessary data, a questionnaire is administered to Sixty students of English at the Department of Foreign Languages, University of Mila, and another questionnaire is administered to ten teachers of literature. The major research findings reveal that intercultural communicative competence is indeed emphasised in the literature classroom and that literature teaching helps to promote learners' intercultural awareness. Eventually, the research work proffers a multiplicity of recommendations for pedagogy and future research with the purpose of drawing more attention to learners' intercultural awareness in the teaching of literature.

Key words: intercultural awareness, literature classroom, teaching of literature, intercultural communicative competence.

List of Abbreviations

COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease of 2019

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

Q: Question

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ملخص

Résumé

General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

Teaching literature has proved to be of a controversial nature as far as language learning is concerned. Notwithstanding the controversy, it is noteworthy that teaching literature offers a multiplicity of merits which tend to impact language learners' competence positively. As suggested by Carter and Long (1991), teaching literature is meant to improve students' abilities at the level of three distinct areas, namely language enrichment, personal enrichment and cultural enrichment.

Shedding light on the cultural aspect of literature teaching, the overwhelming spread of globalisation throughout the world has resulted in major alterations at the level of the abilities required for language learners, especially those needed for communication across cultures. Therefore, as cultural enrichment is said to be one of the fundamental justifications for which literature is taught, it has become mandatory for teachers of literature to adapt to the changes imposed by globalisation and shift their focus towards promoting students' intercultural awareness which refers to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow learners to communicate efficiently. Hence, the crux of the problem around which revolves the current study is the investigation of the place held by intercultural awareness in the literature classroom. This entails examining if any emphasis is put on intercultural communicative competence in literature teaching in addition to exploring if the latter has any potential contribution to the promotion of learners' intercultural awareness.

2. Aims of the Study

The present study attempts to bring to the fore the place held by intercultural awareness in the literature classroom. Put otherwise, it is aimed at investigating whether intercultural awareness, in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, is emphasised when teaching

literature. What is more, the current research explores whether teaching literature results in promoting learners' intercultural awareness.

3. Significance of the Study

The significance of the current study stems from its being concerned with the concept of intercultural awareness which has gained unprecedented currency in the modern globalised era as one indispensable element in the process of communication across cultures. Furthermore, this research derives its importance from the fact that it takes into account the literature classroom as one variable to be held under scrutiny. It is assumed that much attention has been oriented to the study of literary texts per se rather than the various approaches and procedures involved in teaching literature; these happen to be emphasised in the study at hand. On the whole, the present research is meant to raise educational and pedagogical concerns, on the part of both students and teachers, towards the status of intercultural awareness in the literature classroom.

4. Research Questions

In view of what precedes, the current study sets out to answer the following questions:

1. Is intercultural awareness emphasised in the literature classroom?
2. Does teaching literature contribute to promoting learners' intercultural awareness?

5. Means of the Research

In order to reach the research aims and answer the research questions, it is opted for utilising a students' questionnaire and a teachers' questionnaire which help obtain the information required for the completion of this work.

The students' questionnaire is administered to third year EFL students at the Department of Foreign Languages, University of Mila. The sample with which the

questionnaire is concerned consists of 60 students representing a target population of 159 students in total. It is designed with the purpose of eliciting students' major attitudes towards the status of intercultural awareness in their literature classroom. In line with this, the teachers' questionnaire shares the same aim, but one that is complementary yielding information from a different perspective; it is administered to 10 literature teachers who are believed to offer valuable viewpoints with regard to the issue under study.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is made up of three chapters wherein the first two chapters constitute the theoretical part of the research while the third one is devoted to the field work. Concerning the first chapter, it offers theoretical insights into the first variable of the current study which is the teaching of literature. To start with, the chapter is initiated with defining literature according to different scholars and standpoints. Following that, an account is made of the significance of teaching literature in language learning emphasising the arguments of both proponents and opponents. Next, there is coverage of major models of literature teaching that are commonly circulating in the literature; this is followed by the provision of a discussion of the main approaches to literature teaching. After that, interest shifts to the phase of material selection in the literature classroom and the fundamental factors to be considered in this process. At the end, the chapter highlights the issue of assessment in the literature classroom.

As for the second chapter, it is devoted to the concept of intercultural awareness. It starts with defining the intercultural awareness which is followed by discussing the major barriers to intercultural communication. Next, focus shifts to intercultural communicative competence where its definition is provided and followed by a brief account for the most prominent types of its models. Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence

occupies the following section in this chapter. After that, this latter deals with the issue of teaching intercultural communicative competence; it, then, provides a multiplicity of methods and tools which are thought to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence. In the final section, the process of assessing this type of competence is discussed.

In turn, the third chapter is devised to provide a description of the field work of the present research. It sets out to tackle the research questions in an attempt to achieve the aims of the study. Within this chapter, the research methodology is thoroughly explained through the description and the analysis of both the students' and the teachers' questionnaires. In the same vein, considerable attention is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the main findings and the major implications that they are likely to bring about. Drawn to the close, the third chapter ends with mentioning the major limitations of the study in addition to the provision of a variety of recommendations for pedagogy and further research agendas.

CHAPTER ONE: Teaching Literature

Introduction

Literature is a highly valued human product which concerns itself with the diverse aspects of human life as themes tackled by the different texts that are said to be literary. It is for this reason that teaching literature is a crucial issue that receives much attention. Central to this issue are the questions raised about the significance of teaching literature in the context of foreign language learning. In addition, the controversy associated with this matter emerges from the various standpoints which account for the way literature is better taught resulting in the emergence of several approaches to its instruction.

This chapter sets out to offer some exploratory insights into the enterprise of literature teaching. To begin with, it attempts to introduce the concept of literature through providing some clarifying definitions for the term. Then, it accounts for the importance of literature teaching in foreign language learning and the contradictory viewpoints regarding this matter. Further, questions as to how to teach literature are answered by catering for the main models and approaches to literature teaching. This is followed by a brief discussion concerning the phase of material selection in the literature classroom through highlighting the major criteria for selecting texts. Last but not least, the present chapter is equally concerned with the process of assessing students' learning in the literature classroom and some common tools to be utilized in this process.

1.1. Defining Literature

Although the term "literature" is of a common use, providing a clear cut definition for it proves to be a daunting task which cannot be carried out easily. A large number of definitions can be associated with it depending on the context in which it is used. However, what is

commonly agreed upon is the etymology of this term which is of a Latin origin, derived from “littera”. The equivalent of this Latin word in English is “letter” which is the smallest element of alphabetical writing (Klarer, 2004).

As Klarer puts it, “in most cases, literature is referred to as the entirety of written expression with the restriction that not every written document can be categorized as literature in the more exact sense of the word” (2004, p. 1). This denotes the fact that literature is generally used as an encompassing term under which fall all types of writings on a given subject. It implies, however, a deliberate consideration of what can be categorized as literature in its conventional meaning which is mainly linked to its distinct form as indicated in the following.

In the context of the present study, literature is defined, according to Merriam Webster dictionary, as writings characterized by the excellence of form and the expression of ideas that serves permanent and universal interests (n.d.). Added to this, Lazar (1993) indicates that the term can be used to mean novels, short stories, poems and plays which are produced with the purpose of carrying specific messages with an emphasis on the rich and multi-layered language utilized in them. As such, the aforementioned definitions endeavour to put accent on the idea that the defining characteristic of a literary text lies in its focus on impressing the reader and invoking certain feelings by means of its peculiar style.

In line with this, Rainsfold provides a definition which seems to be very much in keeping with the previous idea that literature can be defined with regard to form and content; for him, literature is “a kind of writing in which the way that something is said matters as much as what is said, or where the way that something is said is part of what is said” (2014, p. 8). As such, one cannot fail to notice the paramount importance attributed to the way a literary composition is shaped to be, effectively, set apart from other non-literary writings. By the

same token, there emerges a need for a brief account of the diverse forms of literary texts which are divided into four main types: novels, short stories, poems and plays (Klarer, 2004).

Firstly, a novel stands for a variety of extended works of fiction that are written in prose. It is characterized by a great multiplicity of characters and events, a complication of the plot and an ample development of milieu (Abrams & Harpham, 2012). Examples of well known novels include: Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* and Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. Secondly, a short story, as well, is a form of prose to which most of the narrative techniques of the novel are applicable. It is, however, distinguished from the novel by being a brief work that is usually read in one sitting as indicated by Edgar Allan Poe who is said to be the pioneer of such "prose tales" (Abrams & Harpham, 2012). Thirdly, as opposed to the novel and the short story, a poem is, according to Cuddon (1977), an artistic composition of verse in which words are patterned with the purpose of eliciting a sort of tune that cannot be found in prose. It may be in rhyme, a blank verse or a combination of the two. Poetry can be, hence, regarded as a special form of creation that is distinguishable by its aesthetic features and stylistic form. Finally, a play is a literary work which is meant to be performed on stage by actors who play the role of the characters and perform the actions and the utterances of the written dialogue. It falls within the range of the literary genre termed "drama" which subsumes a number of types including poetic drama (written in verse) and closet drama (written to be read rather than performed). William Shakespeare is believed to be one of the major figures of this genre; he is the playwright of famous dramatic works such as: *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, to name but a few (Abrams & Harpham, 2012).

Of note, these literary texts are demarcated from other texts since they entail a crucial factor which leads to literary understanding termed as literary competence. By definition, literary competence is an implicit understanding of and familiarity with certain conventions

which allow readers to transform the passages they read in a poem, a novel or a play into literary meanings (Lazar, 1993). To put it in a different way, those readers who are labeled as “competent” are equipped with a certain facility to extract the implied meanings which the authors of literature aim at promoting. For instance, Lazar introduces the example of the way a reader deals with the sentence in a newspaper and in a poem. She posits that the sentence in the newspaper is expected to convey a factual meaning of informing about a given incident; conversely, in the poem, the reader does not satisfy himself with the literal meaning of the sentence. Rather, he draws upon certain symbolic and metaphorical considerations to associate implicated meanings with that sentence. Culler (1997) points out that literature can be seen as “a speech act or textual event that elicits certain kinds of attention” (p. 27). This supports the claim that reading literature requires a certain level of literary competence, and this is the main incentive for the quest to develop it in learners through the teaching of literature.

1.2. The Significance of Teaching Literature to Foreign Language Learners

Germane to the foregoing is an attempt to answer the overarching question as to whether literature holds an essential place in foreign language teaching; in fact, it is not an easy matter for those in favour of literature teaching to provide undisputed evidence to justify its utility (Sell, 2005). That is to say, there exists no agreement, among scholars and researchers in this field, on the significance of literature teaching, the thing that instigates the emergence of two opposing viewpoints regarding this issue: the case against and the case for teaching literature.

1.2.1. The Case against Teaching Literature

The scholars who stand in this position should not be seen as opponents of literature teaching. Rather, they try to proffer some descriptive insights in order for them to reveal the

difficulties that might be brought about as a result of relying on literature in language teaching. Their major claim revolves around the nature of literary language which is deemed distinct. By way of illustration, Hall (2015, p. 9) describes the language utilized in literature as “difficult, specialised, out of date, or just some way 'different'”. In turn, Leech (1988, as cited in Lazar, 1996) states that literary texts usually contain a sort of difficult language which tends to deviate from common rules. In the same vein, it is of paramount importance to note that the rhetoric functions of the language in poetry and prose are far removed from the conventional use of language to which students are generally exposed in non literary discourse. A good case in point is that the lexicon and the syntactic structures used in writing poems are meant to create specific effects which cannot be easily grasped by the student (Disvar & Tahriri, 2009).

Another reason why literature teaching might be rejected is that it does not serve the communicative skills of students. Developing the ability to use language communicatively is said to be a top priority for language teachers. However, literature is commonly construed as a matter of reading what is written and writing what is read which makes it of no utility in terms of the communicative use of the language (Sell, 2005). This assumption meets some support from McKay (1982) who believes that literature has no direct contribution to the achievement of student’s occupational purposes. By this, it is meant that students are expected to use language for practical purposes to solve real world problems rather than using it with the purpose of stressing its aesthetic and poetic features.

In addition to the foregoing, the selection of material, a crucial step in literature teaching, poses a huge difficulty for teachers; they are required to consider the nature of the literature that they teach, for it is imperative for them to be aware of all the responses that the materials can stimulate on the part of the learners (Beach, Appleman, Hynds & Whithelm, 2011). Besides, a multiplicity of factors should be taken into account when it comes to

selecting the appropriate material for an effective literature course. Khatib, Rezaei and Derakhsan state that “teachers should be wary about such factors as the learner’s language proficiency, age, gender, and background knowledge” (2011, p. 204). This suggests that the content presented in a literature classroom ought to be based on learners’ needs and their different individual characteristics. Thus, this can act as an objection to be added to the list of arguments against the teaching of literature regarding the extent to which it is sophisticated to deal with the various discrepancies at the level of learners’ profiles.

1.2.2. The Case for Teaching Literature

In spite of the difficulties explained in the account above, there are firm grounds to underscore the argument for teaching literature. Literature is often seen as an indispensable element in foreign language teaching because of the several benefits it offers: authenticity, motivation, development of language abilities and cultural enrichment.

- *Authenticity*

One of the most prominent claims which support literature teaching is that it provides an opportunity for students to be exposed to authentic texts. Collie and Slater (1987) stress the importance of the human issues with which literary texts are primarily concerned. The value of literature, in this respect, stems from the originality of the texts whose creation is, in essence, aimed at being enjoyed by the creator and the readers as well. Therefore, what makes literature authentic is its focus on discussing important issues without considering the vocabulary and syntactic structures that contribute to the simplification of language. It is genuine in the sense that the author’s main purpose rotates around expressing his ideas and feelings in an artistic manner regardless of the potential difficulties that the reader may encounter in understanding the deployed language (Setyowati, 2018).

- *Motivation*

It is a matter of fact that motivation is an essential factor which helps learning to take place (Dörnyei, 1998). Literature in foreign language teaching might cause motivation to happen and be a rich source of learners' interest. According to Lazar (1993), the different forms of literary texts deal with a multiplicity of complex themes which captivate students' attention; as a result, these latter become motivated to know more and analyze the problems presented in literary materials. The same author states that a good composition of prose, a novel or a short story can develop a sense of interest in the learners emanating from their will to explore the transitions of the plot and the various circumstances which the characters undergo throughout the story.

- *The Development of Language Abilities*

As opposed to the views postulating its difficulty for language learners, the language of literature is, in most cases, said to have considerable bearings on the improvement of students' linguistic abilities; it contributes to the process of language acquisition which foreign language learners undergo. Lazar posits that the importance of literature in developing language abilities is best perceived in students' being given the opportunity to process and interpret language that is employed in a wide range of contexts; she states that "literature may provide a particularly appropriate way of stimulating language acquisition as it provides meaningful and memorable contexts for processing and interpreting language" (1993, p.15). In line with this, Collie and Slater (1987) put accent on the utility of literature teaching through the provision of a number of merits by which literature is characterized. The following are but a few:

- Literary works expose students to many functions of the written language;
- Students can be exposed to various ways of linking ideas logically;
- Students gain familiarity with many features of language formation and the possible structures embedded in a given language;

- Students develop the ability to make inferences from linguistic clues and to elicit meaning from context.

- *Cultural Enrichment*

Literature teaching enables learners to have access to the cultural background of the people whose language is being learned. That is to say, through the exposure to a diversity of literary works in the classroom, students are asked to consider the culture from which literature is produced. They are, hence, encouraged to develop some awareness of the historical, political and social aspects which shape the background of a certain literary composition (Lazar, 1993). Furthermore, it is argued that literature provides a vivid context which depicts the life of characters that belong to different societies. It allows the student to become acquainted with their way of thinking, feelings, customs, and beliefs (Collie and Slater, 1987). Van (2009, as cited in Khatib et al; 2011) et al. (2011) stresses that the teaching of literature plays a pivotal role in promoting one of the most important requirements in the era of globalization, namely intercultural awareness. In so doing, it helps in developing a sense of accepting the other and tolerating the differences across cultures.

1.3. Models of Literature Teaching

After discussing the significance of teaching literature, the focus shifts to the central guidelines for conducting this process. There emerges a necessity for exploring the most prominent models which govern the enterprise of literature teaching. Beach et al. (2011) state that:

“In your teaching, you will continually be making decisions about how to best foster students learning. These decisions are based on what you value in terms of what works. What you believe works reflect your preferred teaching model and what you think is important in teaching literature” (p.10).

This is meant to support the presumption that the teaching model which the teacher adopts relies, in essence, on his perspective towards the most plausible purpose for which literature should be taught. Put differently, each of the following models represents a distinct way of

viewing the utility of literature teaching which can be examined from different perspectives such as cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal enrichment.

The cultural model, the language model and the personal growth model are first introduced by Carter and Long (1991) to become the most common models that teachers tend to adopt. Nevertheless, it is argued that they should preferably be regarded as tendencies rather than exclusive models whose overlapping is not allowed. In effect, the teacher is not confined to adhere to a particular model to the exclusion of the others; instead, he is likely to draw upon the tenets of the three models in order for him to elicit certain teaching practices that ascertain the achievement of the intended objectives (Carter & Long, 1991).

1.3.1. The Cultural Model

The Cultural Model is also known as the traditional model or the content-based model given that literature itself is considered as the content to be delivered; the focus is directed towards the literary aspects that are linked to the text including: the characteristics of literary movements, the literary genres and the rhetorical devices (Lazar, 1993).

This model looks at literature as works reflecting the highly intellectual ideologies that are thought and felt within a certain culture making literature a property exclusive to the elite. In this respect, the teaching of literature is deemed necessary to connect students with valid values over a given historical period. Within this framework, literature teaching allows for the understanding and the appreciation of the cultures that are in no way similar to the student's; he is enabled to come into grips with the feelings, traditions of thought and the diverse artistic forms which, in tandem, make up the literary heritage of such cultures (Carter & Long, 1991). Accordingly, Yimwillai (2015) stresses the fact that students taught according to a cultural model are expected to develop a facility in exploring and interpreting the social, political and historical aspects of the text. Again, this comes to confirm the focus put by teachers adhering

to this model on the cultural background of the studied text at the cost of other aspects like language.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the cultural model is inherently tied to a teacher-centered transmissive pedagogic mode (Carter & Long 1991). In other words, texts are considered as products to be studied in order for students to obtain information about them. The teacher, therefore, takes the responsibility to highlight the most important elements and to deliver them in a traditional method wherein students' contributions are minimized.

As put by Lazar (1993), the significance of the content-based model stems from its being genuinely educational in the sense that the understanding of texts is favoured through situating them in their historical and cultural context. At the other extreme, this model is said to have some inconveniences which are likely to impinge on students' performance. As literature itself is the content, students are likely to encounter difficulties in understanding the intricacies contained in an unmodified literary text; as a result, they tend to rely on the teacher to carry out the process of language simplification through explaining and paraphrasing. Of course, this might lead to students' demotivation and can be the major reason behind which the cultural model is mostly appropriate for students who are described as "literary-minded" (Lazar, 1993).

1.3.2. The Language Model

One cannot fail to notice that promoting language development is one of the salient justifications for literature teaching. By dint of this, teachers of literature are intrigued to adopt an orientation towards a language model which, as suggested by its terminology, emphasizes language enrichment as its prime priority. The inception of this model is originally meant to direct attention towards the varied and creative instances of language use in a wide range of contexts.

Bringing the language of a literary text to the fore tends to bring about notable improvements at the level of students' competence in terms of grammar, lexis, syntax and semantics. As such, by adopting the language model in literature teaching, teachers aim at developing students' abilities to understand advanced levels of language manipulation through a careful examination of the way the styles of writings are varied in literary texts (Lazar, 1993). Moreover, students are encouraged to reflect upon their previous knowledge of the grammatical, lexical and discoursal categories to provide various aesthetic judgments of the text. As an ultimate aim, students are expected to develop, as Lazar maintains, self autonomy in analyzing the linguistic features of a given text without recourse to total reliance on teachers' guidance.

Situating the discussion in a pedagogical context, the language model diverges from the content-based model in terms of teaching centeredness. It attempts to be learner-centered and activity-based with a particular attention to language use. That is to say, students are given an active role in contributing to the learning process through carrying out individual analyses of the linguistic structures contained in the literary text under study. Language-based activities, such as guessing the meaning from linguistic clues, are widely incorporated in every lesson to maintain the integral link between literature teaching and language teaching (Carter & Long, 1991).

Not surprisingly, the language model represents one of the most prominent viewpoints with regard to the way literature should be taught. This is why Lazar (1993) puts accent on what can be regarded as advantages of the model. She states that it is one way of justifying the incorporation of literature in language syllabi given the fact that it helps students to achieve their main aim which is enhancing their knowledge of the language; the students' exposure to literature acts as a revision of grammar and vocabulary. Besides, she indicates that within

such a model, students are provided with a set of analytical tools which they make use of to reach their own interpretations.

However, the foregoing does not suggest that adopting a language model to literature teaching is a way of obviating all the possible problems in the classroom. The rigid application of the principles of this model, with a definite exclusion of personal interpretation, might result in rendering the teaching operation a mechanical one. The pure linguistic analysis of texts, which are by definition meant to be enjoyed, is likely to be detrimental to students' motivation and to learning in general. In addition, one important aspect which might be ignored within this framework is the cultural context of the texts though it proves extremely useful for the interpretation of literary meaning (Lazar, 1993).

