

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY OF ALGIERS 2 Abou El Kacem Saâdallah



Faculty of Foreign Languages

Department of English

**Exploring the Importance of the Target Cultural Background Knowledge in Reading EFL
Literary Texts**

A Case Study of the Algerian LMD Undergraduate Students at the University of Algiers 2

استكشاف أهمية ثقافة المجتمع المستهدف في قراءة النصوص الأدبية باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية
دراسة حالة طلاب في المرحلة الجامعية من جامعة الجزائر 2

A thesis submitted to the Department of English – Faculty of Foreign Languages–University of Algiers II in accordance with the requirements for the degree of 'Doctorate' in English Linguistics and Didactics

Submitted by:

Ms. Fasla-Lakrouf Meriem

Supervised by:

Prof. Brakni Dalila

2024

Board of Examiners

CHAIR

Prof. Mansouri Brahim (University of Algiers 2)

SUPERVISOR

Prof. Brakni Dalila (University of Blida 2)

INTERNAL EXAMINER

Prof. Douifi Mohamed (University of Algiers 2)

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

Dr. Bouchama Réda (University of Blida 2)

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

Dr. Zahali Fatma (University of Blida 2)

Declaration

I hereby declare that the substance of this thesis is entirely the result of my investigation and that due reference or acknowledgement is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

I am duly informed that any person practicing plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary sanctions issued by university authorities under the rules and regulations in force.

Date: 26/ 06/ 2024

Signature:

Meriem Fasla Lakrouf

Dedication

I dedicate my research to my husband for his never-ending support.

To my dad, for teaching me to stand up for myself in my own truth and never try to conform.

To my mom, for her unconditional love.

To my children, for showing me that I can have hope in the future. You make me so proud.

To the memory of my regretted teachers,

Ms. Deramchia, Mr. Bensaou, Mr. Bouchentouf, and Mr. Bouabdallah,

I am passionate about teaching because you all showed me an unwavering support.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to my former African literature teacher

Ms. Ait Hamou Louisa for igniting my passion for Africa, African culture, and

African talent.

Last but not least, I dedicate this piece of work to my supervisor, Prof. Brakni, who has been more than a supervisor to me, you have been my mentor and role model.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Professor BRAKNI Dalila. With her guidance and support, I have learned academic research completion, but most importantly, I have learned to build confidence in academic research.

I would also like to thank the jury members, Prof. Mansouri, Prof. Douifi, Dr. Bouchama, and Dr. Zahali, for accepting to read my work. Your valuable comments will allow me, I hope, to pursue research with more insight and perspicacity.

I am grateful to the literature teachers and students who agreed to participate in my investigation. I know how overwhelmed you all were. Thank you.

I want to thank my dear colleague, Dr. Silhadi Lynda, for her moral support. Indeed, she went above and beyond to assist me in this journey.

Last but not least, a big shout-out to my soul sisters Ms. Yerboub Radia, and Dr. Dahman Leila.

Abstract

Our investigation is exploratory and aims to be highly descriptive of the cultural element as well as how the Algerian students understand or interpret it when they handle EFL literary texts. Our purpose was to explore through a mixed-method, whether the teaching and learning of the target culture as well as bridging the gap between the native cultural identities of the EFL Algerian students with the EFL contexts presented in the literary works can raise the students' awareness of their hindrance. Ultimately, we studied the connection between prejudices students may have and those found in EFL literary texts and the awareness of there being such a bias within both parties for that matter. The study was conducted at the English Department of the University of Algiers II, situated in Bouzaréah during the 2021-2022 & 2022-2023 academic years. A total of 62 students participated in the study; 20 students in the first year, 22 students in the second year, and 20 students in the third year. For each group, the students were given a reading task where they were asked to identify cultural references in an excerpt of the American novel by Jean Webster *Daddy Long Legs* (1912). In addition, all the students were given a questionnaire with multiple choice as well as open-ended questions in order to reflect on their literature and cultural knowledge. Finally, five students of a focus group were interviewed in an unstructured manner, which could better capture the richness of our research topic. The data collection tools were for both teachers and students, hence 15 teachers of literature were also administered the questionnaire and eleven teachers accepted to be interviewed. Our findings allow us to affirm that the EFL students' hindrance in target culture affects their successful interpretation of the text and impedes them in acquiring the necessary tools to interpret EFL literature. It also influences their overall commitment to literature study, as they do not have the target cultural proficiency that literature study requires. Results show Algerian students feel denied the freedom of personal interpretation.

Keywords: cross-cultural reading, cultural referents, EFL literature study, native culture, target culture.

List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Conception of Disciplinary Relationships-version 1	p.27
Figure 1.2. Conception of Disciplinary Relationships-version 2.....	p.27
Figure 1.3. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.....	p.30
Figure 1.4. Stylistics Relating Disciplines and Subjects.....	p.57
Figure 2.1. Teaching African literature: A narrative by teacher 9.....	p.120
Figure 3.1. The Students’ Gender across the Three Groups.....	p.133
Figure 3.2. The Students’ Age ranges across the Three Groups.....	p.133
Figure 3.3. Students’ Linguistic Profile: the Identification of their Native Language.....	p.135
Figure 3.4. Literature Teachers Age Groups.....	p.193
Figure 3.5. Literature Teachers Gender Proportions.....	p.193
Figure 3.6. Teachers who studied at The University of Algiers.....	p.194
Figure 3.7. Teachers who enrolled in a University Abroad.....	p.195
Figure 3.8. Teachers’ Experience with The Literature Module.....	p.196
Figure 4.1. Exerpt of <i>Tintin aux Congo</i>	p.317

List of Tables

Table 2.1. Summary of Seven Types of Triangulation.....	p.113
Table 3.1. First Year Students' Previous Contacts with the English Language.....	p.136
Table 3.2. Second Year Students' Previous Contacts with the English Language.....	p.136
Table 3.3. Third Year Students' Previous Contacts with the English Language.....	p.137
Table 3.4. Means used by Students for Cultural Acquisition.....	p.138
Table 3.5. Topics Preferred by Students for Literature Study.....	p.139
Table 3.6. First Year Students' Free Associations to 'Reading' ranked from the mostly repeated to the least repeated words.....	p.140
Table 3.7. First Year Students' Free Associations to 'Reading' grouped into Lexical Fields.....	p.141
Table 3.8. Second Year Students' Free Associations to 'Reading' ranked from the mostly repeated to the least repeated words.....	p.141
Table 3.9. Second Year Students' Free Associations to 'Reading' grouped into Lexical Fields.....	p.142
Table 3.10. Third Year Students' Free Associations to 'Reading' ranked from the mostly repeated to the least repeated words.....	p.142
Table 3.11. Third Year Students' Free Associations to 'Reading' grouped into Lexical Fields.....	p.143
Table 3.12. Students' Reading Profiles.....	p.146
Table 3.13. First Year Students motivation to Read.....	p.148
Table 3.14. Second Year Students motivation to Read.....	p.148

Table 3.15. Third Year Students motivation to Read.....p.148

Table 3.16. Students’ Anticipations toward the Literature Module.....p.150

Table 3.17. Students’ Expected Modules instead of the Literature Module.....p.150

Table 3.18. Students’ Surprise rate about the Literatures Taught at the Licence.....p.151

Table 3.19. Students Evaluate the Difficulty of the Literatures Studied.....p.151

Table 3.20. The Most Interesting Literatures according to the Students.....p.152

Table 3.21. Helpful Tools for Studying Literature according to 1st Years Students....p.154

Table 3.22. Helpful Tools for Studying Literature according to 2nd Years Students...p.154

Table 3.23. Helpful Tools for Studying Literature according to 3rd Years Students....p.154

Table 3.24. Evaluation of Their Strengths and Weaknesses in studying Literature by First Year Students.....p.156

Table 3.25. Evaluation of Their Strengths and Weaknesses in studying Literature by Second Year Students.....p.156

Table 3.26. Evaluation of Their Strengths and Weaknesses in studying Literature by Third Year Students.....p.157

Table 3.27. Elements that influence the Test Results according to Students.....p.159

Table 3.28. Movie adaptations of the novels or plays Studied.....p.162

Table 3.29. First Year Students on How Movie Adaptations are Helpful to Them.....p.162

Table 3.30. Second Year Students on How Movie Adaptations are Helpful to Them..p.163

Table 3.31. Third Year Students on How Movie Adaptations are Helpful to Them....p.163

Table 3.32. Media Use of Choice by Students of Literary Study.....p.164

Table 3.33. Extra Activities by Students of Literary Study.....p.165

Table 3.34. Cultural References Identified by First Year Students.....p.166

Table 3.35. Cultural References Identified by Second Year Students.....p.166

Table 3.36. Cultural References Identified by Third Year Students.....p.167

Table 3.37. Wrong answers of Students from the Three Years Licence.....p.167

Table 3.38. Qualitative Statements of Students about Cultural Symbols in the Text
Reflecting a Foreign Culture.....p.169

Table 3.39. Students’ Knowledge of the Sociocultural References in the Text.....p.170

Table 3.40. Students from the Three Years Licence Drawing a Parallel with the
Protagonist of the Story they Read for the Activity.....p.170

Table 3.41. Overall Qualitative Statements of the Students from the Three Years
Licence.....p.172

Table 3.42. Teachers’ Experiences with Literature at the Three Levels of the
Licence.....p.197

Table 3.43. The Teachers’ Free Associations to ‘Teaching’ ranked from the mostly
repeated to the least repeated words.....p.198

Table 3.44. The Teachers’ Free Associations to ‘Teaching’ Grouped into Lexical
Fields.....p.199

Table 3.45. The Teachers who declared having received a Training in Educational
Psychology.....p.201

Table 3.46. The Teachers who are in Favor of Reflective Teaching.....p.201

Table 3.47. Qualitative Responses of Teachers in favor of Reflective Teaching.....p.202

Table 3.48. Qualitative Responses of Teachers who do not view Reflective Teaching
Favorably.....p.203

Table 3.49. Problems encountered by Students in the Literature Module.....p.203

Table 3.50. Evaluation of the Students Literary Study Skills by the Literature Teachers.....p.204

Table 3.51. The Criteria of the Literature Teachers to select the Works Studied in Class.....p.205

Table 3.52. The Features used by the Literature Teachers to select the Passages to be studied in Class.....p.205

Table 3.53. Extensive Reading Instruction.....p.206

Table 3.54. Research in The Literature Classroom.....p.206

Table 3.55. The Students’ Native Culture in the Literature Classroom.....p.206

Table 3.56. Bridging the Cultural Gap in the Literature Classroom.....p.207

Table 3.57. Media Use in the Literature Classroom.....p.207

Table 3.58. Qualitative comments of the teachers in Favor of Media Use in the Literature Classroom.....p.207

Table 3.59. Overall Qualitative Responses of Teachers.....p.208

Table 4.1. Students & TCBK Hindrancep.248

Table 4.2. Students’ Answers to How the Cultural Elements in the Text Reflect a Foreign Culturep.250

Table 4.3. Social Media Usep.253

Table 4.4. Reading from the EFL Students’ Point of Viewp.259

Table 4.5. Students’ Open Responses about Literature Studyp.268

Table 4.6. The Place of TCBK in Literature Classp.274

Table 4.7. Teachers Surprised by TCBK as a Pedagogical Tool for Literature Study.p.275

Table 4.8. Teachers Focusing on Target Culture Onlyp.277

Table 4.9. TCBK vs. Languagep.278

Table 4.10. Teachers in Need of a Strategy to Teach their EFL Studentsp.286

Table 4.11. Lack of Clarity of the syllabusp.288

Table 4.12. Students' Discrepancies with EFL Literature & Culturep.297

Table 4.13. The Place of Reading in Education and the Effect on Literature Study.....p.299

Table 4.14. Students Profiled as Digital Natives by Teachersp.301

Table 4.15. Native Culture in the EFL Literature Classroomp.303

Table 4.16. Teacher 8 contradictory statements about TCBK Pedagogyp.305

Table 4.17. High Potential Students Lacking Preparationp.307

Table 4.18. Lack of Guidance of the Teachersp.308

Table 4.19. Excerpts of Student Interviews Presenting Suggestionsp.309

Table of Contents

General Introduction.....	p.1
Introduction.....	p.1

Chapter One: Theoretical Background

<u>Part One: Reading Comprehension and Culture Acquisition</u>	p.18
Introduction	p.18
1.1.1. Learning: a Socially Shaped Process	p.19
1.1.1.1. Zone of Proximal Development	p.19
1.1.1.2. Thinking is Social	p.21
1.1.1.3. Signifier / Signified	p.23
1.1.2. The EFL Reader in his Culture and Context	p.24
1.1.2.1. The EFL Context	p.25
1.1.2.2. The EFL Classroom	p.28
1.1.2.3. Teachers as Guides	p.29
1.1.2.4. The EFL Reader	p.31
1.1.3. Reading Comprehension	p.33
1.1.3.1. The Negotiation Process	p.33
1.1.3.2. Schema Theory	p.36
1.1.3.3. Bottom-Up and Top-Down Reading Processes.....	p.37
1.1.3.4. Cultural Background Knowledge	p.39

1.1.4. Critical Thinking in Education	p.41
1.1.4.1. Reading Academically	p.41
1.1.4.2. Critical Thinking and Cross-Cultural Reading	p.43
1.1.4.3. Bloom’s Taxonomy	p.44
Conclusion	p.46
<u>Part Two: Literature in the Classroom</u>	p.47
Introduction	p.47
1.2.1. Literature and Globalization	p.48
1.2.1.1. Reading: a Merchandized Distraction	p.48
1.2.1.2. Scaffolding the Reading Skill in our Digitalized Era	p.50
1.2.2. Is Literature Teaching the Teaching of Literature per se?	p.51
1.2.2.1. Language Teaching	p.51
1.2.2.2. Culture Teaching	p.54
1.2.3. Literature Study Requirements	p.58
1.2.3.1. Teaching Literature Objectives	p.58
1.2.3.2. Literature Study Teaching and Assessing Methods	p.60
1.2.3.3. Guidelines to Critical Thinking	p.62
1.2.3.4. Literature and Academic Proficiency	p.64
1.2.4. Literature at the University	p.65
1.2.4.1. Theories of interpretation in the Literature Classroom	p.65
1.2.4.2. Culture Teaching in the Literature Classroom.....	p.68

1.2.4.3. The University: a Decisive Cultural Platform	p.70
Conclusion	p.74
<u>Part Three: Cultural Awareness in Literature Teaching</u>	p.75
Introduction	p.75
1.3.1. Global Thinking: From a Native to a Target Perspective	p.75
1.3.1.1. Defining Intercultural Reading	p.76
1.3.1.2. Critical Reading or Thinking Freely	p.78
1.3.2. Deconstructing Reading Practices	p.80
1.3.2.1. Intertextuality or Reader Inspiration	p.81
1.3.2.2. Historical Evolution of Interpretation in EFL Literature.....	p.83
1.3.2.3. Ethnicity, Religion and Gender Stereotypes	p.85
1.3.2.4. The Revision of the Western Canon or Western-centeredness.....	p.87
1.3.3. Intercultural Reading: Valuing Individuals in their Communities	p.90
1.3.3.1. Reader Response or Reading Freely	p.91
1.3.3.2. The Resisting Reader.....	p.93
1.3.3.3. Muted Group Theory	p.95
1.3.3.4. Restoring Native Culture in the EFL Literature Classroom.....	p.97
1.3.3.5. Exotism and Orientalism, Prejudiced Colonialism	p.100
Conclusion	p.102

Chapter Two: Research Design & Methodology

<u>Introduction</u>	p.104
2.1. The Research Questions.....	p.104

2.2. The Case Study, its Data Collection Procedure and Study Sample.....	p.110
2.2.1. The Case Study.....	p.110
2.2.2. Data Collection Procedure and Study Sample.....	p.111
2.2.2.1. Data Collection Procedure.....	p.111
2.2.2.2. Data Collection Tools Selection.....	p.113
2.2.2.3. Study Sample.....	p.115
2.2.2.3.1. Teachers.....	p.115
2.2.2.3.2. Students.....	p.116
2.3. Presentation of the Data Collection Tools.....	p.117
2.3.1. Presentation of the Students' Questionnaire.....	p.117
2.3.2. Presentation of the Students' Focus Group Interview.....	p.124
2.3.3. Presentation of the Teachers' Questionnaire.....	p.125
2.3.4. Presentation of the Teachers' Interview.....	p.128
2.4. Data Analysis.....	p.129
Conclusion.....	p.130

