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Enhancing Cultural Dialogue Through Literary Texts

**A Case Study of Third Year EFL Students at the University Center 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

I dedicate this work to my family and many friends of mine.

A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents, whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring in my ears.

I also dedicate this dissertation to all my family members, my brothers and sisters, who have supported me throughout the process.

Special thanks go to my uncle Abdelmallek for his support throughout my moments of hardness.

Amin

Dedication

This work is wholeheartedly dedicated to my wonderful parents and my sisters Ahlem, Sarah, Kenza, Amira and specially Hadil who have been my source of inspiration and strength.

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To all my friends who never left my side.

Islam

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Abstract

Literary texts are mirrors that reflect the aspects of a given culture. This dissertation, a total of three chapters, seeks to reveal the importance of literary texts in enhancing cultural dialogue in the EFL classroom. The misunderstanding that currently dominates cultural relations is the main motive that prompted this research work, which aims at exploring the effect of literary texts on students' intercultural communicative competence. In this study, it is hypothesized that literary texts are a significant means of enhancing cultural dialogue and overcoming the misunderstanding that occurs between people of different cultures. Our research is based on a questionnaire; which is administrated to a research sample of third year EFL students at the University of Mila. The results obtained reveal that reading literary texts plays an effective role in mitigating cultural misunderstanding. Moreover, reading literary texts develops a sense of cultural awareness that helps learners to cross cultural borders and forge a nourishing dialogue with other cultures. Based on the findings of our research, some recommendations are given.

Keywords:

Literary texts, Cultural dialogue, intercultural communicative competence, cultural awareness, the EFL classroom

List of abbreviations

3P Model: Perspectives, Practices and Products

AUM: Anxiety/Uncertainty Management

DMIS: Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EIL: English as an International Language

ELT: English language teaching

FC: Foreign Culture

FL: Foreign Language

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

NSFLEP: National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project

SL: Second Language

USA: United States of America

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General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

Throughout history, literature has been a significant tool that fulfilled humans' needs of expressing their feelings, opinions and the events going around them. It is a reflection of society and culture. Moreover, it gives people a room to portray their ideas and dreams in the most imaginary and creative way possible, allowing them to express their values and beliefs, as it shows how people have lived and how their cultural life and traditions were like. Literature is an outstanding tool that helps people around the world discover other cultures or understand them better. The expansion of their knowledge of literature led to an increase in their linguistic and cultural competence, thus to a more effective interactions between people of different cultures.

In the field of EFL teaching, culture and literature are often taught separately despite the strong relationship between the two. Language learning is effective when the social and cultural aspects of language learning are not neglected. Fischer (2001) argued that there has been a shift in ELT from teaching grammar and vocabulary to developing communicative competence. Hence, cultural understanding is given a tremendous importance. In the Algerian university, literary texts seem to be undervalued means of teaching culture in the classroom. The literary text is often viewed as an objective and self-sufficient entity that has its own life. Thus, the relationship between literature and culture has never been seen as a reciprocal one.

Significantly, the huge waves of immigration and the exponential evolution of technology have opened the door for more frequent interactions between different cultures, making the cultural environment more diversified. However, cultural diversity has raised many issues in the world, and it causes difficulties in communication that triggered racism, stereotyping, intolerance, misunderstanding and discrimination. Therefore, there is an urgent

need to appease the present heat that marks cultural relations. Since the university might be the appropriate context that can solve this cultural misunderstanding, the present work suggests the use of literary texts to enhance cultural dialogue and ease the interactions of members of different cultures.

2. Aims of Study

Literature is a very important means of learning about other cultures because the author is the spokesman of his cultural identity. The main aim of conducting this research is to examine the importance of literary texts in enhancing cultural dialogue in the EFL context.

3. Significance of the study

Intercultural dialoguemay not be acquired spontaneously by individuals.It is a process that happens with the passage of time, and there is no point at which someone achieves full intercultural competence. This research investigates the use of literary texts as a tool for enhancing cultural dialogue. It aspires to mitigate the huge cultural misunderstanding which characterizes the contemporary world in the EFL context.

4. Research Questions

The questions addressed in this research are:

1. What are the learners' attitudes towards the target culture?
2. Do literary texts play a pivotal role in enhancing cultural dialogue and solving the problem of intercultural misunderstanding?

5. Research Hypothesis

To reach the aim of our study and to answer the aforementioned questions, we hypothesize that literary texts are a significant tool for enhancing cultural dialogue and overcoming the misunderstanding that occurs between people of different cultures

6. Tools of research

For the sake of investigating the importance of using literary texts in enhancing cultural dialogue, a qualitative method is used. Third year students of English at the University of Milan are chosen as the population of this study. A questionnaire has been administered to a sample of 75 students, who were chosen randomly.

7. Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is composed of three chapters. The first and the second chapters constitute the theoretical part and the last one constitutes the practical part of our work. The first chapter, which is entitled “teaching Culture in an EFL Classroom”, provides an overview of some of the concepts related to the culture, and its relation with language learning. It also discusses the importance, the goals, and the problems of teaching culture in the EFL classroom.

The second chapter, which is entitled “Literary Texts and Cultural Dialogue in the EFL Teaching”, highlights the role of literary texts in enhancing cultural dialogue. It discusses some of the important notions related to cultural dialogue, and the techniques of using literary texts to raise students’ intercultural communicative competence.

The last chapter is devoted to the presentation and the analysis of students’ questionnaire in order to test the validity of our hypothesis. It also suggests some recommendations for teachers and learners in order to facilitate the process of teaching/learning the aspects of the other cultures and to raise students’ awareness of cultural dialogue.

CHAPTER ONE: Teaching Culture in an EFL Classroom

Introduction

Culture is an umbrella term that encompasses social behaviours and norms found in human societies. Culture has been taught as one of the most important aspects of language. There were many researches made about the approaches of teaching culture in EFL classroom. This chapter attempts to bring to the surface the different conceptualizations of culture, and it tackles the different notions related to it. It begins with defining culture, and it illustrates some of the key issues such as the elements of culture, cultural differences, and the relation between language and culture. Then, it sheds light on the importance and the goals of teaching culture in the EFL classroom, and the problems encountered in the process of teaching it.

1. Definition of Culture

The term “Culture” has so many different definitions. Some are sociological, psychological, or philosophical; others are political or historical. Although it was hard to define culture, many anthropologists and sociolinguists have attempted to do it. Before students can engage in interactive cultural discussions, it is very important that teachers must define culture for them.

Some people believe that culture is about artefacts like food, music, literature or art. Others associate the word culture with conventions such as social interaction patterns, attitudes and values (Frank, 2013). Every human being is a part of at least one culture, which affects the way people think, interact, communicate, and transmit knowledge from one generation to another (Frank, 2013). However, according to anthropologists, culture was defined as the full range of learned human behaviour patterns. One of the first people to use this definition is the English anthropologist Edward B. Taylor(1871, p.1) who defined culture

as: “a complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” He made it clear that culture is possessed by man alone. This meaning of culture has been used for decades by anthropologists, and it became the central focus of anthropology.

In *Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions* (1952), the anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn cited 164 definitions of culture. The definition of culture that is preferred by Kroeber and Kluckhohn and also by many other anthropologists is that culture is an abstraction or, more specifically, "an abstraction from behaviour." (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p.46)

Later on, another anthropologist, named John H. Bodley (1994, p. 22), described culture simply as “what people think, make, and do.” Bodley views culture as socially transmitted information that shapes human behaviour, and it includes mental, behavioural and material aspects. This definition has been studied and developed into what is called the 3P model of culture (Frank, 2013).

Culture can also be considered as an important part of one's knowledge of the world. In this context, Duranti (1997, p.27) said:

If language is learned, then much of it can be thought of in terms of knowledge of the world. This does not only mean that members of a culture must know certain facts or be able to recognize objects, places, and people. It also means that they must share certain patterns of thought, ways of understanding the world, making inferences and predictions.

To put it succinctly, culture may be defined as a complex whole that contains multiple components, for instance traditions, literature, customs, beliefs, values, arts, knowledge and other habits acquired by people within a specific society.

2. The Elements of Culture

The standards for Foreign Language Learning (NSFLEP, 1999) have distinguished several elements of culture which have become known as the 3P model of culture. These elements include perspectives, practices and products. According to Frank (2013), the 3P model can be illustrated as follows:

- Perspectives: They are the philosophical perspectives, meanings, attitudes, values, beliefs, and ideas that underlie the cultural practices and products of a society. They represent a culture's view of the world.
- Practices: They are patterns of social interactions and behaviours. They involve the use of products. They represent the knowledge of "what to do when and where" and how to interact within a particular culture.
- Products: They are the tangible or intangible creations of a particular culture. They reflect a culture's perspectives. Examples of these products are music, art, food, paintings, literature, chopsticks, a dance, a sacred ritual, a system of education, a law, etc.

Products can be easily identified, because things like music and art can be interacted with, using our five senses, whereas perspectives and practices are not as easy as products to be recognised because they are ingrained in a society or they exist within the psyches of an individual (Frank 2013). Brooks (1968, p.204-217) made a better clarification and provided two terms to distinguish two types of culture. The first one is "formal culture" like literature, fine arts, history, etc. The second one is "deep culture" such as patterns of social interactions, values, attitudes, etc. Just like the 3P model, the elements of formal culture are easily observable across cultures. However, elements of deep culture are often difficult to identify.

Edward T. Hall (1976) have made a tool that can aid EFL students to develop a thought on culture elements; it is called the “cultural iceberg” analogy. Hall developed the analogy to make a difference between what we first see when we enter a new culture, which is the tip of the iceberg, and the other invisible part of the culture is the submerged part of the iceberg.

Formal culture and deep culture later developed to new terms which are big C culture and little c culture. These new terms were coined by Kramsch (2012) who maintained that language pedagogy, that focuses on communicative competence and the acquisition of conversational skills, deals with small c culture, whereas literature pedagogy, which focuses on the analysis, interpretation and translation of texts from one language into another, deals with big C.

1. Cultural Differences

Cultural difference involves the integrated and maintained system of socially acquired values, beliefs, and rules of conduct which impact the range of accepted behaviours distinguishable from one sociocultural group to another (Jackson&Guerra 2011).

People grew up in different living environments and social groups that shape their beliefs and perceptions. These sociocultural settings determine the norms and standards of these people, and they assign the principles and characteristics that differ from one sociocultural group to another. The latter play a tremendous impact on humans' mentalities. In addition to the differences between societies and cultures in terms of beliefs and mindsets, societies may differ in other aspects. They vary distinctly in tradition, styles of living, and stuffs like foods, clothes, practices...etc.

2. The Relationship Between Language and Culture

Language and culture are intertwined and closely related with each other. Every component of culture, such as beliefs, customs, literature, values, arts and techniques, can be described, analysed, stored, evaluated and transmitted by language. So, it is safe to say that language is the carrier and the container of culture. On the other hand, language is influenced and shaped by culture; it reflects culture. The two are related, and the understanding of one requires understanding of the other (Kun, 2013).

Language is the principal means whereby social lives are conducted. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways. When people use words, they refer to a common experience. When they express facts, ideas or events, they refer to their knowledge about the world that other people share, and they reflect their beliefs, point of view, morals and attitudes. Language expresses cultural reality. People within the same social group do not only express their experience; they also create experience through language, by choosing a specific way on how to communicate with one another. For instance, they choose whether to speak on the phone or meet up face to face. They decide whether to write a letter or rather to send an e-mail message. The way in which people use the spoken, written, or visual form of language creates meanings that are understandable to the group they belong to, like when using a certain tone of voice, or accent when speaking, using gestures and specific facial expressions. People in a society view their language as a symbol of their social identity. They identify themselves and others, their beliefs, their morals and other cultural components through their use of language (Kramersch, 1998).

3. Teaching Culture in the EFL Classroom

Culture and language learning are strongly linked to each other, and the relationship between the two is deeply rooted. But teaching culture in a foreign language classroom has been a debatable issue that splits into two different views supported by two different sides.