1.3.3. The Personal Growth Model

As personal enrichment is one of the most fundamental purposes of literature teaching, the personal growth model is devised to fulfil this aim. It transcends the focus on culture and language to bring into play students' personal engagement with the reading of literary texts. This implies that success, according to the proponents of this model, is contingent on the extent to which students can develop a sense of enjoyment and interest in literature as a highly valued human production; it cannot be measured through passing examinations and tests. Adhering to the principles of the model at issue, teachers impart a continuing pleasure in reading literature which surpasses the limits of the classroom. In other words, students' engagement with literature is meant to be renewed and maintained throughout the rest of their lives; therefore, reading literature is no longer considered as a classroom activity that can be easily neglected outside it (Carter & Long, 1991).

In most cases, personal growth is looked at as the learner's ability to understand his own society and to realize his role within it. Thus, it is argued that teaching literature for personal

growth purposes allows students to grow as individuals and to establish well connected relationships with people around them. This is mainly achieved, as Carter and Long point out, through drawing upon one's own feelings, viewpoints and personal experiences in relation to the theme with which the literary text is concerned.

In practice, teachers are required to create an involving atmosphere where students become motivated to imaginatively respond to the texts. On this basis, the personal growth model is put alongside the language model as student-centered models of literature teaching. Its overall aim revolves around the personal involvement of the students which can be demonstrated through their active participation in the literature classroom. In addition to this, student-centeredness is better pursued through encouraging students to provide their own evaluation of the material to which they are exposed; eventually, they are likely to be equipped with an ability to distinguish what is deemed great literature from less successful instances (Carter and Long, 1991).

Accounting for the merits of this model, Lazar (1993) notes that teaching literature according to the methodological assumptions of the personal growth model helps students to be intellectually and emotionally involved in studying the text. This involvement of students as whole persons might lead to increasing their motivation in the literature classroom. Furthermore, it is useful for stimulating group works in the classroom where students are allowed to share their personal experiences within the limits of the discussed theme.

Nevertheless, requiring students to demonstrate a personal response can be examined from a different perspective which places it within the drawbacks of the personal growth model. This is likely to be tenable when considering the fact that some texts are remote from students' personal experiences, and students may not be able to respond to them meaningfully. Besides, the linguistic intricacies which underlie literary compositions might

impinge on the extent to which students can provide their own response; this can act as a barrier which hinders the personal growth of individuals. Of note is the importance of students' personalities in applying this model; students who are oriented towards introversion may show some reluctance to discussing their personal experiences in the literature classroom which makes their personal enrichment extremely complex (Lazar, 1993).

1.4. Approaches to Literature Teaching

As put by Richards and Schmidt (2010, p.30), an approach to teaching refers to “the theory, the philosophy and principles underlying a particular set of teaching practices.” There are various assumptions which cater for the optimal way to teach literature providing insightful glimpses into a variety of classroom practices. This helped in the emergence of several approaches to literature teaching: the information-based approach, the paraphrastic approach, the stylistic approach, the language-based approach, the personal response approach and the moral philosophical approach.

1.4.1. The Information-Based Approach

The main principle of Information-Based Approach rotates around providing students with knowledge about literature and rich information about the literary text being studied. As such, teachers are required to be well equipped with adequate knowledge about the input that is prepared for delivery. In turn, the input incorporates a variety of contents such as the political, historical, cultural and social background from which the text cannot be detached. This approach is likely to be linked to the cultural model of literature given its focus on the contextual factors of literary texts (Hwang & Embi, 2007).

Rashid, Vethamani and Rahman (2010) contend that the inherent basics of the information-based approach are founded in conformity with what is entailed by teacher-centered approaches to literature teaching. Put differently, it is teacher-centered in the sense

that the lessons are mostly delivered by means of teachers' lecturing wherein the teacher tends to be the sole source of information and explanation in the classroom. As for students, they are obviously oriented towards being passive in the course of their learning in which their contribution is barely of notice. Learners' primary concern is limited to accumulate knowledge about the most fundamental literary conventions and critical concepts that can be of paramount importance in talking or writing about literature (Carter & Long, 1991).

1.4.2. The Paraphrastic Approach

Unlike the information-based approach, the paraphrastic approach attributes much significance to the linguistic aspect of literature. As stated by Disvar (2014), it is based on paraphrasing the text to less sophisticated levels of language intricacies through the use of less complex sentence structures and words mainly in order for the text to become within the grasp of students. In addition to paraphrasing, translation to other languages is another instrument to which teachers resort to favour understanding on the part of students who might encounter certain difficulties with the language of the original text.

Indicating that it is an approach which concerns itself with the surface meaning of the text, Hwang and Embi (2007) argue that the paraphrastic approach to literature teaching is categorized as teacher-centered. According to them, the most prominent characteristic which makes it belong to that category is the undue reliance of students on teachers in the course of paraphrasing or translating the text into another language. This makes most of the activities in the classroom revolve solely around teachers' contribution especially in the absence of motivating activities in which students might be intrigued to take part. Furthermore, Rosli (1995), as cited in Rashid et al. (2010), underscores the argument for adopting a paraphrastic approach to teaching beginners who are in need for the processes of simplification underpinning this approach.

1.4.3. The Stylistic Approach

Shibu (2006) points out that “[t]he stylistic approach regards literature a discourse and studies it from a linguistic perspective” (p. 37). This denotes that the linguistic features embedded in literary texts hold an essential place in the teaching of literature according to what is advocated by the proponents of this approach. It is meant to fulfil two salient aims which, according to Lazar (1993), are:

- Allowing students to interpret the text meaningfully.
- Expanding students’ knowledge and awareness of the language.

This is meant to stress the idea that the attempt to achieve one of the aims does not necessarily exclude the achievement of the other. Instead, the stylistic approach is concerned with both the content and the form of the literary text being studied. On the whole, as an ultimate aim, the current approach strives to bring about an appreciation of the literary texts through the emphasis on the discussed theme and the various styles utilized to introduce it.

The stylistic approach can be regarded as being learner-centered since it accentuates students’ contribution to the literary analysis of texts; it enables students to be engaged in a complex process of interpreting the meaning of the text rather than depending on the teacher to provide readymade interpretations. What is more, it involves students in activities of comparing various types of texts in order for them to explore the way different social functions are expressed in literature (Lazar, 1993).

Nonetheless, it is worth highlighting that relying on students’ linguistic intuitions in analyzing texts poses a problematic issue in the process of teaching. This is especially true when considering the claim that learners’ intuitions about language might be quite different from the author’s; in most cases, there is an inevitable mismatch between their linguistic, cultural and literary background. Moreover, it is argued that the stylistic approach expects students to appreciate literary texts without identifying a clear strategy on which they might

depend to achieve that aim. Consequently, students are likely to find themselves lost in terms of how to approach the analysis of texts, and they mostly lose motivation as a result (Lazar, 1993).

1.4.4. The Language-Based Approach

The core idea of the language-based approach is that literature can be taught for the purpose of language learning. Teaching literature by means of this approach enables students to enhance their language proficiency and expand their language awareness through the examination of the different ways in which language is employed in literary texts (Carter & Long, 1991). In the same line, Rashid et al. (2010) state that adhering to this approach entails shifting the focus to the learner and developing language and developing his reading processes. This can be seen as the main reason behind which this approach is most appropriately adopted in teaching literature to language learners.

As it puts accent on the learner and the variety of his learning processes, the language-based approach is, by definition, learner-centered and process-oriented. It attempts to involve students in exploring the linguistic aspect of a text and accounts for the diverse processes they utilize to analyze the unfamiliar instances of language use. This can be illustrated through teachers' reliance on a wide range of engaging classroom activities making this approach an activity-based one (Lazar, 1993). In this respect, Carter and Long (1991) argue that most of the activities which teachers use within this approach originate from language learning classes; they are, undoubtedly, not specific to literature teaching. A list of the most common of these includes: jigsaw reading, role play, rewriting stories and cloze poetry recital.

1.4.5. The Personal Response Approach

Being closely linked to the personal growth model of literature teaching, the reader response approach aims at imparting students' personal development (Rashid et al., 2010). It

attempts to involve students in the study of literature and makes them connect the themes they discuss to their personal life experiences; this can be carried out through demonstrating personal responses that are unique to each student in the classroom. According to Disvar (2004), the reader response approach does not merely confine learners to accumulate knowledge of literature and language; rather, it engages them in studying literary texts to achieve personal satisfaction and pleasure.

It cannot be denied that the reader response approach is by all accounts learner-centered as it is based on students' responses to what they are exposed to in the literature classroom. Hwang and Embi (2007) state that there is a number of activities which favour students' responses in the literature classroom, namely small group discussions, journal writing, interpreting opinions and brainstorming. Thus, teachers are required to allow students to carry out most of classroom practices and to be primarily concerned with assisting them to draw on their personal experiences in order for the ultimate aim of the approach to be achieved.

1.4.6. The Moral Philosophical Approach

It is an approach which sheds light on the moral values of which the works of literature are abundant. As such, its primary focus is put on exploring these values through the critical analysis of meaning in the text; learners are required to go beyond the surface meaning of the text in order for them to discover the moral aspect which the author intends to impart (Hwang & Embi, 2007). According to Rachid et al. (2010), the awareness of moral and philosophical features of a certain literary work enables students to achieve high levels of personal growth and self-actualization which is, as indicated in previous accounts, one of the main justifications for literature teaching in general.

In the light of what is claimed by the proponents of this approach, it can be argued that teaching literature using the moral philosophical approach is arguably oriented towards

learner-centeredness; students are required to develop autonomy in coming into grips with the moral values contained in each text they study. However, this does not imply the absence of an important role played by teachers within the classroom. That is to say, it is within the teacher's remit to direct students towards understanding values which cannot be grasped easily; he is also responsible for selecting works which contain a wide range of moral and philosophical considerations in order for learners to become acquainted with them (Rashid, et al., 2010).

All in all, it is worth noting that these six approaches have much bearing on the previously mentioned models of literature teaching. As introduced by Ling, Ling and Eng (2016), the information-based approach falls under the cultural model of literature teaching given that it focuses on literary knowledge only. Secondly, the language model incorporates three approaches which examine the linguistic aspect of literary texts; they are: the paraphrastic approach, the stylistic approach and the language-based approach. Thirdly, the last two approaches – the personal response approach and the moral philosophical approach – are said to be closely linked to the personal growth model of literature teaching as they bear upon students' personal development. The following is a conceptual framework which summarizes the current discussion.

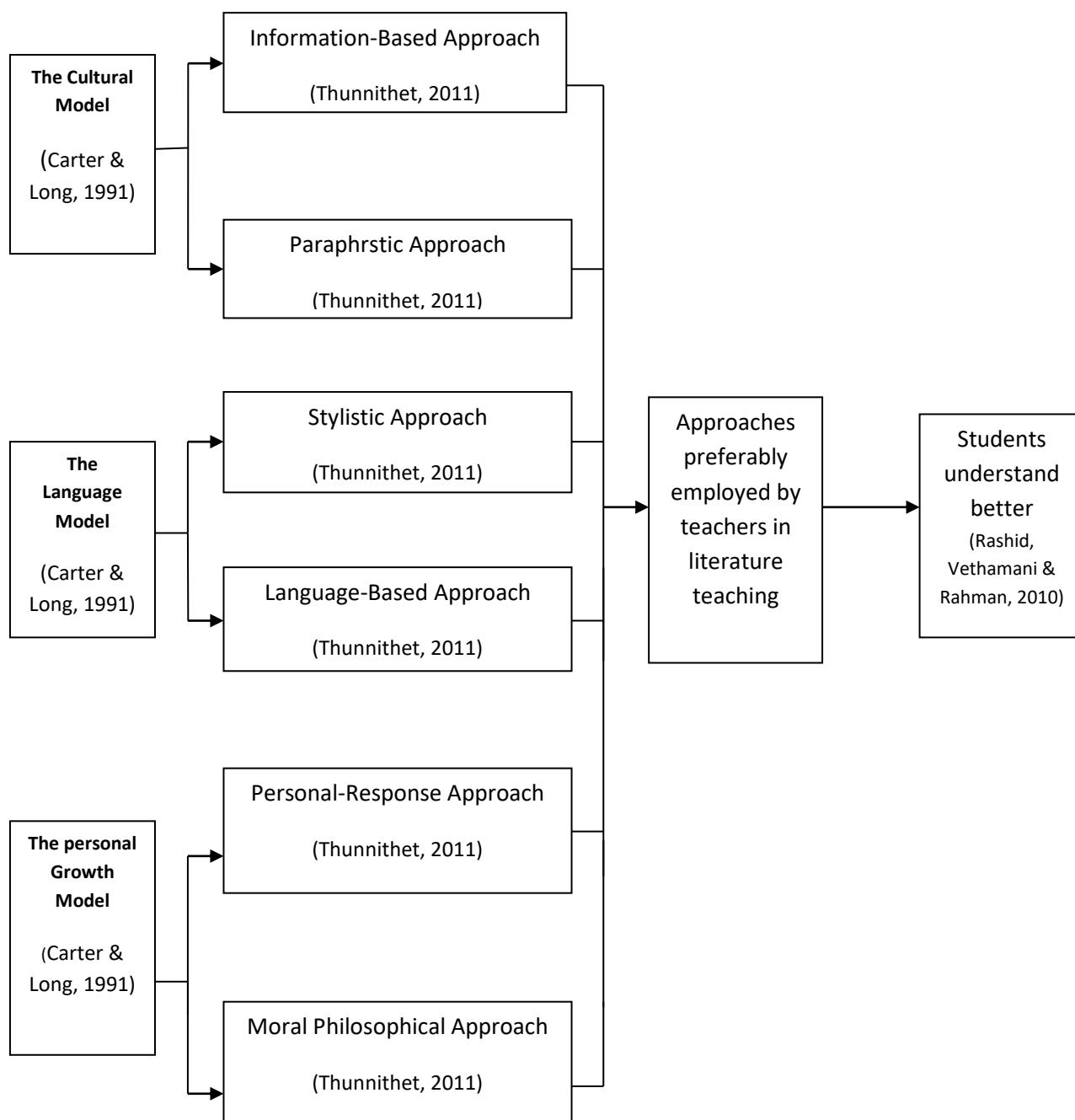


Figure 1.1. Conceptual Framework of Literature Teaching Models and Approaches (Ling et al., 2016, p. 2).

1.5. Material Selection in the Literature Classroom

Undoubtedly, selecting materials is a vital step in the process of literature teaching. It is a preliminary phase wherein decisions on the most appropriate texts to be studied are taken. Given this importance, the selection of materials takes place under a deliberate consideration

of a number of factors that have a direct impact on the success or failure of teaching. Lazar (1993) argues that this essential step is meant to find a diversity of texts which are suitable for the majority of students. To achieve this aim, she provides different factors which are regarded as the most essential considerations in the materials selection. They can be divided into two main categories: factors connected to students and factors connected to texts.

1.5.1. Factors Connected to Students

When selecting materials, it is necessary to consider several points that are related to the learners who will study and analyze the texts. In any literature classroom, there are three basic factors to consider with regard to students' abilities. These are:

1.5.1.1. Students' Cultural Background

Given that the cultural background of students has a pivotal role to play in their ability to understand texts, it is essential for teachers to be wary of the extent to which the cultural background of the students might help or hinder understanding the cultural aspects included in the text. In other words, those texts which provide a cultural background that is in no way similar to that of the students are better avoided as a way to promote understanding (see chapter on intercultural competence). Besides, teachers are required to take into account the background that they should offer to their students in order for them to, at least, have a basic understanding of the texts. However, this does not deny that texts which seem to be extremely remote in time and space might be appealing for students since they tackle themes which are pertinent to the student's life, or they might touch upon human relationships and universal issues.

1.5.1.2. Students' Language Proficiency

Notwithstanding the possibility that students have advanced levels of language proficiency, they might be, in the main, unable to adapt to the unusual use of language which characterizes literary texts. The language of these texts does not comply with the norms of the parlance utilized by students in daily life communication; it is full of archaisms, rhetorical devices and figurative expressions. These are among the considerations with which the process of selecting materials is mostly concerned. In addition, whilst this phase, there is a need to answer a set of questions which act as standards on the basis of which the texts might be selected:

- Are students adequately acquainted with the ordinary norms of language use to recognize them when they are altered?
- How much meaning will students be able to infer?
- Will students enjoy studying the text, or will they be demotivated due to the difficulty of the language?
- Will they be attracted towards other aspects in the text if the language is too difficult?

1.5.1.3. Students' Literary Background

Selecting a text that is suitable for the majority of learners is not limited to the grading of language; it ought to bring into the limelight the specific literary qualities associated with texts. Central to this is examining the extent to which students have built a literary competence which enables them to grasp the implied meaning of the text. Hence, knowing about students' ability to manipulate the conventions of literary understanding helps to select materials which are compatible with their competence. In the same line, it is argued that students who have inadequate literary knowledge encounter countless difficulties in understanding the text even if they are linguistically proficient. They are likely to understand every separate word in a literary composition without being able to grasp the literary meaning behind those words.

1.5.2. Factors Related to Texts

As texts represent the core of materials utilised in the literature classroom, they are closely examined from different perspectives before being selected and subsequently delivered to students. This selection is conducted on the basis of several factors.

1.5.2.1. Availability

By availability of texts, it is meant that only those materials which are within reach are selected. In this regard, the selection of text takes into account such concerns as:

- What kind of books and texts which are likely to be available for selection?
- How easily can these texts be made available to students?

1.5.2.2. Length of Texts

The length of text is a crucial factor in material selection as regards the teaching of literature, for it is obvious that unmodified literary texts cannot be suitable for being studied in the classroom context unless their length is optimal. Therefore, it is necessary to consider questions such as the following:

- Is there enough time to work on the text in the classroom?
- How much time will students spend working on the text outside the classroom?
- Is it possible to use a part of the text only?
- Does using an abridged version of the text serve the objectives of the course?

1.5.2.3. Exploitability

Texts are meant to be used in order for teachers to reach certain objectives. This requires a consideration of the exploitability of the text and the extent to which it is useful for the development of students' abilities. Exploitability entails accounting for these points:

- What are the tasks and activities that can be devised to exploit the text?

- Are there enough resources available to help the teacher to exploit the text?

1.5.2.4. Fit with Syllabus

The last factor to be considered is the compatibility of the text with the syllabus to which the teacher adheres. The selection of materials is concerned only with those texts which conform to the rest of the syllabus elements, and which do not affect the objectives of the course. Pertinent to this, then, is answering the following:

- How is the text in conformity with the rest of the syllabus?
- Is the teacher able to devise tasks and activities to exploit the text with the same methodology he uses in teaching other elements in the syllabus?

1.6. Assessing and Evaluating Students' Learning

Assessment is a process of collecting information about students' learning and whether they have achieved the intended learning objectives. It is also a means by which teachers can be informed about the effectiveness of their teaching and therefore helps to solve the problems which might hamper the learning process (McKay, 2006). In the teaching of literature, assessment is a vital issue to which much attention is oriented since it enables teachers to check the suitability of their approach to literature teaching for the taught students. Carter and Long (1991) argue that examinations are not recommended to be the result of teaching literature as literature is a subject which requires time in order for learners to develop their abilities; their capacity of understanding literary texts can merely come into play after years of readings. Be it as it may, the evaluation of students' understanding remains a necessity which cannot by any means be overlooked.

According to Beach et al. (2010), throughout the process of evaluation, students' performance is mostly judged on the basis of what the teacher values in teaching literature. Simply put, the teacher's viewpoint about how literature is better learned determines the areas

that he evaluates in students' learning and the assessment tools to be used; for example, a teacher who considers learning literature as a matter of acquiring knowledge about literature is likely to evaluate student's information about literary texts, authors and literary movements through the use of quizzes and worksheets. In this case, the evaluation is completely different from that conducted by a teacher who regards enhancing students' abilities of critical analysis as the priority of literature teaching.

In the same vein, it stands to reason that assessing students in the literature classroom is preferably carried out as a criterion-based evaluation rather than a norm-based one. That is, students are not evaluated as below average, average and above average in their peer group; instead, they are evaluated over a period of time to examine whether they have developed a specific criterion. This helps to engage students in the learning process and make them adopt positive attitudes towards their capacities in understanding literature. Therefore, assessment is meant to provide students with:

- A description of their performance and how well they respond to literature;
- Ways of self-evaluation in order for them to decide upon what they need to improve.

Again, Beach et al. (2010) state that the main purpose of assessing students in the literature classroom is to explore their abilities in developing their own interpretation without relying on teachers. This indicates that assessment in literature teaching is oriented towards building learners' autonomy to analyze the literary texts that they read; moreover, it is often stressed that teachers are confined to avoid what is known as "correct answer" tests to evaluate learners' abilities of interpretation and critical thinking. In so doing, teachers turn their attention towards the use of a multiplicity of assessment tools.

- *Evaluating Journal Responses*

Students are evaluated on the basis of their informal journal responses to texts which are mostly used to foster personal expression of ideas related to the themes of literary texts. This type of assessment is aimed at examining the originality of students' literary interpretations in addition to their critical ability to draw connections between texts. Moreover, teachers might resort to the evaluation of learners through adopting another means termed "blog partners" wherein students provide comments on each other's journal responses to be utilized as a supportive assessment tool.