Chapter Three: Presentation and Analysis of the Results

Introduction.....	p.131
3.1. Presentation of the Results of the Study.....	p.131
3.1.1. Presentation of the Students' Answers.....	p.132
3.1.1.1. Results of the Students' Questionnaire.....	p.132
3.1.1.2. Results of the Students' Reading Comprehension Activity.....	p.166
3.1.1.3. Results of the Focus Group Interview.....	p.172
3.1.1.3.1. High Potential Students with Complexities.....	p.172
3.1.1.3.2. Students lacking TCBK.....	p.175
3.1.1.3.3. Reading and TCBK.....	p.180

3.1.1.3.4. Internet & Social Media.....	p.182
3.1.1.3.5. Lack of Guidance.....	p.185
3.1.1.3.6. Native Culture in the EFL Literature Classroom.....	p.189
3.1.2. Presentation of the Teachers’ Answers.....	p.192
3.1.2.1. Results of the Teachers’ Questionnaires.....	p.192
3.1.2.2. Results of the Teachers’ Interviews.....	p.209
3.1.2.2.1. The Place of TCBK in the Literature Classroom.....	p.209
3.1.2.2.2. TCBK and Language.....	p.214
3.1.2.2.3. The Place of Reading in Education and the Effect on Literature Study.....	p.220
3.1.2.2.4. Technology Use.....	p.225
3.1.2.2.5. Students’ Profile	p.228
3.1.2.2.6. The syllabus of The Literature Module	p.232
3.1.2.2.7. Bridging the cultural gap	p.235
3.1.2.2.8. Teachers’ Guidance.....	p. 240
3.1.2.2.9. Teachers’ Suggestions.....	p.243
Conclusion	p.246

Chapter Four: Interpretation, Discussion of the Results and Pedagogical Implications

Introduction	p.247
4.1. Discussion of the Results	p.247

4.1.1. The Target Cultural Gap and its Outcome on Algerian EFL Students' Literature Study	p.247
4.1.2. Teachers' Assessment of the Cultural Gap between Algerian EFL Students and the Literary Texts they Study	p.269
4.1.3. Literature Interpretation: from Eurocentricism to Afrocentricism?	p.293
4.2. Pedagogical Implications	p.309
4.3. The Limitation of the Study.....	p.322
Conclusion	p.323
General Conclusion	p.324
References	p.337
Appendices	p.350
Appendix A: Questionnaire to the students' (version of the piloting session).....	p.351
Appendix B: Questionnaire to the students' (final version).....	p.353
Appendix C: Teachers' Questionnaire.....	p.360
Appendix D: Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Condensed Version	p.366
Appendix E: Taxonomy of the Affective Domain.....	p.370
Appendix F: Interview Transcripts of the Students.....	p.371
Appendix G: Interview Transcripts of the Teachers.....	p.384

General Introduction

Introduction

Today, Algerian students have access to information from the entire world thanks to the internet. Those who have learned to speak and write in English can also communicate with people of different nationalities even though English is their third and sometimes even their fourth language. Accordingly, multilingualism is a noticeable characteristic of the Algerians; not only do they speak more than one language, with Arabic, Tamazight and French, but their mother tongue is not one they all share. For some it is oral Arabic also called “Eddarija”, for others coming from Berber-speaking areas for instance, speak “Kabyle” or “Chaoui”. Finally, there is French for those who, although a minority, were brought up in French speaking homes. Hence, our students, from their first steps at school until University, have already experienced several phases of ‘acculturation’. They move from their mother tongue that can be Berber or darija (the Arabic vernacular) to their official language, which is classical or written Arabic. Then they learn to read and write in French, the first foreign language that is traditionally taught in the Algerian schools, and since the 2022-2023 academic year, English as well.

In fact, this multilingualism brings about a multiculturalism in the students’ background which simultaneously affects them and how they view the world. Nonetheless, there is a twist to the Algerian cultural circumstances. Essentially, with a freedom and sense of sovereignty recovered not half a century ago, came the abandonment of French as a second language. The decline of French use in our country has caused a decline in the

influence of Western culture in Algeria as well. If today in Algeria French has been consigned to being a foreign Western language, English on the other hand, is better accepted. Decolonized from the French, swiftly thrown into a technologically violent globalization, the Algerian context is a particular one in cultural terms.

With English, the Algerian population has found a peaceful alternative to its fearful past of French use. Historically, speaking French was forced upon Algerians by the colonizer, and in the early post-colonial years, it was their only bridge to communicate with the rest of the world. Their identity as a people, it is important to mention, was denied to the Algerians under the French ruling. The UNO speech of president Boumedienne in 1974 in classical Arabic will lead the way as the breaking point with the French language use in Algeria. However, the rote learning policy and a large scale hammering of nationalistic cultural material seems unsuccessful to shift language use along with a restored independent Algerian paradigm, with an established philosophy, attitude, beliefs, and way of life.

Algeria is seeking to shape its identity, to bridge the gap between its different languages, and to connect tradition and modernity. We need to explore what it is to be Algerian today, what it was during the war of Liberation, and what we want it to be in the future. Algeria, with its history of colonization for over a hundred years, is in need of a commemoration. According to Trauma Theory, whatever affects a people will continue to affect them as they recall the events whenever they narrate them. Caruth (1991) cited in Lahrech (2017-2018) asserts that the trauma caused upon a victim affects the people who

directly witness the traumatic event, those who hear about the event, as well as the future generations who would later hear or read about it. Thus, it is vital to read about the French colonization of Algeria, which is a national traumatic period of our history. Learning about the beautiful solidarities that developed across countries for the cause of independence may possibly reinforce positivity about otherness and the connection with one another. Unfortunately, the reading skill, which is fundamental to enhance learning, is scarcely practiced nowadays by the youth around the world and Algeria is not an exception. Frantz Fanon or Maurice Audin, to name just these are unknown to the Algerian students even though their names stand in golden letters in many schools, institutions, streets, etc...

Every community has common values and principles, and its beliefs about the 'Other' depend on the level of intercultural awareness that its people have reached; although one can argue that the objective of reading EFL literature goes beyond familiarizing students with foreign cultures. Following Byram's Model of Intercultural Awareness (1997) the sociocultural representations we have about a given culture strongly influences the way we view ourselves in comparison to other societies. Therefore, researching to what extent reading EFL literature affects our thinking and vision about otherness will allow us to shed light on the process that EFL students use to move from their native sociocultural perspective and to explore or even assimilate the target culture and to fully understand the literary works in the target language. Through EFL literature, students can identify their place as citizens of this world who can think by themselves and not be told by others what or how to think; avoiding in doing so to be judgmental in response.

1-Background of the Study

What inspired this research is a previous investigation in the completion of the researcher's magister (Fasla: 2009). In inquiring about the difficulties that students face in understanding foreign literatures in the English language, one unforeseen parameter arose: the reluctance of students to handle African literature in English. These students affirmed in the questionnaire given to them that they did not feel at all connected to African literature in any way and many students declared feeling closer to the English literature. This was a surprise to the researcher who found that decrypting whether events presented in a novel were real or imaginary, or doing library research to uncover the mythical dimension of words for example, are unfamiliar practices to most students interviewed (Fasla; 2009). The researcher also noted that whenever students dealt with the African American cause, or were asked to draw parallels with their national history of decolonization, their apparent lack of enthusiasm and even signs of boredom they seemed to express, were unforeseen. Considering the common geography, oral traditions, and community driven lifestyle that Algeria shares with the other African countries, a sense of belonging was rather expected.

As an Algerian teacher, the researcher was even more puzzled because the Algerian pupils are presented with their national history and colonized past each year with the celebration of the independence. Nothing anticipated this cultural and even affective distancing on their part. Hence, every year for the past five years (for the piloting of the data collection of the present work), the researcher has regularly questioned students on themes such as nationalism, humanism, feminism, and otherness; in relation to the literary

works they were studying. The reactions observed were disappointing at first because students showed passivity and a lack of interest.

Nonetheless, looking deeper into the issue draws to note incomprehensible discrepancies: In a country where women have played predominant roles in politics or at war, for example with El Kahina, Lalla Fatma N'Soumer, or Djamila Bouhired, students were judgmental towards women who fought racism during the segregation years in the USA. Angela Davis, the African American civil rights activist who went to visit prisons to speak out for unfair treatments in the penitentiary, was considered by the students to have an inappropriate behavior for a woman. However, Rosa Parks, the teacher who refused to give away her seat in a bus to a white man was much admired and complimented. The example of Rosa Parks shows a lack of preparation in thinking critically and analyzing rather than misinformation. Her story is in fact a cover up for the original civil rights activist, Claudette Colvin, who refused to give her seat to a white person. Claudette was from a family among the poorest of the African American community and did not abide by the general rulings: she did not straighten her hair; she was pregnant out of wedlock, and was considered a troublemaker in the community for speaking too freely her mind. Although the NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) recognized her courage and emulative power, she was left out of the history books until very recently.

Hence, as abovementioned, students will tend to express socially acceptable ideas instead of rationally connecting the information or researching them thoroughly. It is safe

to say that critical thinking and personal analysis decline when students seem only capable to paraphrase what they have retained; in other words, they are trapped in the cycle / habit of rote learning when they are not encouraged to do otherwise. Chandramohan & Fallows (2009), advocates of interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning, affirm that without the development of a collaborative approach in the field of education with a focus on practice, students will keep struggling to have a voice. According to them, if students are not initiated to ‘interpreting, drawing conclusions, connecting themes with socioeconomic theories’ they will pursue with the instinctive and emotional responses they are used to (Chandramohan & Fallows, 2009: p.13).

2- Current Issues and Theory

Today, in the context of our post-colonial era, it seems that the Algerian students are widely influenced by mainstream consumerism media, which comforts them in their prejudices about foreign cultures, deterring them from learning about them, or even from inquiring about their own cultural origins for that matter. Instead, we have non-informed learners with the dream of a better elsewhere, embarrassed by their local, regional, and even continental roots, and bewildered by the Western materialistic norms of success and even be it of happiness. This comes in no contradiction with Mannoni’s theory on the dependency complex of the colonized or “Le Complexe du Colonisé” (Mannoni: 1950), which Frantz Fanon argues strongly against dedicating his life work to the fight for freedom of the Algerian revolutionaries and their African brothers. The question we are brought to ask is, does literature class offer Western cultural norms as a paradigm of reference to the

Algerian students, who sometimes hear of these for the very first time? Are the students accompanied to develop personal analyses or are they directed to identify the desired / expected interpretation?

According to Boulbina (2018), nowadays have access to knowledge through the web and have multilateral exchanges and conventions with various countries around the world has rendered the Westerners to a diminished horizon and lessened their influence or radius of propagation. It is now the time to restore all decolonized voices, and finally accept that every perspective on an EFL literary text is legitimately equal to any Western acclaimed vision. The critics or those in charge of ‘curating’ literary insight ought to think of students from around the world and allow them to speak from a local point of view with or without referring to Western thinking, but knowing that their position is valid. Theories, analyses, movements, should be reviewed for some or instigated for others, by the non-Westerners themselves. It is ‘the celebration of confusion’ (my translation) or l’Eloge de la désorientation’ (Boulbina, S: 2018). This Algerian philosopher asks of us that we shift our paradigms, a notion also supported by the South African le Grange L. (2018). For her, the educational institutions ought to encourage more than the nationalization of their curricula, but rather their indigenization. Nationalizing implies ignoring, omitting, or borrowing from the Western ideologies to the third-world needs or prisms, yet indigenization means restoring the philosophies of the post-colonial countries to their rightful intellectual platform for equal debates with the Western ones. This was already widely claimed by the father of Deconstructivism Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), who declared to have been misunderstood by the Western intellectuals who deviously reinterpreted his work.

For him, the text is entangled and inconsistent in its discourse, as language itself is always in motion and its signs arbitrary. Hence, analyzing fiction or nonfiction for that matter, is to discover its true significance, which is nearly never faithful to what the author originally intended it to be. Deconstructivism allows readers from around the world to shift their understanding of literary works, particularly to distance themselves as independent thinkers and interpreters from Western philosophy, which in turn encourages a discourse of resistance on the part of the formerly colonized. Brown (1980) citing Acton (1979) says that the acculturation process of the learner when learning a language will be of capital importance in the cultural comprehension of the target language. It is not only the social distance between two cultures which affects their learning of foreign languages and literatures; it is rather how the reader perceives this distance. The researcher adheres to an ethno-relativist perspective, whereby no one culture is superior to another as it recognizes that differences between cultures exist and that acceptance of otherness must prevail, particularly on intellectual grounds. Culture differences are handled in this research in a post-positivist and post-modernist perspective, looking at literary works of interest from a global standpoint to a local one and vice versa.

Hence, Deconstructivism can be one positioning in a post-modernist perspective because it seeks to deconstruct the ideological biases (gender, race, and economic, political, cultural and traditional assumptions) that pollute all historical, philosophical, or religious truths. Therefore, the present investigation stands against Western centrism that judges other groups in comparison to their own ethnic group through behavior, custom, religion,

language and discourse. A famous example of such a dichotomy is Camus' *l'Etranger* both celebrated and disapproved as to how the author presented the Algerian autochthones: silent! *Mersault Contre enquête* by Kamel Daoud, written in reaction to the original novel, was to voice the originally voiceless character of the Arab who was shot by the leading character. Consequently, the importance of cultural specificity along with the reader's identity are both in need of acknowledgement. Accordingly, Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence involves the reader's culture deeper into each phase of reading comprehension. In fact, this globalized era has definitely caused the native / expected reader to be replaced by a more globalized, diverse and inclusive audience. Following the social constructivist theory of learning, we believe that acquiring new skills and knowledge can only be done with the help or assistance of the people surrounding the learner. Hence, the teachers can either trigger greatly the acceptance of what students learn and how well they learn it, as well as distance their students from the learning subject. It is the responsibility of the teacher to guide the students from their native cultural viewpoint to the foreign lenses of the context of origin of the literary text.

This research will uncover the link between teaching cultural perspectives and reading EFL literary texts. For Lev Vygotsky, who introduced the 'Zone of Proximal Development', successful learning can only happen with the help of mentors, teachers, classmates, librarians etc... Thus, from a socio-constructivist point of view, culture teaching can reinforce the students' affect essentially through the scaffolding of previously taught material. In addition, interdisciplinarity is key to allow students to gain anew their

lost role of readers as meaning creators. According to Maley (1998), literature teaching in ESL has research that is small-scale and mostly oriented towards academic projects when the educational implications could spread to benefit the masses. Likewise, we stand in a time of globalization and fuzzy / violent projections of information that is impossible to digest, suppressing a great deal of progress in the field of cultural identity and reaching out to otherness. Concerning the metacognitive skills among which there is critical thinking and schemata management, interdisciplinarity is about helping the students, or these intellectuals to be, to reach an open-mindedness or a globalized point of view. In the on-going process, the subjective affective response of the students needs to be handled from various angles. Hinkel declares:

...multidisciplinary studies on culture carried out in various domains of applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, interaction and pragmatics, and rhetoric and writing can inform second and foreign language learning and teaching. (Hinkel: 1999)

We have students who come to the University to study EFL literature when they have trouble grasping literary theory and dealing with their affective reaction to their readings at the same time. Widdowson (1977) has identified a four-dimension division in literary study: language learning (pragmatic focus), academic or analytical intellectual focus, stylistics, and critical orientation (such as new criticism or post-modernism). If students are unaware of this quadric-pillared structure, they will only be able to parrot other people's analyses of literature. Furthermore, a critical perspective implies that the meaning within a text cannot be separated from the contexts in which it was created, but its writing circumstances are connected to those of its readers (Hilbrink: 2014).

A given reader, within his / her network, is exposed to a book that has its own context from which it was issued. Hence, cross-cultural reading is timeless and space less. According to Anderson in Anderson R. C. & Pearson, P.D. (1984), the American educational psychologist who developed the schema theory originally coined by Bartlett, F. (1932), the human memory systematically recalls one's background knowledge. Background knowledge is also known as the content schema, needed in order to reach comprehension during the reading process. In cognitive science, the mental pattern of handling incoming information while reading for instance consists in connecting new knowledge to the preexisting knowledge that is already in our long-term memory.