The first side denies the idea of teaching culture in the classroom. In Krashen's view (1982), the classroom is not a suitable place for language and culture acquisition, but it is only a context where to learn about the basics of a culture or a language, and this explains what Krashen (1982) said about the classroom in his book *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. In it, he stated that "no matter how "natural" we make it. There is simply no way the classroom can match the variety of the outside world" (p.59). Supporting this idea, Damen believes that the classroom relies heavily on rule guided pedagogy which limits culture teaching to cultural facts only rather than the dynamic view of culture (Damen, 1987, as cited in Gonen&Saglam, 2012).

The second side supports the idea of teaching culture in the classroom. Byram, who is representative of this view, asserted that language functions only in its proper cultural context which is the language patterns used by people when they come across each other in different social situations (Byram, 1988, as cited in Gonen&Saglam, 2012). This means that it is possible to teach culture in the classroom as long as teachers find a way to implement the elements of context which influence language use. Bada (2000, as cited in Gonen&Saglam, 2012) also supported this idea by stating that language learners must be taught the cultural elements of the target society in order to avoid any communication problems with the members of that society.

4. The history of Teaching Culture in FL Classroom

Traditional methods of teaching foreign culture tend to limit themselves to the transmission of foreign cultural information or teaching foreign literature in classroom. However, the current trend of foreign language teaching, associated with culture, has taken into account the relation of language and culture (Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002).

Culture Pedagogy started in the sixties in USA with Lado's seminal work "Linguistics across cultures". He suggested that cultures can be compared from three distinct levels, which are the form, the meaning, and the distribution.

In the seventies, the role of culture in FL teaching increased massively. The teaching of cultures, at that time, focused on societies, both learners' and target cultures' societies. In the eighties, scholars delved deeply into the role of culture in SL/FL teaching where the relationship between language and culture was examined and emphasized.

In the nineties, the challenge that foreign culture teaching faced is the impact of globalization (Nault, 2006, p.324). At that time, people and learners, specifically, became more than ever exposed to different cultural issues, due to the exponential development of technologies that turned the world into a small global village. This development raised many cultural issues that needed a deep understanding of how to enhance cultural dialogue to ease tensions between societies.

It is suggested that foreign language teaching should be done across national and ethnic boundaries and that it should be considered in a transnational and global context (Risager, 2007, p. 15). The role of English as a world international language demands these changes in culture dimensions (Wandel, 2002, p. 15).

An intercultural approach is proposed in ELT to train FL learners to be EIL users. That is, learners need to be trained to use English as a lingua franca and develop their

intercultural sensitivity and awareness. It is important to develop culture sensitivity and culture awareness in FC teaching under globalisation since it is impossible to include all aspects of culture into one curriculum. The intercultural communicative approach allows learners of English to use culture as a powerful tool to understand and explore the global cultures (Prodromou, 1992, p. 46).

ELT teaching with mainstream cultures contents, i.e., North American, British, Australian cultures, has to be considered. Teachers of English have to take into account the following questions to reconsider the cultural dimension of ELT: what goals in culture teaching should be addressed? and how should culture-related materials be designed and chosen? (Nault, 2006, p.19). It is suggested that a more diversity of cultures and non-mainstream cultures in ELT instruction are included in the phenomenon of English as a global language (Nault 2006, p .19). Hence, in this globalised world, there is a need to shift from focusing on the monolithic single native to teaching other cultures.

The notion of communicative competence has been challenged by globalisation (Alptekin, 2002). People who speak different languages and belong to different cultural background use English to communicate in various settings: in academic context, in their research works, in conferences, and when they travel abroad. Since English is used as a lingua franca, speakers or non-native speakers are engaged in a specific intercultural context, and they require strategies for interpreting cultures and languages when they communicate with each other (Crozet &Liddicoat, 2000).

6. The importance of Teaching Culture in the EFL Classroom

In the past decades, EFL language teachers hardly realize the importance of cultural orientations. In the EFL classroom, they believe that communication is nothing else but the use of accurate and correct grammar rules while speaking or writing. In certain cases,

learning the target culture is seen as a huge threat to the native values. Not all language learners have a close contact with the target culture and its speakers. So, unless they visit a foreign country and experience the difficulty of understanding its target culture, they cannot appreciate the importance of learning the cultural aspects of communication (Kachru, 1992, as cited in Choudhury, 2013). Cultural misunderstanding might result in embarrassing situations and it can even amount to conflicts.

McKay (2003) believes that culture has an influence on language teaching in two important ways: linguistically and pedagogically. Linguistically, culture is important in the linguistic dimension of the language itself, because it affects the semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels of the language. Pedagogically, it has an influence on the choice of language materials because the cultural content of the language materials and the cultural basis of the teaching methodology must be taken into consideration while deciding upon the language materials. Cultural awareness and intercultural learning are both a part of the Common European Framework policies to promote international understanding and world peace. Kitao (2000, as cited in Choudhury, 2013) maintained that one of benefits of culture learning is intercultural understanding. Kitao believes that studying a culture makes the learners more interested in studying the target language, because understanding a culture makes studying its language and literature more meaningful. Moreover, understanding the target culture is likely to help learners avoid stereotyping others.

7. The Goals of Teaching Culture

It is somehow difficult for EFL teachers to determine which teaching materials to include when teaching culture. Picking out the goals or objectives of culture instruction is favourable to adjust the how, when and particularly what to teach. Seelye (1974, p. 38-48) proposed

seven goals of culture instruction toward which classroom activities and materials should be directed.

7.1.The Sense, or Functionality, of Culturally Conditioned Behaviour

Learners need to understand that people act the way they do because they are using options the society allows for satisfying basic physical and psychological needs. When an individual attempts to satisfy a basic need, he usually has to employ many interacting cultural patterns that form a relatively cohesive structure. For example, maintaining the respect of male peers in upper-class Guatemala City might involve skills in telling jokes and discussing literature, knowledge of English and of wines and liqueurs.

7.2.Interaction of Language and Social Variables

Learners must understand that such social variables as age, sex, social class, and place of residence affect the way people speak and behave. So, learners will take into account these variables when they speak and interact with others. Students understand, for example, that an eight-year-old child talks differently from an 80-year-old man. In another instance, the speech regarded as appropriate for women would raise eyebrows if spoken in a man's locker room.

7.3.Conventional Behaviour in Common Situations

Learners will develop a comprehension of the way individuals perform in target cultures in any ordinary settings. They can demonstrate how people conventionally act in the most common mundane and crisis situations in the target culture. For instance, when you meet someone new in English, you say 'how do you do', or in some settings, simply 'Hi'. In fact, some cultures provide conventionalized linguistic responses while others do not.

7.4.Cultural Connotations of Words and Phrases

Learners will promote a sensibility toward cultural pictures that are associated with words. The learners must be aware that culturally conditioned images are associated with even the most common target words and phrases. For instance, the thought of a beautiful woman to an Arab man might be an image of a 250-pound lovely woman, while to an American, it could be a slim woman.

7.5.Evaluating Statements About a Society

Learners are able to evaluate the relative strength of a generality made about the target culture depending on the amount of evidence supporting or substantiating the statement. This boosts students' critical abilities and develops a statement of principles having general rather than specific validities regarding the target culture.

7.6.Researching Another Culture

Learners develop the skills needed to locate and organize materials about the target culture from the library, mass media, and personal observation. Hence, they acquire the competencies to study, examine, explore and discover data about the target culture.

7.7.Attitudes Towards Other Cultures

Learners possess intellectual curiosity about the target culture and empathy towards its people. They tend to be directed to experience acquisitiveness about the selected cultures, and they raise their ability to understand and share the feeling of others.

8. Problems of Teaching Culture in the EFL Classroom

Rivers (1981, p. 323) noticed certain problems in attempting to teach a culture, whether one's own or that of another language group. Students experience a cultural shock when exposed to a new culture they have never encountered before. This happens because

they are confronted with new different ways of behaving, thinking and interacting. Teachers must convey cultural concepts dispassionately and objectively in order not to make students confused that the teacher is making the aspects of the new culture look better or worse than the student's own culture. Moreover, students will try to understand the aspects of the new culture. In doing so, they will figure out how this new culture perceives the world. In other words, these students will try to understand how and why things are the way they are in the new culture.

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter provides a detailed explanation of the term culture, which is defined from different perspectives and angles. It also provides a description of the main characteristics of culture. It gives significance to the inseparable relationship between culture and language. Moreover, the chapter gives an overview of the history of the education of culture. It has also dealt with the major goals and problems of cultural teaching. Visiting the country where the language is being spoken is the ideal way to enhance cultural knowledge. However, this opportunity is available to a limited category of learners with a decent social and economic status. The majority of learners have to make use of the information the teacher provides in the classroom to achieve the same goal.

CHAPTER TWO: Literary Texts and Cultural Dialogue in EFL

Teaching

Introduction

The literary text in broadest sense is any written work of art in a given language. It is a reflection of the author's society and culture. Thus, cultural awareness is an important concept that should be emphasized in language teaching. This chapter attempts to highlight some of the notions related to literary texts, cultural dialogue, and the different methods and guidelines that should be considered in teaching FC in order to strengthen learners' intercultural communicative competence and mitigate the cultural misunderstanding.

1. Defining Literature

Defining literature is not an easy task, and there is a controversy among literary theorists and critics on how to define that term. According to Lazar (1993), literature refers to the different literary works such as novels, short stories, plays and poems. These works are used to evoke a personal response in the reader or listener, and they reflect the lived world or a part of the writer's imaginary created world. Literature is where thoughts, ideas and beliefs meet, interact and share experiences through creative use of language. Thus, literary language characterizes literature, and it is not completely separate from the various forms of language. Reading literary texts is a good way to discover and appreciate distinct levels of meaning, because the language found in the literary works is not only simple, but rich in profound meanings (Lazar, 1993).

2. Pedagogical Benefits of Using Literary Texts for Learning Culture

2.1. Literature Integrates Language Skills

Literature provides a medium for integrating multiple skills. To enhance students' oral proficiency, for instance, teachers can design activities like debating cultural issues in the text. Students can also be asked to rehearse and role play the events of the literary text. Furthermore, they may retell the story from the perspective of a character. Lazar (1993, as cited in Zacharias, 2005) believed that if recorded literary texts are available, students can be asked to adapt the story to a local context. Teachers can give students exercises of paraphrasing and summarizing that are found in academic writing.

2.2. The Role of Literature in Enhancing Students' Motivation and Interest

Maley and Duff pointed out that literary texts are "non-trivial" because they discuss subjects which are related to the authors' cultural background. They claim that literary texts do not "frequently trivialize experience in the service of pedagogy" like any other teaching input (Maley & Duff 1990, p.7). This is why literature is a powerful means of promoting students' motivation and interest.

2.3. The Role of Literature in Developing Students' Cognitive Dimensions

Concerning the cognitive dimension, literature can improve students' explanatory skills and critical thinking. This is because literature has multiple interpretations, and therefore, "only rarely will two readers' understanding of or reaction to a given text be identical" (Maley & Duff 1990, p.7). One might opine that the divergences between one person's interpretation and another's interpretation can provide a source of motivation for learning culture. This also gives students the opportunity to discuss their opinions. Of utmost importance, they can express their own representations of reality. The way in which literature

discusses a topic or an issue is so exciting that it touches the hearts of readers and stimulates their thinking process. Since it discusses common topics such as love, war and peace, literature helps learners criticize and make comments on a given subject in the text.

2.4. The Role of Literature in Developing Students' Affective Dimensions

Literature is also conducive to the personal growth of students. It can help them develop empathy because it shows how other people see things, which may be different from our own. Maley and Duff asserted that literature can mobilize students' intelligence and emotions (Maley & Duff 1990). Lazar, in turn, believed that by responding to literary texts, students "feel that they have the ability to deal with the text and its language and associate it with the values and traditions of their society" (1993, p. 19). Students are likely to respond to the text and make comments on it when they find affinities between their experience and those of the characters.