- *Evaluating Formal Essays*

Evaluating formal essays is meant to test learners' ability to deploy a variety of interpretive strategies and critical analyses through the evaluation of their formal essay writing. These essays are mainly concerned with questions like the elaboration of retelling story events, the explanation of characters' actions and the use of intertextual links. In the main, students are informed about the criteria by which their performance is judged in order for them to be aware of providing answers that fulfil those preset criteria. For instance, teachers might inform their students that the evaluation is carried out on the basis of their capacity to surpass the simple retelling of the story and to make inferences of the underlying theme.

- *Evaluating Classroom Discussions*

In the classroom, students' learning might be evaluated with regard to their use of a diversity of discussion skills while analyzing a given literary text. Hence, evaluating classroom discussion touches upon a number of crucial points such as: learners' frequency of participation, their skills of formulating original interpretations and their ability to provide supportive arguments for their individual viewpoints. It also focuses on students' skills of

interaction in the classroom by considering their ability to restate or to pose counter interpretations to what others suggest.

In a nutshell, it goes without saying that the process of assessment goes along with providing feedback for learners with the purpose of making them aware of their areas of weakness. To achieve this end, teachers are likely to provide their feedback in the form of corrective comments during classroom discussions, or they might, as well, highlight and correct mistakes in students' essay papers (Beach et al., 2010).

Conclusion

Though of a controversial nature as it might seem, literature teaching still persists as a vital element in the context of foreign language learning. It is characterized by a rich multiplicity of teaching approaches which help to make it offer numerous advantages in different areas, whether cultural or otherwise. More particularly, in an era where communication across cultures is the norm, the teaching of literature might, apparently, have a say in aiding learners to enhance their intercultural communicative skills. Therefore, literature teaching might be regarded as an instrument by which students' intercultural awareness is developed.

Intercultural awareness is the focal point around which revolves the following chapter of the current study. It offers a descriptive review of the literature on intercultural communication and the notion of intercultural communicative competence. The latter is believed to be one indispensable element whose acquisition is a necessity for language learners nowadays.

CHAPTER TWO: Intercultural Awareness

Introduction

A language, be it spoken, written, or just in the form of specific gestures, is a tool for one's thoughts to be known in the outer world (Crystal & Robins, 2020). People use language in their daily lives to express their thoughts, show their feelings, or request something they need. Nowadays, many societies are multilingual, comprising people of different cultures trying to live together. This phenomenon has been a tough shell to crack for many researchers in different domains, especially in education. Teachers and curriculum designers have been trying to search for effective solutions for a classroom made up of learners from different ethnic origins. The issue is not only of a linguistic origin, but it leans more towards the problem of having multiple cultures that can potentially clash with each other in one place. This is explained by Byram (1997) in his book "Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence", where he tries to advance a model that bears on cultural differences in the foreign language classroom.

One may argue, however, that there is no need to learn how to deal with the culture of the other if we know his/her language already. In fact, research has proved throughout the years that language and culture are two faces of the same coin; Leveridge (n.d.) supports this notion by stressing that language and culture are two intertwined fields. According to him, language is embedded in culture, and culture can manifest and be passed on through language from one generation to another. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to explore how people from different cultures can communicate with each other effectively by referring to the different works researchers have done throughout the years, the factors that govern this process in a formal and non-formal setting, and the way these factors can be used to better the process of education.

2.1. Defining Intercultural Awareness

Interculturalism is an evolving paradigm that strives to account for the notion of different cultures coexisting in a single society. All of the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the Oxford Dictionary, and the Cambridge Dictionary define the word intercultural as something that takes place between cultures. Bouchard (2011) points out that interculturalism is built on a fair foundation that attempts to keep a sense of equality between the constructing concepts of each competing culture, such as principles, beliefs, and religion. Cantle (2012) suggests interculturalism as a suitable model that can surmount the danger of societies succumbing to a set of divisions caused by cultural differences. He holds the idea that interculturalism is what brings people together to form a unified community despite their ethnic origin. According to him, “it is about envisioning the world as we want it to be, rather than determined by our separate past histories” (p. 212).

Given the foregoing, it can be deduced that interculturalism is one of the essential keys for effective communication and social interaction; this effect is born as a result of it aiding people understand each other’s behaviours and lines of thought, the thing that reduces the risk of any cultural conflict. This is explained further by Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009) who clarify that if people stay culturally distant and unaware of each other’s cultural norms, a cultural situation will occur. Notwithstanding, achieving a grasp on how cultures circle in a society in order to introduce social changes and cultural integrations demands an approach that covers a variety of concerns, ranging from human rights to education.

It is a matter of fact that humans are characterised by their ability to establish various social relationships as they are tend to be sociable by nature (Young, 2008). This view has led researchers and psychologists to invest a great amount of effort into attempting to find what factors are involved in governing a person’s daily social interactions. Zhu (2011) not only

explains intercultural awareness to be one of the main pillars on which successful communication is held, but he also shifts attention towards the number of negative outcomes that can escalate should we not take advantage of it, including misunderstandings and hostile interactions. In Zhu's eyes, intercultural awareness is an individual's ability to be objective and to acknowledge both his/her own culture and the culture of the other.

In the same line, (Baker, 2011) views intercultural awareness as a concept that promotes the absence of cultural subjectivity, the acceptance of cultural differences, and the acknowledgement of coexisting cultures during social interactions. He also argues that intercultural awareness is the most suitable approach that can be used in education nowadays due to the lingering phenomenon of globalisation. He believes that this concept caters for better interactive classes in which learners from different ethnicities are able to share their ideas with a less risk of being misunderstood.

Pushing further, Byram (1997) defines intercultural awareness as "relativisation of one's own and valuing of others' meanings" (p. 35). This is in keeping with the presumption that the acquisition of intercultural awareness starts from valuing oneself and one's culture without excluding valuing the other.

In light of the aforementioned, intercultural awareness can be defined as an individual's ability to be consciously aware that a society is a melting pot of mixed cultures, and to acknowledge not only the defining norms, behaviours, and traditions of his/her culture but also those of the other's culture as well.

2.2. Barriers to Intercultural Communication

In pursuit of achieving effective intercultural communication, there emerges a diversity of impediments which hinder the communication process resulting in misunderstanding

among people who belong to different cultures (Barna, 1997). Four major intercultural barriers may be distinguished: ethnocentrism, stereotypes and prejudice, and language.

2.2.1. Ethnocentrism

One major barrier to intercultural communication is ethnocentrism which can simply be defined as “negatively judging aspects of another culture by the standards of one’s own culture” (Jandt, 2017, p. 86). This entails the belief of the superiority of one’s culture over the rest of cultures. In line with this, Nishiyama (2000) states that ethnocentrism stems from specific ethnic groups’ belief that they possess superior racial characteristics, political system, economic system, religion morality, and social customs.

2.2.2. Stereotypes and Prejudice

Stereotypes and prejudice are usually used together to represent a category of intercultural barriers, for both terms refer to judging individuals with regard to their group membership. The term ‘stereotypes’ is broadly used to mean positive or negative, often unchanging, overgeneralizations about others’ behaviours and attributes on the basis of their ethnic group membership (Marx & Ko, 2019). As for prejudice, another prominent impediment, it refers to the irrational feelings of hatred and suspicion towards a certain ethnic group, religion, race or sexual orientation. It is the feeling which makes one tend to avoid dealing with members of another culture for no specific rational reason (Jandt, 2017).

2.2.3. Language

As far as intercultural understanding is concerned, language plays a vital role in achieving the aim of effective communication. Notwithstanding, language differences prove to be a perennial problem in face of attaining this aim. That is to say, differences of vocabulary, syntax, idiomatic expressions, and idiolects are likely to cause misunderstandings and block the flow of appropriate communication. Another problem that leads to

misunderstanding is that people who try to speak the language of a different culture tend to stick to the literal meanings of utterances without considering their connotation and the context where they should be used (Barna, 1997).

2.3. Intercultural Communicative Competence

2.3.1. Definition

One cannot doubt that a multiplicity of research agendas are established with the common aim of conceptualising intercultural communicative competence, or ICC for short, the thing that results in a plethora of definitions which can be related to this notion. To mention but a few, ICC is defined as an individual's capability of understanding cultures starting from his own and, then, using the knowledge he/she gets to communicate with people from different cultures ("Intercultural communicative competence", n.d.). Adding to that, Byram (1997) views ICC as a set of factors that an individual possesses in order to communicate effectively with people from other cultures. These factors include knowledge of one's own culture as well as the other's, attitudes, skills of interpretation and interaction, and critical cultural awareness.

Along the same line, Bennett (2009) postulates that the notion of ICC refers to the ability to interact with members of the host culture in an effective and appropriate manner that does not violate the norms of that culture. According to him, the scope of intercultural awareness cannot be confined to the language skills and knowledge about culture; instead, it necessitates the willingness to understand members of the target culture deeply. This comes to confirm Fantini's definition of ICC as "a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (2006, p.12, as cited in Gu, 2015).

On the whole, it is concluded that ICC is the ability to understand and be able to interact with other people from different cultures, irrespective of their race or the country they are from. It is about willing to understand how others live, their style of life, their beliefs, and their behaviours in order to share an effective communication with them.

2.3.2. Models of Intercultural Communicative Competence

A plethora of studies and research works are carried out with the purpose of coming into terms with modeling intercultural competence. Researchers attempt to devise a multiplicity of models in order for them to conceptualise the notion of competence and in turn help developing it. Consequently, there emerges a wide variety of models that are named models of ICC ranging from simple to complex frameworks that include sophisticated dimensions.

In this regard, Spitzberg and Chagon (2009) provide a typology which accounts for the main types of ICC models. As they put it, models of ICC can be divided into five major categories that share the same goal of conceptualising ICC but diverge in terms of how to achieve this aim. These categories are: compositional models, co-orientational models, developmental models, adaptational models and causal path models.

In the following, it is not aimed at providing a detailed account for these types; instead, they are introduced briefly to demonstrate the variety of assumptions that strive to conceptualise ICC.

2.3.2.1. Compositional Models

This type of models attempts to determine the components of ICC through the provision of pertinent and possible characteristics and skills which are supposed to underlie competent interactions. A defining feature which sets this category apart from other models is that compositional models are not concerned with the relations that might link the hypothesised components of what can be called “competence” (Spizberg & Chagon, 2009). Not

surprisingly, a number of scholars follow the basics of the compositional type of models in their pursuit to conceptualise ICC. The table below outlines a variety of models which are said to belong to the discussed category.

The model	The scholar(s)	The year
Intercultural competence components model	Hamilton, Richardson and Shuford	1998
Facework-based model of intercultural competence	Ting-Toomi and Kurogi	1998
Deardorff pyramid model of intercultural competence	Deardroff	2006
Global competence model	Hunter, White and Godbey	2006

Table 2.1. Compositional models of ICC (Adapted from Spitzberg & Chagon 2009)

Reviewing this type of models, Spitzberg and Chagon (2009) suggest that these models prove to be of a significant utility when it comes to determining the basic scope that is supposed to be incorporated in a theory of intercultural competence. Nevertheless, it ought to be admitted that compositional models are theoretically weak in terms of defining the relations amongst the components of ICC and the standards through which competence can be evaluated.

2.3.2.2. Co-Oriental Models

Co-orientational models of intercultural competence are mainly concerned with the comprehension results of interactional processes, namely understanding, overlapping perspectives and clarity. In this type of models, much focus is put on a specific standard of communicative mutuality in pursuit of conceptualising the interactional achievement of

intercultural communication (Spizberg & Changon, 2009). The following are some instances of models that fall under the so-called co-orientational models of ICC.

The model	The scholar(s)	The year
Intercultural interlocutor competence model	Fantini	1995
Worldviews convergence model	Fantini	1995
Intercultural competence model	Byram	1997
Intercultural competence model for strategic human resource management	Kupla	2008
Coherence-cohesion model of intercultural competence	Rathje	2007

Table 2.2. Co-orientational models of ICC (Adapted from Spitzberg & Changon 2009)

As regards the utility of this category of models, it is assumed that such models allow for putting accent on the paramount importance of achieving certain levels of mutual understanding through various means of interaction. Furthermore, the significance of these models stems from their striving to answer the overarching question as to how people can adapt to each other's meanings regardless of their dissimilar cultural backgrounds. Contrariwise, one major difficulty that these models end confronting is conceptualising mutual understanding given that most of everyday interactions among competent interactants are characterised by ambiguity (Spizberg & Changon, 2009).

2.3.2.3. Developmental Models

As suggested by its appellation, the developmental type of models is meant to account for the progression of conceptualising ICC; it tackles the stages of development and maturity that competence undergoes throughout the process of its evolution, that is. Developmental

models emphasise the premise that people can become more competent by the passage of time and through embarking on multiple sorts of interactions across cultures (Spizberg & Chanson, 2009). Examples of these models are listed in table 2.3.

The model	The scholar(s)	The year
Intercultural maturity model	King and Magolda	2005
Developmental intercultural competence model	Bennett	1986
U-Curve model of intercultural adjustment	Gullahorn and gullahorn	1962

Table 2.3. Developmental models of ICC (Adapted from Spitzberg & Chanson 2009)

As Spizberg and Chanson (2009) put it, it is believed that developmental models allow for enriching theories on intercultural communication through hypothesising a sequence of stages that are supposed to facilitate the process of conceptualising intercultural competence. In spite of this, one cannot deny that developmental models are relatively weak in terms of identifying the interpersonal and intercultural characteristics which are likely to bring about the evolution of the targeted competence.

2.3.2.4. Adaptational Models

This fourth category of models strives to draw the attention to two salient elements in the process of developing ICC. These are the interactants who are responsible for producing interactions in addition to the change of actions (known as the adjustment process) resulting from these interactions. Within the context of this type, the adjustment process itself is construed as an indicator of one's intercultural competence since it denotes that there occurs a positive alteration of attitudes with an eye towards the acceptance of others' cultures (Spizberg & Chanson, 2009). By way of illustration, the following are some models which are deemed adaptational by nature.

The model	The scholar(s)	The year
Intercultural communicative competence model	Kim	1988
Intercultural communicative accommodation model	Gallois, Franklyn-Stokes, Gills and Coupland	1988
Attitude acculturation model	Berry, Kim, Power, Young and Bujaki	1989
Relative acculturation extended model	Navas, Rojas, García and Pumares	2005

Table 2.4. Adaptational models of ICC (Adapted from Spitzberg & Chagon 2009)

Again, Spitzberg and Chagon (2009) stress the importance of adaptational models in the realm of intercultural communication research pointing out that these models shed light on a crucial requisite of intercultural competence, namely the ability to adapt to different cultures. It is, however, noteworthy that one prominent limitation of this category is its inability to specify the nature of mutual adaptability that is required in every stage of the adjustment process.

2.3.2.5. Causal Path Models

Causal path models are meant to touch upon the specified interrelationships which bring the components of competence together; they are said to be the most convenient type which can be transformed into testable propositions. In this respect, this category of models attempts to reflect ICC as a theoretical linear system that can be exposed to empirical testing by means of standard cross-sectional multivariable techniques (Spizberg & Chagon, 2009). The table below reveals the most well known models that are associated with the causal path type.

The model	The scholar(s)	The year
Model of intercultural communication competence	Arasaratnam	2008
Intercultural communication model of relationship quality	Griffith and Harvey	2000
Multilevel process change model of intercultural competence	Ting-Toomy	1999
anxiety/uncertainty management model of intercultural competence	Hammer, Wiseman, Rasmussen and Brusckke	1998
Deardorff process model of intercultural competence	Deardroff	2006
Relational model of intercultural competence	Imahori and Lanigan	1989

Table 2.5. Causal path models of ICC (Adapted from Spitzberg & Changon 2009)

Of note, the proponents of this category tend to argue that these models are open for adaptation in order for them to meet research requirements and purposes. Moreover, relations of causality govern the vast majority of the relations among the components of competence, the thing that allows for positing explicit hypotheses and straightforward ways to test them. From a different angle, this can be regarded as a drawback of adhering to causal path models; it is indicated that being openly exposed to the process of hypothesis testing and falsification might impinge on the value of such models in proffering well established theories of intercultural communicative competence (Spizberg & Changon, 2009).

It is noteworthy that the variety of the types of models listed above denotes the importance attributed to the notion of ICC in the field of intercultural communication. These models can be regarded as various ways which seek the same aim that is conceptualization of

ICC, so one cannot prove the effectiveness of one model over the other as each one of them stems from a different philosophy that certainly has strengths and weaknesses. However, considering the currency gained by these frameworks in the literature, one cannot fail to notice that Byram's model of ICC is a very common framework in the world of intercultural communication and foreign language teaching (Hoff, 2014), for it attempts to represent a non-biased view on how people with different knowledge, beliefs, behaviours, and languages understand each other in a formal and non-formal setting (Byram, 1997). As such, the following section is specifically devoted to elaborate more on this well known model.

2.4. Byram's Model of Intercultural Communication Competence

In his book entitled "Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence" (1997), Byram showcases a model of ICC that is, according to him, very abstract and not tied to any specific culture or language. In the model, he avoids calling participants present in a dialogue 'speakers'. He believes that an individual, exchanging ideas in an intercultural environment, is not the same individual as he is in his native country, where he is surrounded by people who share with him the same beliefs, traditions, and most of the time the same language; he is, rather, an intercultural speaker. An intercultural speaker is what Byram calls an individual communicating in an intercultural setting. He defines him as a person who has extensive knowledge about the culture of the environment in which he is interacting, who can keep an open mind, and who has the skills to relate what has been said by the other to his own culture. In other words, an intercultural speaker in the eyes of Byram is a person who possesses all of the factors or components underpinning his model which are called the five 'savoirs'.

2.4.1. Knowledge (Savoirs)

In this component, Byram (1997) accounts for the way knowledge can affect intercultural interactions. He believes that an intercultural speaker has two types of knowledge, the knowledge that he brings from his native country, which he can be sometimes unaware of its existence, and the knowledge of the different concepts and processes used in interaction.

Knowledge of the speaker's social experience, i.e. the first type of knowledge, is acquired by a person while he is going about his daily tasks, meeting with people and exchanging messages back and forth with them; this is further explained by Byram when he says: "Through primary socialisation largely in the family and secondary socialisation usually in formal education, the individual acquires knowledge..." (p. 35).

However, the second type of knowledge, knowledge of the processes of interaction, which an intercultural speaker is required to have is unlike the aforementioned. It is the knowledge that an interlocutor has about his culture and the culture of the people he is communicating with. An example of this could be the knowledge about a given history, the traditions, and the behaviours of people of a given country. This is central to successful intercultural communication (Byram, 1997). However, Byram clarifies that having knowledge is not enough in all situations, for it needs the development of intercultural attitudes and further skills to interpret what may happen in some special cases that can appear in a discussion.

2.4.2. Intercultural Attitudes (Savoir Etre)

Byram explains this factor as an individual's ability to have an accepting attitude towards the anomalies that he/she may encounter while communicating with others no matter what their origin or beliefs are. He believes that an intercultural speaker should always try to

see the world from the other's point of view and avoid any cultural barriers that may lead in to a failed interaction (Byram, 1997). In other words, Byram's view of this factor is that for an effective exchange of ideas and thoughts in an intercultural setting, an individual should be ready to accept the different behaviours and thoughts that may seem very odd to him and react to them by showing interest in learning more about the topic and avoiding any signs of surprise or discomfort in order not to offend the other party or bring any awkward moments to the discussion.

It is deduced, then, that the purpose of the present factor is to show intercultural speakers the importance of the attitude they decide to take while partaking in an intercultural communication. Having the will and the curiosity to learn about one's own culture and the culture of the other, knowing that there are differences that one may encounter while dealing with people who have non-identical behaviours and beliefs to one's own, and possessing the willingness to accept as well as to analyse the received message from the other interlocutor from one's point of view and the other's is what Byram tries to achieve through this factor and his other factors: a way for people to communicate effectively in the modern world either for the purpose of teaching and learning, or just for exchanging thoughts and opinions.

2.4.3. Skills of Interpreting and Relating (Savoir Comprendre)

This is the third factor in Byram's model of ICC. It can be seen as the implementation of the two first factors. In this factor, Byram demonstrates how having enough knowledge as well as a positive attitude for intercultural communication is not always successful to sustain an optimal interaction in an intercultural situation. He maintains that "declarative knowledge though necessary is not sufficient, and needs to be complemented by procedural knowledge of how to act in specific circumstances" (Byram, 1997, p. 36). To solve this problem, he proposes that an intercultural speaker should be able to interpret a given message, received in

an intercultural setting, with the aid of his preexisting knowledge, and to mirror the meaning of the interpreted message into similar meanings in his culture. Moreover, he confirms that if the intercultural speaker is able to perform the aforementioned task, he should be able to understand the different metaphors and the indirect meanings that may have been otherwise completely vague (Byram, 1997).

Taking into account what Byram advocates, we can append, to the list of what makes the intercultural speaker, the ability to interpret and to adopt the knowledge obtained from other cultures and make it his own, so that it can be used in the future to help him make more effective choices that may have been fated to make him fail otherwise. It is about learning from experience, and keeping track of what has been learnt to use as material and to solve problems in the future (Byram, 1997).