3-The Delimitations of the Study

In this study, the researcher explores the Algerian students' difficulties when comprehending EFL works of literature with the focus on the lack of cultural knowledge, which impedes the reception of literary documents. Nonetheless, this research does not deal with the organization of literary texts, nor the value of creative discourse, literary theory or literary criticism per se. Analyzing the literary discourse with reference to non-creative discourse requires another research as a comparative study or a linguistic/ literature researcher cooperation, which is beyond the scope of this research. Additionally, our interest in the learners' cultural identity issues is didactic and under no circumstances is it an adherence to the cultural studies approach or any other literary theory.

4- Problem Statement

The major concern here is to investigate whether the misunderstanding in target cultural knowledge would create a feeling of insecurity on the part of the EFL Algerian students. In Fasla (2009), it is affirmed that although the cultural element was implemented at the different levels of under graduation classes with the Cultural Studies module, it did not remedy the cultural gap most students suffer from. Instead, this uncovered the issue at stake: the learners' inability to situate themselves as a different voice from the established Western normalized way of thinking. What is fearful is that when they are in front of culturally challenging views, Algerian students may remain blind to or perhaps even stubbornly reject them if they are left unprepared.

5- Rationale

The Target Cultural Background knowledge as a research topic was inspired from the researcher's direct experience at the level of fourth year 'licence' American literature class. Fellow classmates had the utmost difficulties to manage text interpretation and analysis. In a previous research, (Fasla: 2009) it was already established that cultural background information did in fact undermine literary study, however a very interesting but surprising element was uncovered: the students had difficulty accepting African literature and even declared to feel 'closer' to English or American literature! Hence, the researcher's interest in the impact of TCBK on EFL literature study and its dialectic connection to the students' Native Cultural Background.

6- Aims of the Study

In looking more closely into the connection between the students and their native culture background knowledge as well as how they manage their target cultural knowledge acquisition, I hope to discover whether cultural background knowledge is motivating for literature study. I would also like to explore both teachers and students beliefs and if they consider that cultural knowledge affects the students' EFL literature reading experience in any way. Are they motivated when they do understand the cultural cues? Do they feel completely discouraged when they miss the cultural symbols or hidden meanings due to their estrangement? As a matter of fact, a big majority of students considered Cultural Studies to be a history class and fourth year students on the verge of graduating expressed the regret of not having understood earlier the significance and helpfulness this information offered for their fourth year literature class. When TS. Eliot, an author they studied in literature class, was filled with religious references, they did not have any time to do the indispensable research; some even claimed they had lost their first year notes thinking them useless (Fasla: 2009). Hence the following hypotheses:

1. The teaching of Culture is not taken care of in the literature class. In addition, the target cultural knowledge gap in the EFL Algerian students' background as a weakness transpires in their preconceptions on EFL literature even before doing any reading.
2. Both students and teachers are unaware of the underlying cultural dimension that hinders the students' understanding of EFL literature. they need to bridge

the gap between the Algerian native culture and the realm of western Anglophone beliefs and values.

3. Explicit cultural instruction can bridge the culture gap for a better understanding of EFL literature. Alongside literary works, there are theories of interpretation that cannot offer freedom of analysis if the underlying intricacies between the West and the post-colonial countries are not unveiled.

What follows are the three research questions that were elaborated to best investigate the veracity of the hypotheses above:

1/ Do students truly suffer from a cultural gap in the target culture of the literature they study at the English department of Algiers?

*If so, does it discourage them from pursuing literature study?

*Do they feel that their native voice is silenced in the process?

2/ How do teachers assess the cultural background knowledge gap that exists between the students' native learning environment and that of the texts they are asked to analyze?

*Do teachers ignore the importance of the cultural factor on reading literature?

*Can literature teachers help their students with background knowledge acquisition for literature reading?

3/ Are students taught to interpret from their Mediterranean / African perspective or do their teachers encourage the western official reading?

*Are the teachers aware of their students' culturally biased perceptions as well as their own?

*Does the literature study practice in the EFL literature classroom conform to the classic Western paradigm or transcend it?

7- Significance of the Study

In Algeria today, we are transitioning from French, which is the first foreign language in schools all over the country, towards English, yet another Western cultural vessel. If the main objective of the present research is to explore the teaching and learning of the target culture at the department of English of Algiers 2 Abou el Kacem Saadallah, our implication is to challenge their teaching of EFL literature and its stance. Although literature is an art, it often functions as a lens through which we can examine foreign cultural backgrounds or discover unknown sets of beliefs. The issue is that nowadays, even more than ever, Western ideological hegemony needs to be addressed, particularly in an EFL university classroom. Hence, this study explores the dialectic link between the target cultural background knowledge and the students' native cultural upbringing as a means to facilitate their acceptance and their comprehension / interpretation of foreign literatures. We argue that the Algerian EFL students have a right to their native perspective, which must be acknowledged in the EFL classroom.

8- Research Methodology

The present paper unfolds the investigation of a case: that of the students registered in the three years under graduation 'licence', at the University of Algiers 2 during the academic years of 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. The complexity of this case study drove the researcher to use a mixed research design with a focus on qualitative data collection tools that put side-by-side data from two categories of informants, 62 EFL Algerian students enrolled in the first, the second, and the third year licence and 15 teachers of literature. The data collection tools for both teachers and students are the questionnaire administration, which contains open-ended questions and comment sections for rich and deep input, as well as unstructured interviews. The students have an additional reading comprehension activity; it is a reading task for the students who were asked to identify cultural references in an excerpt of the American novel by Jean Webster *Daddy Long Legs* (1912). The overall objective being an exploratory understanding of the cultural element, and looking into the way students at the level of the three years licence LMD deal with the specific words or expressions mentioning the target culture within the extract they are asked to read. The reason behind an exploration at the level of the three years of the licence is to ensure that the factor of language proficiency is eliminated and the focus is exclusively on the cultural background element. The intention here is to pursue a mixed research procedure with a focus on the qualitative data in order to reach a deep insight about cultural background knowledge acquisition in the department.

9- The General Framework of the Research

The present work consists of a general introduction to the study, a theoretical chapter that reviews the literature related to the topic of the research, a practical chapter that presents the methodology, and a third chapter that presents the results of the study. A fourth chapter aims to answer the research questions and to offer some pedagogical implications and is followed by a general conclusion. The first chapter of the work presents the review of the theoretical background to cultural knowledge acquisition. Thus, chapter one is divided into three main parts that discuss reading comprehension and culture acquisition, literature in the classroom, cultural awareness in literature teaching. Chapter two or the practical chapter describes the population of the study, the tools of data collection used in this research as well as the research design. The third chapter presents the results gathered from the research tools. It first reveals the responses that were collected from the students followed by those of the teachers. The first research tool is the questionnaire, and then there are the interview responses that are theme-coded and grouped for an easy read. The results of the reading comprehension activity will not be evaluative scores for assessing students' papers, but rather comprehensive results with metacognitive input. The data obtained from the questionnaire are analyzed and displayed in tables and figures. Hence, the third chapter presents and discusses the results. The fourth chapter contains an interpretation of the results as well as some pedagogical implications with a focus on didactic recommendations for literature teaching. Likewise, it attempts to present some pedagogical implications on teaching cultural knowledge. Finally, guidelines for further research and suggestions for experimentations will be given in the general conclusion.

Chapter One: Theoretical Background

Part One: Reading Comprehension and Culture Acquisition

Introduction

Reading comprehension involves meaning creation by a reader when facing a given text. Within schema theory, it is established that the EFL reader needs to acquire some amount of cultural knowledge from the target language when reading its literature. TCBK is considered as an essential tool to unveil the hidden message originally directed to a knowledgeable intended reader. Otherwise, students would make dangerous comprehension shortcuts. In fact, if left to interpret the text according to their point of view, students would occult the fact that the written work was not from their context and was not destined primarily to them. In identifying the original context of the work, their interpretation or analysis would not only be more adequate but academically valid, as they would be able to use the cultural referents in the text scrupulously. They would either be able to comprehend the original meaning of the text or to make parallels with their own personal situations and express how it is that this work in particular reaches out to them or to their community. Following the social constructivist theory of learning, it is necessary for us to explore how learning new things is essentially a scaffolding with previously taught material, we expect that this can only be done with the help or assistance of others surrounding us.

1.1.1. Learning: a Socially Shaped Process

We learn to understand through communication and experience, and this happens at a specific time and in a given place within a milieu with its principles, beliefs, references, that can be historical, civilizational, ecological, and the like.

1.1.1.1. Zone of Proximal Development

We are cultural beings and our intellect is culture-bound, therefore considering the cultural factor in any learning process is promoting the well-being not only of the learner, but of their learning capacity as well (Flynn & Schweickart, 1986: p 5). Brown (1980: 137) already identified the acculturation process being a necessary step in foreign culture acquisition. When encountering a new culture their shock is inevitable. He explains that: "...human beings perceive the cultural environment through the filters and screens of their own world view and then act upon that perception, however "biased" it may be." (Brown, 1980: 137) The above-mentioned author citing Acton (1979) says that the acculturation process of the learner when learning a language will be of capital importance in the acquisition of the target culture. This carries us directly to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development.

For Vygotsky, any kind of learning is socially structured; it happens within the learner's environment, and only with the help of knowledgeable people from this same environment who act as guides in a well-structured support system. This support system is environmental and hence shapes the way people learn as well as how they learn. Vygotsky

claims it is impossible to escape this learning organization; it is the family members for infants, neighbors and passers-by when a child learns to play and socialize, and teachers and peers in the classroom or at school. This creates a culture-bound perspective or way of seeing things that is proper to each human being: our thinking, the meaning we give to things and a fortiori our reading comprehension. Everything fits into a social dynamism, and even more so our learning process. This makes accepting divergent points of view or learning styles that are from abroad a daunting experience, creating more obstacles for the learners of foreign languages, as Montgomery et al (1992: 11) puts it:

Factors such as the place and period in which we are reading, our gender, ethnicity, age and social class will encourage us towards certain interpretations but at the same time obscure or even close off others. (Montgomery et al, 1992: 11)

The issue dealt with in the above lines is that of rejection on the part of the foreign language learners. Interpretation is of a personal and therefore cultural nature, it is then often difficult for learners to see things from a new angle or foreign lenses. So when reading a foreign text for the first time, students often make the mistake of decoding elements in the text from their native standards instead of trying to see what those mean within the target culture. In an interview for a previous research (Fasla: 2009), students were found to be frustrated with the teachers' corrections of their understandings of a given novel extract, they would say: "I understand and I do have opinions about the characters and events in that novel, why am I being silenced?" Their incomprehension caused a refusal of the intended meaning identified by the specialists, the critics, theories of interpretation and the like, and created a feeling of rejection toward them. Understanding the social aspect of

culture acquisition in literature study is of utmost importance when in an EFL learning environment and a priority in the present research. As our direct environment influences our deductive patterns, our learning abilities, and even our emotional state as to whether we will be receptive to new information or not, the teachers and the academic learning context responsible for guiding the learners through the process of interpretation appear all the more central.

1.1.1.2. Thinking is Social

Within the social constructivist theory of learning where the teacher is the guide, Piaget (another important social constructivist theorist alongside Vygotsky) identified that a state of disequilibrium appears when a new information comes contradicting the existing preconceptions of a person. In fact, even children at their earliest developmental stage need to build on what is familiar to them before they get to handle anything new. Anderson & Wilson state: “Piaget believed that children grasp concepts such as conservation only after a series of crucial developmental experiences. For each of these thinkers, mature cognition depended on prerequisite knowledge.” (Anderson & Wilson, 1986:31). The words retained here are “crucial developmental experiences”. This means that learning by doing is brought forward as being crucial or decisive in the learner’s future learning style and evolution. The point I wish to make as clear as possible is that at the University in Algeria we must remedy to an intricate situation: Students by habit expect to be given models to follow when they are asked to think autonomously. Throughout their schooling, which is from the age of six to the age of eighteen years old, Algerian pupils have been put through a repeated series of

rote learning practices (Hellal, 1988). Consequently, their developmental experiences of learning how to interpret texts is through rephrasing what their teachers told them to be the correct understanding instead of having them construct meaning, and this is a major educational issue. Flynn & Schweickart state what follows:

One of the main achievements of cognitive science in the past fifteen years has been to make us aware of the extent to which even the simplest understanding and recollection depends on knowledge that the reader brings to the task. (Flynn & Schweickart, 1986: p 4)

If the students' cultural environment not only influences their knowledge acquisition but also the application of this knowledge to the tasks that are given to them in class or for exam purposes, then teachers have a multidirectional and complex mission: make students accept foreign cultures and reach out to otherness and learn a new way to handling tasks. Accepting foreign cultures means knowing there are ways of seeing things that are different from ours and recognizing the fact that we all position ourselves according to our native culture. Wierzbicka explains:

It is impossible for a human being to study anything – be it cultures, language, animals, or stones – from a totally extra-cultural point of view. As scholars, we remain within a certain culture, and we are inevitably guided by certain principles and certain ideals which we know are not necessarily shared by the entire human race. (Wierzbicka, 1992: p.25)

Without judging the other, we need to create a space where we can reach effective learning. Hence, the difficulty is a complex one for the teachers as they too are subject to cultural bias. Cultural bias is also present in the famous dichotomy of the language sign coined by the linguist De Saussure as the Signifier and the Signified.

1.1.1.3. Signifier / Signified

Taken from semiotics, a sign is composed of a signified and a signifier (from the French: signifié and signifiant). The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, founder of semiotics, explained that for every lexical item or word (the signifier) there is a referent in reality (the signified). We are dealing here with the arbitrariness with which meaning is connected to language use. If words have synonymous equivalents across languages, their objects of reference on the other hand do not. Consequently, this is where the cultural shock happens. From this theory we have the concept of connotation, or the cultural meaning attached to words, as well as denotation that is the literal meaning of words. Let us consider the word “wilderness”. From a European or American perspective, it refers to such elements of nature composed of waterfalls, rocky mountains, with perhaps bears or wolves even. For a Mediterranean, there is a landscape of another order, the Sahara, palm trees and camels.

A few decades ago there were many TV commercials worldwide with the motto ‘food for Africa’, showing those African landscapes associating them with drought and famine. This simple manipulation of the ‘signified’ brings the audiences, both in and out of Africa, to think that the European wilderness is rich in comparison to the African one.

As a result, Europeans are brought to think they are happy to be where they are when Africans are convinced they need to flee a hostile land. Similarly, Aidoo, A. A. (1996) also blames the Western media to promote a negative view of the Africans around the world as well as in the minds of the Africans themselves. She declares:

In Western visual media especially the African woman is old beyond her years; she is half-naked; her drooped and withered breasts are well-exposed; there are flies buzzing around the faces of her children, and she has got a permanent begging bowl in her hand. (Aidoo, A. A. in Jarrett-Macauley, D. (ed.), 1996: 156)

It is not a fortuity that the abovementioned examples are Westerners' positioning as to the impossible autonomy of formerly colonized people. Mediatizing the poor in third-world countries puts the emphasis on the fact that these newly independent countries are still in need of the help of the former colonizer, who originally established colonies in Africa to bring assistance and civilization. Kermezli (2018, p.56) adds: "The colonial representation of the colonized relates to a state where a certain image of the latter is made, in order to accommodate the former's whole plan of colonization." The role of a literary work is to be able to shape the cultural unity of a given community making the readers obliged to define their own attachment and to look deeper into what actually makes them who they are as a people. Otherwise, we have peculiar situations such as the one I have been regularly witnessing whenever I ask my students if they had ever read African literature before. Once a student told me, "I have never read any African authors". Saying this, she overlooked the fact that she herself was African and that the Algerian authors she knew quite well, happen to be also African.

1.1.2. The EFL Reader in his Culture and Context

Every person around the reader, and a fortiori in the classroom where things are discovered and questioned, contributes to building reading comprehension, analytical and evaluative skills for the reader in the EFL classroom. Kramsch (1997) is in favor of an

educational system that encourages the students to use their different styles of learning and without forgetting to familiarize them with styles that are different from the ones they know; emphasis is put on their context, classroom interaction, and their teachers' guidance.