Hadaway et al. (2002, as cited in Babae & Yahya, 2014) suggest three benefits of using literature for teaching language. The first advantage considers the contextualization of language. When reading literary works, students become familiar with the application of language under various conditions. The second benefit takes into account the social factors embedded in different literary genres. The third advantage considers the natural and meaningful application of language, which is achieved through the use of descriptive language in illustrations and literature.

Duff and Maley (1990, p.6) believe that there are three reasons for the use of literature in second language teaching. First, the linguistic reason, why literature is influential in language teaching, is because it provides students with real samples of language applications. Foreign language learners accept different genres and styles of teaching, and they can distinguish their respective functions, which is of great significance. The second reason is

methodological. It can be explained by the fact that literary texts can have different interpretations; so, they generate different ideas among learners, which lead to creative and motivating interactions with texts, learners, and teachers (Widdowson, 1983, as cited in Babae&Yahya, 2014). The third reason, which is the motivation factor, is very important, because the literary text represents the true feelings of the author, which generates strong motivation among the learners. With the help of literary texts, students can feel this personal experience, and they become able to connect what they read with the real world. Literature has the ability to create real conditions for learners to practice and learn foreign languages with motivation.

3. Advantages of Teaching Different Genres of Literature

3.1. The use of Poetry in EFL Classroom

Poetry is a significant genre for teaching and learning language skills. The benefits of teaching poetry for language learners have been highlighted by many EFL practitioners, and they can be summarized as follows:

- Poems provide students with insights into developing cross-cultural awareness, and this in turn will help them in acquiring fluency in the target language (Lazar 1996, p. 775).
- Poems also provide inspiration and can serve as a good model for creative writing (McKay, 1982).
- According to Collie and Slater (1987), "using poetry in the language classroom can lead naturally to freer and creative written expression" (p.72).

According to Çubukçu (2001, as cited in Babae&Yahya, 2014) reading poetry makes learners more familiar with the accent, pitch, beat, and intonation of a foreign language. In

EFL teaching, it is possible to use different types of poetry, such as epics, lyrics, folk songs, sonnets, etc. Using different types of poetry helps learners familiarize themselves with different types of language applications and different poetry styles.

3.2. The use of the Short story in EFL Classroom

Many scholars have discussed the use of short stories in EFL classrooms for developing language skills and recommended the use of short-stories in teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. According to Lazar (1993), the short story in the EFL context has many advantages that can be summarized as follows:

- Short stories in the EFL classroom offer motivating and authentic teaching materials.
- They develop the interpretative abilities and help in expanding language awareness.
- They encourage EFL learners to express their opinions and feelings.
- Stories help learners understand other cultures and work as a stimulus for language learning.

Collie and Slater (1987) also strongly advocate the use of short-stories in the EFL classroom. According to them, short stories have a variety of choices for students of different interests and tastes, and they can be used with all levels, all ages, and all classes.

3.3. The use of Drama in EFL Classroom

The advantages of teaching drama, as Lenore (1993, p. 4) observes, are as follows:

- Stimulating the imagination and promoting creative thinking.
- Developing the critical thinking ability.
- Heightening influential listening skills.

- Increasing the learners' empathy and awareness.
- Reinforcing positive self-concept.
- Providing the instructors with a fresh perspective on teaching.
- Developing creativity, originality, sensitivity, flexibility, cooperation, and communication skills.
- Helping the learners develop their level of competence with respect to their receptive and productive skills.
- Helping the learners develop new opinions and thoughts. The use of drama can be a very influential way in communication-based language teaching. Authentically, drama helps the learners develop their understanding of the verbal as well as nonverbal features of the target language.

In short, the use of drama is an effective technique in today's EFL teaching communication-based and student-centered approaches and methods. This is mainly because it provides authentic material, and it helps students to promote their comprehension of the verbal and nonverbal aspects of English.

3.4. The use of Novels in EFL Classroom

Choosing the appropriate novel can foster learners' motivation to learn the target language. According to Hişmanoğlu (2005, p. 63), using the novel for learning a foreign language can have the following benefits:

- Developing the learners' knowledge about different cultures, traditions, societies, and people.
- Offering real life like settings.
- Giving learners the opportunity to make use of their creativity
- Improving the critical thinking ability.

- Stimulating the learners' imagination.
- Developing both oral and written language skills.

In short, the use of appropriate novels can increase the enthusiasm and interest of learners. Although some learners may think that reading novels is tedious and boring, it can be an influential tool for developing reading comprehension skills and accumulating vocabulary. In fact, reading novels broadens learners' horizons, it allows them to understand other cultures, and it cultivates their intercultural communication skills.

4. Problems and Difficulties in using Literary Texts

Although literature provides many benefits, there are still some major difficulties that face teachers in teaching literary texts. The most common problem encountered when using literary texts is language. Many EFL teachers and students view literature as a complicated subject matter because literary language is seen as difficult to understand. Teachers and students often find that the language “does not stick to more common usages, but exploits and even distorts the accepted conventions in fresh and unexpected ways” (Lazar, 1993, p.115). In addition, literary vocabulary and grammatical structures are often considered too complicated. However, if students cultivate a reading habit, they will be very familiar with the language of literary texts with the passage of time.

The length of the text is also regarded as one of the main difficulties. For some people, longer texts may seem more difficult, while for others, shorter texts cause more difficulties, simply because they don't provide the extended context that longer texts provide (Duff & Maley 1990, p.7). By and large, students do not like very long texts. They found them boring because of the lack of reading habits among students.

Another problem with using literary texts in EFL classrooms is related to culture. According to Duff and Maley, cultural factors may bring some difficulties. In their words, “it is clearly impossible for an outsider to share fully the range of references of an insider” (Duff & Maley 1990, p.7). What is meant here is that lack of knowledge about the author’s culture makes the act of reading difficult.

In short, we can see that there are some problems encountered in using literature in EFL classrooms. Understanding these problems, as noted earlier, will enable teachers to identify the areas they need to improve in order to make the best use of literature in teaching culture.

5. Cultural Dialogue

The council of Europe has defined Cultural dialogue or “Intercultural dialogue” as “an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other’s global perception” (Council of Europe, 2015).

Intercultural dialogue is a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange or interaction between individuals, groups and organizations with different cultural backgrounds or world views. The aims of cultural dialogue include the following: first, it helps develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices. Second, it increases participation and the freedom and ability to make choices. Third, it fosters equality, and it enhances creative processes. In this sense, intercultural dialogue processes or encounters are to go beyond a mere 'tolerance of the other'. They also involve creative abilities that convert challenges and hindrances into innovation processes and new forms of expression. Communication is essential for understanding the attitudes, value systems, behaviours, points of view, and the entire cultural context of one’s interlocutor. One must be able to decipher his

message correctly and know what stance to adopt in relation to whom, referring to one's own cultural context. In order to communicate, not only on the linguistic level, people have to understand each other, exchange ideas and interact with each other. The success of intercultural communication does not depend only on the level of the linguistic skills acquired. Without intercultural skills, the simplest communication sometimes proves impossible (Gulliver, 2015).

6. Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Communicative Competence

Intercultural competence was briefly defined by Fantini 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, emphasis in the original). That term was also defined by Deardorff who stated that the intercultural competence is “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (2006, p. 247). These two definitions could be simplified by saying that intercultural competence consists of the skills and abilities which allow people to enhance their intercultural knowledge proficiency, thus improving the intercultural interactions.

However, Byram (1997) made a distinction between the term intercultural competence and the term intercultural communicative competence (ICC). He believes that the former is the ability of someone to interact with others from different cultures and countries using his own language. This could happen when someone has the knowledge about intercultural communication and certain skills and abilities that allow him to overcome cultural differences and enjoy intercultural contact. Intercultural communicative competence occurs in the context of foreign language teaching, and it focuses on the ability to use a foreign language when interacting with other people from other countries and cultures. The

appropriate use of the foreign language as well as the knowledge of other cultures allow people to “negotiate a mode of communication and interaction which is satisfactory to themselves and the other, and they are able to act as mediator between people of different cultural origins” (Byram, 1997, p.71). In this sense, master of the foreign language and the awareness of its culture are likely to foster intercultural understanding and communication.

6.1. The Intercultural Speaker

Byram (1997) introduced the term “intercultural speaker” to describe an individual who is able to communicate in an intercultural setting. He also defined him as someone who is capable of developing his intercultural communicative competence skills, and he is able to establish a relationship between his own beliefs, meanings and behaviours and those of the other cultures. According to Kramsch, an intercultural speaker has “adaptability to select those forms of accuracy and those forms of appropriateness that are called for in a given social context of use” (1998, p.27). She suggested that the intercultural speaker is a recognized member of different speech communities where he communicates using rules of interpretation. Gaining ICC is about constructing relationships and engaging in communication regardless of whether the participants share the same worldviews or not (Byram, 1997). Hence, intercultural communicative competence is likely to cross cultural borders and forge nourishing relations between people who belong to different cultures.

6.2 Models of Intercultural Competence

Bennett’s (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), also called the Bennett Scale, explains the reaction of people to cultural differences in various social situations. According to Bennet (1993), the scale starts from “ethnocentrism”, which he described as an attitude or mindset which presumes the superiority of one's own worldview (p. 30). Then, it moves to “ethnorelativism”, which is a stage when one's own

culture is experienced in the context of other cultures (p. 46). This means that the scale starts from the state of denying cultural differences to the state of integrating the differences. The first three stages, which are denial, defense, and minimization, are ethnocentric. It means that people see their culture as the correct way of living. Moving up the scale, an ethnorelative point of view will be developed, and people start to experience their own culture as in the context of other cultures. During the fourth stage, which is acceptance, ethnocentric views are replaced by ethnorelative views. The last two stages are adaptation and integration of the differences. People in these stages can understand and behave properly within other cultures, and they understand their cultural boundaries.

Gudykunst's (1993) Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) model explains that in order to cope with new cultural situations, a person must learn how to properly manage his anxiety in new cultural encounters. In this model, Gudykunst (1993) explains more that if anxiety is too high, when interacting in intercultural situations, there are very few chances that people visiting another country are able to interpret the hosts' responses. On the contrary, when anxiety is too low, visitors of other countries can start conversations with confidence about their ability to understand everything about the foreign culture. This model is mainly used in training sessions by doing role-plays and discussions for people planning to live abroad.

Byram's proposed Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997) consists of the following factors:

1. The attitude factor which refers to the ability to relativize one's values, beliefs and behaviours.

2. Knowledge of the self and other, Knowledge of interaction, Knowledge of individual and societal means, and knowledge of the rules for individual and social

interaction. This factor consists of knowing social groups and their practices, both in one's own culture and in the other cultures.

3. The first skill set, which consists of the skills of interpreting and relating, describes an individual's ability to interpret, explain, and relate events and documents, from another culture, to one's own culture.

4. The second skill set, which consists of the skills of discovery and interaction, allows the individual to acquire new knowledge of another culture, including the ability to use existing knowledge, attitudes, and skills in cross-cultural interactions.

5. The last factor, which is critical cultural awareness, describes the ability to use perspectives, practices, and products in one's own culture and in other cultures to make evaluations. Byram further clarified that the interaction factor, which consists of skills of discovery and interacting, includes a range of communication forms. The latter includes verbal and non-verbal modes of communication, and the development of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competencies.

7. Literary Texts and Cultural dialogue

The traditional approach to teaching literary texts advocates their use in order to illustrate grammatical rules and enrich learners' vocabulary. This is because they were seen as closed and self-sufficient products that must be analyzed and explained (Hall, 2005, p.79). In fact, literary texts can be viewed from different angles. For example, they can be considered as a means that enables learners to access other cultures' values and perspectives. They are a source that provides and contains different aspects of other cultures, such as norms, traditions, and attitudes. Literary texts contain stories that tell how other people see the world and how they perceive things, how they behave in certain situations, how they deal with others, and how they reflect on their environment and the events happening around them.

Literary texts offer other educational advantages such as intercultural understanding, empathy and tolerance (Bland, 2018). These competencies help to promote cultural dialogue and ease the interaction between people of different cultures.