2.4.4. Skills of Discovery and Interaction (Savoir Apprendre/Faire)

This factor deals more with the practical part of communicating in an intercultural environment. We have seen that the three factors above guide the speaker towards getting a positive interaction while communicating with people from other cultures; however, the inherent approach is more theoretical than it is practical. The fourth component deals with the intercultural speaker's interactions with other interlocutors and how he should act in the case of unexpected situations appearing while conversing; Byram calls this the skills of discovery and interaction. He believes that an intercultural speaker should be able to discover responses on the fly while conversing with others even if he does not have an extensive amount of knowledge about the issue at hand. Quoting his words, "... the skills of discovery and interaction are the means of augmenting and refining knowledge about the other and knowing how to respond to specific features of interaction with a particular individual" (Byram, 1997, p. 37).

Given the aforementioned, it is crucial for an intercultural speaker to have all the factors mentioned above before reaching this stage; that is, having knowledge about the concepts of socializing, picking the right attitude, and being able to see between the lines are all a must before reaching this stage. Having no idea of what attitude to show in an intercultural interaction could showcase you as a rude person who does not respect the others even if you did not intend it to turn out that way.

2.4.5. Critical Cultural Awareness (Savoir s'engager)

This is the last factor in Byram's model of ICC. It deals more with the educational side than informal interactions. According to Byram, an intercultural speaker should be aware of the different traditions, practices, and beliefs that bear upon both his culture and the culture of the other person he is communicating with. He encourages teachers to teach their students about other cultures and how these can be different from their native culture. In other words, he believes that every educational system should promote intercultural awareness, for when interlocutors are aware, their chance of effectively communicating in an intercultural setting is high (Byram, 1997). From this, it follows that an intercultural speaker should be aware of his culture and the culture of the other, and he should respect it and try to understand the different behaviours that he may encounter. This is likely to lead towards fewer conflicts and less incidents of a cultural clash.

In the following figure, Byram summarises the factors that he believes are necessary for developing intercultural communicative competence.

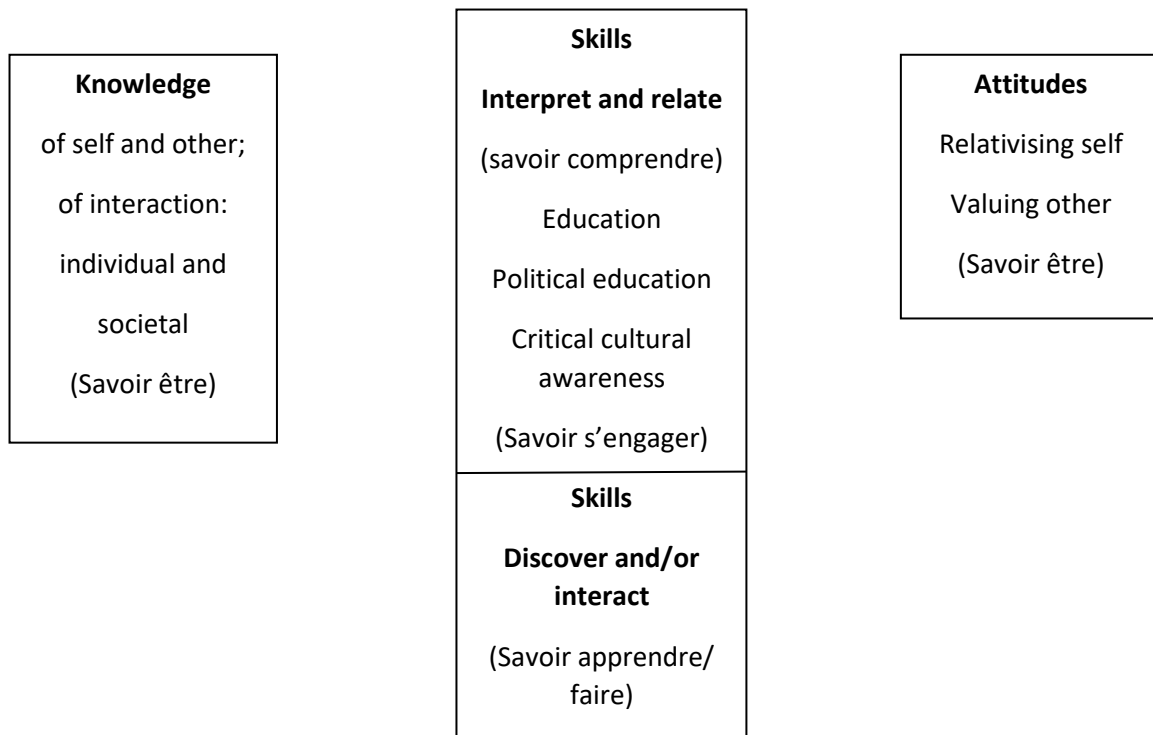


Figure 2.1. Factors of intercultural communication (Byram, 1997, p. 34)

2.5. Teaching Intercultural Communicative Competence

Education is a process that shapes the future of the society we live in. Byram (1997) presents an overview on how the subject of teaching intercultural awareness is viewed by different teachers and educational systems. He believes that educating learners about the cultural diversities which exist in various societies is crucial in order for us to steer away from the reoccurring issue of cultural clash, manifesting when people with different ethnic origins try to connect with each other. In his research, Byram points out that not all teachers and, by extension, not all institutions are for the idea of including additional materials that may contribute to the development of intercultural awareness. This case manifests mainly at the earlier stages of education, specifically at the level of primary schools. The reasoning behind this refusal, according to Byram, is the avoidance of cluttering the syllabus with items that do not benefit the learner at that given stage. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the research

continues and shows that higher education systems are more willing to mix some materials that should introduce the learners into the world of interculturalism (Byram, 1997).

Based on this research, conclusions are drawn concerning the matter of how people, specifically the staff and the teachers in the educational departments, view intercultural awareness. It can be observed that at lower stages of education, people underestimate the value of teaching culture; they believe that language is what a learner needs when he is starting to learn. This point of view may be valid for some; however, for Byram (1997), having an appreciation for culture, starting from a young age, raises the chances of people showing respect for it later. Therefore, it is important for a syllabus to include some teaching material that helps learners get acquainted with different cultures and familiarises them with the different concepts of their culture. The material or course in question is not required to address intercultural awareness explicitly, for acquiring it unconsciously is also a valid method. The mere inclusion of texts that address how other people from a given country interact with each other, for example, would participate in the process of developing the knowledge and awareness of different cultures. Consequently, this might well lead to having more intercultural speakers who can sustain an effective conversation in an intercultural setting.

2.6. Methods and Tools for the Development of Intercultural Communicative Competence

All along the persistent quest for developing learners' ICC, it is imperative for researchers in the field of intercultural communication to devise a variety of methods and tools on which practitioners can rely to promote both competence and awareness thereof.

2.6.1. Methods for the Development of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Several classifications can be proffered to categorise the methods utilised in developing ICC. Tudorache's (2012) may be a convenient one.

2.6.1.1. Cognitive Methods

Cognitive methods entail the reliance on learners' mental abilities. They are meant to collect limitless scopes of knowledge about significant notions such as behavioural norms, history and religion. This category makes use of lectures and seminars in order to present a large amount of information about cultural diversity and therefore serves building learners' ICC on a firm basis.

2.6.1.2. Self-Insight Methods

Through being exposed to self-insight methods, learners are allowed to explore different facets of their personality in terms of reacting to foreign cultures. Self-insight methods are useful in helping learners change their negative attitudes towards the better, especially that they can be utilised in informal learning.

2.6.1.3. Behavioural Methods

As suggested by the appellation, behavioural methods are all about changing learners' behaviours. They help learners to rid themselves of inappropriate behaviours to be supplanted by efficient and respectful ones. These methods allow for the practice and the application of the theoretical knowledge acquired through the use of the cognitive methods.

2.6.1.4. Experimental Methods

In experimental methods, learners are given the opportunity to conceive a real image about the potential impact that their behaviours might have. They are required to create

various situations wherein they use a foreign language and try to act in conformity with the norms and the customs of another culture.

2.6.1.5. Attribution Methods

The core of this class of methods is based upon drawing conclusions out of facts. That is, learners are enabled to explore the dimensions of a certain culture depending on the analysis of observable behaviours demonstrated by the people who belong to it.

2.6.2. Tools for the Development of Intercultural Communicative Competence

With the purpose of studying the methodology of developing intercultural communicative competence, Navaietene et al. (2013) present a review of a set of tools that are mostly utilised in developing ICC.

2.6.2.1. Verbal or Written Description

This tool requires a verbal or written description of the various cultural aspects of a certain culture in order for learners to touch upon the mindset of people who belong to that culture. Through these descriptions, learners are encouraged to get rid of the judgmental thinking steered by stereotypes and prejudice; they develop their levels of empathy and their skills of observation, interpretation, and analysing.

2.6.2.2. Narration of Stories

Fictional, real, or a mixture-of-both stories are crucial means to illustrate groups' cultural diversity which can be thoroughly analysed by learners during discussions. This tool enables learners to take the perspectives of the people involved in the narrated stories. It, therefore, helps them to focus less on their own beliefs and move towards the consideration of other cultures.

2.6.2.3. Theatre, Poetry and Creative Writing

Needless to say, it is generally agreed upon that watching plays, reading poems and creatively rewriting these literary pieces have a significant contribution to students' learning about the cultural diversity of perspectives. This allows learners to explore other people's different aspects of life and personality traits with an eye towards tolerating the differences that exist among cultures.

2.6.2.4. Online Communication

Online communication is meant to be commonly used by learners independently. By means of this tool, students are given an opportunity to virtually interact with people who possess different cultural backgrounds. During instances of online communication, issues of religion, ethnicity, and gender are likely to become insignificant as focus is shifted towards the deep understanding of new cultures and the enhancement of interpretation skills. This tool is deemed effective in a modern era where telecommunication is integrally embedded in every society.

Of note, apart from online communication which is a tool used by learners independently, Navatiene et al. (2013) draw the attention to a number of tools that are pertinent to literature teaching. That is to say, written description, narration of stories, theatre, poetry and creative writing are tools for developing ICC which are likely to take place in the literature classroom. This can be regarded as an indirect way to suggest that the teaching of literature has a role to play in developing learners' ICC.

2.7. Assessment of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Given that it tells about the gaps to be filled, assessing ICC is a crucial step in the process of promoting learners' intercultural awareness; it allows for testing the effectiveness of the syllabi and the methods implemented to teach them (Zheng, 2014).

Byram (1997) holds the idea that before a teacher or a syllabus designer starts to think about assessing the learners, they should first know the objectives they want to achieve with their course or syllabus. In this regard, they try to discover the proper ways to assess the components of ICC termed as 'Savoirs'. Even if the objectives are set beforehand, Byram argues that it is not possible to implement an assessment process that works for all of them. He argues that since every 'Savoir' has its own objectives, different methods of assessment need to be applied for each factor.

To back up his point, he gives the example of assessing the component of 'savoir s'engager'. In his example, he says that this factor is based on an individual interacting with people using the experience he has; however, this cannot be assessed with simple observation (performance assessment) because it is not something that can be controlled and measured (Byram, 1997).

Given the above, we can say that assessing interculturality requires adaptability from the assessor. He/she should be able to choose the proper method of assessment which is supposed to produce the best results possible for each factor. In the same vein, Zheng (2014) stresses the idea that the clarification of the element to be assessed is a prerequisite to conduct an effective assessment. Assessment tools, hence, need to be designed specifically to assess a certain skill or attitude rather than assessing the concept of competence as a whole.

This is to conclude that the importance of assessing ICC ought to capture much interest among researchers in the field of intercultural communication. It is a process which requires a deliberate consideration of the content to be assessed and the tools to be utilised in order for the assessment to be adequate.

Conclusion

Interculturalism is a reoccurring term in the world we live in today. The phenomenon of globalisation prompted the coming of age of this term, and it is likely to last for the coming years due to the digital turn and the means of transportation which are becoming easier and less costly with every passing day. People moving in to new societies and bringing with them new beliefs to share with the others is one reason for us to learn how to accept and communicate properly with them. Being interculturally aware is a huge step for accomplishing the aforementioned goal, for an individual who has the knowledge of how to treat foreigners, how to accept their beliefs, how to handle misunderstandings without ending up being agitated, and most importantly how to look at the events from the point of view of the other person he/she is conversing with, can live successfully and in harmony with other people in a heterogeneous society; as such, it is high time we taught our students how to be culturally aware.

Teaching intercultural awareness is no easy feat, but it is not impossible either. Intercultural awareness can be taught explicitly or implicitly, depending on the way it is presented in the syllabus: It can be included in the form of readable material that addresses another country's style of life, or it can be a set of definitions and factors that should be followed by the learner. The former is most suitable in the literature classroom, where learners experience different tastes of other cultures with every topic they tackle or with every opinion they debate. Therefore, it may be worth it if literature teachers try to shift the focus from time to time to the cultural aspects present in their lesson. This should be done only when there is no risk of not meeting the required objectives of the said lesson.

All in all, it can be synthesised that teaching intercultural awareness plays a role in the stability of our societies that cannot be ignored, for being interculturally aware means that we

have the chance to be more civilised in our ways of interacting with others, and we also get a chance to learn about other people's history, style of life, and literature treasures that we may not have known before or expected them to exist.

CHAPTE THREE: Intercultural Awareness in the Literature Classroom

Introduction

Unlike the two preceding chapters which provide the literature review of the topic at issue, this chapter is devoted to the practical part of the present research. It is devised to bring to the fore the field work which is conducted to collect the information required to answer the research questions and to reach the aims of the study. This chapter is aimed at proffering a thorough description of the most fundamental elements that are pertinent to the field work. This includes the reiteration of the central aims of the study, the participants and the data collection tools. More importantly, this chapter concerns the description, the analysis and the discussion of both the students' questionnaire and the teachers' questionnaire. Further, within the remit of the chapter at hand, an account is made of the major limitations of the study in addition to the provision of some suggestions for further research based on the analysis and the interpretation of the obtained findings.

3.1. Aims of the Research

The current study endeavours to investigate the place of intercultural awareness in the literature classroom. It sets out to explore whether intercultural awareness is emphasised in the literature classroom. Equally, this research attempts to put into question whether the teaching of literature contributes to promoting learners' intercultural awareness.

3.2. The Participants

The present research is carried out at the University of Mila, Institute of Letters and Languages, Department of Foreign Languages. The population with which the study is concerned involves students of English in addition to teachers of literature. Insofar as students are concerned, they are third year students in the academic year '2019/2020'. The parent

population consists of 159 students who are distributed on 4 groups; among these, 60 students constitute the sample of the research. Third year students are opted for due to their familiarity with the module of literature and the likelihood of their having been exposed to longer pieces of literary writing in comparison with first and second year students. As regards teachers they are ten teachers of literature who do not belong to the same university; six of these are teachers at the University of Mila. The remaining four teachers are resorted to for reinforcement purposes. Two teachers are from the University of Jijel, and the other two are from the University of Algiers.

3.3. Data Collection Tools

In the pursuit of the aims the study, two questionnaires are used as a data collection tool, administered to both teachers and students so as to obtain the necessary information.

3.4. The Students' Questionnaire

3.4.1. Description of the Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire aims at exploring the importance of intercultural awareness in the literature classroom and whether it is promoted through the teaching of literature. The respondents are informed about the significance of their answers in the progress of the research, and that their responses are intended to be utilized for study purposes merely. Of course, students are also informed that filling in the questionnaire, through ticking the appropriate box, remains anonymous and voluntary in order for them to express themselves freely and provide truthful answers.

The questionnaire consists of twenty items that are a mixture of close-ended questions and open-ended questions divided into four sections. Of note, the number of questions is minimized to twenty in order to include the most important questions which contribute to

answer the research questions. It is assumed that including more questions leads to students' boredom and, therefore, impinges on the quality of their answers.

The first section is entitled "Background Information"; it attempts to shed light on students' background information in terms of how long they have been learning English in addition to whether they are motivated to study this language.

Following that, the second section, on the literature classroom, is composed of five questions. It is concerned with the students' viewpoints towards the teaching of literature. The first question seeks to determine whether students are interested in literature. The second one is meant to elicit students' attitudes concerning the importance of literature; then, what makes it so important, if at all, is questioned in the third question. The fourth question is designed to bring into play the most prominent obstacles that students encounter in learning literature. Finally, this section is ended by the fifth question which concerns itself with the major purposes behind teaching literature.

The third section is entitled "intercultural awareness" attempting to underscore the second variable in the current study. To begin with, this section is initiated by the first question that aims at exploring whether students are interested in knowing about cultures. The second question tackles the importance of students' awareness of the differences among cultures. After that, the third question of this section aims at investigating the most common factors that result in misunderstanding between people of different cultures. The fourth question is concerned with whether students try to tolerate and embrace the cultural differences that they face when communicating with people of different cultures. Bringing the third section into the close, the fifth question invites the students to evaluate their own level of tolerating cultural differences.

The last section acts as the main section in the students' questionnaire since it is made up of seven questions about intercultural awareness in the literature classroom. It is entitled "intercultural communicative competence in the literature classroom". As for the first question, students are asked about the central emphasis of their literature classroom. The second question aims at exploring whether cultural differences are discussed when literature is taught; students who respond approvingly are asked about the frequency of these discussions in the third question. Next, the fourth question seeks to determine the intercultural obstacles which the literature classroom helps students overcome. In the fifth question, the respondents are asked about whether the literature classroom contributes to developing their ability to accept and respect the other cultures. Then, the sixth question aims at discovering the attitudes towards the other cultures that the students develop when being taught literature. The seventh question is meant to know if the literature classroom enhances students' skills of communicating across cultures. Eventually, in the eighth question, the respondents are invited to provide their viewpoints regarding the utility of the literature classroom in promoting students' intercultural awareness; this is done through comparing it with the utility of the rest of the modules.

3.4.2. Administration of the Students' Questionnaire

Since students are not attending their classes due to the quarantine that is imposed to protect people from the so-called COVID-19 epidemic, it is opted for email as a platform to send the questionnaire to third year students and receive their responses. The process of collecting data has taken about seven weeks to reach the intended sample number which is 60 students.

3.4.3. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

3.4.3.1. Background Information

Q1. How long have you been learning English?

Options	Number	Percentage
10 years	48	80 %
Over 10 years	12	20 %
Total	60	100 %

Table 3.1. Students' experience with learning English

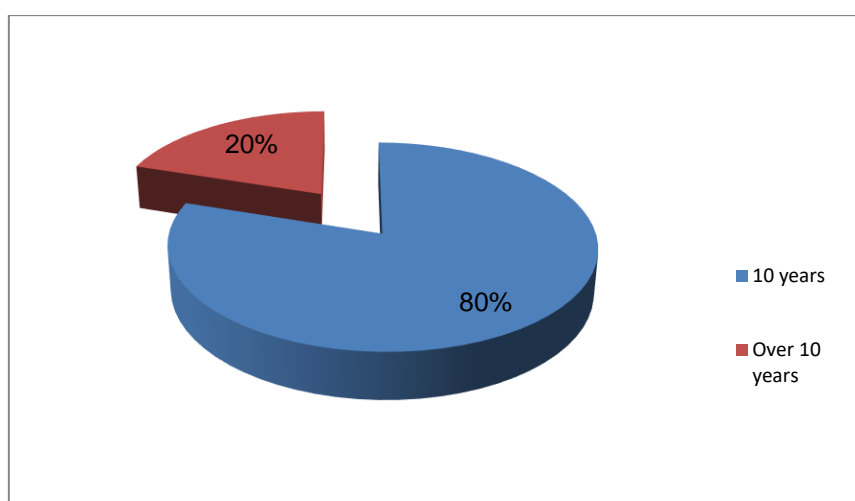


Figure 3.1. Students' experience with learning English

Aiming at exploring some aspects of students' background, this question is set to determine the period of time spent in learning English. Figure 3.1 clearly shows that the majority of students (80%) have been learning English for 10 years. This is because most of the students studied English in the middle school for four years, followed by three years in the secondary school and three years at university. The rest of the participants, (20%) constituting a minority, declare that they have spent over ten years in the process of learning English.