1.1.2.1. The EFL Context

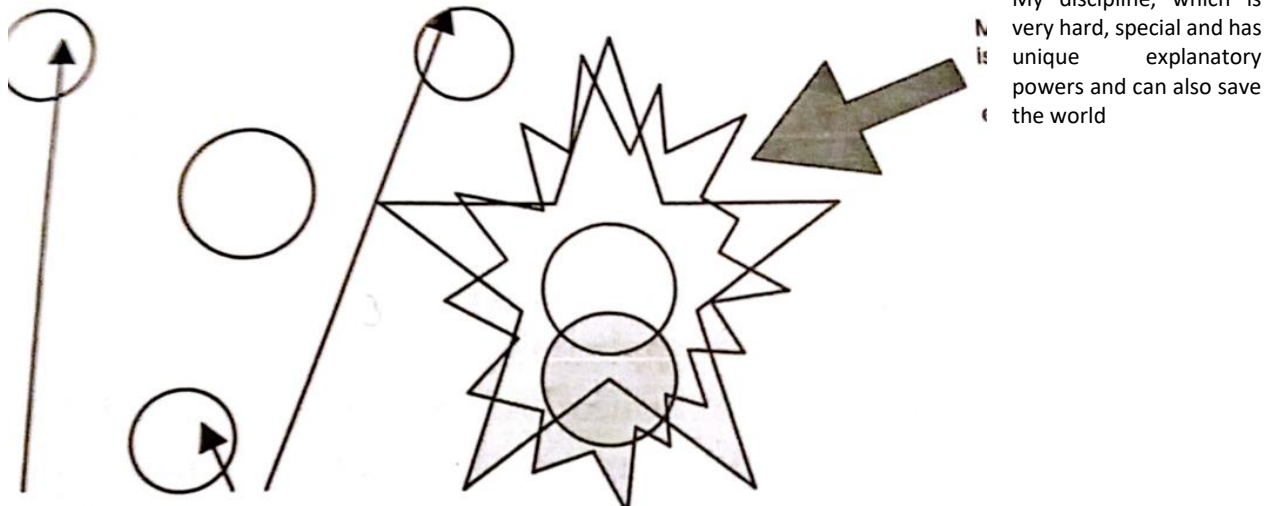
The situational context of the EFL classroom is all the more strategic for the learner's acquisition of interpretive abilities. The EFL reader must learn to develop a dynamic connexion between his / her cultural values or references and the target cultural information within the text. This is a negotiation process particular to cross-cultural reading environments. Understanding will come through a social process where the teachers and peers are active participants in the scaffolding of knowledge and skills, eventually shaping the reader's interpretive practice. Consequently, the teachers can either trigger greatly the acceptance of what we learn and how well we learn it as well as distance their students from the learning subject. Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008: 30) go further by stating:

Moreover, as meaning-making is both a personal and social process (community), new knowledge and skills develop through personal as well as co-operative reflection/analysis (cognition) and through a communicative process (communication). Long-term retention also usually requires that we experience the application of new knowledge and the use of related skills in a meaningful context. Finally, discussion and reflection, and the drawing of conclusions related to the experience associated with the application of new knowledge and skills, helps to cement learning. (Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols, 2008: 30)

In fact, teachers today are faced with a double standard concern; on the one hand, students are encouraged to speak freely, but on the other, they are expected to be skilled in analysing accurately the literary works they are presented with. In Chandramohan &

Fallows, (2009: 65) educational institutions need to encourage the development of areas of collaboration and practice between disciplines, for them: "...models of learning have a cross-disciplinary applicability despite a tendency to question and criticize generic models of student learning." Many scholars have affirmed time and time again that teachers lecturing in their bubbles without group work, peer discussions, or having reflective teaching as a regular practice fail to reach their students.

Graff (1997) for instance, says that the differences or contradictions even, that teachers exhibit about one another tend to puzzle the students who are no longer concerned with academic proficiency, but rather with uncovering what each teacher wants from them and this on an individual level. For Chandramohan & Fallows (2009) an individualistic vision of one's discipline that teachers in general seem to be holding on is antagonistic with the dynamic of what could be a sane and productive learning communal atmosphere; that as a teacher I can only abide by. When there is a disconnection between modules, the students are the first to suffer. What follows are two figures reflecting teachers' conception of disciplinary relationships—Version 1 & the Version 2, the one suggested by Chandramohan & Fallows for a better learning (Chandramohan & Fallows, 2009: p. 64).



Other, less interesting, helpful and rigorous disciplines, undertaken by people without the imagination or intellect to tackle mine.

Fig 1.1. Conception of Disciplinary Relationships-Version 1

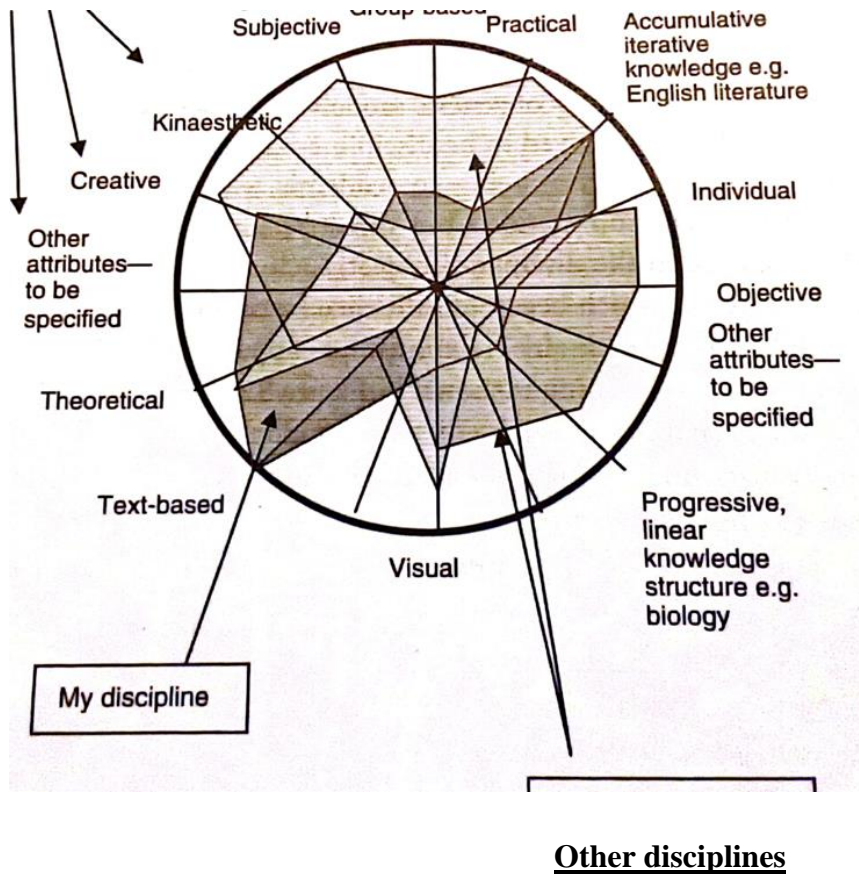


Fig 1.2. Conception of Disciplinary Relationships-Version 2

How can it be expected of the teachers to shape the students' interpretive abilities when they ignore one another's methodologies or approaches to text analyses? Additionally, there is a lack of communication between students and teachers; students want a systematic guidance and teachers expect the learners to be more autonomous. Students have declared to lack methodology; as a result, they end up rote learning instead of consolidating cultural knowledge (Fasla, 2009, p.79).

1.1.2.2. The EFL Classroom

The issue in an EFL classroom is to determine the importance of the students' interpretive conclusions compared to the authoritative intended message of the author with the identification of the intended reading community. Kramersch (1997: 51-52) argues that the construction of meaning from texts is a rhetorical and not just a cognitive process, and proposes seven principles of text interpretation which draw on current theories of discourse analysis. The principles of a rhetorical approach are the following:

1. Texts both refer to a reality beyond themselves and a relationship to the readers.
2. The meaning of texts is inseparable from surrounding texts, whether footnotes, diagrams or conversations. Intertextuality refers to the extent our texts echo other texts.
3. Texts attempt to position readers in specific ways by evoking assumed shared schemata.
4. Schemata are created by relating one text or fact to another through logical links.
5. Schemata reflect the ways of thinking of particular communities or cultures.
6. Schemata are co-constructed by the writer in dialogue with others.
7. Schemata are rhetorical constructions, representing the choices from other potential meanings.

(Kramersch, 1997: 51-52)

Thus, according to Kramersch, reading interpretation should be based on the scaffolding of the teacher and the discussions or debates with peer learners as pointed out above by Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008). Understanding a text and more importantly constructing one's opinion is the product of everyone's contribution.

1.1.2.3. Teachers as Guides

Teachers are guides even though they too are biased. Their role is to guide purposefully their students through the intricacies of foreign culture acquisition without diminishing one culture over the other. For Glas (2012) teachers tend to elevate the target culture at the expense of the students' native culture with the idea that this will improve their learning. She says the result is disastrous as the students feeling put down, reject the teachers' perspective and this even causes them to view their teachers negatively. For this reason, we will explore the link between teaching cultural perspectives and reading literary texts in an EFL context. I consider that the academic community is the direct environment where students can improve and not only where academic training takes place. For Kramersch (1993) the way learners have learned to read and to react to texts caused them to bring "different talents" to the literature class. Kramersch states:

There are those who read globally a text, make unexpected analogies, uncover metaphors & symbols, are good at close readings, collecting info, making lists, making thematic links, grouping ideas, organizing what they learned, expressing personal opinions... (Kramersch, 1993: p. 128)

Teachers while actively tutoring, coaching, and educating their students need to exchange more in order to allow their personalities to develop and to achieve efficient guidance. Accordingly, the following figure represents the theory of the hierarchy of human needs developed by Maslow, A. (1943).



Figure 1.3. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

For Maslow there are five categories to the human needs; physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. Each level of needs, from the lowest to the highest, must be

met before a person can move on to focus on securing the next need. We can observe that the sense of connection or belonging to one's family, friends and community is immediately after physiological and safety needs, which are the vital needs of a human being. It also comes in the pathway to esteem and self-actualization, which allow us to thrive in confidence. Baumeister, R. F. and Leary, M. R. (1995) who built on Maslow's theory, argue that a sense of belonging is crucial, as feeling isolated or left out can have a damaging impact. Today, an EFL student is confronted to a complex situation: he/ she is reading a literary work of a foreign culture and he / she, being of modern times, does not relate to ancient times and places and may well feel left out.

1.1.2.4. The EFL Reader

Teaching a foreign language includes the teaching of its cultural patterns and specifics that differ from the students' native ones. This is essential to enter the realm of understanding, exchanging and discussing. Even though we are brought to challenge the others in their viewpoints, principles or ideals, we can do so in an inclusive manner without having our interlocutor feel estranged. Montgomery et al (1992: 126) present:

Passages of description in fiction are often full of such references: to streets and cities, clothing, types of furniture, marks of cars...such assumed knowledge, however, will differ, sometimes profoundly, between places and periods. An obvious important example of this, as regards English literature, is the major differences between knowledge and beliefs as represented in – and anticipated by – Renaissance literary works and the knowledge and beliefs of modern-day readers. (Montgomery et al, 1992: 126)

It must be noted, students or ‘readers’ of literary texts are confronted with the handicap of the cultural schema or the culturally distant content schema they bring with them. Additionally, both students and teachers are confronted with managing the customs and cultures students come from while negotiating meaning during the reading comprehension process, demonstrating the role played by one’s background knowledge in their handling of the outside world. Already in the 1960s, Lado valued the teaching of cultural content of foreign text, he states:

Every time that the textbook or the teacher mentions a word or describes or refers to something that the American student does not understand culturally or misunderstands because its cultural content differs from his native patterns, there is immediate need to deal with the cultural differences involved. (Lado, 1967: 149)

Culture is not a school-issued phenomenon but an atmosphere carried by and through the learner’s sociocultural environment. Kramersch (1993: 23-24) states: “Because texts encourage us to enter the writer’s subjective world view, they appeal to the reader’s own subjective response.” Surely, EFL students activate their understanding of what they read from their native culture viewpoint and standards, causing the relationship between reader and text to be collective and cultural as much as it is interpretive and personal. Bennabi, M., (1959) “L’individu ne doit pas ses qualités sociales à sa formation scolaire mais à des conditions propres à son milieu...”¹ (2014 : p. 23). I tend to agree with Bennabi, M. (1952), it is the ‘milieu’ to which we belong that dictates how much we read, what we read, and which references we consider familiar. Indeed, in the above cultural upbringing

is defined as community-bound, likewise Kramersch (1993) explains that a student's personal response is also issued from where he/ she grew up. She explains:

In all its dimensions at once, a foreign language text invites the learner to discover both the personal voice of a foreign author, and the cultural voice of a speech community. This would be a daunting task indeed for a foreign language reader, if the text did not, at the same time, appeal to his or her personal response and to the cultural voice he or she in part represents. (Kramersch, 1993: 124)

Essentially, cross-cultural reading directly refers to foreign cultural elements that the EFL reader needs to decode from his / her own native cultural perspective, making the endeavor of reading within the EFL context of highly connected to the reader's sociocultural upbringing hence to his / her NCBK.

1.1.3. Reading Comprehension

Meaning creation during a reading activity is a socially directed task. In other words, what a text signifies for one community is not the same as what it will mean for another group. In addition, different readers will bring their own preconceptions and values to bear on their readings and will associate them with their own experiences of reality.

1.1.3.1. The Negotiation Process

The negotiation process within the EFL setting induces variables such as the intended reader, the actual reader and the writer and his message. For Kramersch (1993), psycholinguistic research has more studied the prior information, cultural information or influence/ sensitivity, and general educational background of the learner. However, little was done on prior reading experience and the effect it has on the learners' reading

proficiency. Training to read at home, at school, to retrieve knowledge from the written text is what Kramersch (1993: p. 126) identifies as “prior textual experience”. The experience comprises all the elements dynamically involved in the EFL reading context. Byram (2017, pp.20-21) explains:

We adopt a dynamic concept of culture rather than one which implies a static, monolithic and homogeneous entity usually associated with geographical and national boundaries. (Byram: pp.20-21, 2017)

The problem here is that privileging facts over meaning does not help foreign learners to grasp mindsets, attitudes, or values that are different from theirs and that accompany those facts. The EFL context within the text as well as the native environment of the reader, are both subject to continuous change and interferences; not to mention the reader’s perception of both his / her native and the target language cultures, which is also in constant evolution. Learners are not passive recipients of factual historical input and they are not supposed to rehearse carefully learned stereotypes conveyed by the target language. EFL readers need guidance in the handling of foreign cultural knowledge, as a mirror image for a foreign reality that can be opposite to their own. Teaching interpretive skills and the ability to juggle between different cultural backgrounds that are in constant movement, according to Kramersch (1993: 24) is necessary. She says:

The other direction taken recently has been to situate culture within an interpretive framework, taken from cross-cultural psychology or cultural anthropology, using universal categories of human behaviour and inferencing procedures for making sense of foreign reality. (Kramersch, 1993: 24)

Although we do not focus here on theory of interpretivism, it remains important to note that reading and learning to read does not happen in a vacuum, but in a social environment that is the EFL classroom. Cross-cultural reading brings about the importance of the native cultural background knowledge in schema theory. Reading comprehension unfolds what a text has to say to a particular reader at a particular time, from a particular place. The outcome of such a complex activity cannot be simplified; the meaning creation process is rather a negotiation between all the above mentioned, Montgomery et al (1992:11) explain:

“...comprehension will not follow the same track for each reader. What is in question is not the retrieval of a fixed or ‘true’ meaning that can be read off and checked for accuracy, rather we ascribe meanings to texts on the basis of interaction between what we might call textual and contextual material.” (Montgomery et al; 1992:11)

Reading brings us to an interaction between the structure of the text, its style for instance and the reader’s background; his knowledge, tastes, beliefs, etc...Reading comprehension is thus similarly a social process as well as a contextual / cultural process. In this perspective, the reading equation comprises many variables: variables such as the intended reader, the actual reader and the writer and his message as he planned it. The elements of the reading equation are taken into consideration in the schema theory. The schema theory suggests that everything a person knows is stored in memory into building blocks from which information is retrieved for use. In addition, every information is positioned in connexion to other information. For Lyons (1996 in Fasla: 2009) schemata refers to the reader’s informational knowledge and is divided in two categories: content

knowledge and language. We believe that as both schemas are highly influenced by the learning context, schema theory accentuates further the role of the cultural background knowledge.

1.1.3.2. Schema Theory

In schema theory, we understand that the information used by a learner is impacted as much by the context of learning as by its mode. What we learn is not as meaningful as how well we learn it. The people we are with, the place, the events taking place during the learning all are absorbed with the information at stake. Furthermore, Flynn & Schweickart add that the importance played by memory leads to a reconstruction of our personal understanding. For them:

Memory and comprehension are based on the same structures. What is recalled, according to schema theory, is not usually the actual sentences presented but a reconstruction based on what was understood. (Flynn & Schweickart, 1986: p 5)

Hence, the accuracy of the fact that learning needs to be experienced or lived, and that the context of learning remains unceasingly attached to the learnt information. Some of us can remember vividly when and where they were when they learned the hard lesson of not touching something hot without the fear of being burned. We recognize then that learning is a continuous back and forth movement between knowledge stored and the context we are in pouring in new information, modifying our background knowledge little by little.