Cultural awareness can be promoted through language and literature pedagogies since language gives records of its users and can be used to develop learners' awareness of their own culture as well as the other cultures (Hall, 2005, p.41). In a foreign language classroom, foreign language learners are engaged both cognitively and affectively, and their perspectives are shared in the classroom. Reading literary texts critically, they reflect on the ideas from the intercultural point of view, thus gaining different experiences. As a result, they develop self-awareness, which is necessary for understanding and accepting other cultures (Gonçalves Matos, 2011, p.7).

During the process of teaching literary texts, both teachers and learners are involved. The teacher should be aware of the materials used in order to meet the targeted intercultural competences. He should also go farther to present sensitive topics that oppose learners' own cultures, in order to mitigate the cultural misunderstandings. On the other hand, learners should reflect on these materials and attempt to analyze them from different perspectives. Literary texts provide learners with a variety of intercultural information that help learners to gain the skill of processing and thinking of the aspects of different cultures. In the same vein, many scholars have identified the word "third place", the place from which learners should read literary texts. They define the term third space as "the space between the two cultures, in other words, that is the spot from which literary texts are read and which stimulates critical reading, thus contributing to the cognitive and affective development of foreign language learners" (Gonçalves Matos, 2005, p.67).

The essential role of literary texts in developing cultural awareness and cultural dialogue has been observed by a number of scholars. The incorporation of literary texts in intercultural education and second language classroom has been supported by many arguments. One of those is the fact that any work of literature will help readers view the world from multiple perspectives and appreciate the diversity of individual perception. Literature has the ability to involve the reader both at the cognitive and the emotional level. The subjectivity that lies within the literary protagonists might not only fascinate and allure the reader, but also transfer them to a different reality, regardless of their own otherness or limitation (Soter, 1997, p.213). In the same vein, another scholar, called Hanauer (2001, p. 390), also supported the idea of incorporating literary texts into second language education by proposing three more arguments. First, he mentioned the motivational aspects of reading literary texts which can greatly enhance personal involvement and enjoyment on the part of the students, thus leading to their increased motivation. His second argument is related to the psycholinguistic aspects of reading literary texts. Literary texts facilitate the understanding of linguistic structures, and they enhance the students' use of language and extend the semantic scopes. Finally, the third argument provided by Hanauer is that literature has a huge role in developing cultural awareness, since literary texts provide language learners with "access to cultural knowledge of the target language community" (Hanauer, 2001, p. 391).

In this sense, literary texts can be viewed as cultural worlds which reflect the authors' cultural identity. Since the author is the antennae of his own culture, reading literary texts has a tremendous role in raising students' cultural awareness.

8. Criteria for Selecting Literary Texts in Teaching Cultural Dialogue

8.1. Language Competency

Students might feel demotivated if they are not linguistically ready. So, teachers need to select literary texts which suit their language proficiencies. Carter and Long (1991) believe that it is much better to select the literary texts which are not far beyond the students' level of reading comprehension. In other words, it is necessary to select literary texts which consist largely of words or expressions sufficiently common to the students (Hill, 1992, p. 142, as cited in Floris, 2005). Briefly, if the language of literary texts is relatively straightforward, simple and not too difficult or beyond the students' level of understanding, students will aspire to have more opportunities for exposure to literary works. Moreover, they will find that these texts are more relevant to their experience.

8.2. Length of Text

As the length of literary texts varies greatly, teachers also need to consider whether the texts can be taught in the available class time. Lazar (1993, p. 55) commented that when selecting literary texts, teachers should keep in mind whether they have enough time to discuss the text in class. They should also consider the time students spend reading the text at home, and how much time the teacher needs to give students the background information about the text. If the text is long enough, teachers can use various techniques, such as assigning homework. By using this technique, students can complete the exploration of the text on time.

8.3. Cultural Competency

The selected text should also be within the scope of the teacher's and students' cultural awareness. A culture beyond the scope of a student's knowledge or ability to understand will

not motivate students to read. Hill (1992, p. 142, as cited in Floris, 2005) suggested that the subject of the text has to be related to the events and real-life experiences of the reader. Carter and Long (1991, p. 142) agreed with the view that the subject of the text must be related to the reader's country or culture to some extent. Indeed, texts that are far from today's world in time and place may still be attractive to students from different countries around the world. This is either because they touched on topics relevant to the students, or because they deal with the relationships and feelings that resonate with the students' own lives (Lazar 1993, p. 53). Thus, a literary text that is culturally relevant to the students is likely to stir their imagination and motivation. It also provokes hot discussions in the classroom.

8.4. Students' Interests

It is also important to choose texts that stimulate individual participation and stimulate the interest of learners. If learners' ideas, experiences, and needs are completely different from what they are asked to read, it is useless to expect them to be motivated. On the other hand, if the specified literary text is meaningful and enjoyable, learners will enthusiastically try to overcome language barriers (Collie & Slater, 1994, p. 6-7). Teachers must choose literary texts that attract learners' attentions. This may create an active learning environment in which learners respond and participate imaginatively, which will make the reading of literature a memorable, individual and collective experience. There are various literary texts from which teachers can select and choose the most suitable ones. Students are generally interested in literary texts that are related to their personal experiences or those that stir their inmost feelings.

Conclusion

Intercultural communicative competence has become a defining term for general English teaching, especially cultural teaching. Therefore, efforts have been made in the past

and present to design teaching frameworks, with emphasis on cultural and intercultural competence. Literature has a great importance in teaching English as a foreign language. In order for literature to be beneficial for teaching culture, they must have certain criteria to be authentic and useful. Exploring the realm of reading and cultural literacy, literature and its use in the EFL classroom is a very complicated task. Its scope is unlimited, and it initiates discussions of other issues of similar importance. This chapter sheds light on the issue of the study from a theoretical point of view. However, the next chapter takes a practical path to investigate enhancing cultural dialogue through literary texts.

Chapter Three: Field Work

Introduction

The third chapter constitutes the practical part of the current study. It describes the adopted methodology used to test the research hypotheses. Of utmost importance, it tests the verity of the basic assumption that cultural dialogue can be enhanced through literary texts. This chapter provides a comprehensive description of the most fundamental elements related to the fieldwork, including the methodological approach used in this research and the population and sampling. Moreover, this chapter deals with the description, analysis and discussion of the students' questionnaire. In addition, it states the major limitations of the research, and it provides some recommendations for further research based on the analysis and the interpretation of the results obtained.

1. Methodological Approach

This research adopts the qualitative method. One of the main reasons for using the qualitative research is to explore and describe the study from the perspectives of the participants in the study. According to Cohen et. al, "Qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities". (Cohen et al, 2005, p. 461) This research relies on a questionnaire to test our hypothesis and answer the research questions. This questionnaire was administered to students in order to obtain the necessary information for our study.

2. The Population and Sampling

The questionnaire was administered to third year students at the University of Mila during the second semester. The population with which the study is concerned involves third

year students of English. Our selected sample consists of 75 students. They were randomly chosen to answer the questionnaire. Random sampling enables us to generalize the findings of this study on the remaining population. The respondents were given enough time to fill in the questionnaire and to hand it on soon after. They were also provided with clarification of any item which seemed difficult or not clear enough. Third year students were chosen because they have the knowledge needed to participate in this research as they are all familiar with the module of literature. In fact, they have been studying literature for three years. Therefore, the learners are aware of the role of literary works in enhancing their cultural knowledge and their cultural dialogue.

3. Description of the Students' Questionnaire

The respondents were informed about the importance of their answers for our research, and they were assured that their answers will be used only for research purposes. They were also told that their answers will remain anonymous in order for them to express their ideas and thoughts freely and provide truthful answers. The respondents were asked to tick the appropriate box or to provide further clarifications whenever it is necessary. The questionnaire is composed of twenty-one questions, which include both open-ended and close-ended questions, and it is divided into three sections. The first section, which is entitled *Students' Background Information*, contains three questions that aim to gather general information from the participants, for instance, years of studying English, their level in English, and the reason for choosing to study English. The second section consists of six questions, and it is entitled *The Importance of Literature and Culture*. The questions in this section ask the participants mainly about the importance of studying both literature and culture. The last section, which is entitled *Literary Texts and Culture dialogue*, contains twelve questions. These questions aim to ask the students about the impact of literary texts on cultural knowledge and cultural dialogue.

4. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

4.1. Section one: Students' Background Information

Q1. For how many years have you been studying English?

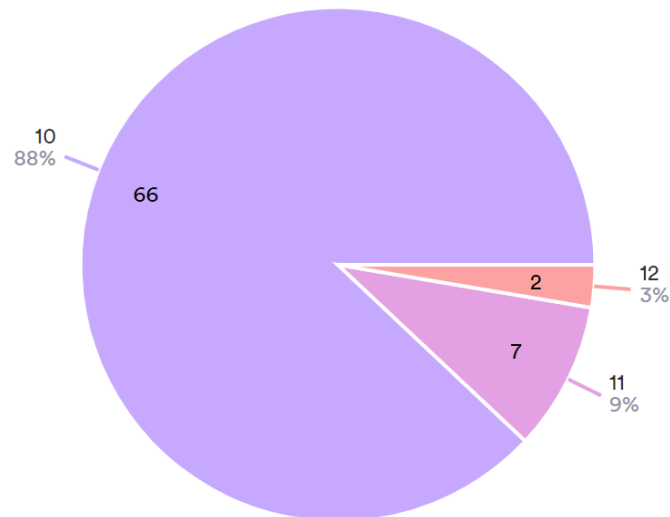


Figure 1: Years of studying English

This question is set to determine the period of time spent in learning English. As it is shown above, the majority of students (88%) have been studying English for ten years. In fact, these are students who have started learning English from their first year in middle school and never failed. The rest of the participants (12%), constituting a minority, declare that they have spent more than ten years in the process of learning English. This can be explained by either a failure or a change in the field of study.

Q2. How do you evaluate your level in English?

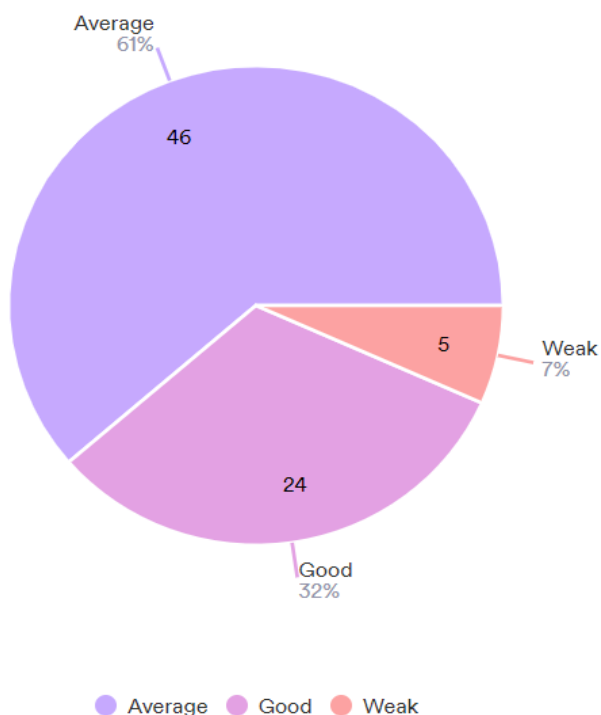


Figure 2: Students' level in English

This question asks the learners to evaluate their level in English after all those years of studying it. The majority of the participants, (61%) state that their level is average, because they probably still make mistakes, and they are not fluent in English yet. Some students (32%) admit that they are good, meaning that they have enhanced their level of English throughout their life by putting a lot of effort and time into it. Very few participants (7%) believe that they have a weak level. These students seem to have a low level mainly in the writing and the speaking skills.

Q3. Why did you choose to study English at the university?