Q2. Are you motivated to learn English?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	54	90%
No	6	10%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.2. Students’ motivation to learn English

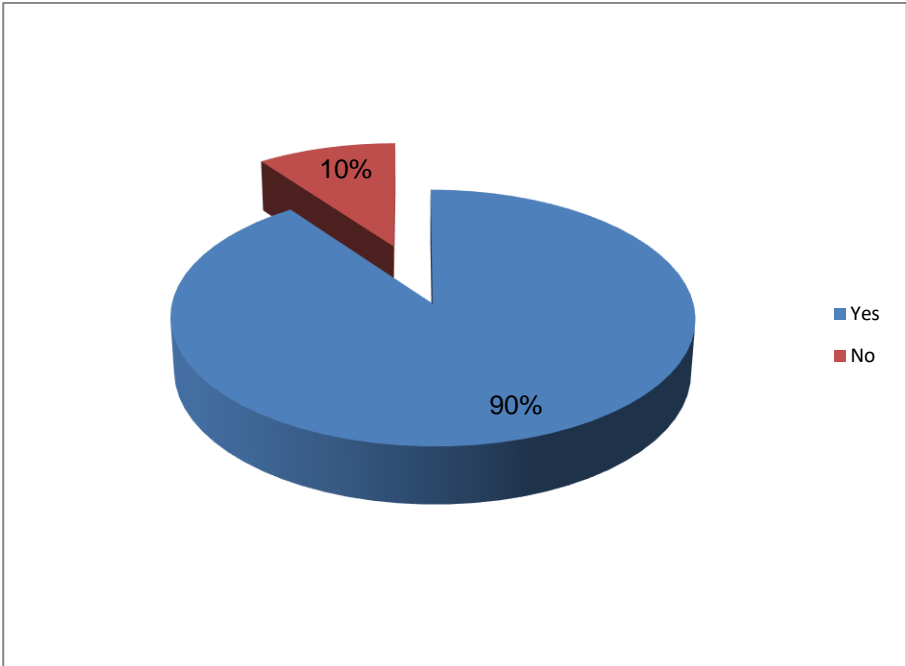


Figure 3.2. Students’ motivation to learn English

As shown in table 3.2, the vast majority of students (90%) are motivated to learn English. They explain that English was their first choice to be studied at university in addition to its being the language of the world; some mention that it is also entertaining to learn it. On the other hand, 10% of the respondents indicate that they are not motivated to learn English. According to most of them, they find English a difficult language to be learnt in addition to their feelings that they are better at doing other things.

3.4.3.2. On the Literature Classroom

Q1. Are you interested in literature?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	39	65%
No	21	35%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.3. Students' interest in literature

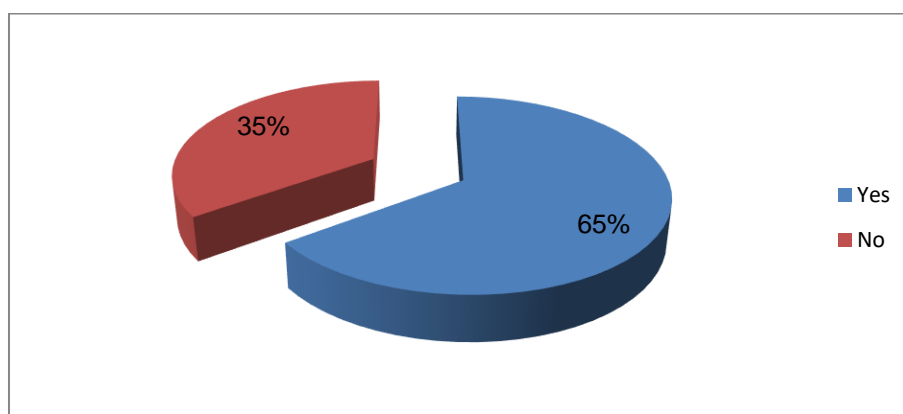


Figure 3.3. Students' interest in literature

This question attempts to explore students' interest in literature. Thirty-nine students (65%) state that they find literature interesting. As opposed to them, twenty-one participants (35%) declare that literature is not among their interests.

Q2. Do you think that literature is important?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	57	95%
No	3	5%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.4. Students' attitudes towards the importance of literature

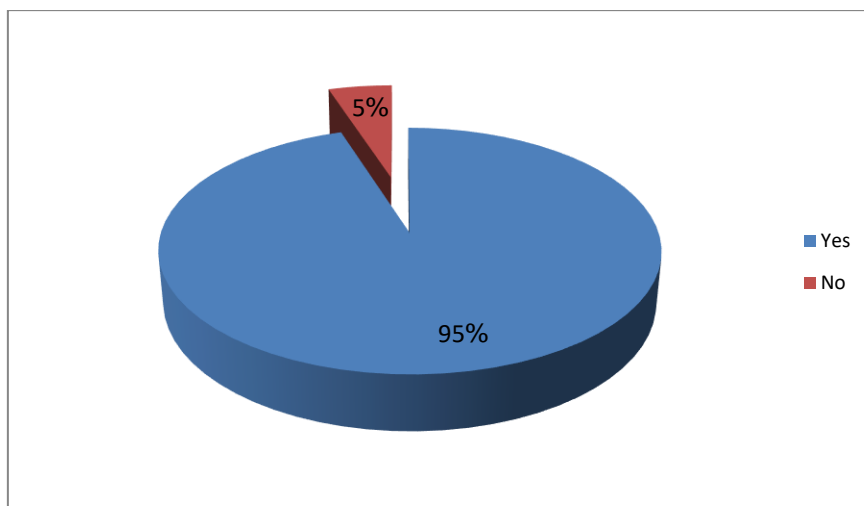


Figure 3.4. Students' attitudes towards the importance of literature

When asked about whether literature is important, the greater part of the subjects (95%) answered approvingly. They state that literature is important for language learners. Contrariwise, a minority of three out of sixty participants (5%) report that literature does not hold an essential place in language learning. By way of explanation, they say that the language of literature cannot be utilized in daily life for communicative purposes, let alone the fact that it is complex.

Q3. If yes, why is it important?

Options	Number	Percentage
It provides authentic texts	9	16%
It teaches about culture	11	19%
It is motivating	3	5%
1+2+3	34	60%
Total	57	100%

Table 3.5 Reasons for the importance of literature

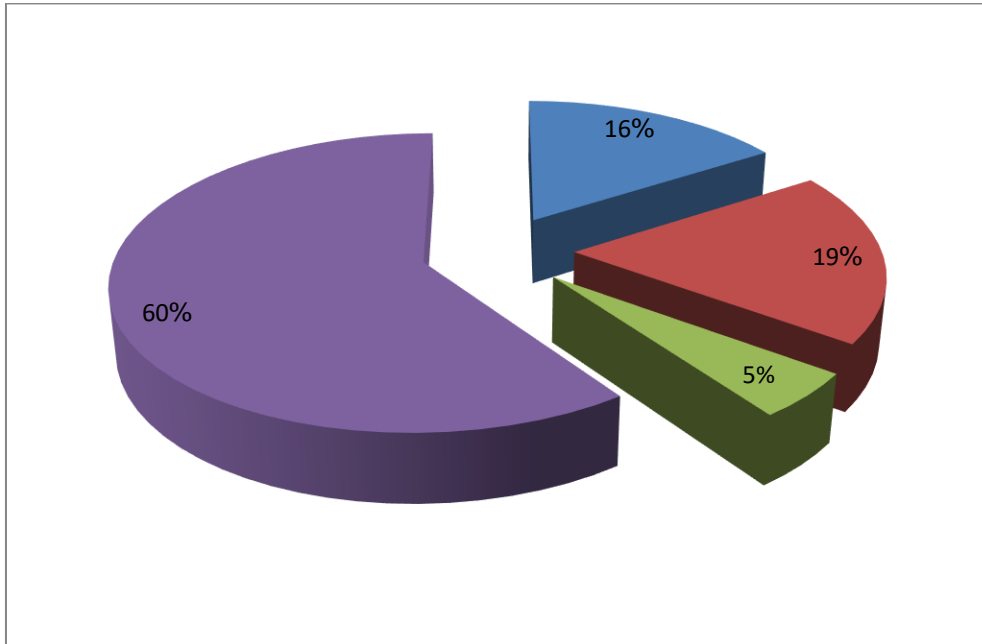


Figure 3.5. Reasons for the importance of literature

This question is designed for the students who opted for the “yes” answer in the previous question. Therefore, the total number of respondents concerned with it is fifty seven rather than sixty. Upon analysis, nine students (16%) say that literature is important since it exposes learners to authentic texts. Eleven students (19%) see that literature is, instead, important for it teaches about the target culture. Only 3 respondents (5%) opt for the third choice which holds that literature is important because it is motivating for learners. For more than half of the students (60%), the importance of literature lies in the three above mentioned elements altogether. That is, it enables learners to be exposed to authentic texts, to explore the target culture, and to gain motivation.

Q4. What are the difficulties you face in studying literature?

Options	Number	Percentage
Difficulty of the language	11	18%
Critical thinking	2	3%
Knowledge of the target culture	10	17%
1+2+3	37	62%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.6. Students' difficulties in studying literature

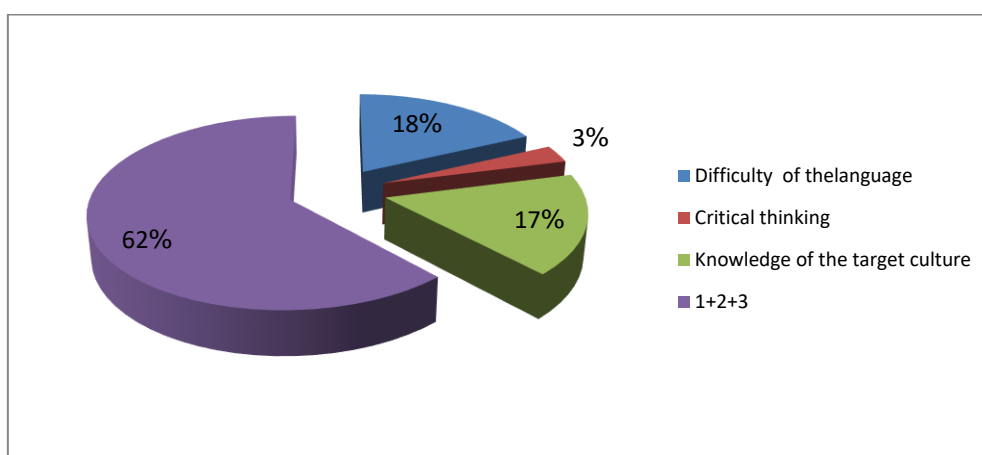


Figure 3.6. Students' difficulties in studying literature

The data displayed in table 3.6 reveal that students have different views regarding the difficulties they encounter in studying literature. Out of sixty, eleven respondents (18%) consider that the complexity of literary language constitutes their major problem in studying literature. Two students (3%) suggest that literature requires high levels of critical thinking. Further, ten subjects (17%) declare that understanding literature entails one's knowledge about the target culture. Sixty two percent of the respondents, representing thirty-seven students, believe that all the options provided are equally regarded as difficulties faced in the study of literature.

Q5. Which of these do you think literature teaching should focus on more?

Options	Number	Percentage
Cultural awareness	27	45%
Language abilities	22	37%
Personal growth	11	18%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.7. Focus of literature teaching

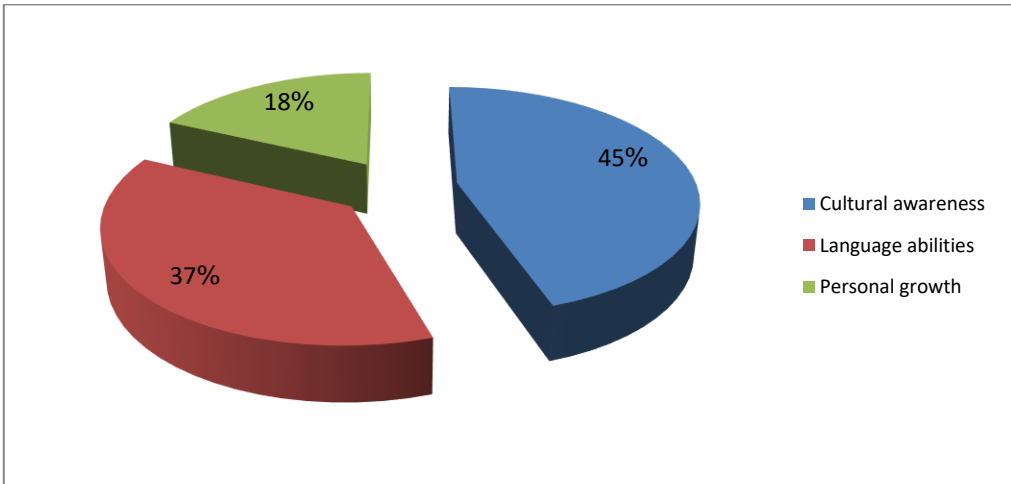


Figure 3.7. Focus of literature teaching

This item is devised to highlight students’ views concerning the most important aim behind teaching literature. Forty-five percent of informants opt for cultural awareness which should receive the main focus in literature teaching, while (37%) agree that developing language abilities should be the most important goal for which literature is taught. The residue of the subjects (18%) report that literature teaching should aim to fulfil learners’ personal growth.

3.4.3.3. Intercultural Awareness

Q1. Are you interested in knowing about your culture and other cultures?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	60	100%
No	0	0%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.8. Students’ interest in knowing about cultures

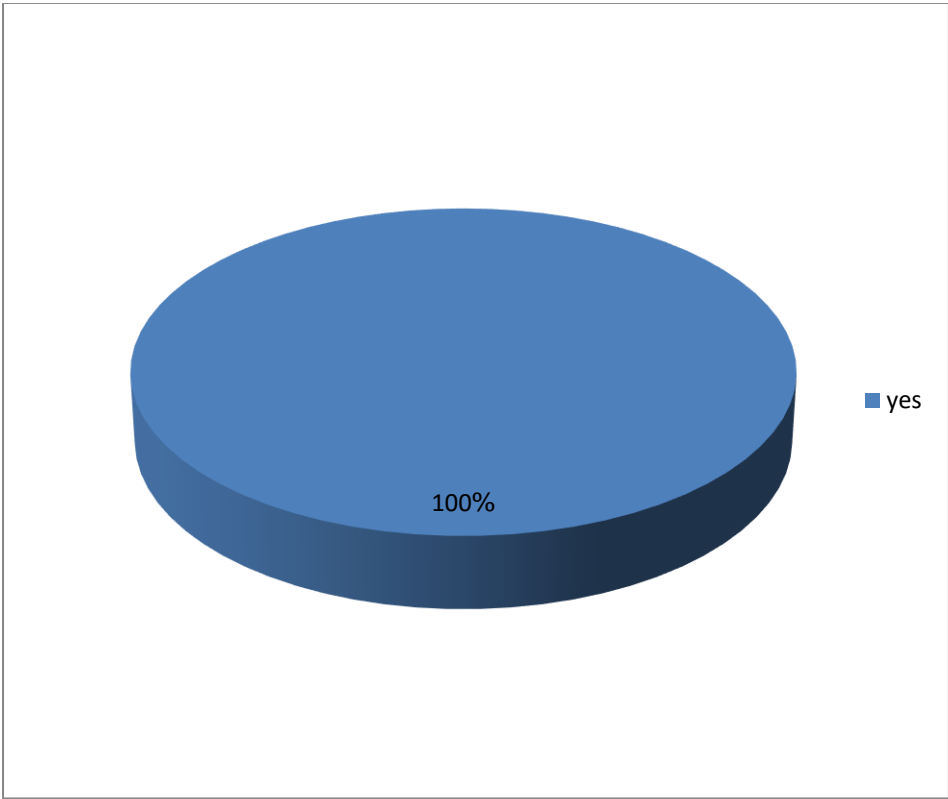


Figure 3.8. Students’ interest in knowing about cultures

This introductory question attempts to shed light on students’ interest in knowing about their own culture and other cultures. All of the students (100%) agree that they are interested in cultures, whatsoever.

Q2. Do you think that it is important to be aware of the differences between your culture and other cultures?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	60	100%
No	0	0%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.9. Importance of students’ being aware of cultural differences

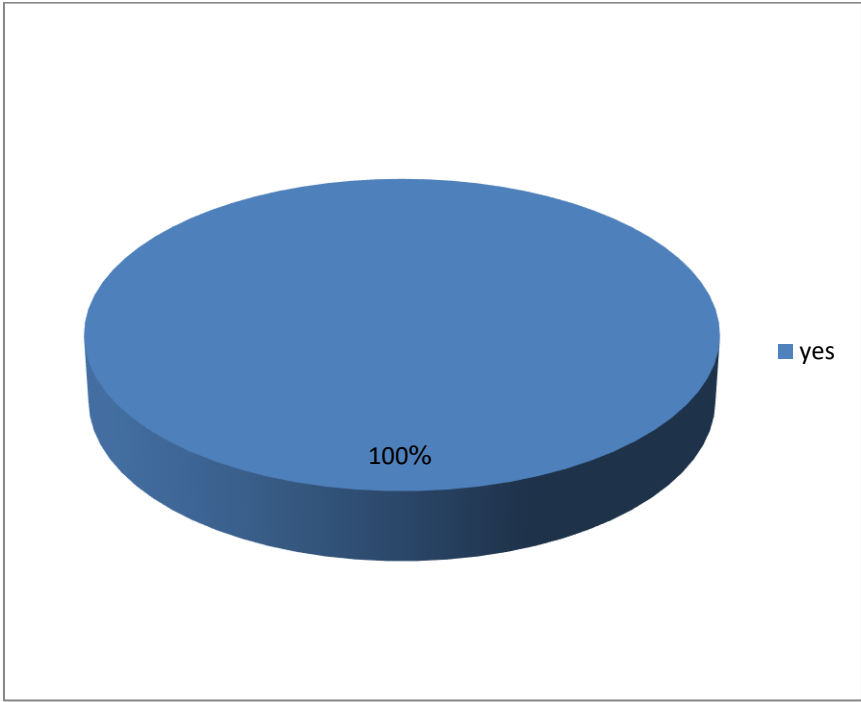


Figure 3.9. Importance of students’ being aware of cultural differences

In response to this question, all of the sixty students (100%) opt for “yes” revealing that they believe that it is of paramount importance for learners to be aware of the differences among cultures.

Q3. What can cause misunderstanding between people of different cultures?

Options	Number	Percentage
Racism	9	15%
Different views of the world	2	3%
Prejudice	3	5%
Language	13	22%
1+2+3+4	33	55%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.10. Obstacles of intercultural understanding

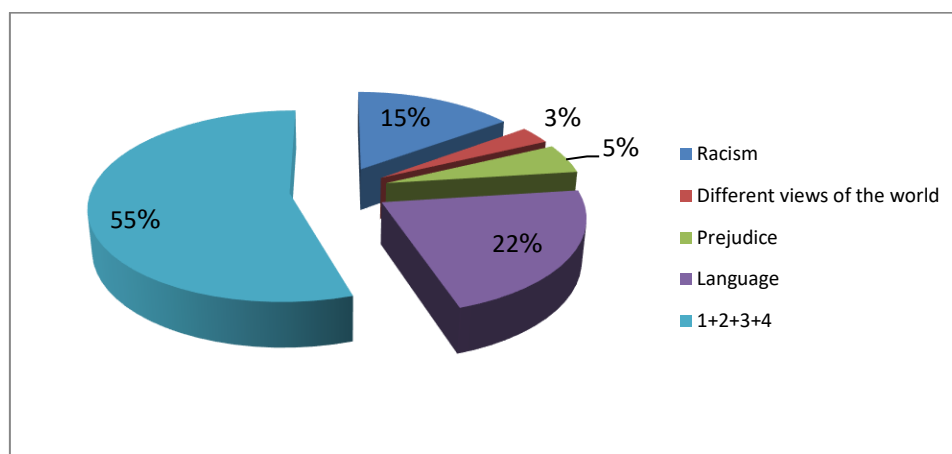


Figure 3.10. Obstacles of intercultural understanding

Through devising this item, attention is directed towards the obstacles which result in misunderstanding between people of different cultures. Nine respondents (15%) report that racism is the most prominent obstacle which prevents cultural understanding. Only two students (3%) opt for different views of the world while three other subjects (5%) opt for prejudice. As for the option of language, it was opted for by thirteen students (22%). However, more than half of the informants (55%) believe that all of the provided suggestions contribute to misunderstanding among cultures.

Q4. Do you try to accept cultural differences when communicating with people who have a different culture?

Options	Number	percentage
Yes	60	100%
No	0	0%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.11. Students’ attempt to tolerate cultural differences in communication

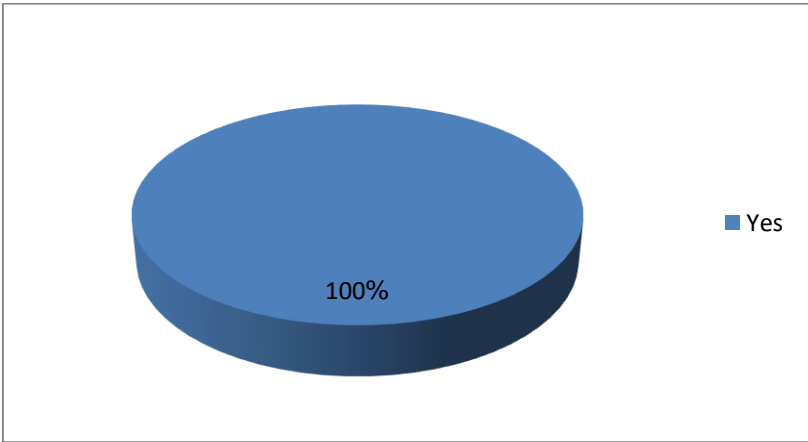


Figure 3.11. Students’ attempt to tolerate cultural differences in communication

Sixty students, constituting the whole sample of the study, declare that they try to tolerate cultural differences when communicating with people of a different culture.

Q5. How do you consider your level of accepting others and their cultures?