Also, according to Bloom et al. (1956), the more a learner is involved in his learning or is active as in the last stage of acquisition (teaching) the more fixed the information is. When we are reading this happens solely between us the readers, and the text. Hence, during our reading, we try at times to insert some of our information onto the text, and at others to pull information from the text to our own references and previous knowledge. Schema Theory presents what is at stake in the reader's understanding while reading; the bottom-up and top-down processes.

1.1.3.3. Bottom-Up and Top-Down Reading Processes

The reading process is a difficult process because when one is reading, decoding language is not the only thing that occurs. Teaching the reading practice is teaching how to connect the linguistic code with the social / cultural codes attached to it. Hence, the bottom-up and the top-down reading processes. The bottom-up process is when the reader must draw information from the text in order to unveil its meaning: deciphering code or following the cues for progress in the events to understand the plot for instance. As to the top-down process, the reader draws information from his own background knowledge, i.e. what he knows of the world (content schema) and what he knows of the language used in the text (linguistic schema). Kramersch (1993; p.11) calls out for a pedagogy that can unfold the reading practice to its deepest layers. She says:

“Researchers can describe the variations in language use but these descriptions are still no blueprint for the language teacher on how to teach the interaction of linguistic forms and social meanings: for this interaction is dependent on the context and the way this context is perceived by the participants....” (Kramersch 1993; p.11).

The context of EFL reading pedagogy calls for direct and indirect ways of accessing reading proficiency. Information that is understood is not as important as how this information connects with its context of origin or with the reader's perception of it.

Encouraging the learner to have different reading contexts, inside and outside of the classroom or with the insight of different reading partners, such as the teacher and the classmates. This combination of experience and reflection on that range of experiences can show the EFL reader what it takes to access the necessary cultural background knowledge and to use it in his/ her interpretation of the text. Anderson and Wilson (1986:36) explain:

A schema enables inferential elaboration. No text is completely explicit. Facts necessary to comprehension are often omitted. The reader's schema provides the basis for making inferences that go beyond the literally stated information to complete the meaning of the text, thus ensuring comprehension. (Anderson and Wilson, 1986:36)

It is asserted here that the foreign language learner needs cultural background knowledge. The real question is not how much or when to provide the cultural background knowledge but rather which kind of cultural knowledge. Some literature teachers said that providing background knowledge before reading the text is necessary for the students to know what to expect. Also, predicting meanings will be helpful to grasp fully what a text is really about. Others claimed that giving some schemata progressively and throughout the reading process would be more useful to the students (Fasla, 2009). For Kramsch, this focus on either a rhetorical or a linguistic knowledge imprisons the EFL learner in a top-down and bottom-up dichotomy. Hence, the necessity of the cultural background

knowledge connecting the reader's native background with the context of the text is our core interest.

1.1.3.4. Cultural Background Knowledge

When we consider the cultural background knowledge as specified within the schema theory description, we tackle an information that is helpful in filling missing messages of the text. "...called alternately 'frames', 'scripts', or 'schemata', this background knowledge makes it possible to anticipate incoming information, relate it to previous knowledge and thus make global sense of the text as it unfolds." (Kramersch, 1993: 124) However, we cannot deal with cultural information without specifying the differences that exist between the native cultural background knowledge, and the target cultural background knowledge. Discrepancies between the two create misunderstandings as well as issues of rejection on the part of the reader, Byram explains (2017) that although researchers such as Anderson (1979) & others studied the impact of cultural knowledge on reading comprehension, they did not include it within the intricacies of the reading process.

He states, "However...in these studies cultural variations were taken as an independent variable in reading rather than as a constitutive and integral component of schemata in their own right." (Byram: p.4, 2017) When studying the cultural background knowledge, we discover that its traces go back to the earliest times of Western thinking. In the following passage, the authors Anderson and Wilson (1986:31) refer to Plato's allegory of the Cave, where the philosopher explains that comprehension is biased or limited by our senses. They explain:

Analyses of the role of background knowledge can be traced to the origins of educational, psychological, and philosophical thought. Plato's explanation of how we know was based on recollection; the Socratic dialogue was a method of generating new ideas through novel combinations of what was already known. (Anderson and Wilson, 1986:31)

Hence, we can note that in Ancient Greece, between the 8th C and the 5th C BC, Classical Greek philosophy recognized the fact that background knowledge was mandatory for text understanding. For Anderson & Wilson (1986) students should be knowledgeable, not only to fulfil academic requirements, but for avoiding misunderstandings and manipulation. A strict and unimaginative interpretation is not the risk neither is the objective making a literary art piece a scholarly matter stripped of emotion. Wrong inferences are not only responsible for denying the students a voice; it is also disrespectful to their learning and their independent thinking. For Flynn & Schweickart (1986) it is a matter of register or schemata. They say:

Differences in the schemata that people bring to bear on a text may result from differences in background or from differences in viewpoint. Differences in background— upbringing, education, and life experiences —cause differences between people in what they know. Differences in viewpoint, on the other hand, may occur even when people share similar knowledge. A reader's viewpoint on a text is determined by factors such as what she wants to learn from it, what she thinks the author is trying to do, and her opinion of the author. Differences in background knowledge are relatively enduring; they can be altered only by the acquisition of new knowledge. Differences in viewpoint may be more transient... (Flynn & Schweickart, 1986: p 11)

By dismissing the EFL learner's native cultural standpoint, we are shutting down all communication with them as well as hindering their ability to develop a personal point of view. This study will shed light as to whether our Algerian students, if adequately equipped

with the necessary target cultural background knowledge, could have the possibility to analyse with their native standards a text abiding by foreign ones. Reading academically is what allows students to be independent critical thinkers. As mentioned above, it is difficult for the students to enter the field of literary study if they have not been properly introduced comparing, etc... In fine, they do shape the general public appraisal of works of art around the world, past and present, humanely, artistically, and ideologically.

1.1.4. Critical Thinking in Education

The importance of reaching high cognitive skills as those required while being analytical are not an objective per se at the University level. They are the bridge to a coherent and well-enhanced academic learning, at the basis of which is the academic reading process.

1.1.4.1. Reading Academically

In this research, we are concerned with exploring whether the EFL learners can be skilled interpreters, by using their CBK, which is what they are expected to do at University while they often rely on responding spontaneously or sometimes emotionally to the literary works they study in literature class (Fasla: 2009). Hence, we must make sure as teachers, lecturers, researchers, tutors, scholars in general that our learners reach a cultural awareness where they do not feel endangered in their identity. Frigols, Marsh, and Mehisto (2008: 169) explain:

Scaffolding and critical thinking strategies are tools for extending learning, for helping students to step out of and expand their comfort zone. In so many ways, those strategies are about helping students to operate in what Lev Vygotsky has called the zone of proximal development – the zone which lies between current knowledge and that which can be accomplished with the assistance of teachers and

peers. These strategies help students to move from their current understanding of content and attitudes to a new level of understanding and then to take another step forwards right back into their zone of proximal development. (Frigols, Marsh, and Mehisto, 2008: 169)

In our Algerian context, our rote learning history has widened the gap of acquired learning strategies and needed learning strategies as well as background knowledge. During French colonization, Algerian natives as they were labelled, went to the Medersa to learn the Koran and then integrated their classes in the French schools where they had enrolled. Kermezli (2017-2018, p.71) adds: “The Algerian children used to spend about 12 hours of study between the Koran schools and the French state ones. This fact denotes how important knowledge acquisition for the Algerian was.” Kermezli (2018, p.71)

Thus, although knowledge acquisition has always been central for the Algerian population, the sacredness of the Koran associated with knowledge acquisition has caused to privilege the use of rote learning as a traditional learning practice in our country. Therefore, students need to be assisted in critical thinking abilities development by enriching their TCBK. Cultural background acquisition, which is at the heart of our exploration, is also a catalyzer for critical thinking. Critical thinking is officially among the essential goals of pedagogical training for learners of all levels and around the world, hence cross-cultural reading brings about interesting and original analyses and debates. Montgomery et al says:

...you infer information you feel the writer has invited you to grasp by presenting you with specific evidence and clues; and you make further inferences, for instance about how the text may be significant to you, or about its plausibility. Such

inferences will form the basis of a personal response, for which the author is far less responsible. (Montgomery et al, 1992: 11)

The truth is that the complexity of the task of teaching literary study hinders it completely; the intricacy of culture and literature, the social aspect of learning and the scaffolding issues of adequate reading strategies as well as the Western code of belief that has weighed for centuries on the rest of the world.

1.1.4.2. Critical Thinking and Cross-Cultural Reading

There is more to critical thinking in the academic environment than to thinking autonomously and being in full possession of knowledge. It also refers to one's positioning within worldwide-established theories, canons, philosophies, and ideas. Western viewpoints or beliefs are habitually taught, but rarely debated (Boulbina: 2008). For Burden & Byrd (1994) critical thinking is a higher order thinking activity that requires a set of cognitive skills that are, I must add, a determining factor for one's opinion construction.

They present the following by Beyer (1984):

1. Distinguishing between verifiable facts and value claims.
2. Distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information, claims and reason.
3. Determining factual accuracy of a statement.
4. Determining credibility of a source.
5. Identifying ambiguous claims, and reasons.
6. Identifying unstated assumptions.
7. Detecting bias.
8. Identifying logical fallacies.
9. Recognizing logical inconsistencies in a line of reasons.
10. Determining the strength of an argument / claim.

(Beyer, 1984 in Burden & Byrd, 1994)

Hence, in Burden & Byrd (1994) critical thinking is what leads to autonomous thinking and logical analysis. By identifying source legitimacy or inconsistencies that are present in a given document, just to name these two, the reader is enabled to interpret freely his / her ideas without being biased, knowingly or unknowingly for that matter. In fact, it is often accepted for students to follow any one theory without having to express their opinion. Like the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) advocates, I consider the holistic development of learners to be essential in our teaching. Critical thinking is a freeing tool, not only from one's own cultural shackles, but also from the Western-centered academic dogma. Gall 1984, Watson & Young 1986, (as cited by Echevarria et al, 2000) declare that "of the approximately 80 000 questions asked on average annually by teachers, 80 per cent are at the lowest level of thinking-factual knowledge." in Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008: p. 154). Hence, it is mandatory for EFL learners to acquire the necessary critical thinking cognitive skills in order to read critically, i.e. personally and freely. Consequently, we bring to the attention of our readers the significance of Bloom's taxonomy of the skills needed to be a proficient learner.

1.1.4.3. Bloom's Taxonomy

The taxonomy of educational objectives also known as Bloom's taxonomy was first elaborated by Bloom, B, S, et al (1956) in order to verbalise thinking about learning and its specific goals. Bloom's Taxonomy outlines six levels of cognitive difficulty: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This taxonomy is also one of the most influential theories in curriculum development; it is in two sections, the first

deals with the cognitive aspect of knowledge and skills acquisition when the second part is concerned with the intellectual abilities and skills. The second handbook of the taxonomy concerns the affective domain and is developed a little later by the same group of authors (1964). The taxonomy of the affective domain is known as Krathwohl's taxonomy and contains five levels, from the lowest to the highest: receiving, responding, valuing, organization, and characterization.

Both handbooks, originally developed to assist curricular designers and educators in their missions, present condensed versions or summaries of their taxonomies to make these more graphic (see appendices D & E). In Bloom and Krathwohl's taxonomies, we see knowledge and skills acquisition and learning abilities put on the same level as the affective trait of learning. This shows that how one feels about learning is as significant as the learning experience itself. As a result, we can affirm that critical thinking is a passageway to discovering hidden meanings and the exploration of otherness. Cultural knowledge, as mentioned in the beginning of this section, acts as a shield to unethical ideologies that serve Western societies and their vision of post-colonial people. Critical thinkers when analyzing a foreign text expose these ideologies. Reading implies to focus on keeping an open mind, remaining culturally unbiased, and in a receptive mode of tolerance. Nevertheless, to reach this level of thinking for intellectual growth it is crucial that we respect the reader's reception with his/ her native background, as 'acceptance' and 'internalization' following both taxonomies.

Conclusion

An explanation of the target culture and its intricate connection with the concepts dealt with in any literary text allows the reader to react knowingly, consciously, and emotionally. Literature is art and the way we read may either hinder or uphold the artistic value of any literary work. Differences in creative ability that are due to differences in ethnicity or religion are to be incorporated as an academic endeavour, instead of being criticized, mocked or weakened. For Bennabi (1952) creative emulation differs entirely whether we are in a Western or a non-Western environment, whether we are Muslim or not. In the first, eroticism is valued and sublimed even, in various art creations when in the second, morality and purity are the sole objects of its arts. Calligraphy for instance, is the utmost symbolic manifestation of Muslim art. Informed readers are competent enough to react to concepts that are foreign to them in an unrestricted manner and their response comes from a place of understanding and never opinionated or judgmental. Nowadays, within globalization and a market-oriented planet, the place of emotion or emotional response is more than threatened. Hence the empowering role of literature in the classroom for EFL students.

Part Two: Literature in the Classroom

Introduction

University literature study is necessarily an introduction or the familiarizing of an art that has become out of fashion for many. The stream of consciousness in James Joyce's *Ulysses* could be a parallel for today's flashback techniques in Tarantino movies for instance. For Montgomery et al (1992) certain literary works were experimentations, artistic experimentations some of which were opaque, with highly tangled meaning possibilities. TS Eliot, James Joyce or Virginia Wolfe need specialist instruction for interpretation, just to name these. As a result, our study that focuses on bridging this spatial / temporal cultural gap, will explore whether it assists positively the EFL learners to enter the realm of literary analysis, otherwise of a complex technicality, towards a successful approach to literature study. Additionally, as all learning situations are tainted with emotions, we will tackle whether foreign language literature teaching needs to present a conscious effort to foster positive images in both target and native cultures for a negative-free learning context. For Byram, the learner's emotional state needs to be handled with care in the presentation of cultural background knowledge in the EFL context. He explains: "The recognition of the importance of emotion in cultural understanding is a significant finding of our research." (Byram: p.29, 2017). We do live today in a modern, globalized world village where we are continuously bombarded with facts and events before ideas and values that are left unchecked.

1.2.1. Literature and Globalization

Globalization has offered great progress in international commerce and exchange as well as an extraordinary growth in human communication with technology development and internet access. However, if goods are exchanged rapidly and with ease, negative judgments about other populations, fed by the fear of racial and cultural additions, have increased. In spite of that, various communities around the world and their cultures have been brought forward, seemingly for a better understanding of one another's culture when truly it essentially serves the mass consumption market.

1.2.1.1. Reading: a Merchandized Distraction

In this capitalistically globalized world, there seems to be a focus namely upon materialistic matters. We exchange goods, market values and bills. Today, even qualified employees are tossed from one corner of the planet to another. Needless to say, all these movements have continually been accompanied by emotion; and the humanistic approach puts emphasis on the personal worth of individuals, their values, and their creative nature have long been replaced by the feeling of fear creating frustration or a lack of confidence. In addition, it is never easy to expose oneself or one's identity when facing people from another culture knowing the prejudices we may conceive against one another. For Maley (2008: 185), literature study plays a highly humanistic role in the educational field. He says:

It may seem anomalous in a market-oriented world of supply and demand and cost-benefit calculation that there is a place for literature. Perhaps the growing interest in literature is one manifestation of the spread of parallel notions such as ‘emotional intelligence’. (Maley, 2008: 185)

Artistic creations are today presented in various formats and the same artistic work can be duplicated as a movie, a video game and a book. One famous example is the medieval fantasy novel, *The Witcher* by the Polish writer Andrzej Sapkowski that has been adapted first into a video game and then into a television saga. Additionally, the reading practice and the number of books bought have dramatically dropped since the appearance of smartphones and this has influenced the choice of formats that are developed by creatives or marketing teams.

In the same line of thought, Couldry (2000) declares that openness towards others is very fragile in the system we know. For him, the right for human equality which can be taken for granted, at least in theory, is distorted through a cultural assimilation forced on the individuals by our economic reality. He states: “...irreversible link between cultural life and the capitalist economy. ‘Culture’, then, is already a paradoxical term and that paradox is something each of us as an individual may feel.” (Couldry, 2000: 2). Culture consumption was brought forward by modern consumerism to integrate pop music / culture, convenient modern dress code with the timeless jeans, technology apps, smartphones, connected tablets and the like. Everyone around the globe converges to this mass culture consumption causing tradition, oral transmission, and human connections to be all viewed as ancient practices. Although weary cultural customs and artifacts are endured because they remain merchandisable.