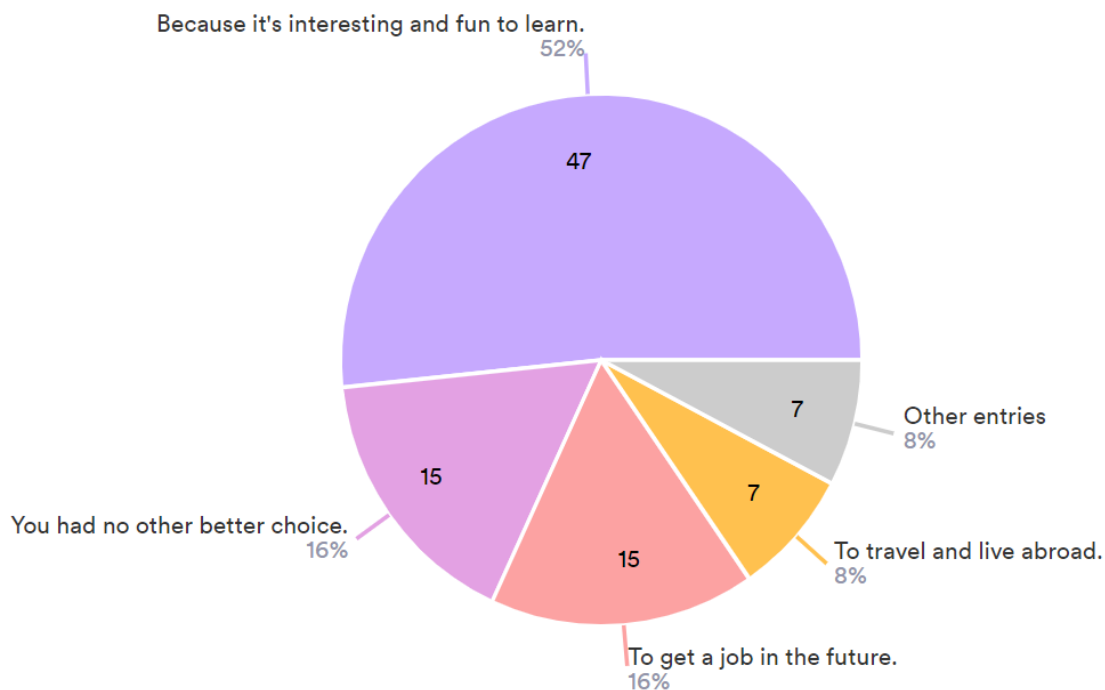


Figure 3: Reasons behind choosing English at the university

From the above figure, it is observed that half of the sample (52 %) say that they chose English because it is interesting and fun to learn. However, some students (16%) respond that they had chosen to study English because they had no other better choice. This means that those students found themselves obliged to opt for English, because the options they wanted were probably rejected as they did not meet the required baccalaureate average. The other students (16%) had chosen to study English to get a job in the future, hoping that English would give them more opportunities in workplaces. Among the respondents, few students (8%) stated that they opted for English because they wish to travel and live abroad. It is possible to think that these students have a positive attitude towards the target community. These students, who have an integrative motivation to learn English, are more likely to know about the target communities' way life, behaviour and thinking. The rest of the

participants (8%) wrote other reasons for choosing to study English, but the most important one is the fact that English is a universal and international language.

4.2. Section two: *The Importance of Literature and Culture*

Q1. Which of the following is the most important aspect of EFL learning?

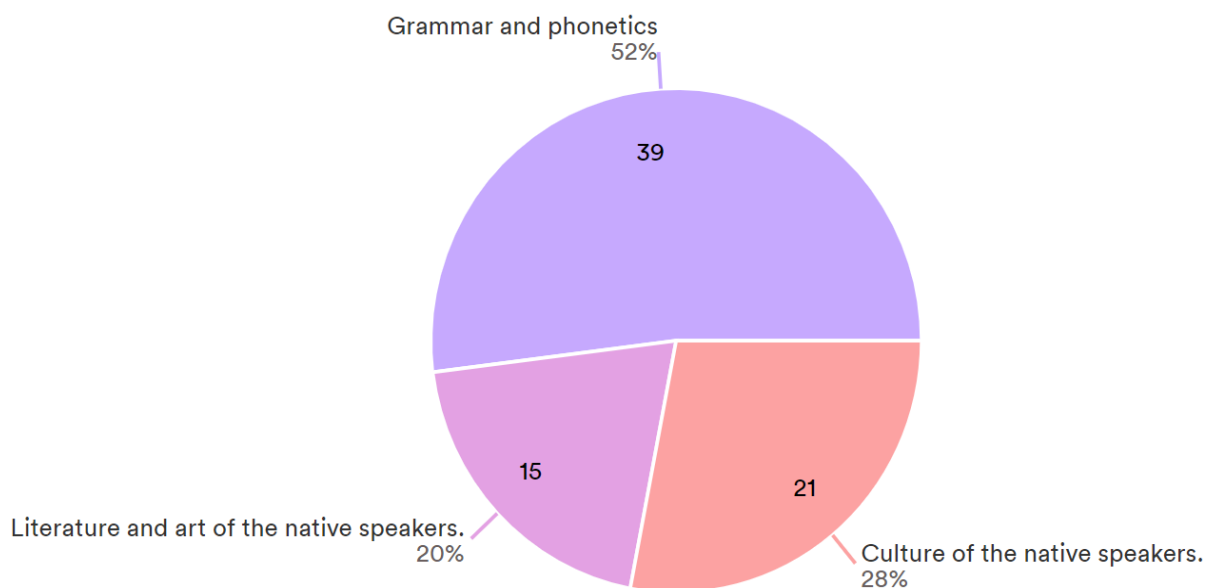


Figure 4: The most important aspect of EFL learning.

This question is meant to check the students' views about the most important aspect of learning English as a foreign language. Literature and art are both elements of culture. So, the aim of giving the participants the choice between "Culture" or "Literature and art" is to see whether they think that learning literature and art is enough without the other elements of culture.

Half of the participants (52%) believe that grammar and phonetics are the main aspects to focus on when learning a new foreign language. They support their claims by saying that language rules are needed in order to use the language properly, pronounce it correctly and express one's thoughts in a meaningful pattern with an understandable pronunciation. However, casual discussions with teachers revealed that the majority of students make a lot of writing mistakes which are mainly grammatical.

Other students (28%) agree that learning about the culture of the native speakers is the most important aspect when learning English as a foreign language. These students claim that culture and language are inseparable and that culture is embedded within language. Learning the culture builds up a road for the learner to use the language just like the native speakers. This involves using their accents, idioms, proverbs and understanding their morals, beliefs, attitudes and how they view the world. In addition to the interrelatedness of language and culture, students who opine that learning the target culture is the most important aspect of EFL learning might be attracted to the target culture. They may even have a desire to be integrated in that culture.

The remaining students (20%) believe that the literature and art of the native speakers are the most important aspects of EFL learning. According to those students, studying literature means studying language forms, and it is possible to learn grammar from literary texts. They say that the learner will be able to learn about the target culture through reading literary texts. These students believe that art can be used as a bridge to connect people with different cultural backgrounds.

Q2. Do you enjoy reading literature in English?

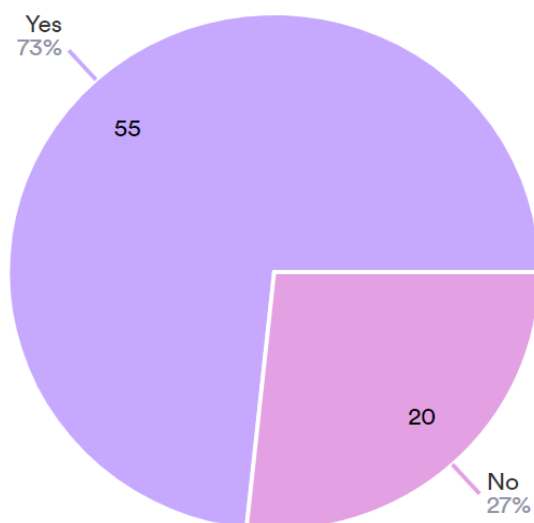


Figure 5: Enjoyment of reading literature in English.

The reason behind this question is to see if the participants are interested in reading literature in English. Apparently, the majority of them (73%) enjoy reading literary works in English. These participants get pleasure from literature, and they believe that literature gives them the ability to see the world through the eyes of others, not to mention that it makes their mind more flexible. On the other hand, some students (27%) do not get any enjoyment whatsoever from reading literature in English. This is probably due to the difficult expressions and complicated themes that can be found in literary works in English. It is also possible to think that these students do not have any interest or motivation to learn English.

Q.3 Do you think that literature is important in learning English as a foreign language?

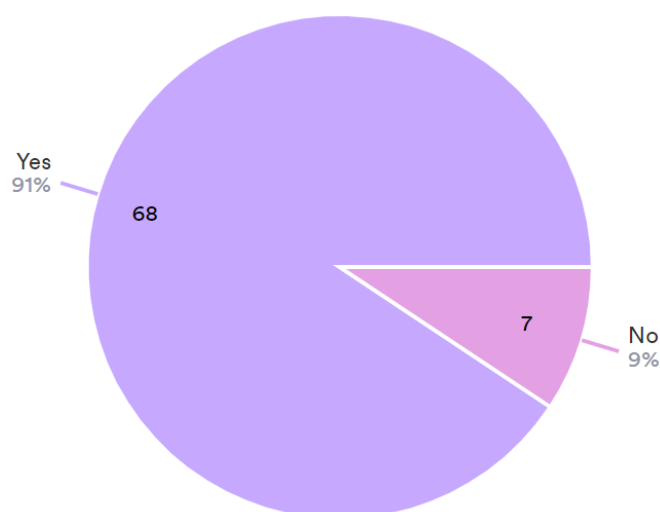


Figure 6: The importance of literature in learning English as a foreign language.

The overwhelming majority of the students (91%) believe that literature is important when learning English as a foreign language. One possible reason for that response is the fact that literature gives learners a room to practice the four language skills, and it makes it possible for them to acquire new vocabulary. However, few students (9%) deny the importance of literature. It is possible to say that these students belong to those who do not enjoy reading literature. They think that anyone is capable of learning a new language

without being exposed to its literature. One might also think that these students see learning English, as a foreign language, as unimportant.

Q.4 What is the importance of studying English literature?

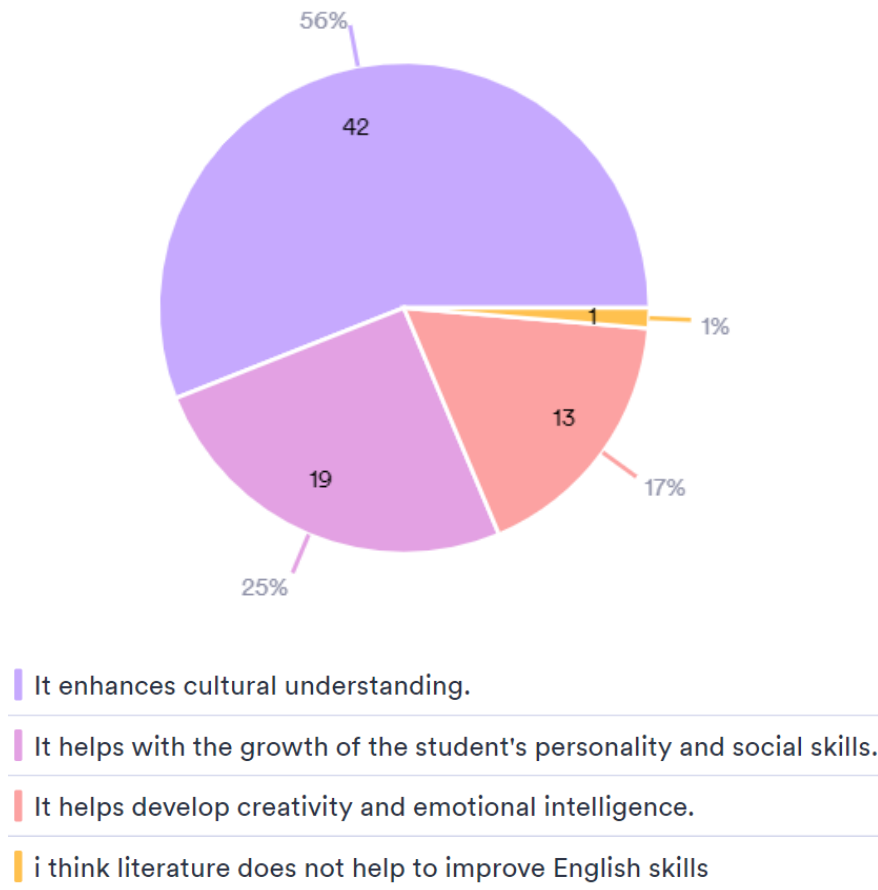


Figure 7: The importance of studying English literature.