Options	Number	Percentage
Low	4	7%
Average	53	88%
High	3	5%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.12. Students’ level of accepting others and their cultures

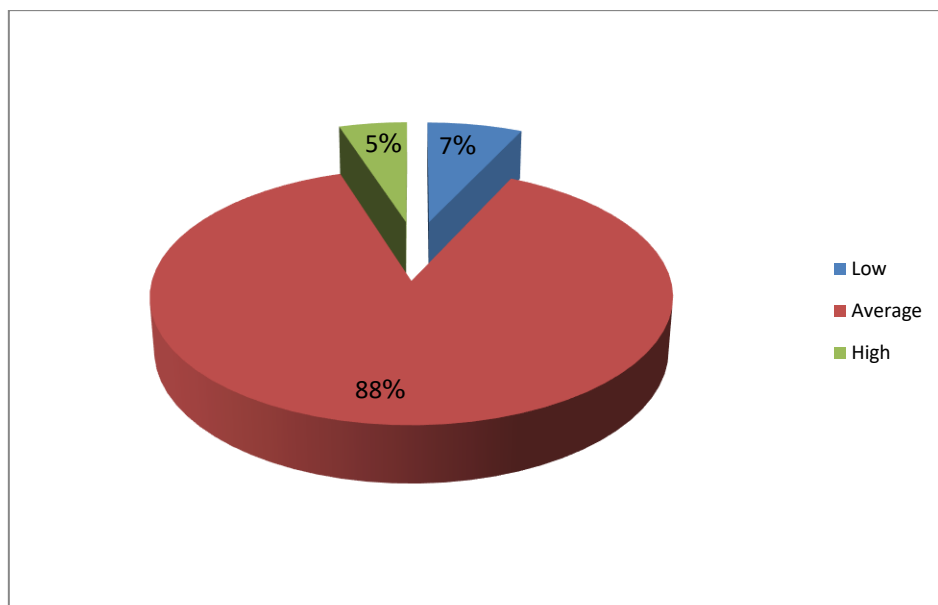


Figure 3.12. Students' level of accepting others and their cultures

In this question, students are asked to evaluate their level of accepting the others and their cultures. The overwhelming majority of informants (88%) describe their level as being average. Seven percent of them see that their level is low while the remaining (5 %) claim that their level of accepting others and their cultures is high.

3.4.3.4. Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Literature Classroom

Q1. On which of these does your teacher of literature focus more?

Options	Number	Percentage
Culture	10	17%
Language	8	13%
Both equally	42	70%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.13. Students' views about the focus of their teacher

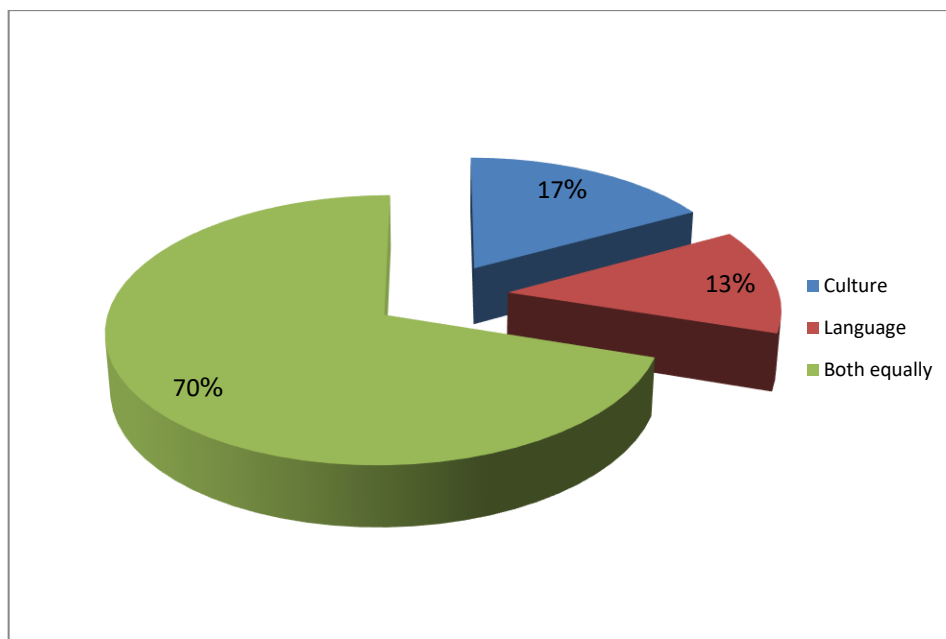


Figure 3.13. Students' views about the focus of their teacher

The data in table 3.12 show that ten students (17%) consider that their teacher of literature attribute much importance to cultural aspects in the classroom. Conversely, eight students (13%) reveal that language forms are the main focus of their teacher. The third option, which suggests that language and culture are equally given prominence in the literature classroom, is selected forty-two times; that is, (70%) of the subjects believe that their teachers give credit to both language and culture in the teaching of literature.

Q2. In the literature classroom, do you discuss the differences between cultures?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	54	90%
No	6	10%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.14. Discussion of cultural differences in the literature classroom

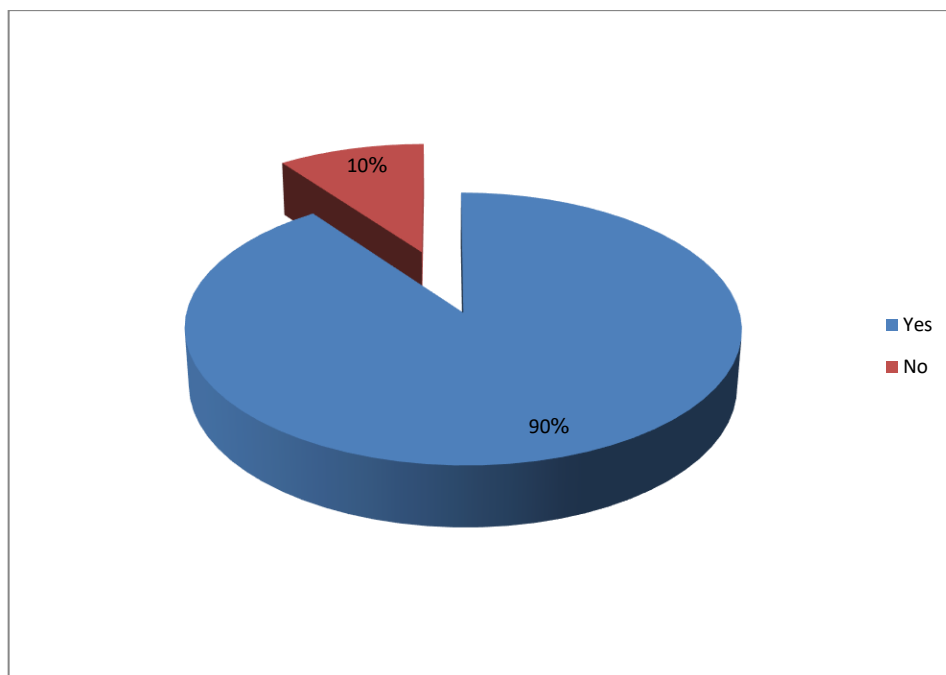


Figure 3.14. Discussion of cultural differences in the literature classroom

A quick glance at table 3.13 reveals that most the informants (90%) claim that cultural differences are discussed in the literature classroom. The remaining subjects, a minority of (10%), agree that the students and the teacher do not deal with cultural differences when literature is taught. In explanation, this is mainly attributed to the lack of time.

Q3. If yes, how often do you do that?

Options	Number	Percentage
Rarely	7	13%
Sometimes	38	70%
Often	9	17%
Total	54	100%

Table 3.15. Frequency of discussing cultural differences in the literature classroom

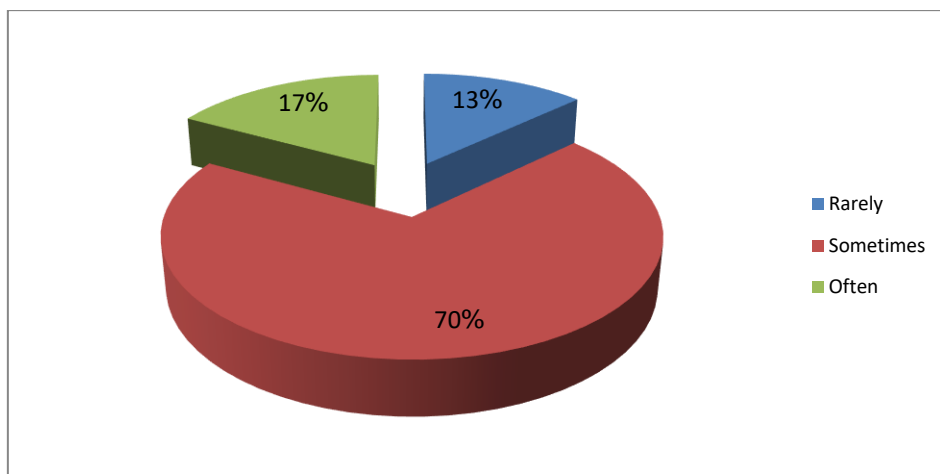


Figure 3.15. Frequency of discussing cultural differences in the literature classroom

This item is devised specifically for the respondents who claim that they discuss cultural differences in the literature classroom. Thus, among the total of fifty-four, seven students (13%) consider that the discussion of cultural differences takes place *rarely*. Nine students (17%) select the option *often*. As for the majority, thirty-eight (70%) students report that they *sometimes* discuss the differences among cultures.

Q4. What are the intercultural difficulties that your literature classroom helps you overcome, if at all?

Options	Number	Percentage
Superiority/inferiority	7	12%
Prejudice	5	8%
Language	12	20%
1+2+3	33	55%
None of the above	3	5%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.16. Students' intercultural difficulties the literature classroom helps overcome

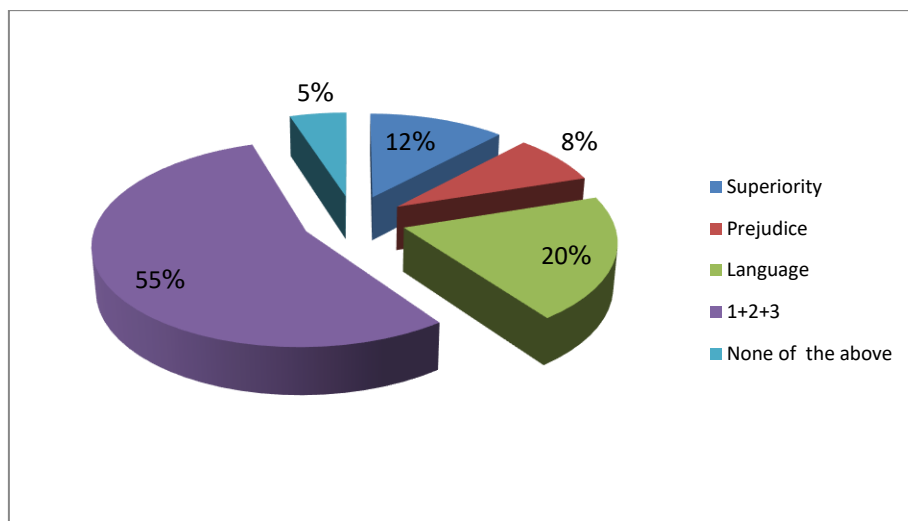


Figure 3.16. Students’ intercultural difficulties the literature classroom helps overcome

This is meant to highlight the contribution of the literature classroom to helping students overcome the obstacles which hinder intercultural understanding. Upon analysis, three students (5%) declare that it has no contribution at all. Seven students (12%) assume that feelings of superiority and inferiority are what the literature classroom helps them overcome. To push further, while five informants (8%) go for “prejudice”, twelve (20%) select “language”. More than half of the subjects (55%) opt for all of the above denoting that the literature classroom helps them surpass all the suggested obstacles.

Q5. Does it help you respect the other and his culture?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	56	93%
No	4	7%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.17. Contribution of the literature classroom to students’ tolerance of cultures

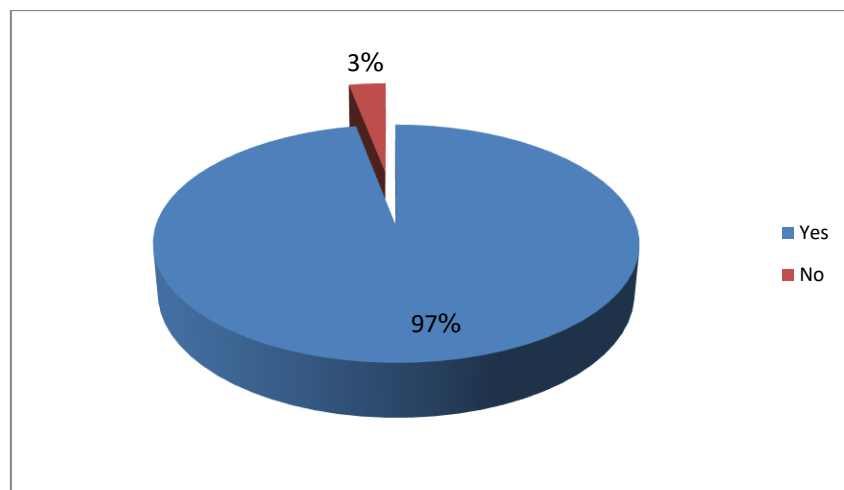


Figure 3.17. Contribution of the literature classroom to students' tolerance of cultures

The results in table 3.16 suggest that the overwhelming majority of the students (93%) claim that what they learn in the literature classroom allows them to accept and tolerate the cultures which are different from their own. Nevertheless, (7%) of the respondents have a different view regarding this matter; they deny that the literature classroom has any contribution to shaping their acceptance of other cultures.

Q6. Which of these attitudes do you develop in the literature classroom?

Options	Number	Percentage
My culture is the best ever	2	3%
The other cultures are equal to, only different from, mine	58	97%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.18. Students' attitudes towards culture in the literature classroom

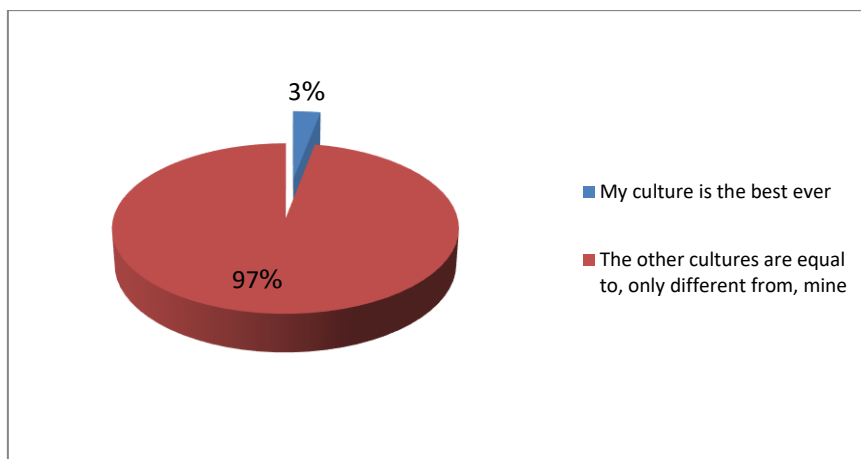


Figure 3.18. Students' attitudes towards culture in the literature classroom

As far as attitudes towards other cultures are concerned, fifty-eight students (97%) agree that the major attitude they develop within the literature classroom is that the other cultures are equal, only different, from theirs. That is, they hold positive attitudes towards the other cultures. On the other hand, only two students (3%) hold negative attitudes, regarding their culture the best ever.

Q7. Does the literature classroom help you improve your skills of communication across cultures?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	34	57%
No	26	43%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.19. Contribution of the literature classroom to improving students' skills of intercultural communication

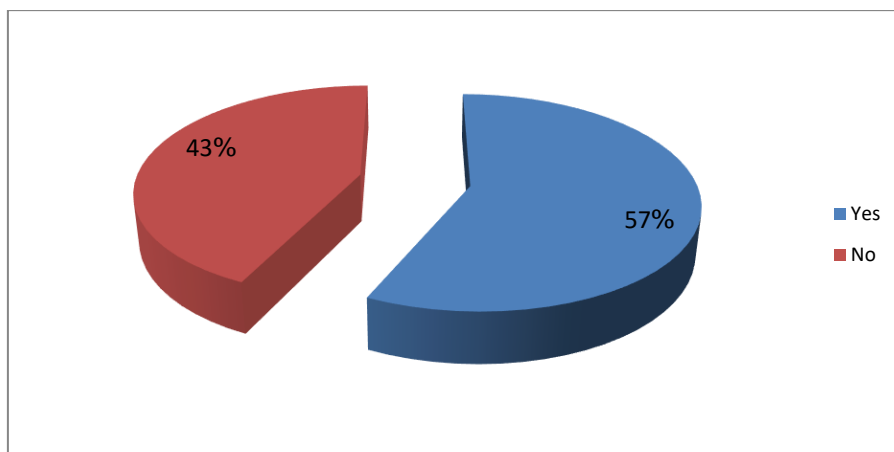


Figure 3.19. Contribution of the literature classroom to improving students' skills of intercultural communication

According to what is revealed in table 3.18, thirty-four respondents (57%) select “yes” as their option; that is, more than half of the subjects state that the literature classroom helps them enhance their skills of intercultural communication. When asked how, some students advocate that discussing others’ cultures allows one to explore the way they communicate and makes it easy to get in touch with them. Others say that the literature classroom helps them avoid insulting the other cultures and respect people’s beliefs when communicating with them.

Twenty-six students (43%) opt for “no” showing that they consider that the literature classroom does not help them to improve when it comes to the skills of intercultural communication. According to most of them, what they learn about cultures is not truly adequate for them to develop their skills of communication. For some, what the literature classroom offers in terms of cultural understanding is merely theoretical and they need real life situations to develop their skills.

Q8. In comparison with other modules, how do you consider the usefulness of the literature classroom in developing intercultural awareness?

Options	Number	percentage
Not useful	0	0%
Useful	50	83%
Less useful	3	5%
More useful	7	12%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.20. Utility of the literature classroom in promoting intercultural awareness

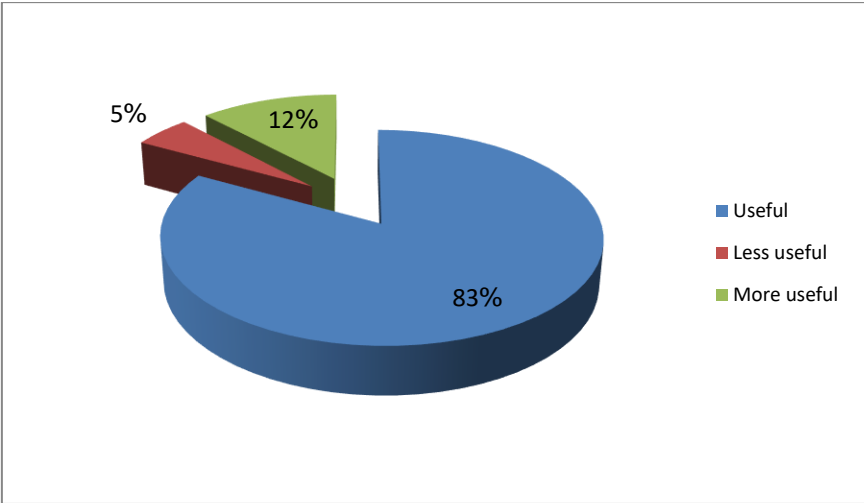


Figure 3.20. Utility of the literature classroom in promoting intercultural awareness

In the last question, students are asked to express their views about the utility of the literature classroom in promoting intercultural awareness. They are required to do so through comparing it to the other modules. Most of the informants (85%) consider that it is useful. Only three students (3%) deem it less useful while the remaining seven students (12%) indicate that studying literature is the best way to promote intercultural awareness compared with the rest of the modules.

3.4.4. Discussion of the Main Findings of the Students' Questionnaire

The analysis of the students' questionnaire allows one to obtain insightful glimpses into the status of intercultural awareness in the literature classroom. The main findings reveal that most of third year students are aware of the importance of cultures and intercultural awareness in the teaching of literature. Students admit that they confront a number of intercultural barriers which affect their ability to accept the other cultures; these include: racism, feelings of superiority and inferiority, language, and the different views of the world. Nevertheless, they still show positive attitudes towards the cultures that are far different from their own. This can be clearly seen in their attempt to explore the cultural differences and their search for embracing them to result eventually in the so-called intercultural understanding. In the same line, the majority of students assume that the literature classroom plays a vital role in improving their level of intercultural awareness. They indicate that it enables them to know about the other cultures, improve their skills of intercultural communication, and develop positive attitudes towards the other cultures.

3.5. The Teachers' Questionnaire

3.5.1. Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The teacher' questionnaire goes along with the students' questionnaire, aiming at investigating the importance of intercultural awareness in the literature classroom and whether it is promoted through the teaching of literature. It encompasses different types of questions ranging from multiple-choice questions to open-ended questions. The questionnaire is composed of fourteen questions that are divided into two sections.

The first section consists of two preliminary questions about teachers' background. The first one is concerned with the professional degree that the teachers hold. The second question is designed to highlight the period of time that they have spent teaching at university.

The second section, which is the main section of the questionnaire, is about intercultural awareness in the literature classroom. It begins by inviting teachers to indicate whether literature is important for language learners. The second question is addressed to those teachers who answer the previous question approvingly; it is concerned with the merits which make literature teaching important. Following that, the third question attempts to shed light on teachers' aims through literature teaching. The fourth question asks teachers about the frequency of their discussions of the differences between cultures and whether they allow their students to express their own attitudes towards the other cultures. Item six is concerned with those attitudes that the students express if allowed to.