1.2.1.2. Scaffolding the Reading Skill in our Digitalized Era

Similarly, reading as a practice, nurtured from infancy and treasured for intellectual growth is outdated; and reading as a hobby has integrated an economic niche. Today, readers are consumers of books and of the stories in the books the same way as they are viewers and gamers. It is the flexibility of interests and the versatility in our comfort-seeking modern age that allows art to be consumed anytime and anywhere. In fact, literary artworks have always been exploited in a reading / culture-learning ratio. For Maley (1998), literary texts have been commonly used to serve scholar consumption instead of being an encouragement or an appeal towards more mindfulness for a globalized humanistic connection to others.

Although scaffolding cultural content is necessary, for Glas, k. in Lang (2013) it is highly dreaded by the teachers. They view their already overloaded share of responsibility to be fully exploited and expect from their students a certain effort of preparation to be done out of class. She says:

...as some of the teachers rely a lot on the cultural contents presented in the textbook, they sometimes report struggling with the need to affectively and cognitively engage students with the given reading and listening texts. This seems especially pressing when the teachers feel that the people or topics portrayed in the books should already be known to the students (as part of their “universal cultural education”), but turn out to be new due to students’ lacking previous knowledge. (Glas, k. in Lang, P. (ed.), 2013: p. 266)

In previous decades, which is before the wide use of internet, information gathering or acquiring a “universal cultural education” was one among many objectives for the

students. Today this does not seem to be the case as with one “click” we have access to virtual libraries and to a literally infinite number of books. Perhaps this is the greatest difficulty of all, the dependence on technology for our every move, and now even for our thinking. This is not a cultural, but a global educational deficiency. This entails that using technology today is part of our students’ lifestyle and a customary element of their lives. It is habitual these days of digital age to have students confound references from different contexts. One student, when asked during an interview if he knew who “La Place Audin” was named after, answered: “Absolutely, it’s for the father of Thor, a Marvel character from the Celts.” Teaching them the issues of confusions or misinterpretations due to intercultural discrepancies goes through the author’s context, the foreign cultural references or symbols present in the literary text, the literary theorists with their own code of analysis, as well as the overflow of digitalized sources.

1.2.2. Is Literature Teaching the Teaching of Literature per se?

As abovementioned, literature like many others fields in education is instrumentalized to serve whatever educational objective was agreed upon, and not for the beauty of the art. Hence, in order to tame literary works these are often used to teach language and culture, both complexifying and even contradicting the educational principles. The first obvious obstacle in the EFL classroom when dealing with literary texts is the complexity and creativity of the language use, and although this is acknowledged, it is still common to find literature excerpts being used to teach grammar or syntax.

1.2.2.1. Language Teaching

Language teaching occurs through a training in the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. At the University of Algiers, there is a module for each skill in the curriculum for every year of the three-year 'licence' program. Literary excerpts are regularly presented to the students for language and vocabulary acquisition, although this may create more confusion for the students than help them to reach proper language acquisition. In the language classroom, we usually ignore those sections that are problematic and where the author's pen has decided to run wild. In class, we will focus on the rigorously accurate passages. Couldry (2000) explains it as being simply "an artificial concentration on those parts of the textual field where the semiotic system seems most plausible..." (Couldry, 2000: p75). For him, this is not only giving a wrong idea of what literature stands for, but also hiding its real purpose: entertaining us with a creative language use through word games or thought driving with the hidden / projected meaning through a riddled language.

For Schogt, H. G. (1988) it is the complexity of meanings given to the words in a literary work, which makes it impossible to decode it unequivocally but on the contrary, allows a variety of interpretations. The "network of hidden cross-references" added to the non-standardized use of language bringing the focus upon "the special effects of meaning" specific to literary devices demonstrate of a great discrepancy between the linguistic sign and the lack of interpretative code. He explains as follows: "...the linguistic code is based on a shared convention, while the hypersemanticized code is more like a riddle that has to be solved without any means of verifying that the solution is the correct one." (Schogt, H.

G., 1988: p.68). There is no authoritative interpretation to abide by, but a variety of points of view with the reception and openness of the reader to be considered. Critical literacy facilitates the critical awareness about the role of language in pacing, maintaining, and changing social relations and power. Montgomery et al (1992:138) adds:

The opening sentence of *Pride and Prejudice* implies that some misguided people do believe that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife. Further reading of the novel reveals that quite a lot of the characters in it believe exactly this. But it is precisely these characters who are criticized and made fun of in the novel. (Montgomery et al, 1992:138)

Through literature, we can help the reader to invest into deeper thinking about society; however, Byram (2013:19) argues that when this intellectual analysis takes place in a foreign language-learning environment, a close attention ought to be given to cultural differences and cues. The cultural construction of a text can be manipulative to EFL students who do not know or are not yet aware of the implicit messages conveyed by that text. Language is then the vehicle of its culture, one cannot choose to use it and ignore its cultural dimension, particularly in a literary text where the symbolic of each word is carefully placed by the author. Words have different levels of meaning and the manipulation of those words within a particular language structure can mislead the unknowing reader. Let us consider the opening lines of *Paradise Lost* where if the reader is not notified, may think it to deal with a plague or a poison:

“Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,”

Milton (1667)

This seventeenth century epic poem by the English poet John Milton was greatly inspired by the Genesis. As it is overflowing with religious references, it becomes difficult to understand for someone who has little or no knowledge of Christianity. Montgomery et al (1992) state that grammar structure and combined epic or religious references likewise pose a problem for the students who are modern readers. Also, the cultural elements present in literary texts offer a greater difficulty as issues in understanding are hidden and the reader who comes with his own native cultural background is biased. Glas in Lang (2013) stipulates that although target culture is difficult, it remains nonetheless necessary. Byram (2012) recognizes the importance of empathy, adaptability, flexibility, sensitivity, and criticality among other characteristics of Intercultural Competence.

1.2.2.2. Culture Teaching

Language acquisition is not the only teaching objective hidden behind the presentation of literary works in the language classrooms. There has always been a tendency to teach cultural information through literary works in foreign language classes. Literary texts are given to students to become more familiar with the lifestyle, customs and the like of the community speaking the target language. The dangerous outcome of such a practice is to rely on fictional prose to uncover real sociological or historical data. Can arts and science be thus mingled? For Widdowson (1970), any academic should consider such a procedure unreliable, even though pedagogical custom, in England and abroad, continues to use this approach repeatedly.

The cultural approach leads to a treatment of literature as a source of facts. It might be worth pointing out, in passing, that it also tends to lead to a conception of

literature as a chronological sequence. Most literature courses at Universities begin in the distant past (Beowulf, Chaucer and Shakespeare being favourite starting points) and advance towards the present through every major 'period' on the way, usually stopping well short of writing which could reasonably be regarded as contemporary. (Widdowson, 1970: p.79)

This practice presents various cultural intricacies; literature teaching cannot be culture teaching. This dichotomy is problematic for the purpose of literature study: which is not a fruitful connection with other languages, cultures and eventually people. Teaching cultural awareness is not the same as teaching culture through literature. Literature study shows that the literary works of a nation are representative of a people's pride, or feeling of unity as a people etc... This is not the same as taking those works to understand the customs and ways of thinking of a community. Unfortunately, this is what is happening in literature study classes (Fasla: 2009). In addition, we must take into account the cultural context from which come the students; they are teenagers with teenager-related interests, they are digital, reading is not their activity of choice. The issue here is context-related; both the context the text was written in, and the context the reader is reading from: and that means time and place! Consequently, the following is a dangerous shortcut. Topuzova, K. in Byram, M., Nichols, A. & Stevens, D. (2001: p.255) explains:

It is generally accepted that literature is a reflection of society's views, values and beliefs: a reflection of the social, political, cultural development of any society. It reveals the people's ideals and dreams in the most creative and imaginative way. (Topuzova, K. in Byram, M., Nichols, A. & Stevens, D., 2001: p.255)

Knowing others, knowing ourselves, and most importantly validating our point of view as being as important as any other worldview, these are key elements to go on board

of an academically established literary study. In this respect, I think we should be highly cautious with the above lines from Byram. Moreover, cross-cultural reading comprehension takes into consideration the native cultural background knowledge of the reader, the target cultural knowledge of the intended reader and the literary critic who voices the supposedly correct/ intended message originally issued by the author. Then, the following quote from Johnson-Roullier shows precisely that focus is key. In this context, he explains:

...a very important shift in the way in which the object of literary study is perceived, as those involved in teaching. We deal with culture rather than with literary works per se. (Johnson-Roullier, 2000: 8)

Our research does not make the appraisal of cultural studies above another approach to literature, on the contrary. The literary method chosen is the decision of literature teachers and their respective boards in their departments. Our object here is that literature study is to be exclusively dealt with in literature study class, and its didactics implemented with care according to the objectives of the teaching staff as a whole. Widdowson (1970) already pointed out an academically invalid practice that is systematic in all literature classes, not limiting itself to EFL learning spheres only. What is important to consider in a cross-cultural reading activity is not only the native cultural background knowledge the students come into class with, but also the target cultural background knowledge present in the text. The dialogue between the two is what creates intercultural communication. The issue is whether this is tackled in the EFL classroom or not. Traditionally, the correct / expected answer by the teacher is the one that uncovers the hidden meaning suggested by

the text and ignoring the viewpoint from which a foreign student would draw his / her understanding of the text. In this respect, we agree with Bensemmane (2006, 88) who states:

There are also specific cultural features in texts which need to be carefully examined. They refer us to contexts, worldviews expressed by writers that are important for any correct hermeneutic treatment. As noted in reference to Joyce's 'Eveline', and given our students' Arab-Moslem background, it is important to take account of the cultural traits of society, which bear on the content of a literary work. It is opposite to understand how some of them are referred to in the writers' images and allusions to fully appreciate their ideas or feelings regarding the mores, customs, and ethics of their respective societies. An exercise in cross-cultural examination is thus involved, and to be encouraged. (Bensemmane, 2006: 88)*

Thus, we bring about the necessity of interdisciplinarity within literature study. There are different literary movements, different readers, personal interpretations, as well as an academic proficiency that requires a certain jargon and know-how to be equipped with, instead of static barriers or listening to the all-knowing teacher. There is a need for a didactics of literature study with respect to the different perspectives that exist and that can shed different lights on any given literary work. The following figure in Widdowson (1975) presents the different disciplines intertwined in the preparation for literature study:

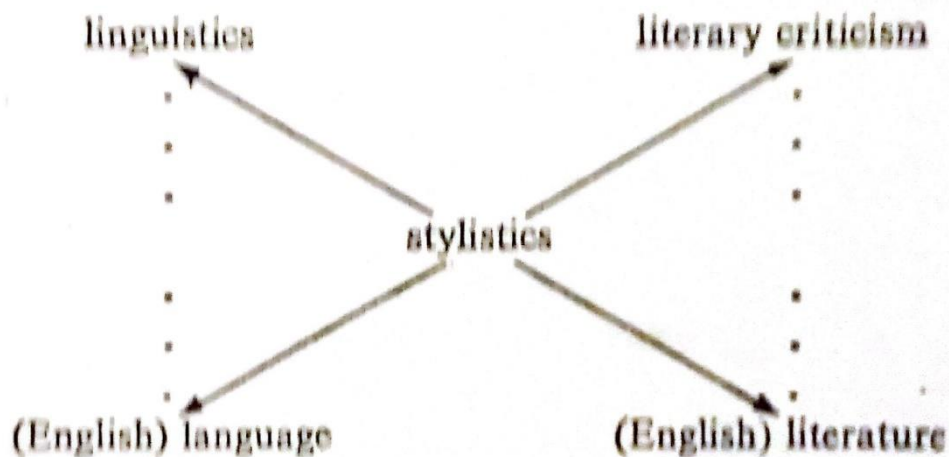


Fig 1.4. Stylistics Relating Disciplines and Subjects

1.2.3. Literature Study Requirements

We are in modern times where the present is valued, social media and the YOLO principle (You Only Live Once) are no more a trend, but the norm. We are witnessing the rejection of common beliefs, values and principles. Our students are not acquainted with the concept of foreign cultural heritage as they ignore their own cultural heritage, and didactic tools need to be developed to reconnect them to this realm both in their native and foreign language acquisition processes.

1.2.3.1. Teaching Literature Objectives

Literature is presented to students who read a text and try to make meaning out of it by acquiring missing or hidden information with the help of their teacher. “The tendency has generally been to see schemata as an individual’s cognitive representations of reality...” (Byram, p. x: 2017) However, the interpretation process is unstable, ever changing negotiations with contextual. Schematic adaptation from the preconceived ideas to new thought-provoking information. This does not fit in to the conventional approach to the study of reading comprehension. For Byram (2017) our memory causes us to focus on certain aspects when we have decided to be oblivious of the others. Then a complete work can change significance due to the angle o focus chosen by the reader, hence the power of identity and paradigm shift. Byram (2017, p. xi) adds:

“Effective reading may depend on deciding on what parts of a text not to pay attention to. A major failing of traditional reading ... since students are typically not primed with a purpose they have no basis for discriminating what is significant and so their understanding is confined at a superficial level.” (Byram, 2017: p. xi)

If we consider Jane Austin's irony and acute observation of one's society and we compare it with today's Bridget Jones' Diary, where the pleasures of life and a nosiness on her everyday activities are the only interests superficially stated, we come to a dreadful conclusion: reading here can lead to no analysis or intellectual activity. Neither does it allow us to reach growth, questioning, and artistic awe. Students can thus be comforted in the primary tendency to gossip over plots with a judgmental eye rather than an expert observation of a social phenomenon. Mowitt (1997:55 (ed.) Kumar) adds:

“When we talk about literary pedagogy we have to begin by acknowledging the sociohistorical circumstances under which the question – how should literature be taught? – arises. Prior to any meaningful response to this question must come the further questions – what is the teaching of literature for? What aim does such teaching have?” Mowitt (1997:55 (ed.) Kumar)

All students alike can have interesting interpretations to offer in class; the one essential condition concerns the tools they will be taught in order to analyze the literary works. EFL literature students who have the necessary background knowledge are able to deal with English literature adequately as they can immediately identify cultural referents present in the texts. Hence, the challenge for the Algerian EFL students seems to be to connect with the Western stories they read about. Olson (1994, p.135) declares:

The central achievement in reading texts critically is a new consciousness of what a text could have meant or could mean to a putative reader. Readers frequently fail to consider how texts could be understood or misunderstood by readers other than themselves. (Olson, 1994:135)

Henceforth, equipping our students with the necessary analytical methods and tools is mandatory if our objective is to have them analyze freely and accurately works of art, philosophies, ideologies and the like. When analyzing a text, I know it is my personal understanding and that I am entitled to it, and I should be, as should our students of theirs. Others construct other interpretations that are very different of mine.

1.2.3.2. Literature Study Teaching and Assessing Methods

For this reason, the teacher's methodology and role in teaching foreign literature is of utmost importance. Sometimes teachers would tend to let the students give original interpretations led by their own knowledge of the world, overlooking the original or intended meaning. As a result, in the absence of a clear-cut method for foreign literature study, false and sometimes dangerous interpretations occur.

In language classes, teachers and textbooks usually give content schemata-that is, situational context of utterance, referential knowledge concerning the author, the theme and its social and cultural value. (Kramsch, 1993: p. 125)

It has always been and still is the responsibility of the teacher who guides the students, from his native cultural viewpoint to the foreign lenses through which a literary text is traditionally examined. For Carter and Long (1990) this tradition has lasted too long and literature should be examined under new standards without conditioning or expected correct answers. They insist on clarifying which competencies students need locally and abroad. For McCarter and Jakes (2009), the difference in competencies is necessarily cultural and foreign students should be familiarized with analyzing techniques they had

never used before. The critical thinking skill for instance, missing in countries where rote learning is a tradition ought to be shown to foreign students especially. They say:

Analysing a reading text or presenting an analysis of a situation may be skills that are not just unfamiliar, but totally alien to your students... For some students up until now, critical thinking may have involved little more than giving answers to questions, without any attempt at going through the process of analyzing and arriving at some kind of judgment or conclusion... It is dangerous to stereotype students from different cultural backgrounds, but it is equally dangerous to assume that there are no differences. (McCarter and Jakes, 2009: page number missing)

Evaluating competencies following the students' origins is a dangerous shortcut we do not agree with. American students do not less plagiarize their teachers' notes than Algerian students do; the issue is one of inadequacy in pedagogy and pedagogical objectives rather than a matter of culture foreignism. Graff (1997) draws an interesting portrait of American students he interviewed. When a teacher insisted on referring to reader-response theory in class, or was clearly a feminist advocate, students would follow blindfolded, hoping that it would grant them a high mark. We can note that although these students were not subjected to a rote learning tradition, similarly to their Algerian counterparts (Kermezli, 2018), they still prefer to imitate their teachers' analyses as they wish to please them by valuing their personal viewpoints.