The aim of this question is to see the importance of studying literature. With regard to our sample, the majority of the students (56%) state that literature enhances cultural understanding. These students believe that literature promotes cultural awareness, tolerance, and respect. It also facilitates and enhances intercultural understanding.

A considerable number of students (25%) say that literature helps with the growth of the student's personality. They think that literature helps them discover and understand their

own identities, and it provides them with topics for discussion and communication with others.

However, some students (17%) believe that literature helps develop creativity and emotional intelligence, because reading literature encourages learners to use their critical mind and employ multiple intelligence. It makes the learner fantasize and use his imagination in order to grasp and comprehend the ideas and reasoning in the literary works.

Only one student thinks that literature does not help to improve his/her level in English. Apart from this student, it is also noticed that all students answered the three options about the importance of studying literature, but in the previous question, seven students stated that literature is not important in learning foreign languages. So, it is safe to say that they probably think that literature is important, but not for learning foreign languages.

Q.5 It is important to learn the culture of people who speak the language you are learning.

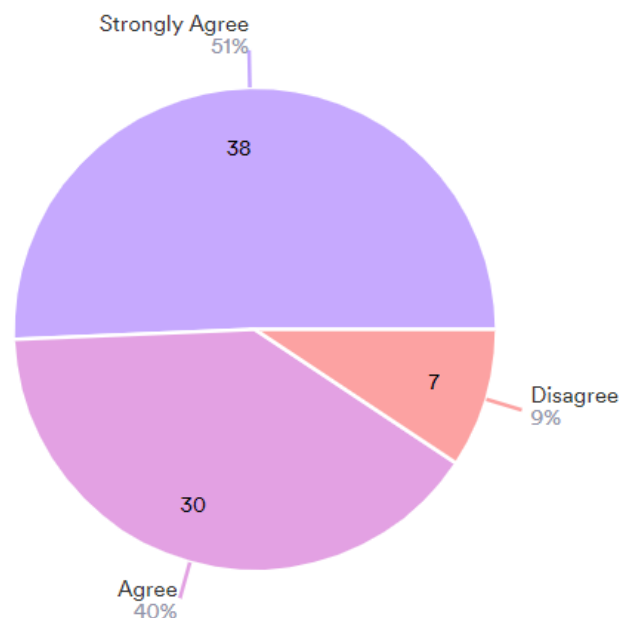


Figure 8: The importance of learning the target culture.

This question is designed to determine the students' opinions on whether it is important to learn the culture of the targeted language or not. The majority of students (91%) strongly agree or agree that learning about the target culture is important in EFL learning. They believe that when studying a foreign language, they are going to be directly in touch with its culture since the latter is the mirror of the former. They further explain by saying that: "In order to avoid falling into cultural gaps, we as learners of a given language have to know about its culture. Language expresses the way we see the outside world, which conveys concepts and ideas of a particular culture".

Only some students (9%) disagree with the statement. They claim that it is not important to learn the culture of the foreign language. This is, probably, because they are not thinking about communicating with people from other cultures, and they are not planning to travel or live abroad. They want to learn and use the language within their own country. We can also assume that these students have negative attitudes towards the target culture. Interestingly, none of the respondents opted for "strongly disagree".

Q.6 Do you think that having enough knowledge and understanding of how other people from other cultures perceive the world can help you communicate with them effectively?

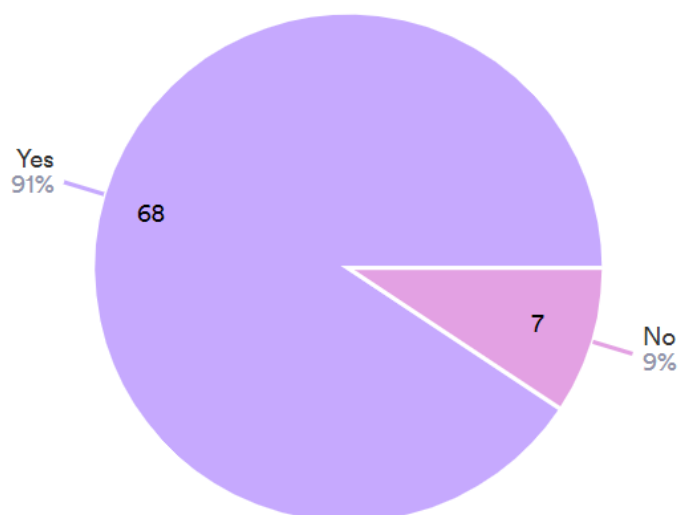


Figure 9: The ability to communicate with people from other cultures.

This item sheds light on the students' awareness of the impact of intercultural competence on their communication with people from different cultures. The majority of the participants (91%) believe that having enough intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes can affect their communication with people from different cultures in a positive way. This is mainly because intercultural competence enables them to behave and interact in a certain way that is appropriate in other cultures, this, in turn, creates a comfort zone full of understanding and respect.

The rest of the participants (9%) replied that all that intercultural knowledge does not help with cultural dialogue, because they see limits and boundaries, like cultural differences, which stand as obstacles that hinder their interactions with people from other cultures.

4.3. Section three: Literary Texts and Cultural Dialogue

Q.1 Has reading English literature changed your attitudes towards the target culture?

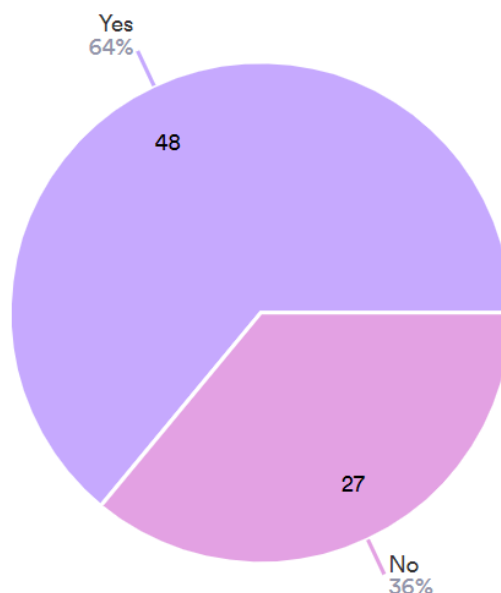


Figure 10: The effect of reading English literature on learners' attitude towards the target culture.

The following item down the line is designed to see whether reading English literature can change the students' attitudes towards the English culture. The majority of respondents (64%) state that reading English literature has changed their attitudes towards the English culture. They support their answer by replying that, sometimes, they find some ideas in literary works that make them change their opinion about a certain culture. Moreover, according to some students, literature enables us to delve into the English culture. They believe that when reading a literary work, the reader is moved with his imagination to live in the place and the time in which the author lived. So, literature gives them enough knowledge that helps them see the real face of other cultures.

The rest of the students (36%) believe that reading literature cannot change their attitude towards the English culture. Only one student justified his / her answer by describing the western society as "savage". This student believes that western cultures have too much freedom that encourages people to do whatever they want, without any strict religious or judicial laws that could be found in Islam or in Algeria. So, reading literature will not change his or her perspectives on the English culture

Q.2 What is your attitude towards the other cultures?

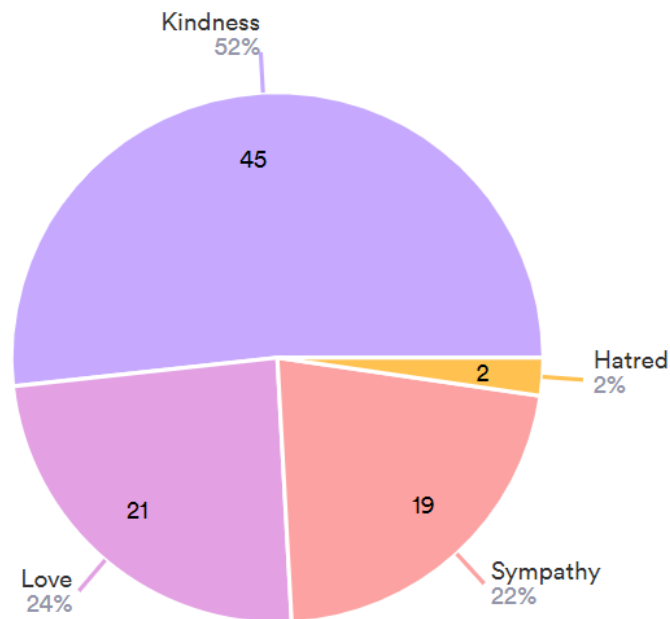


Figure 11: Attitudes towards the other cultures.

This question is designed to test the Bennet Scale, and to see whether the participants are ethnocentric or ethnorelative. In other words, it is meant to see how they feel or what is their attitude towards the other cultures, and where can this attitude be situated on the Bennet Scale.

More than half of the participants (52%) feel kindness towards other cultures, and this feeling is in the early ethnorelative stages. It means that these participants accept and recognize patterns of differences and diversity, and they appreciate other cultures. These learners are curious about other cultures, and they have a desire to learn about them.

Some of our participants (24%) love other cultures; their views are ethnorelative. These students do not only accept the other cultures, but it is also possible for them to adapt to these cultures. These learners are more competent in how to communicate with people of other cultures, and they can incorporate the world view of others into their own world view.

Out of the total number of the subjects (22%), feel sympathy towards other cultures. These learners are in the last stage of ethnocentrism. They feel like they are beginning to understand other cultures, and they start to recognize that all people are human beings like them, whether they have different traditions and cultures or not.

Among the participants, we recorded 2% who hate other cultures; they are in the early stages of ethnocentric. These learners believe that their culture is the only real culture. Seemingly, they reject cultural differences, and they can even isolate themselves from other groups with different cultural backgrounds. In addition to that, they are unlikely to care about people from the other cultures. Interestingly, this question reveals that the majority of students (85%) hold positive attitudes towards other cultures.

Q.3 What is your attitude towards the native speakers of English?

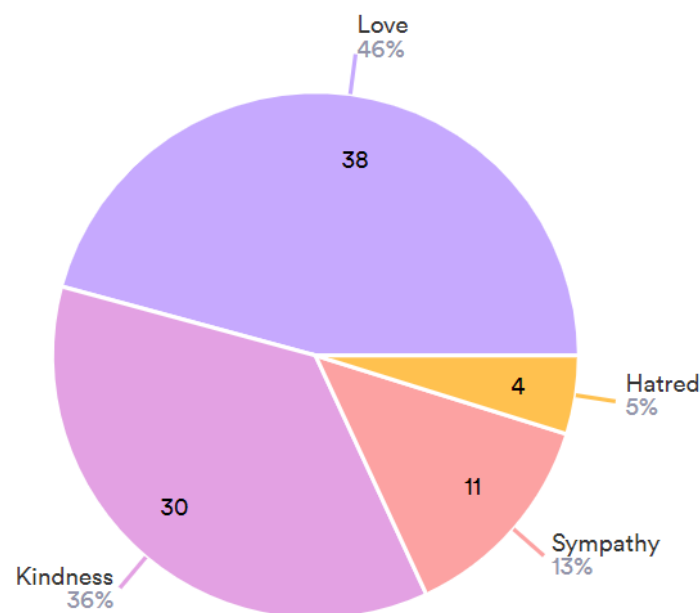


Figure 12: Attitudes towards native speakers of English.