In the seventh question, teachers are asked whether they try to teach that all cultures are equal and merely different. The eighth question deals with the role of the literature classroom in developing students' tolerance of cultural differences. In the next item of information, the respondents are asked whether they try to develop students' skills of intercultural communication; those who answer in the affirmative are required to say how. Item ten is straightforward in the sense that it asks teachers if promoting intercultural awareness is one of their teaching aims. For those who answer in the positive, they are taken to the next question which is about the intercultural barriers that they confront in their search for promoting intercultural awareness. In the twelfth question, teachers are invited to evaluate their students' level of intercultural awareness. The thirteenth question concerns itself with the extent to which literature teaching is effective in developing learners' intercultural awareness. Finally, the section, and the whole questionnaire as well, is brought to a close by inviting teachers to provide further suggestions and comments.

3.5.2. Administration of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Just like the students' questionnaire, the teachers' questionnaire is administered via email. The process of collecting information and receiving teachers' responses is conducted on a span of about five weeks.

3.5.3. Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

3.5.3.1. Background Information

Q1. What professional degree do you hold?

Options	Number	Percentage
Master	3	30%
Magister	5	50%
Doctorate	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.21. Teachers' professional degrees

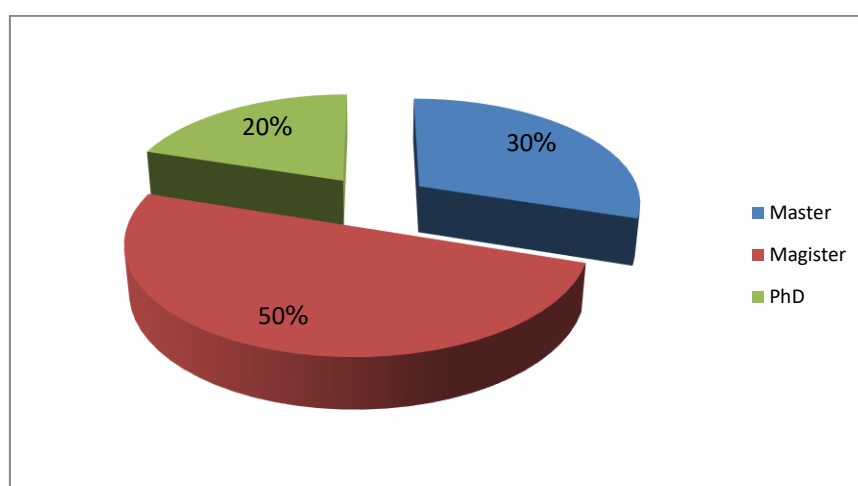


Figure 3.21. Teachers' professional degrees

As shown in table 3.20, half of the respondents (50%), representing five teachers out of ten, hold a Magister degree. Three teachers (30%) hold a Master degree while only two (20%) teachers are PhD holders.

Q2. How long have you been teaching at university?

Options	Number	Percentage
[1-5]	3	30%
[6-10]	4	40%
[11-15]	3	30%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.22. Teachers’ years of experience

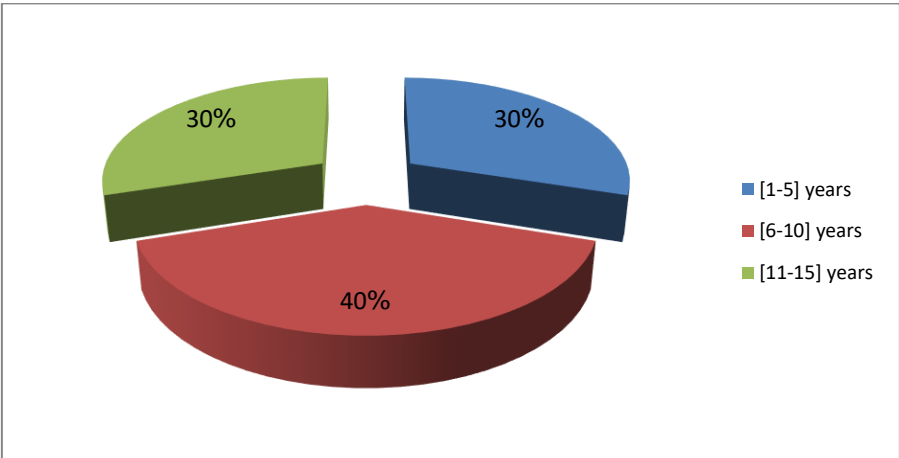


Figure 3.22. Teachers’ years of experience

This question targets informants’ university teaching experience. It is indicated that three teachers (30%) have been teaching at university for less than six years (1-5 years). Four teachers (40%) report that the period they have spent teaching at university ranges from six to ten years. The remaining three teachers (30%) are said to have a longer experience in the field of teaching going for more than ten years.

3.5.3.2. Intercultural Awareness in the Literature Classroom

Q1. Do you think that teaching literature is important for language learners?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.23. Teachers' attitudes towards the importance of teaching literature

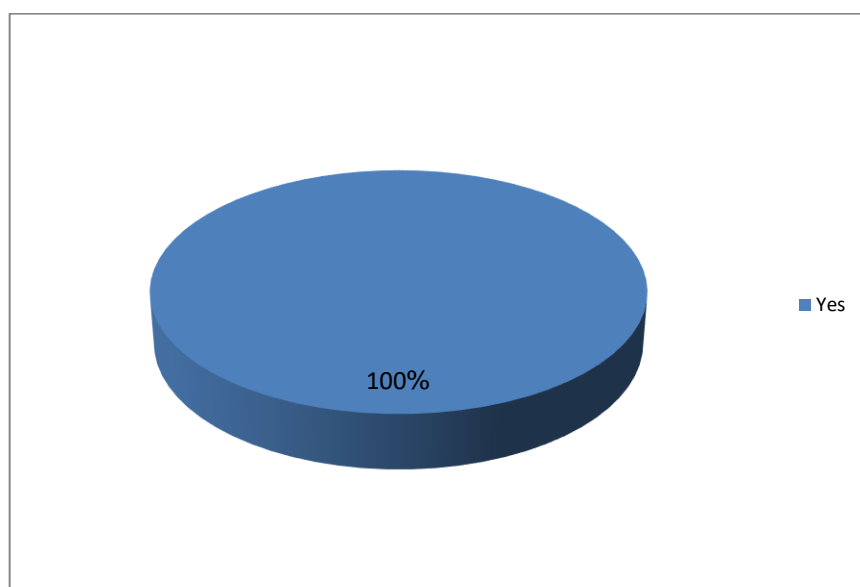


Figure 3.23. Teachers' attitudes towards the importance of teaching literature

When asked about whether teaching literature is important for language learners, all of the subjects (100%) agree that it is. Put differently, ten teachers out of a total of ten believe that literature teaching holds an essential place in language learning.

Q2. If yes, please say why?

Options	Number	Percentage
a- It exposes them to authentic texts	0	0%
b-It teaches them about the target culture	0	0%
c- It is motivating	0	0%
d- Others	0	0%
a+b+c	7	70%
a+b+c+d	3	30%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.24. Teachers’ views about reasons for the importance of literature teaching

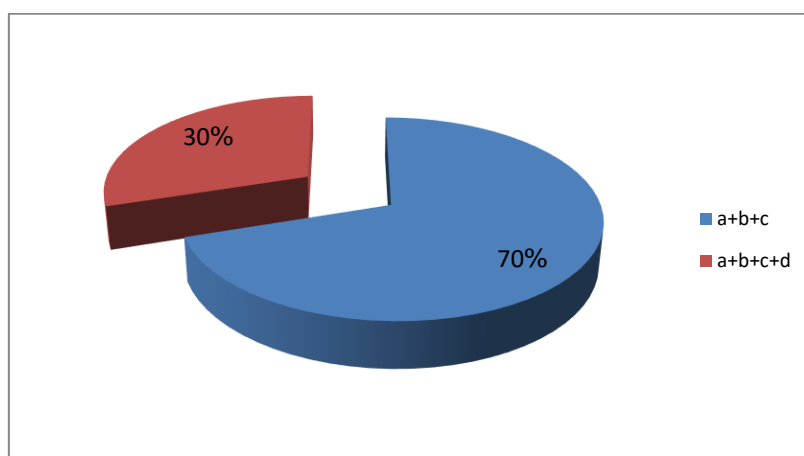


Figure 3.24. Teachers’ views about reasons for the importance of literature teaching

This item is devised for the informants who hold that literature is an important element in language learning. Since all of the subjects’ option in Q2 is “yes”, the total is still ten teachers. Hence, the data in table 3.22 indicate that the majority of teachers (70%) opt for “a+b+c”; that is, teaching literature is vital because it exposes learners to authentic texts, teaches them about the target culture in addition to its being motivating. The rest of the teachers (30%), representing three teachers, agree on the option “a+b+c+d”; they claim that

the aforementioned merits of literature teaching are, indeed, justifications for literature teaching: however, they deem it necessary to add other benefits. One teacher says that it helps to develop students' intercultural communicative competence. Another one adds that it enhances critical thinking while the last teacher reports that it helps learners acquire formal vocabulary.

Q3. In your class, what do you aim at through the teaching of literature?

Options	Number	Percentage
a- Language enrichment	0	0%
b- Cultural enrichment	0	0%
c- Personal growth	0	0%
d- Others	0	0%
a+b+c	8	80%
a+b+c+d	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.25. Teachers' aims through teaching literature

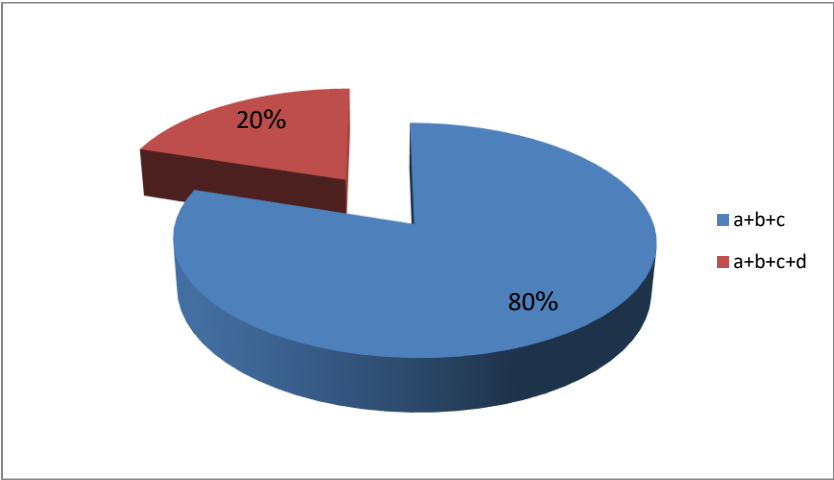


Figure 3.25. Teachers' aims through teaching literature

This question is concerned with the aims that teachers pursue through the teaching of literature. Eight teachers (80%) believe that all the provided options (a+b+c) are indeed goals they try to achieve when teaching literature. In other words, the overwhelming majority of the informants indicate that literature teaching aims at cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal growth. Only two teachers (20%) add other options. One teacher claims that another aim of literature teaching is developing students' ability to think critically. The other adds that teaching literature should be a means to make learners acquainted with social and political issues in the real world.

Q4. How often do you discuss the differences between the learners' culture and the target one?

Options	Number	percentage
Never	0	0%
Sometimes	2	20%
Often	8	80%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.26. Frequency of teachers' discussion of intercultural differences

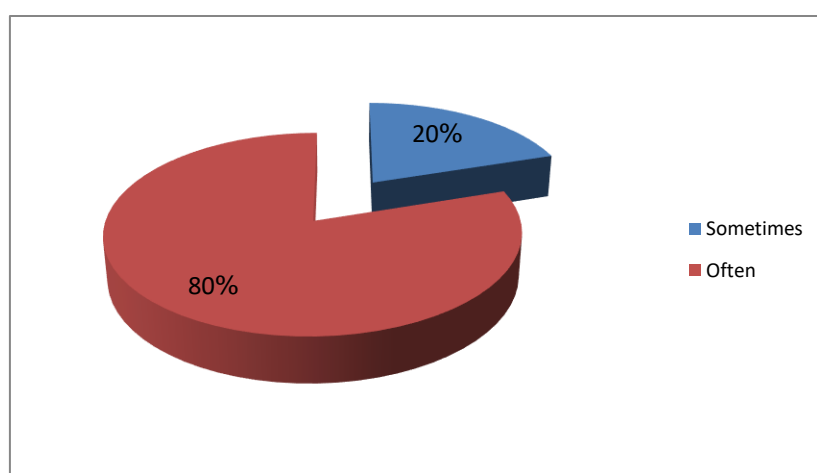


Figure 3.26. Frequency of teachers' discussion of intercultural differences

In answer to this question about the frequency of discussing differences between learners’ culture and the target one, most of the teachers (80%) select the option “often”. They claim that discussing cultural differences is a priority. In contrast, a minority of two teachers indicate that they only sometimes discuss differences between students’ culture and the target culture.

Q5. Do you give your students the opportunity to express their attitudes towards the target culture?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.27. Students’ expression of attitudes towards the target culture

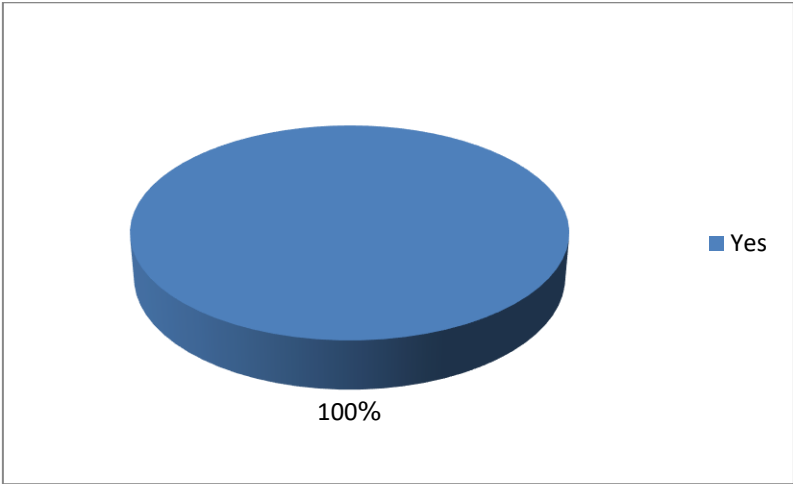


Table 3.27. Students’ expression of attitudes towards the target

Table 3.24 shows clearly that all of the respondents opt for “yes” in answer to the above question; a hundred percent of the subjects claim that they allow students to freely express their own attitudes towards the target culture.

Q6. If yes, what are the major attitudes they express?

This item is an open-ended question which teachers may answer in different ways. It can be synthesized that all teachers agree upon the same idea. They indicate that students have positive attitudes towards the target culture. It is reported that most of the students are aware that their culture should not be regarded as the best one. Instead, they believe that the relationship between cultures is not a matter of superiority or inferiority, and they realize that cultures are merely different. Some say that students cannot show a total acceptance of the beliefs and traditions of the target culture when it is far removed from their own; they, however, enjoy knowing about new political, social and religious ways of life. One respondent claims that the only area in which students might show negative attitudes towards the target culture is religion. He explains that students cannot tolerate beliefs which do not go hand in hand with their sacred religious perspectives.

Q7. Do you try to teach your students to consider that all cultures are equal and merely different?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.28. Teaching about equality of cultures

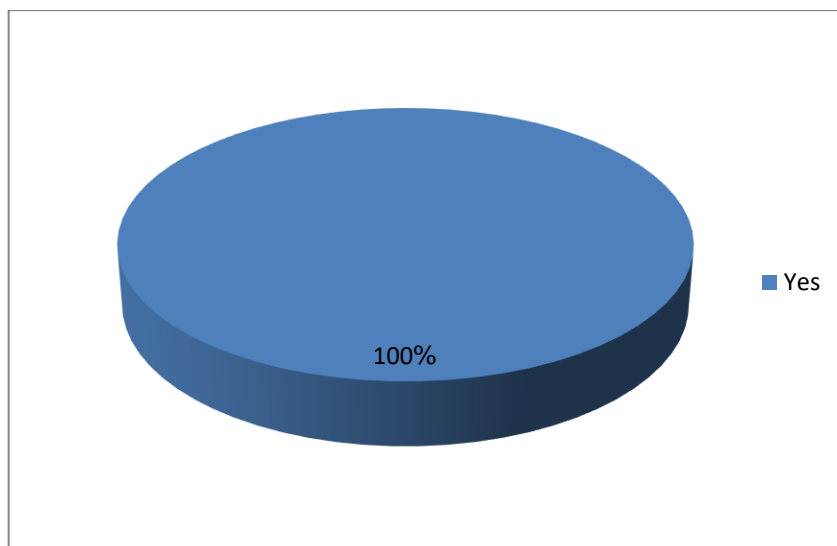


Figure 3.28. Teaching about equality of cultures

When invited to answer this item, the whole sample (100%) go for “yes”. Thus, ten informants indicate that among their interests in the literature classroom is the attempt to teach students that all cultures are equal and only different.

Q8. Is your lecture important in making students tolerate cultural differences?

Options	Number	Percentage
Not important	0	0%
Important	3	30%
Very important	7	70%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.29. Importance of the literature classroom in developing intercultural tolerance

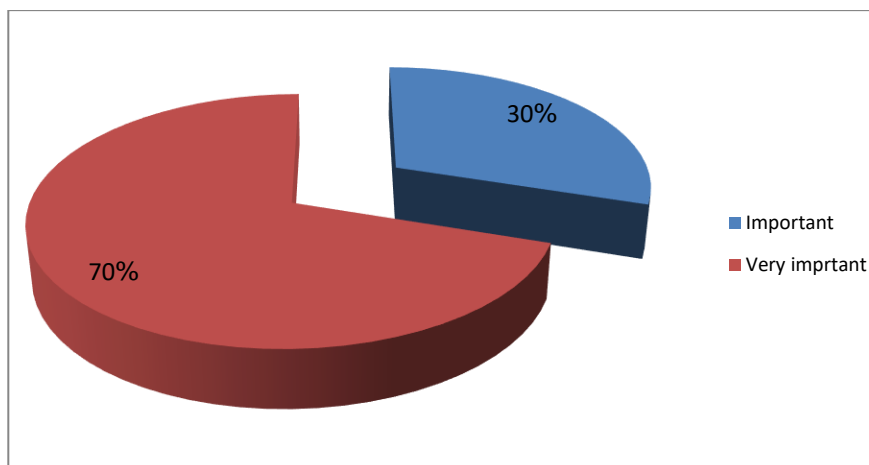


Figure 3.29. Importance of the literature classroom in developing intercultural tolerance

This item is designed to explore teachers' views towards the importance of their lecture in developing students' ability to tolerate the differences that exist between cultures. In response to it, it is indicated that the literature classroom is highly important in developing students' level of tolerance, but the only difference lies in the degree of importance. The overwhelming majority of the subjects (70%) consider that their lecture is very important for helping students to tolerate intercultural differences; this is claimed by seven teachers. As for the remaining minority, three teachers (30%) hold that it is just important.

Q9. Do you try to improve your students' skills of intercultural communication?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.30. Teachers' attempt to improve students' skills of intercultural communication

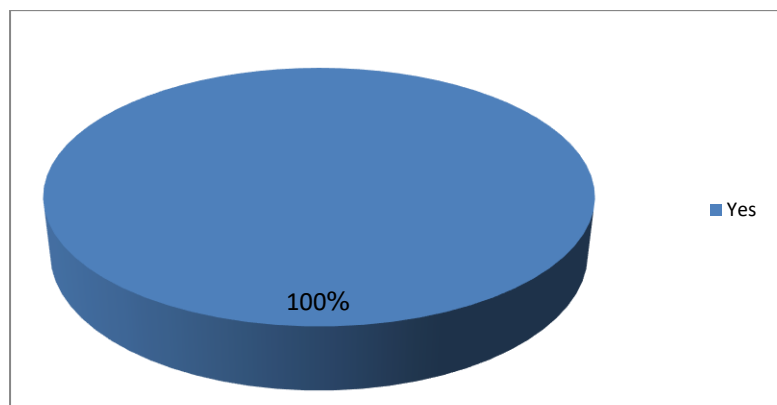


Figure 3.30. Teachers’ attempt to improve students’ skills of intercultural communication

The data obtained in table 3.28 reveal that enhancing students’ skills of intercultural communication is one of the aims of teachers of literature. All of the informants (100%) say they try to improve students’ skills of intercultural communication. When asked how, they agree on the idea that discussing the differences between the students’ culture and other cultures allows learners to discover the way people from other cultures communicate. This acts as an instrument utilized by teachers to enhance students’ skills of intercultural communication.