Wallace (2003) claims that: "the manner in which the principles and purposes of critical reading are pedagogised in practice depends on the level and circumstances of the learners involved" (p. 43). The complexity of literary study and of its teaching cause the University students, wherever they are, to misjudge their own analytical skills. Also, reading comprehension scaffolding and testing formats are two concrete elements of the

literature class that need to be given close attention to for the purpose of literary study. The issue according to Probst in Karolides (1999) is the test format. He asserts that the argumentative essay being valued or even the only form tolerated, limits the learning outcome of the students. He even goes further by saying that any insights on the learners' perceptions are lost with the essay.

1.2.3.3. Guidelines to Critical Thinking

When students are provided with guidelines about the original context of the literary work at stake instead of the 'typical correct interpretation' that would be exposed by teachers in the literature classroom, the possibility for thinking about what is interesting artistically and intellectually becomes the primary object of discussion in the classroom. For Maley (1998), there is a framework or set of questions, that can be used for any text to engage in its analysis. He says:

“For any text, it is possible to examine:

- What it contains: language features, information, emotions, as well as what associations and personal feelings it arouses;
- How it works: repetition, rhyme, rhythm, metaphor, parallelism;
- Who wrote it, and who it was addressed to;
- When/where it was written: background information on the sociocultural and personal context against which it was written;
- Why it was written; why certain choices were made (e.g. why a poem not a pamphlet? Why this word and not that? Why the omission of some information?)

(Maley, 1998: 184)

From a pedagogical viewpoint, specific boundaries are to be identified for the teaching of literature. Hence, the fear expressed by certain critics as to loading a text analysis with

emotional responses from the students cannot be overlooked. Scholars today consider that students are not sufficiently informed of what the original context was, who the intended readers were, or why such a text was written in the first place. The importance of critical thinking as a necessary cognitive process for analyzing, and synthesizing a piece of literary texts is asserted when the various steps for reading literature involve so many parameters.

McCarter Jakes (2009:77) state:

In simple terms, critical thinking is the cognitive process involved in evaluating or analysis statement, a sequence of statements, a paragraph, a whole chapter or a whole book. (McCarter & Jakes, 2009: 77)

Consequently, analyzing closely a text requires an important amount of preparation in the language structure; how it was reshaped by any given author, the context of its writing and its peculiarities. Students also need guidelines about the different angles or currents of thought a text can be analyzed from. Following the above quote, the effort to scaffold or supervise the students' readings and ability to think about their readings is the most important task within the literature classroom as earlier at every level of undergraduation. Thus, scaffolding reading comprehension and all its intricacies needs to be emphasized in the EFL classroom. In spite of the above, it is first crucial to identify the objectives behind teaching literature before we develop its pedagogy. According to Klarer:

However, the real purpose of the enterprise can only too easily be forgotten in the face of ever-growing public concern with test results and grades, targets and mission statements. If teachers go on wanting to teach despite this, it is because their students still approach literature with fresh and personal excitement and still wrestle ambitiously with the problems of self-expression. (Klarer. M., 1999:02)

1.2.3.4. Literature and Academic Proficiency

At the University level, it is expected of students to reach a higher maturity in seeing the complex matters of the world. Artistic literary works teach them that different peoples in various different issues and circumstances are portrayed with the most blurred manner to challenge their customary or even sometimes opinionated analyses. Critical thinking is a fundamental asset for these intellectuals to be, not only for academic challenges but also for humanistic goals. For Pérez, D. and Javier, F., (2013: 09), critical thinking is the most valuable outcome for the students as it makes them autonomous thinkers. They explain:

One of the most important functions of university education is to educate responsible and critical citizens who are able to think by themselves and adopt their own positions with regard to the problems which affect a world which is anything but fair. In this sense, the promotion of critical thinking among students should always be one of the main goals of any university teacher. (Pérez, D. and Javier, F., 2013: 09)

There is a big turmoil that students face when they are asked to express their ideas or to present what, according to them, a literary work has to offer to the world in terms of beauty, of descriptions of the human weaknesses and the message the author wishes to share etc... For Bensemmane (2006: 86) it is almost impossible for them not to turn to ready-made material, to repeat the teachers' own interpretations, or even to plagiarize published critics. The problem, he explains, is not the memorizing aspect, but the absence of the critical thinking skill. Hence, the need for scaffolding reading comprehension and freedom from a rote learning habit. In an age where cultures are evaluated and compared instead of being replenishing and experiences for knowing more about each other, being informed

about cultural information that is hidden within the lines of a literary work is all the more crucial. For Klarer (1999:20) TCBK is a necessary condition for any level of understanding.

He says:

In order to track down the complex answers to the simple questions raised by your critical reading, you may need to find out about James I's interest in witchcraft, or seventeenth-century notions of geography and astronomy, or the music of Ravel and Debussy (in which case reading will need to be supplemented by listening)

(Klarer, M., 1999:20)

The above quote also brings to our attention how enriching and positive the search for TCBK can be for EFL students. Searching for historical features that transpire in artistic works or listening to music that is being referred to in a text, will not only help EFL learners to improve their academic literacy, but is also a thought provoking and enjoyable.

1.2.4. Literature at the University

The teaching of literature is then endowed with great power for arising consciences, training free minds and sensitizing the youth to the beauty of arts. At any rate, a precise thinking as to the outcome is necessary for establishing an appropriate pedagogy. Additionally, we need to acknowledge that there are different interpretations for different viewpoints worldwide accompanying the dimension of the cultural background knowledge, without forgetting the addition of theories of interpretation and literary criticism taught in literature class and their complicating effect on literature study.

1.2.4.1. Theories of interpretation in the Literature Classroom

Literature studying involves several methodological intricacies when brought to the classroom. The theories of interpretation alone are a wide section to be dealt with, and because of the pedagogical constraints known to any learning situation, guidelines for both students and teachers are more than needed. For Freire (2000), literature study needs to bring forward debates between literary criticism, the act of analyzing and evaluating literary works, and literature theory, which investigates the dynamics of textuality and author intention in order to guide better the learners, all the learners, into the realms of interpretation. For him, it is mandatory to establish what literature reception really involves. Hence, the lack of methodological organization in the teaching of literary theory as well as literary movements poses a real concrete pedagogically sound issue to literature teaching. Bernstein (1995: 378) states:

In theory, the proliferation of frames of interpretation (feminist, psychoanalytic, grammatologic, economic, sociologic, Romantic, historical, New Critical, reader-response, canonic, periodic) is a positive development...The normalizing tendency, resisted by some of the most resourceful practitioners of cultural studies, is to elect one interpretive mode and apply it, cookie-cutter-like, to any given phenomenon. (Bernstein, 1995: 378)

As there are numerous literary theories to abide by in text analysis, it is difficult to be able to select accurate ones, to diversify their presentation in class, and to find the correct timing to teach them next to characterization or plot description. Once one theory is selected, it becomes the rule. The complexity of the matter keeps adding up, if we consider intertextuality for instance, according to Montgomery et al (1992) it needs to be taken into consideration also. They say:

Reading a literary or other cultural text involves seeing possible significance in how it interacts with earlier texts. By choosing the title *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner seems to invite readers to compare the events and themes of his novel with Macbeth's nihilistic despair. (Montgomery et al, 1992: 164)

If reading is an issue for the new generations, reading about reading is even more complicated. Not only does the plot of the novel abovementioned allow the reader to be entertained by a series of tumultuous events and characters all the more colorful, but it also is a pretext to a closer examination of a society and its flaws. Missing the connection with previous works referred to, erases an entire dimension of comprehension. Additionally, feminist theory sheds light to issues that would otherwise remain unexploited. The example of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, which is often acclaimed for its unambiguous criticism of nineteenth century English society, is also criticized from a feminist perspective for keeping in the dark several truths about women rights. Philips, B in Javier (2013) says:

Feminist theory denounces the fact that Elisabeth Bennett lives in a world that is far more troublesome for women than it allows to transpire. The entire plot of the story is built on the principle that Elisabeth is not suitable for Darcy and cannot marry him. The author also insists that it is well against the odds that Elisabeth marries him and lives happily ever after. It is Jane Austen's fairytale addition to not only criticize what is, but to dream of what could be as well. (Philips, B in Javier, 2013:129)

EFL students get puzzled and do not know how to approach such thematic complexity when there are many literary standards of analysis to become educated in. If we consider the reader-response theory, which is encouraged in the classroom as it acknowledges the reader's essential role in meaning creation during the reading process as opposed to text-based theory, is severely criticized. The viewed danger of reader-response

by its opponents is to let the students of a foreign background present their uninformed opinions and to create a situation or misunderstanding. Philips in Javier (2013: 129) says: "...the reader never actually learns anything or, perhaps worse, actually reinforces his or her prejudices." Philips in Javier (2013: 129) He goes even further "...male writers tend to celebrate the exploitation of mother earth, while female writers are more likely to lament it..." (2013: 129) This kind of statement is what really hurts the gender-teaching situation. The abovementioned shows how suspicious intellectuals are of people's reasoning and critical thinking capability, assuming that there are differences between women and men. Rather than equipping students with the tools to understand, we expect them to be unable to understand when left with their free will. This means that we are not able to grow out of our stereotyped roles and this is dangerous as literature class is where debates need to occur. With discussion comes the awareness of issues in society as well as in the academic sphere itself.

1.2.4.2. Culture Teaching in the Literature Classroom

The question is how concepts are focused upon during the students' reading of foreign literature, not solely, how they uncover the references present in the text. These references are necessarily culture-bound and culture-specific and can alter one's attention from the interpretive mode. In the above-mentioned example of Joyce's 'Eveline', it is not so much about an Irish girl's desire to live freely, but about the Algerian student reading about it and how he or she responds emotionally to the concept of fear of action or fear of fate for instance. The inter connection between the theme analyzed and the cultural form it

was shaped into is of significance. Teachers guide students through reaching out to otherness and give them motivation to be inspired. For Glas, k. in Lang, P. (ed.) (2013: p. 266) hegemonic ways of dealing with culture is an issue, the danger according to her is the students' estrangement from their own native cultural legacy. She refers to the importance of the "self" identity while communicating with the other. She says:

...if teachers tend to (one-dimensionally) present English-speaking cultures as models to be followed so that their students can "learn from these" to "overcome" some supposed cultural "deficiency", this will just lead to alienation and is not beneficial for raising motivation levels in their students. (Glas, k. in Lang, P. (ed.), 2013: p. 266)

Here we understand that Western model searching is the choice EFL teachers rely on to compensate for a cultural "deficiency" they judge their students suffer from. For Glas (2013: pp. 266-267) both cultures need to be presented to the students in the EFL classroom, if we wish to successfully bridge the gap between the two. Teachers ought to understand the silences, she adds:

"A reader-response approach to reading must take into account the cultural relativity of the reader...it is precisely those moments of discrepancy between the culturally intended reader and the culturally foreign reader that the language teacher should value the most." Kramersch (1993: p. 128)

According to Kramersch, instead of correcting their students' misunderstandings, the teacher should explain that it is a question of positioning, and that different readings can be viewed under different circumstances. The foreign language learner needs the background knowledge. The real question is not how much or when to provide the cultural background knowledge but rather how to reach acceptance for such cultural knowledge. Some literature

teachers say that providing background knowledge before reading the text is necessary for the students to know what to expect in a text and to be able to predict meanings that are hidden within that text. Others claim that giving some schemata progressively and throughout the reading process will be more useful to the students (Fasla: 2009). For Kramersch, they are being imprisoned in the top-down & bottom-up dichotomy. The University is the place where this process of acceptance / rejection needs to be highlighted or at least dealt with.

1.2.4.3. The University: a Decisive Cultural Platform

If we take for instance *Heart of Darkness*, one of the most famous novels in English literature written by Conrad, J. (1899) we read that Africans are chained together, on the ground, and silent. There is no heroic outburst, no rebellion; they are powerless, and victimized. From a Western point of view, the novel is about the disavowal of imperialism and its hypocrisy. For EFL readers such as our students, they are reading about how their people were violated and more importantly, they are made to appear weak. We can hardly expect them to be drawn towards literary works, which transmit the power exerted by the Western forces on their ancestors as they may unquestionably feel muted, restless, and uncomfortable during the reading process (Achebe: 2002). For Byram, cultural discrepancies can be solved through the different steps any learner undertakes and integrate the necessary missing information. These cultural aspects or values exchanged while understanding a foreign text or in a discussion can be progressively learned in his model of cultural understanding. It is as follows (Byram: p.21, 2017):

Model of Cultural Understanding

Level 0. Erratic perception or omission of cultural aspects.

*“indeterminacy of meaning” things remain incomprehensible for the learner at this stage.

Level 1. Perception / Identification of cultural differences. Access to Levels 2, 3, 4, and 5.

*Difference is exciting and attractive, but at the same time it can be difficult in practice and contestable in theory.

Level 2. Identification of own values and ideas. Identification of the cultural assumptions behind one’s own culture (insider’s perspective).

*The identification of others’ stereotypes leads to awareness of oneself and one’s cultural reality.

Level 3. Perception of the cultural C2 from one’s own frame of reference (C1) (outsider perspective). Stereotyped views of the cultural C2.

*Openness to others’ beliefs & behaviours and the willingness to suspend disbelief and judgment.

Level 4. Perception of the cultural C2 from the frame of reference of members of culture C2 (insider perspective).

*The values & behaviours of a given culture are interpreted in the light of their cultural norms.

Level 5. Perception of the cultural C1 from the perspective of cultural C2 (outsider perspective).

*The validity of the cultural C2 is acknowledged & appreciated in its own terms.

(Byram: p.21, 2017)

The above model presents six levels for an optimal cultural understanding. We start at level 0, where there is no knowledge of the target culture and information remains incomprehensible for the learner. At level 1 we are at the threshold of comprehension. Byram explains that perceiving cultural differences and identifying cultural referents in a text for instance, are beginners’ steps to cultural acquisition. Level 2 is, what we consider the missing element in the EFL literature class, and that we wish to confirm within our

investigation process, identifying one's native cultural background and the symbols behind it in order to distance ourselves from our native perception and our customary thinking patterns. Level 3 is the level we know to be our EFL students' habitual way of looking into EFL literary works and that is through their native point of view. Level 4 is the required exercise that our literature teachers aim to reach with their students; to identify TC and to analyze EFL works with the intended / correct meaning as the end result. The final level allows a full assimilation of the TC allowing native culture to be seen from the foreign lenses of TC. This model is illustrative of the cultural acquisition process with the acculturation in the puzzlement phase, the paradigm shift that follows and finally the TC validation of the outsider's perspective that leads to feeling empathy for otherness.

Nonetheless in literature study, from the EFL literature classroom to the dominant interpretive theories, rarely are we brought to view cultural understanding as a communication between the reader's native culture and the target culture of the text in hand (Glas in Lang: 2013). If we take the example of *Heart of Darkness* and the main themes in the novel, we realize that the dichotomy of the civilized against the savages is exclusively oriented toward the White man and his demons, not the Black men nor any women for that matter. White man only! Marlow and Kurtz are opposed as two contradictory images of the Western civilized man and their journeys in Africa symbolize the loss of morality landmarks when one is away from Western civilization (the only existing civilization surrounded by a world of exotic and wild primitives) and its polished sophisticated members of society. This Western-centered view of the world has left little space for the

post-colonized developing countries to truly impose themselves, either artistically or academically. A lack of balance that the new generations are responsible to restore (Achebe in Bacon, 2000: p.02). Bacon puts it more exactly in these terms:

Achebe depicts his gradual realization that *Mister Johnson* was just one in a long line of books written by Westerners that presented Africans to the world in a way that Africans didn't agree with or recognize, and he examines the "process of 're-storying' peoples who had been knocked silent by all kinds of dispossession." He ends with a hope for the twenty-first century—that this "re-storying" will continue and will eventually result in a "balance of stories among the world's peoples." (Bacon, K. 2000: 02)

For Kermezli (2018, p.1) it is a matter of protecting one's culture and values against the colonial discourse and warns us against mimicry. He says:

“...cultural protectionism... is not reducible to refusing other cultures; its task consists rather in preserving one's identity, and in avoiding loss within the hegemonic waves of the superpower's ideological onslaught. Culture then becomes the shield with which ideology is pushed off” Kermezli (2018, p.1)

The colonial discourse is contradictory; it is simultaneously humanist and Christian but disciplinary, denying property to the colonized, and having no tolerance for other faiths that are branded as heathen. Cultural protectionism rejects in that sense any form of mimicry, or the fascination the colonized has for the colonizer with the desire to imitate him. This is also denounced in postcolonial studies as unsettling. For. Bhabha, H. K. “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable 'Other', as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha, 1994: 122). This strongly retells the theory by Fanon that the colonizer and colonized are opposed by violence. For Fanon black people should identify as human beings first and not as being black. Students need to

hear these dissonant voices being as important as the mainstream interpretations presented in any literature class curriculum, validating in the long run their authentic feelings making literature study a stimulating and insightful venture.