The aim behind this question is to see the participants' attitudes towards the native speakers of English. With regard to our selected sample, we recorded (46%) who love the English native speakers. It is possible to think that they love their accent, their behaviours, or

their lifestyle. A considerable number of students (36%) feel kindness towards them, maybe because they respect them, and they would show kindness when interacting with them. On the other hand, we identified 13% of the respondents who feel sympathy towards the native speakers of English, possibly, because they consider them as any other people from around the world. We recorded only 5% of the students who hate the native speakers of English. This is because they might see them as infidels, or they hold a grudge against them due to the conflicts and wars that are happening in some Arabic countries.

Q.4 Do you find aspects of the target culture in the literary texts you study in class?

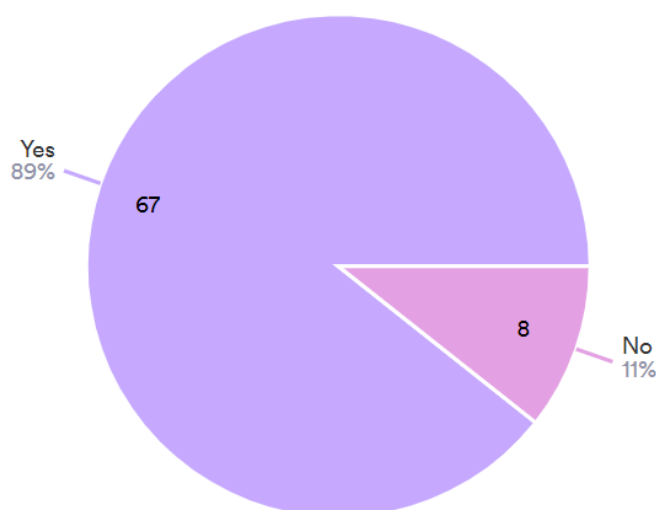


Figure 13: Aspects of the target culture in the literary texts studied in class.

The majority of the participants (89%) find aspects or elements of culture in the literary texts they study in class. When reading any literary work, these students notice a lot of different values, beliefs, music, art, etc. This means that the literary texts that they are studying teach them about the target culture. The rest of the participants (11%) do not find aspects of the target culture in the literary texts they study in the classroom, and they believe that the literary texts do not teach them about the target culture. It is possible to say that these students do not read literary texts at all. In our casual discussion with a teacher, she said that the majority of students nowadays do not read and that there is a crisis or readability in the

Algerian universities. One might also opine that these students fail to identify the aspects of the target culture because of their low level.

Q.5 When you read literary texts in English, do you find any similarities between your culture and the target culture?

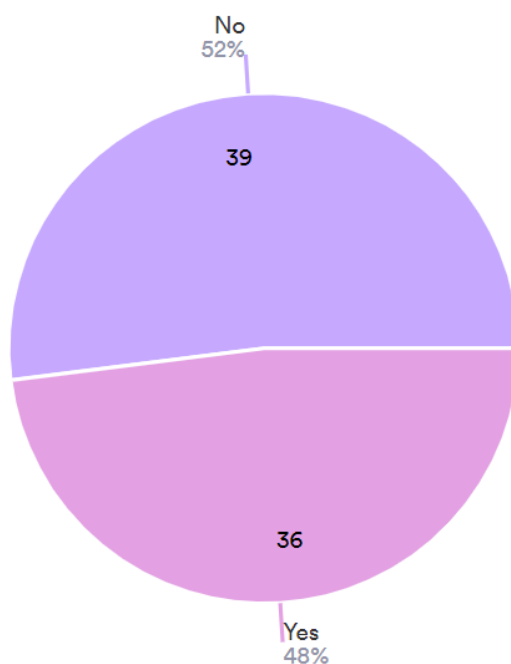
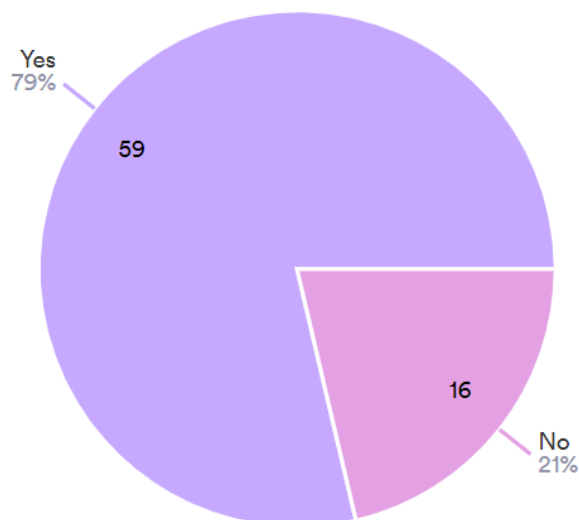


Figure 14: Similarities between the learners' culture and the target culture.

With regard to this question, the participants were almost split in half. We recorded (52%) who did not find any similarities between their culture and the target culture in the literary texts. One possible interpretation of this answer is that some students view culture as synonyms with religion. This is why they deny the existence of any similarities between their culture and the target culture. The remaining participants (48%) find similarities between their culture and the target culture in the literary texts, because when they read any literary work, they come across some beliefs, values or any elements of culture that are identical to the ones in their culture.

Q.6 Do you find that some of characters, in the literary texts, share your views?**Figure 15: Similarities between the learners' and characters' views in literary texts.**

Most of the participants (79%) find that they share the same views with the characters in the literary texts. They believe that those characters' behaviours and words describe and represent their thoughts and feelings, and they identify themselves with these characters. The rest of the participants (21%) admit that they do not share any views with the characters they find in the literary texts. It is possible to think that their cultural morals and values are dissimilar to these of the characters. Another interpretation is that they fail to psychoanalyse characters in the literary texts.

Q.7 When you read literary texts in English, do you find any similarities between the Algerian people and the English people?

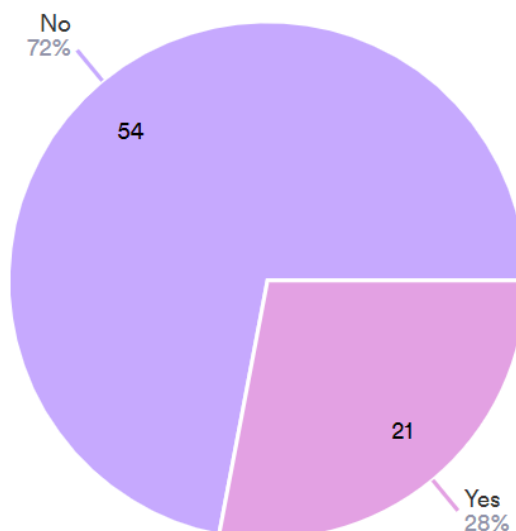


Figure 16: Similarities between the Algerian and the English people.

The majority of the participants (72%) do not find similarities between the Algerian people and the English people in the literary text they read in English. One can assume that these students have a negative attitude towards the target culture. The other participants (28%) find similarities between the Algerian and the English people. When they read any literary work, they find characters who have the same personality and mentality as the Algerian people. This is obvious because despite belonging to different cultures, people belong to the same human race, and they share many personal traits.

Q.8 If the ideas and the behaviours in these literary texts differ from yours, do you accept them?

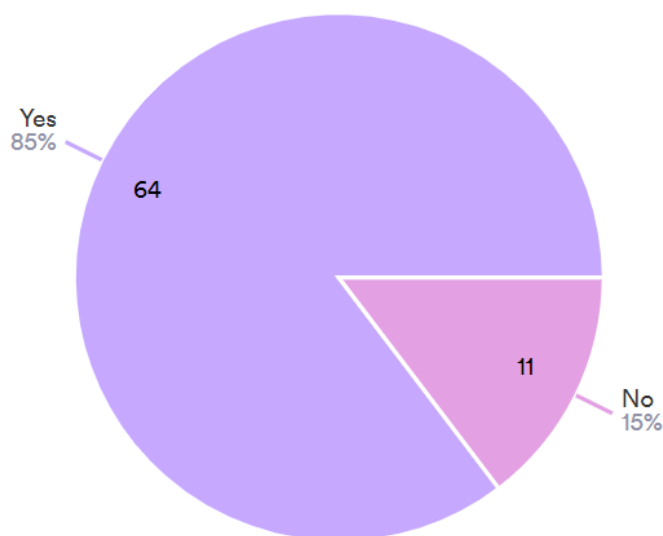


Figure 17: Students' acceptance of different ideas and behaviours in the literary texts.

The majority of the participants (85%) accept the views and the behaviours that they find in the literary texts and which are different from theirs. They explain that in order for their culture to be accepted by others, they must accept the others' culture. One student said that: "tolerating doesn't really mean embracing those thoughts, however, as human beings we ought to acknowledge others' sentiments and thoughts in spite of their religious beliefs or ideologies". In another explanation, a student said that: "when we get to have a deep understanding of a given idea, we end up by accepting it." This means that understanding others' culture will help us to accept and develop an attitude of tolerance and forgiveness towards cultural differences. Another student thinks that in order to live in peace, we have to accept cultural differences.

The remaining participants (15%) admit that when reading literary texts in English, they do not accept the ideas and behaviours conveyed through these texts. They explain that

they find themselves obliged to reject certain ideas which oppose their principles and religious beliefs, like homosexuality and lesbianism.

Q.9 Do you think that reading literary texts can help students discard the stereotypes and misconception about the target culture?

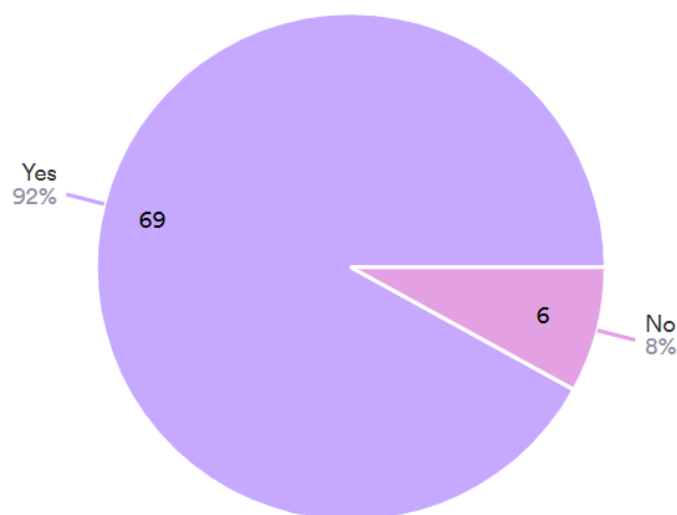


Figure 18: Using literary texts to discard stereotypes and misconceptions about the target culture

Most of the participants (92%) believe that it is possible for literary texts to help debunk the stereotypes and misconception about other cultures. It is possible to think that literary texts teach them about the cultural norms which make them understand the English culture. Moreover, these literary texts put them in a context where they can view the world from the perspectives of people from that culture. The rest of the participants (8%) believe that literature cannot help discard the stereotypes and misconceptions they have about the target culture, because they believe that literature is not enough for that job. They probably think that in order to discard the stereotypes and misconceptions, they have to meet or live with the people of the target culture.

Q.10 Do you believe that literary texts can mitigate cultural misunderstanding?

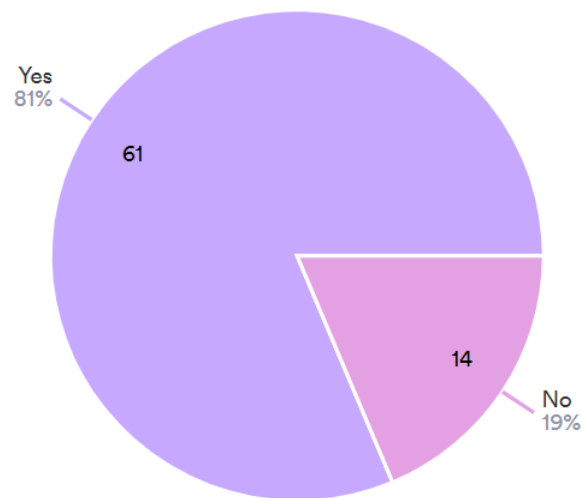


Figure 19: The ability of literary texts to mitigate cultural misunderstanding

The overwhelming majority of respondents (81%) say that literary texts can mitigate cultural misunderstanding, for the same reasons it helps them discard stereotypes and misconceptions. The other participants (19%) believe that it is not possible for literature to mitigate cultural misunderstanding

Q.11 Do you think that literary texts can help promote cultural dialogue?