Q10. Is promoting intercultural awareness one of your teaching aims?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.31. Teachers’ aiming at promoting intercultural awareness

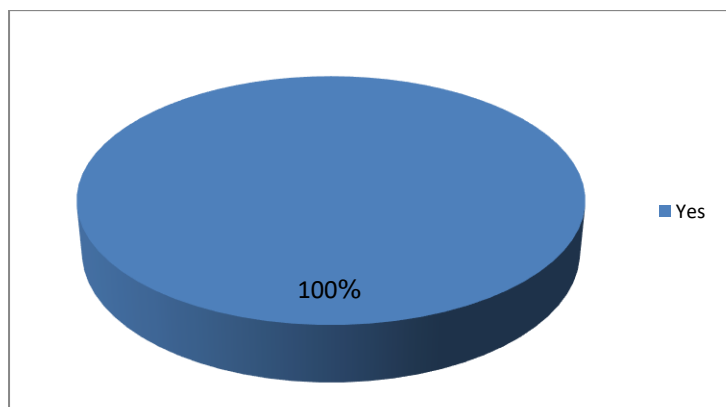


Figure 3.31. Teachers' aiming at promoting intercultural awareness

This question is a direct one in the sense that it asks teachers about whether promoting intercultural awareness is one of their teaching aims. It is approvingly answered by (100%) of the subjects. All of the teachers consider promoting intercultural awareness as one goal of literature teaching.

Q11. If yes, what are the barriers you encounter in so doing?

Options	Number	Percentage
a- Learners' feelings of superiority/ inferiority	0	0%
b- Learners' prejudice and stereotypes	0	0%
c- Learners'' problems with language	0	0%
a+b+c	10	100%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.32. Barriers faced by teachers in promoting intercultural awareness

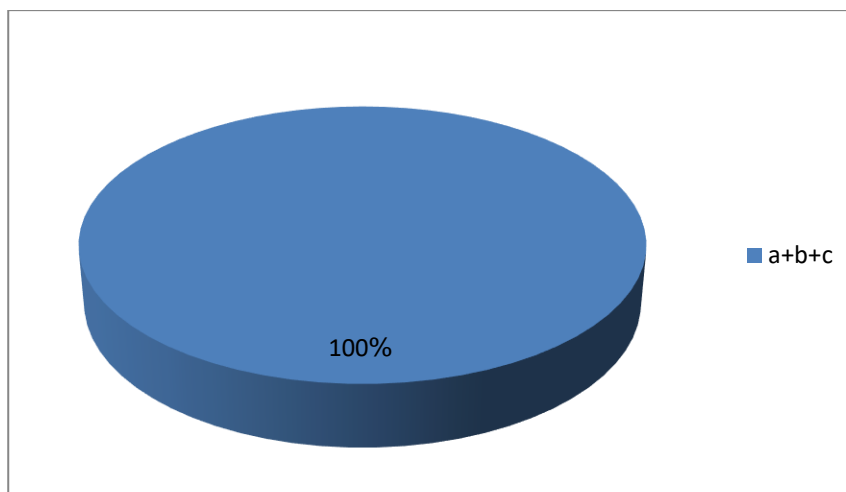


Figure 3.32. Barriers faced by teachers in promoting intercultural awareness

This item is designed as an attempt to shed light on the major barriers that teachers encounter in their search for promoting intercultural awareness. Among the suggested choices, the option “a+b+c” is ticked ten times, meaning that all of the informants (100%) report that they face a multiplicity of barriers which are: learners’ feeling of superiority and/or inferiority, prejudice and stereotypes, in addition to their problems with language.

Q12. How do you rate your students’ level of intercultural awareness?

Options	Number	Percentage
Low	0	0%
Average	8	80%
High	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.33. Students’ level of intercultural awareness

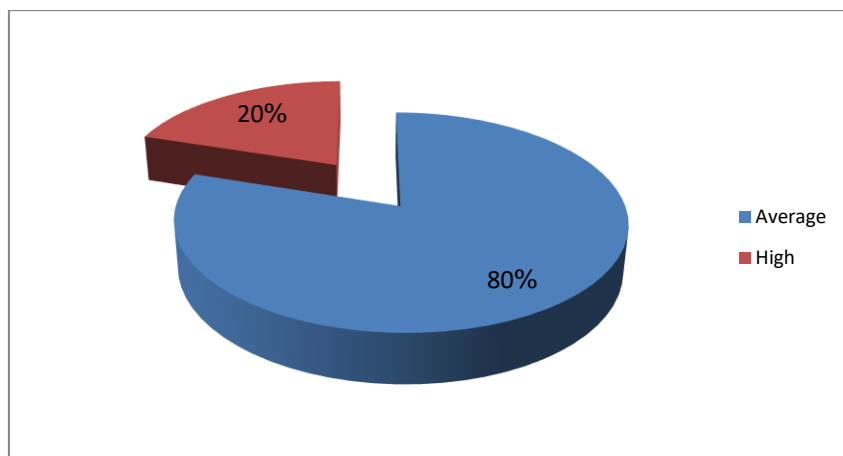


Figure 3.33. Students' level of intercultural awareness

When invited to rate their students' level of intercultural awareness, most of the teachers (80%) assume that their students' level is "average". Two teachers (20%) claim that they deem students' level of intercultural awareness "high", instead.

Q13. How effective is your teaching in developing students' intercultural awareness?

Options	Number	Percentage
Not effective	0	0
Effective	8	80
Very effective	2	20
Total	10	100

Table 3.34. Effectiveness of teaching in promoting intercultural awareness

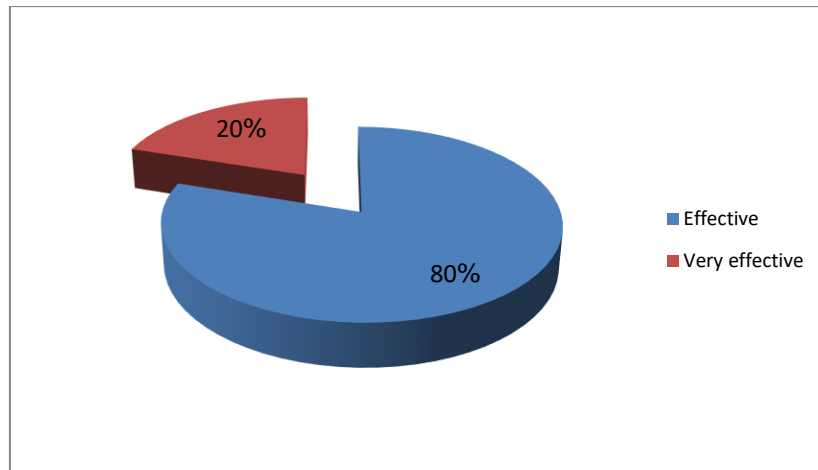


Figure 3.34. Effectiveness of teaching in promoting intercultural awareness

The data shown in table 3.31 are concerned with the teachers' views regarding the effectiveness of the literature classroom in promoting intercultural awareness. Upon analysis, eight teachers, an overwhelming majority of (80%), believe that it is effective. The rest, (20%) of the whole sample of teachers, opt for "very effective".

Q14. Please, add any further suggestions.

This is meant to elicit teachers' further suggestions concerning the issue of intercultural awareness in the literature classroom. Only two teachers happen to contribute some comments. They note that intercultural awareness is one of the most crucial elements in the literature classroom. They recommend that much interest should be devoted to promoting it by every teacher of literature.

3.5.4. Discussion of the Main Findings of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Upon analysis, the answers provided by teachers prove vital in the investigation of the main issue of the current study. It is worth noting that the majority of teachers agree upon the same ideas and perspectives regarding the importance of intercultural awareness. They reveal that culture is one crucial element in the teaching of literature. According to them, this implies

that developing students' intercultural awareness is a priority in literature teaching. Teachers claim that their lectures aim at enhancing students' skills of intercultural communication in addition to making them adopt attitudes of tolerance towards the other cultures. Furthermore, the data obtained from the teachers' questionnaire allow one to explore the significance of the literature classroom in promoting intercultural awareness. The informants emphasize the effectiveness of their teaching in developing intercultural awareness.

3.6. Implications, Limitations and Recommendations

3.6.1. Implications of the Study

Considering the major findings elicited from both questionnaires administered to students and teachers, the current research is said to bring about significant implications for theory and practice.

The main findings of the present study are at variance with the theoretical premises which postulate that teaching literature is of no significant utility for language learners (see section 1.2.1). This is to mean that the present research confirms that the literature classroom plays an essential role in promoting learners' intercultural awareness which might be convincing argument for which literature teaching can be supported.

Another easily drawn conclusion to be underscored is the need for a demarcation between mere knowledge of cultures and what can be described as intercultural awareness while the teaching of literature is carried out. Differently put, in pursuit of developing students' intercultural awareness, it is not in any way adequate to limit the scope of intercultural awareness to mere knowledge of the other cultures; instead, encouraging the adoption of positive attitudes and various skills of intercultural communication is undoubtedly required for teachers of literature as long as intercultural awareness is one crucial element in their classroom.

3.6.2. Limitations of the Study

In the course of carrying out the present study, several difficulties are confronted. The most prominent of these is the problem encountered in the process of collecting the data needed for the practical part of the research. A large sample cannot be included since students are contacted via email considering the fact that some of them do not have a regular access into the internet. In addition, one major limitation to the current study is the lack of teachers of literature in the department of foreign languages at the University of Mila which renders it imperative to get in touch with teachers from other universities to reinforce the collected information.

3.6.3. Recommendations for Pedagogy and Research

Relying on what is revealed through running the analysis of the data obtained through the research tools involved in this study, of crucial importance is the account for a set of recommendations that touch upon pedagogy and further research. This is meant to enable students and teachers to gain much familiarity with the issue of intercultural awareness in the literature classroom and to devote more space to it in their diverse pedagogical practices. In the same line, future researches which might share the same interest with the present study are addressed with some recommendations for further research.

3.6.3.1. Recommendations for Students

-Students should realize the importance of culture and to try to know more about their culture and other cultures.

-They should work on ridding themselves of feelings of superiority/ inferiority, prejudice and racism. This can be undertaken through immersing themselves in exploring the merits of other

cultures in the literary works they deal with in the literature classroom or in those they read extensively.

- When introduced to a different culture in the literature classroom, students are required to learn to tolerate the intercultural differences.
- Students should make use of what they learn in the literature classroom to adopt positive attitudes towards the other cultures. They are asked to embrace an attitude which postulates that though cultures are different, they are still equal.
- As regards skills of intercultural communication, students are required to exert efforts in developing their abilities to communicate with people of different cultures successfully.
- In the wake of the digital revolution, almost all students are mobile users, the thing that enables them to go digital in pursuing intercultural communicative skills through telecollaborative work or learning in tandem.

3.6.3.2. Recommendations for Teachers

- Teachers are required to underscore the element(s) of intercultural awareness throughout the process of teaching.
- Teachers should select materials which expose the learners to a variety of cultural aspects rather than literary theories only.
- In the course of their teaching, teachers should highlight cultural differences and present them in a good image in order for students to accept these differences.
- They should themselves show positive attitudes towards the other cultures and try to instill them in their students' mindset.

- They are required to draw the attention towards the detrimental impact of racism, prejudice and feelings of superiority so that students are intrigued to get rid of them.
- Teachers should work on creating opportunities for their students to communicate across cultures and try to enhance their skills of intercultural communication.
- They should assess students' level of intercultural awareness and endeavour to vary their teaching to make up for any potential weaknesses.
- It will be a good idea for teachers to go digital and seek new ways to develop intercultural awareness through such experiential approaches as telecollaborative projects. This is to mean that there is more to intercultural skill building than the didactic method alone.
- Last, but in no way least, teachers should not lose sight of their course objectives in pursuit of promoting intercultural awareness, nor should they be blinded to the content of the curriculum.

3.6.3.3. Recommendations for Further Research

The current study attempts to bring into play the issue of intercultural awareness in the literature classroom. It is conducted as a descriptive and exploratory investigation of the significance of intercultural awareness in the teaching of literature to third year students of English at Mila University, Department of Foreign Languages. Therefore, it is construed as an indispensable step which might pave the way for other research works to be carried out with the purpose to study the previously mentioned issue more profoundly. In other words, studies about the importance of intercultural awareness in the literature classroom can be conducted relying on other case studies which may offer a larger sample to represent a larger population. Provided that time is available for future researches, a study of this kind can be more

informative if made experimental. This allows the researcher to deeply measure and analyse the progress of students' level of intercultural awareness.

Conclusion

For reminder purposes, this chapter is concerned with the practical part of the current study which touches upon the importance of intercultural awareness in the literature classroom. The analysis of the students' questionnaire and the teachers' questionnaire reveals that intercultural awareness does not go unperceived in literature teaching; it is highly emphasized and much attention is oriented to it within the scope of the literature classroom. Added to this, relying on the perspectives shown by both students and teachers, it can be noted that teaching literature is one crucial way to promote intercultural awareness.

General Conclusion

All along the current research work, it is reiterated that the place of intercultural awareness in the literature classroom is the main focus around which this descriptive study is carried out. An attempt was made to investigate whether intercultural awareness is emphasised in the literature classroom in addition to whether the teaching of literature contributes to promoting learners' intercultural awareness.

In search of achieving the previously mentioned aims of the study, a questionnaire is administered to 60 EFL students at the Department of Foreign Languages, University of Milan. Furthermore, another questionnaire is delivered to 10 teachers of literature to add welcome insights from a different perspective.

As regards the main findings obtained through the administration of the questionnaires and the analysis of the respective data, it is revealed that considerable emphasis is put on intercultural awareness in the literature classroom; that is, it is indicated that promoting such an awareness constitutes one fundamental aim of literature teaching. In the same line, interpreting the results of the field work, one cannot fail to conclude that what learners are exposed to in the literature classroom contributes to promoting their intercultural awareness and enhancing their level of intercultural communicative competence.

At the end, it is noteworthy that the current study can be resorted to in order for teachers and learners to reflect upon the extent to which they orient attention towards intercultural awareness in their assorted pedagogical practices. In this respect, it is recommended that learners take advantage of the literature classroom to develop their levels of intercultural awareness which is an indispensable requirement for the process of communication across cultures. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that this study is of a limited scope and its

results can probably be open to discussion and critique, the thing that makes it imperative for future researchers to consider conducting further research in the same area.

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Appendices

Appendix A

The Students' Questionnaire:

Dear student,

We are kindly asking your help to answer the following questions in order for us to conduct our research. This questionnaire attempts to examine the place of intercultural awareness in the literature classroom i.e. whether it is promoted through teaching literature. We would like to inform you that this questionnaire is anonymous, and answers are kept confidential to be used for study purposes only.

Please put a tick (✓) in the box corresponding to your answer, and note that more than one answer is possible in some questions. Your comments and further suggestions are welcome.

Section One: Background Information

1- How long have you been studying English?

.....

2- Are you motivated to learn English?

Yes

No

Explain.....

.....

Section Two: On the Literature Classroom

1- Are you interested in literature?

Yes

No

2-Do you think that literature is important?

Yes

No

If no, please explain.....
.....

3-If yes, why is it important?

-It provides authentic texts

-It teaches about culture

-It is motivating

-Others:

4-What are the difficulties you face in studying literature?

-The language of literary texts is difficult

-It requires high levels of critical thinking

-It requires knowledge of the target culture

-All of the above

Others:.....
.....
.....

5-Which of these do you think literature teaching should focus on more?

-Cultural awareness

-Developing language abilities

-Personal growth

Others:.....
.....

Section Three: Intercultural Awareness

1- Are you interested in knowing about your culture and other cultures?

Yes No

2- Do you think that it is important to be aware of the differences between your culture and other cultures?

Yes No

Please Justify.....
.....;.....;
.....

3-What can cause misunderstanding between people of different cultures?

-Racism and feeling of superiority

-Different ways of viewing the world

-Prejudice (judging before knowing)

-Language

-All of the above

4- Do you try to tolerate/accept cultural differences when communicating with people who have a different culture?

Yes No

Justify:.....
.....

5- How do you consider your level of accepting others and their cultures?

Low Average High

Section Four: Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Literature Classroom

1-On which of these does your teacher of literature focus?

-Language more than culture

-Culture more than language

-Both equally

2-In the literature classroom, do you discuss the differences across cultures?

Yes No

-If no, suggest why.....
.....

3-If yes, how often?

Rarely Sometimes Often

4-What are the intercultural difficulties that your literature classroom helps you overcome, if at all?

-Superiority/inferiority

-Prejudice

-Language

-All of the above

-None of the above

5-Does it help you respect the other and his/her culture?

Yes No

6-Which of these attitudes do you develop in the literature classroom?

-My culture is the best ever

-The other cultures are equal to, only different from, mine

7-Does the literature classroom help you to improve your skills of communication across cultures?

Yes

No

If possible, say how?

.....

8-In comparison with other modules, how do you consider the usefulness of the literature classroom in developing intercultural awareness?

Not useful

Useful

Less useful

More useful

Thank you for your collaboration

Appendix B

The Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

You are kindly asked to devote some of your valuable time to respond to the present questionnaire which attempts to explore the importance of intercultural awareness in the teaching of literature. It investigates whether intercultural awareness is emphasized in the literature classroom, and whether it is promoted through teaching literature.

Please put a tick (✓) in the box corresponding to your answer, and note that more than one answer is possible in some questions.

Section One: Background Information

1. What professional degree do you hold?

.....

2. How long have you been teaching at university?

.....

Section Two: Intercultural Awareness in the Literature Classroom

1. Do you think that teaching literature is important for language learners?

Yes

No

2. If yes, please say why?

a- It exposes them to authentic texts

b- It teaches them about the target culture

c- It is motivating for them

d- Others.....
.....
.....

3. In your class, what do you aim at through the teaching of literature?

a- Language enrichment

b- Cultural enrichment

c- Personal growth

d- Others

.....

.....

4. How often do you discuss the difference between the learners' culture and the target one?

Never

Sometimes

Often

5- Do you give your students the opportunity to express their attitudes towards the target culture?

Yes

No

6-If yes, what are the major attitudes they express?

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7. Do you try to teach your students to consider that all cultures are equal and merely different?

Yes

No

If possible comment.....

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.....

8. What role does your lecture play in making students tolerate cultural differences?

Not important Important Very important

9. Do you try to improve your students' skills of intercultural communication?

Yes No

If yes, say how?

.....

.....

10. Is promoting intercultural awareness one of your teaching aims?

Yes No

Please, justify.....

.....

.....

11. If yes, what are the barriers you encounter in so doing?

a- Learners' prejudice and stereotypes

b- Learners' problems with language

c- Learners' feelings of superiority/inferiority

d -All of the above

e- Others.....

.....

12. How do you rate your students' level of intercultural awareness?

Low Average High

13. How effective is your teaching in developing students' intercultural awareness?

Not effective Effective Very effective

Why so?.....

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14. If possible, please add any comments and suggestions.

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Thank you for your collaboration

ملخص

تتطلع هذه الدراسة إلى التقصي حول مكانة الوعي ما بين الثقافات في صف الأدب حيث تهدف إلى استكشاف إذا ما كان هناك تركيز من طرف أساتذة الأدب على الوعي ما بين الثقافات وإذا ما كان تدريس الأدب يسهم في تنمية هذا الوعي لدى الطلاب. وفي هذا السياق، تم طرح أسئلة البحث التالية: (1) هل يتم التركيز على الوعي ما بين الثقافات في صف الأدب؟ (2) هل يسهم تدريس الأدب في تنمية الوعي ما بين الثقافات لدى الطلاب؟ في محاولة للإجابة على هذه الأسئلة تم اللجوء إلى المنهج الوصفي. وللحصول على المعلومات الضرورية تم توزيع استبيان على ستين طالبا من طلبة السنة الثالثة للغة الانجليزية على مستوى قسم اللغات الأجنبية بجامعة ميله بالإضافة إلى استبيان ثان موجه إلى عشرة من أساتذة الأدب. أهم ما آلت إليه نتائج البحث يوحي انه بالفعل هنالك تركيز على الكفاءة التواصلية ما بين الثقافات في فصل الأدب كما يشير إلى إن تدريس الأدب يساعد على تنمية الوعي ما بين الثقافات لدى الطلاب. في الختام تبرز هذه الدراسة مجموعة من التوصيات فيما يخص طرق التعليم والبحث المستقبلي بهدف توجيه قدر أكبر من الاهتمام نحو الوعي ما بين الثقافات لدى الطلب خلال تدريس الأدب.

Résumé

Le but de cette recherche est d'examiner la place de la conscience interculturelle dans la classe de littérature. Elle sert à déterminer si la conscience interculturelle est accentuée par les enseignants de littérature et si elle est promue à l'aide de l'enseignement de littérature. En conséquence, deux questions de recherche sont posées : (1) Est ce que la conscience interculturelle est accentuée dans la classe de littérature ? (2) Est ce que l'enseignement de la littérature aide à promouvoir la conscience interculturelle des étudiants ? Afin de répondre à ces questions, une méthode descriptive est adoptée. Les informations nécessaires sont obtenues au moyen d'un questionnaire destiné à soixante étudiants d'anglais de troisième année dans le Département des Langues Etrangères, Université de Mila, et un autre questionnaire est destiné à dix enseignants de littérature. Les résultats de la recherche montrent que la compétence communicative interculturelle est, en fait, accentuée dans la classe de littérature et que l'enseignement de la littérature aide à développer la conscience interculturelle des étudiants. Finalement, cette étude offre une variété de recommandations pour la recherche et la pédagogie avec le but d'orienter plus d'attention vers la conscience interculturelle des étudiants dans la classe de littérature.