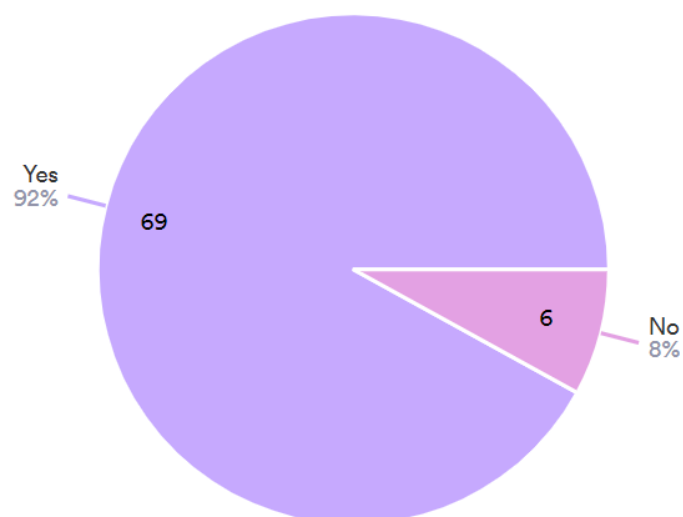


Figure 20: Promoting cultural dialogue through literary texts

The results illustrate that a large number of the students (92%) state that literary texts can help promote cultural dialogue. They explain their answer by saying that literary texts help expand their cultural knowledge about others, which consequently helps in communicating with them in a better way. In addition, they explain that literary texts give an insight into the whole culture by mentioning a certain idea, a social practice, a social phenomenon and by highlighting all of the reasons behind it. This, according to them, vindicates the fact that those cultural differences are just another form of seeing things from another perspective. Thus, this will allow us to open the door to a better cultural dialogue.

Very few students (8%) believe that literary texts cannot promote cultural dialogue. However, they did not give any explanation or justifications for their views.

5. Limitations of the Study

In the course of carrying out the present study, several difficulties are confronted:

- Though all the students answered the questions, some of them left the follow up questions, which asked them to explain or justify, unanswered.
- The lack of time made it impossible for us to conduct an experiment.

6. Research Recommendations

6.1. Recommendations for Students

- Students should realize the importance of culture and literature, and they have to read literary texts to enhance their cultural knowledge.
- Students should be tolerant by accepting cultural differences, and they have to bear in mind that all people were born equal.
- Students should use their cultural knowledge to communicate with people from different cultures in a kind and respectful way.

- Students' negative attitudes towards the target culture need to be changed. Their fears of losing their culture and the fear of strange ways of thinking and behaving should be altered. Students must understand that knowing another person who is different from them does not mean becoming like him.
- If students are taught racist texts like Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, they have to use their critical thinking and write back to these texts, but this should be done objectively
- Due to the lack of time in class, students should be encouraged to read literary texts outside the classroom not just to improve their level in English, but also to learn about the target culture and construct positive attitudes.

6.2 Recommendations for Teachers

- Teaching culture through literary texts should be given a great importance in the literature class.
- Teachers of literature should select the appropriate literary texts to enhance cultural communication and dialogue.
- Teachers should devote at least a segment of their programme to teach students how cultural borders can be crossed.
- Teachers have to select literary that preach the gospel of love and humanity.
- Teachers need to be given a large amount of time to teach culture and cultural dialogue through literature.
- It is recommended that teachers of literature ask their students to keep reading journals or write about their responses to the literary texts they read in English.
- Teachers themselves should not hold racial views regarding the target culture.

6.3 Recommendations for Further Research

Studies about enhancing cultural dialogue through literary texts can be conducted relying on other case studies which may offer a larger sample to represent a larger population. The study would be more informative if made experimental. This allows the researcher to measure and analyse the progress of students' level of ICC

Conclusion

Through analysing the results of the questionnaire, the following results were obtained.

The majority of the students avowed that it was their decision to study English. This indicates that if the students were obliged to study English, they will not be interested in improving their level or expanding their knowledge eabout the target culture.

Almost all the participants believe that literature and culture are very important when learning a new language. Thus, they must be integrated in EFL teaching/learning. The results also showed that dealing with EFL cultural aspects will not have a negative effect on their own culture. This, in fact, reflects their high cultural awareness and competence throughout their learning process. The majority of students stated that literature changed their attitudes towards the target culture, and most of them hold positive attitudes towards cultures in general and the target culture in particular. After their exposure to literary texts in English, students find many similarities between their culture and the target culture. This, in fact, is likely to enhance cultural understanding and dialogue. Through reading texts in English, students were also able to discover the reality of the target culture, and this made it possible for them to discard some of the misconceptions they have constructed about the target culture.

Students are aware of the differences between the English and the Algerian culture, and this is likely to help them preserve their cultural identity in the process of cultural dialogue. Reading literary texts in English allows students to know and learn about the target culture. Hence, this will enable them to communicate effectively with others. As a result, this will minimize the chance of creating misunderstanding with people who are different from them.

General conclusion

We are drawing to the close of this dissertation that touches upon an important subject, which is enhancing cultural dialogue through literary texts. In this study, we hypothesized that literary texts are a significant tool for enhancing cultural dialogue and overcoming the misunderstanding that occurs between people of different cultures. In order to test this hypothesis and answer the research questions, a questionnaire was administered to third year students of English at the University of Mila.

The work is divided into two theoretical chapters and a practical one. The theoretical part is a review of the literature which has appeared through the years in order to explore and clarify the most important issues related to the subject of our research work. The practical part is a description of the research methodology used by the researchers. It also focuses on the analysis of the questionnaire and the interpretation of the results.

All in all, the obtained results of this research confirmed our hypothesis. The results reveal the main role of literary texts in EFL classroom and its profound influence on cultural communication and dialogue. Teaching literature has an impact on the students' attitudes towards the target culture as it debunks all the misconceptions, misunderstandings and stereotypes about the target culture. Reading authentic literary texts in English, as it has been evinced through the analysis of the students' questionnaire, plays a significant role in building bridges between cultures. One of the main findings is that literary texts help promote cultural dialogue and enrich students' cultural knowledge which makes the communications between people from different cultures much easier.

To close, it is worth mentioning that due to the broad nature of the subject and the lack of time, what is presented in this research merely skims the surface. A thorough study on this subject is needed. Nonetheless, this work paves the way for further research, which may be handled in different ways, from different angles. It should also encourage both teachers

and students towards making the necessary changes in an attempt to enhance cultural dialogue through literary texts and mitigate cultural misunderstanding.

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Appendix

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

You are kindly requested to complete this questionnaire for a master dissertation on enhancing cultural dialogue through literary texts. Please, note that the questionnaire is completely voluntary and anonymous. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential, and they will be used only for research purposes. Your collaboration is tremendously important and very much needed for the completion of this work. Many thanks for your time and cooperation.

Section One: Student's Background Information

Q1: For how many years have you been studying English?

Q2: How do you evaluate your level in English?

- a. Weak
 b. Average
 c. Good

Q3: Why did you choose to study English at the university?

- a. Because it's interesting and fun to learn
 b. To travel abroad and live there.
 c. You had no other better choice
 d. To get a job in the future.
 e. Other Reasons:

.....

Section Two: The Importance of Literature and Culture

Q1: Which of the following is the most important aspect of EFL learning?

- 1- Grammar and phonetics
 2- Literature and art of the native speakers
 3- Culture of the native speakers

Please justify your answer:

.....

Q2: Do you enjoy reading literature in English? Yes No

Q3: Do you think that literature is important in learning English as a foreign language?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Q4: What is the importance of studying literature?

- a. It helps develop creativity and emotional intelligence.
- b. It enhances cultural understanding.
- c. It helps with the growth of the student's personality and social skills.
- d. Others, please, specify:.....

Q5: It is important to learn the culture of people who speak the language you are learning.

- e. Strongly agree
 - f. Agree
 - g. Disagree
 - h. Strongly disagree
- Please justify.....
-

Q6: Do you think that having enough knowledge and understanding of how other people from other cultures perceive the world can help you communicate with them effectively?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Section Three: Literary Texts and cultural Dialogue

Q1: Has reading English literature changed your attitudes towards the target cultures?

- Yes No

If yes, please justify:
.....

Q2: What is your attitude towards the other cultures?

- Hatred
- Love
- Sympathy
- Kindness

Q3: What is your attitude towards the native speakers of English?

- Hatred
- Love
- Sympathy
-

Kindness

Q4: Do you find aspects of the target culture in the literary texts you study in class?

Yes No

Q5: When you read literary texts in English, do you find any similarities between your culture and the target culture?

Yes No

Q6: Do you find that some of characters, in the literary texts, share your views?

Yes No

Q7: When you read literary texts in English, do you find any similarities between the Algerian people and the English people?

Yes No

Q8: If the ideas and the behaviours in these literary texts differ from yours, do you accept them?

Yes No

Please, explain:

.....

Q9: Do you think that reading literary texts can help students discard the stereotypes and misconception about the target culture?

Yes No

Q12: Do you believe that literary texts can mitigate cultural misunderstanding?

Yes No

Q13: Do you think that literary texts can help promote cultural dialogue? Yes No

Please, explain:

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your collaboration

ملخص

تعتبر النصوص الأدبية مرآة تعكس خصائص الثقافات، تهدف هذه الأطروحة المكونة من ثلاثة فصول إلى كشف مدى فعالية النصوص الأدبية في تحسين الحوار الثقافي لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية. يعتبر الخلاف الحاصل بين الثقافات في الوقت الراهن الدافع الأكبر الذي حثنا لكتابة هذه الأطروحة التي تهدف إلى سبر أثر النصوص الأدبية على كفاءة التواصل بين الثقافات لدى الطلبة. تفترض هذه الدراسة أن النصوص الأدبية أداة مهمة لتحسين الحوار الثقافي وتجاوز سوء الفهم بين الأفراد من ثقافات مختلفة. يعتمد هذا البحث على استبيان موجه لعينة من طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية في المركز الجامعي بميلة. تظهر نتائج البحث أن النصوص الأدبية تلعب دوراً فعالاً في تخفيف سوء الفهم الثقافي. إضافة إلى أنها، تنمي الحس الثقافي الذي يساعد المتعلمين على رآب الصدع، وجسر الهوة بين الثقافات وتعزيز روح الحوار بينها. أعطيت بعض التوصيات بناءاً على نتائج هذا البحث

الكلمات المفتاحية

النصوص الأدبية، الحوار الثقافي، كفاءة التواصل بين الثقافات، الحس الثقافي، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

Résumé

Les textes littéraires sont des miroirs qui reflètent les aspects d'une culture donnée. Cette thèse, en trois chapitres au total, cherche à révéler l'importance des textes littéraires dans l'amélioration du dialogue culturel dans la classe EFL. L'incompréhension qui domine actuellement les relations culturelles est le motif principal qui a motivé ce travail de recherche, qui vise à explorer l'effet des textes littéraires sur la compétence communicative interculturelle des élèves. Dans cette étude, il est émis l'hypothèse que les textes littéraires sont un moyen important d'améliorer le dialogue culturel et de surmonter le malentendu qui se produit entre les personnes de cultures différentes. Notre recherche est basée sur un questionnaire qui est administré à un échantillon de recherche d'étudiants EFL de troisième année à l'Université de Mila. Les résultats obtenus révèlent que la lecture de textes littéraires joue un rôle efficace dans l'atténuation des malentendus culturels. De plus, la lecture de textes littéraires développe un sens de la conscience culturelle qui aide les apprenants à traverser les frontières culturelles et à nouer un dialogue nourrissant avec d'autres cultures. Sur la base des résultats de notre recherche, quelques recommandations sont formulées.

Mots clés:

Textes littéraires, Dialogue culturel, compétence communicative interculturelle, sensibilisation culturelle, la classe EFL