Conclusion

Without TCBK understanding or meaning creation is impossible. The teaching of literature, particularly a foreign one, has always been intertwined with the teaching of culture, jeopardizing both their roles as well as the objectives allotted to them in the intellectual and artistic spheres in society. The canon and its academic requirements brings about discrepancies in literature study that have consequences far beyond the literature classroom. Couldry (2000) carries forward the lack of clarity as to how to implement such cultural awareness teachings or introductions to learners when Freire, P. (1998) declares that cultural awareness and an adequate pedagogy needs to be allotted to the EFL teachers instead.

Part Three: Cultural Awareness in Literature Teaching

Introduction

All human beings are biased, seeking to impose their culture as it implies validating their own identities and their value as citizens of the world. ‘Correct thinking’ or the ‘conscientization’ of learning, as Freire, P. (1998) puts it, becomes the only requirement. One must not be blurred by certainties and know that anything learned can be unlearned in an ever changing manner. The objective behind University teaching is to train students to become independent learners. Accordingly, these critical thinkers to be are continuously exposed to texts that challenge their view of the world and they are encouraged throughout their academic path to express personal opinions that fit higher order intellectual norms; they must validate their arguments with proof from the text at hand for instance. Hence, they should master foreign cultural landmarks, know how to identify genres and their importance for different periods. According to Bhabha, H. K. (source) ‘different cultures’, is not the issue, it is the ‘*differentiation*’ in colonial prism, or the translation of authority causing the other to feel undervalued or denigrated which remains problematic. We consider in this work that this is particularly hurtful for more novice readers such as our EFL students.

1.3.1. Global Thinking: From a Native to a Target Perspective

EFL literature is about an intercultural setting, learners and EFL texts. Hence, intercultural reading practices involve innovative methods of interpretation. Considering

our EFL environment, reaching out to otherness from the students' native background perspective before the foreign context of the target language, will allow EFL students to live a harmonious learning experience. Students would be given a voice and not feel rejected and as a result will be able to open their minds to other realities and ideas even if these are very divergent to what they initially know.

1.3.1.1. Defining Intercultural Reading

Cross-cultural reading is an encounter of two or more cultures, ways of seeing things, different sets of values etc... the quiet discussion that takes place between the author and the reader, intended or not, is to discover who we are in relation to one another. If literatures depict their societies to beautify them or to restore them in their truths, it is the freedom of the reader to identify himself with a national or foreign perspective. This is an issue in literature teaching when literature, an artistic work meant to touch the hearts, is contested in its very core. Reaching out to otherness is to beautify individuals who dialogue, not unify or mould one way of thinking for all. Yebra, J. M. (2013: 167) says:

When I make reference to the political and ethical undertones as well as the responsibility of other literatures, or literatures of others, by others or for others, I am necessarily assuming a cultural perspective...concepts such as subjectivity (which implies 'the other'), deeply embedded in Liberal Humanism, are determined and ascribed culturally. (Yebra, J. M., 2013: 167)

If we are concerned with preserving the original meaning of the text, it is at the expense of the students' native standards; standards from which he / she views the world. If our desire is to render faithfully the learners' understanding whatever that may be

representative of, it is the entire context from which the text was created that we are ignoring. For Couldry (2000) a lack of balance between the knowledge a reader brings to the text and the knowledge originally implemented within the text is a cultural issue connected with empowerment as well as control. In fact, affecting any one of the two elements, the reader or the text, within the reading comprehension process would be prejudicial to the whole reading process. In order to move from critical thinking proficiency to intercultural communicative competence, the entirety of the teachers' role and how they view their mission as transmitters of knowledge and assistants to the intellectual growth of their students lies in the fact that readers can identify to a context that is at first sight foreign to them. The beauty of this experience of cross-cultural communication is to create a link where traditionally there was none. For Frigols, Marsh, and Mehisto (2008: 154) understanding is an accommodative social process. They explain:

“Since meaning is co-constructed through a social process, critical thinking is also tied to social processes. The understandings we reach and the solutions to problems we propose need to match on some level with the understanding of others. At the very least, others have to be prepared to accommodate our views.” (Frigols, Marsh, and Mehisto, 2008: 154)

The necessity of restoring any voice in its own right is becoming more apparent at this time. Different readers from different regions of the world appropriate themselves a text that originally did not relate or was not meant to relate neither to their context nor to their issues. For Glas in Lang (2013: p.267) students have the need to express their own reality. She states what follows:

...a deeper reflection of what cultural identity means in certain contexts, and if the way in which cultural comparisons and contrasts are dealt with helps students develop empathy...it might empower students by encouraging them to value their own viewpoint...the danger is the thinness of the line between empowerment and cultural chauvinism, or hostility against other cultures. Glas in Lang (2013: p.267)

At the core of the learning process, we have a learner. If this learner is not given consideration, chances are big that he will turn away from his task and learn nothing. Similarly, what of a foreign reader of English literature who is facing a text originally written for White men? Our reader can be any person: a woman, a Black man, or a Buddhist. If the teacher only presents those arguments addressed to the understanding of that focused population, would they be silenced because of their differences? Allowing our students to challenge the authors' theses from their own standards and not simply review the texts they study from the official/ traditional standards is the difficulty of our teaching management. For Freire, we need to free learning from the oppression of the West that silences the minority groups. Considering the Algerian context, the main obstacle in EFL knowledge and skills acquisition, is the students' rote learning history. Students have a tendency to imitate the ideas of others by restatements or summaries, instead of making use of analysis, or criticism (Hellal: 1988). Concretely, students neither know what to do of critics nor of the words from the novel. This has always been, and still is today, restrictive and impedes them in developing their critical and creative abilities. It is part of a problem of cultural identity!

1.3.1.2. Critical Reading or Thinking Freely

Teachers need to encourage divergent opinions in view of enriching the discussion within the classroom. Hence the following statement by Montgomery et al (1992: 32): “There is also another social context that is relevant, for which artificial lists seem less urgently needed: the context in which the text is now being read.” Montgomery et al (1992: 32)

Critical reading involves critiquing not just the logic, argument or sentiments expressed in texts but the ideological assumptions underpinning them. (Wallace, 2003, p. 42)

Being the implied/ intended reader, i.e. the population expected to appreciate a given author has become today, an obsolete pattern. Women for example, have for long read works written by men for men, colonized peoples have also indisputably been reading Western ideas and concepts that never served them in their principles and values nor in their best worldly interests. In fine, the negating of the richness brought out by cultural differences; of a complementarity in gender perspective, and of a critical analysis by the oppressed of the colonial ideologies, has caused these forgotten opinions to resurface. Consequently, the denial to validate ‘the other’s sufferings has brought them to resist and revisit the reading practice, its analysis, and even thinking as a whole. Freire joins Bloom in the sense (1998: p. 37) that all people have a capacity to be critical and this can be taught to them, if brought to them smoothly, bridging the gap from pure experience of life observations for instance to the methodological procedure demanded in an academic scholarly environment. Hence, the learning process creates a continuity between the two instead of a rupture. In this context, Freire (1998) describes the subsequent step as follows:

This further stage, which is a continuity rather than a rupture, happens when ingenuous curiosity, while remaining curious, becomes capable of self-criticism. In criticizing itself, ingenuous curiosity becomes “epistemological curiosity”, as through greater methodological exactitude it appropriates the object of its knowing. (Freire, 1998: p.?)

The resisting reader comes from a place where they were denied a voice. Their viewpoint was considered weak, non-academic, or even trivial. For Freire, P. (1998) even the most modest learners have something of importance to teach their teachers, a different perspective that is highly in touch with reality, he considers we need to respect what students know, instead of swiping what they know in favor of what we wish to teach them.

Critical reading does not privilege an author’s communicative intent but is concerned with effect. The aim is not to converge with the author, but to disrupt or challenge the schemas called up by the text; the author is not the sole or ultimate arbitrator of a text’s meaning. This is not to take, however, a totally open, relativist position, one that assumes that every interpretation is as good as another. (Wallace, 2003, p. 42)

There is resistance in reading critically one does not inertly accept the established or official interpretation that is spread out by critics or by teachers in their literature classes. To begin with, there are different possibilities or hypotheses as to what a work means. Secondly, there are as many versions on interpretation as there are students in the classroom; all to which the teacher can choose to agree with. It can become a session for heated debates provoked by an author’s words. The author can remain clueless about the interest or the shock triggered by his/ her art, hence the need to deconstruct traditional ways of reading that have the objective to uncover the ‘correct’ meaning.

1.3.2. Deconstructing Reading Practices

For Umberto Eco in Collini, S. (1992), whose contributions in cultural criticism, semiotics, and aesthetics are plethoric, a text is an open-ended universe where the interpreter can discover infinite interconnections. Eco, U. (in Collini, S. 1992: p. 25) explains:

...between the intention of the author (very difficult to find out and frequently irrelevant for the interpretation of a text) and the intention of the interpreter..., there is a third possibility. There is *an intention of the text*. (Eco, U. in Collini, S. 1992: p. 25)

For Eco, then the text has a life of its own and interpreting it or trying to uncover its secrets is to have a discussion with the universe. The reader faces the text with his own set of questionings towards a text full of other questionings, which in turn belong to the author, to his environment, or are proper to the imaginary world created in the text. The mystery is endless as are the possibilities offered by the linguistic intricacies at our disposal. A text not only means different things for different people, but it can mean different things at different times and change meaning again when in different contexts.

1.3.2.1. Intertextuality or Reader Inspiration

Intertextuality for Schogt, H. G., (1988: p. 67) is a core element to the interpretive practice. He states as follows:

How can we still today acknowledge the necessity 'to preserve the original meaning of the text' when "subconscious factors, where the author is not necessarily aware of the fact that texts he has already read account for elements in his own work? (Schogt, H. G., 1988: p. 67)

An interesting element concerning the reader's cultural background knowledge acquisition is the impact of the context of reading and that of the reader himself.

Consequently, the EFL learning milieu is a central issue for literature handling and should not be underestimated. A situation illustrated in Eco's 'subconsciousness of construction'. About his novel *The Name of the Rose*, Eco explains that he was accused of plagiarism, if not of similarities or allusions to other works in it. Eco declares ignoring this fact completely. He says: "I have read critical analyses in which the interpreter discovered influences of which I was unaware when writing, but I certainly had read those books in my youth and I understood that I was unconsciously influenced by them." (Eco, U. in Collini, S. 1992: p. 75)

If we willfully make what Eco believes to be an arbitrary interpretation, we would merely "use" rather than "interpret" a text. That is, if we were somehow to superimpose on the text our own personal knowledge, our own personal encyclopedia, we would look in the woods for what is, instead, a part of our own private memory... (2009: p.27)

For Eco, the sociocultural background of the text must be respected for the meaning creation to be truthful; inferences and interpretations need canvas. Our interpretations can extend to be infinite but not multiple as claimed by Derrida (1992). If a reader wants to infer or interpret according to his own standards then it becomes 'subjective and unjustified'. For, Eco the reader is using the text and not interpreting it.

If the emergence of the other in innovative activity takes place in writing, in scientific, mathematical, and philosophical thought, in political engagements, in painting and musical composition, and in intersubjective and intercultural relations, to name just a few of its instances, it is not difficult to see that it takes place in reading. (Culler 2003: 331)

In this work, we identify cultural competence as a process for cultural understanding that is not centered on factual & objective characteristics of another culture but rather on

the exploration of how other cultures relate to one's own perceptions and misperceptions!

A neutral, communicative approach to literature study according to Bensemmane, M. (2006) is needed to foster academically proficient techniques for literature study. He says:

At this juncture, it would be appropriate to mention ideologically-based approaches to literature, and which take account of the confrontational views between North and South in terms of culture and civilization, as notably propounded by postcolonial theory in literature. Interesting studies have been conducted to compare texts of former empires and those of colonies to examine in them cases of intertextuality and dialogism. (Bensemmane, M. 2006: pp. 89-90)

Critical reading is the objective of cross-cultural reading, a reading where we analyse foreign literary works by comparing viewpoints, themes exploitation and character description. Teaching to read foreign texts otherwise would only be manipulative. Kaced, A. (2016) presents in her study a comparison between the cases of the Algerian formerly colonized people and the African American former slaves' history in the USA. The parallel drawn between the two geographically and ideologically very distinct situations leads to an insightful outcome: the theorization of the White man's supremacy over the other races.

1.3.2.2. Historical Evolution of Interpretation in EFL Literature

The manipulation of the cultural background knowledge and the appropriateness of one interpretation over another has administrated for a long period of time literature study and literature interpretation. According to Olson (1994), reading has known many changes from the middle ages to the Renaissance. Hermeneutics, which dealt with the sacred texts, were concerned with pinpointing the right interpretation or the closest interpretation possible to what was the right one. However, the evolution was such that the search for

contexts and concealed references reached the point of issuing original debates as to the discovery of different possible hidden meanings. A skill which, Olson (1994: 136) says, is absent from the students' repertoire of capacities. He declares:

Professional historians distinguished that the author was attempting to get some readers to believe from what they themselves were, in fact, willing to believe. Students failed to ask themselves why is the author saying this? What assumptions is the author making about the audience? What does the author want the reader to think? Do I really think that? And so on. (Olson, 1994: 136)

Repeatedly, the difficulty with reading comprehension boils down to a duality in the reading practice: expressing one's perspective and acknowledging the voices of others. Nevertheless, Hermeneutics being the theory of interpretation of sacred written texts, initiated the traditional fear of wrongful interpretation and this has persistently taken the debate to the exact opposite: standing one's ground and ignoring the very existence of other perspectives. According to the same author, interpretation is universal and accessible to anyone who can read, at the more basic code deciphering level. It is a matter of 'cultural absolutism' according to Prachad, V. in Kumar that was determined by the colonialists. The culture or cultural background of a people is presented as homogenous and coherent without discrepancies or nuance; here individuals must fade in the décor that is to say hide behind his / her community. A rigid reading tradition associated with the lack of real cultural recognition have caused readers and learners in reading to remain non proficient in meaning creation. Hellal (1988) adds that we can teach EFL students about context and text reading strategies all we want but it is not sufficient if we let them be culturally unknowledgeable, a change is needed in the teaching of these EFL students to handle different cultures in

literature as well as their own. Western canons and what they will become in the future is in a great deal part of that necessary change.

1.3.2.3. Ethnicity, Religion and Gender Stereotypes

The Western canon presented to EFL students follows its Western model and is also presented chronologically, from the most ancient to the more modern times. Instead of esteem and the treasuring of the community one belongs to with enriching exchanges with foreign ideas and principles, we oppose one another's identities. Students need to be taught that their point of view is valuable; they also need to be taught that it is not the only one, that divergent positions are as valid as theirs are and stand in their own right. Others can have different point of views; we simply need to communicate an objective evaluation of any disagreement regardless of the origins of our interlocutors. Achebe, cited in Nnadi, J. eds. By Amoia & Knapp (2004: p. 25), condemns such an unfruitful and inhumane mindset, which happens to be Western-centered. In what follows they explain what Achebe sees as an act of injustice:

Achebe deplores the racist stance of those Westerners who, arrogating to themselves the monopoly of knowledge, refuse to see the black man as a potential contributor to world dialogue. Achebe's writing is primarily a crusade for the dignity of the black man, for the respect of all races and cultures. (Nnadi, J. eds. Amoia & Knapp, 2004: p. 25)

When Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian novelist and poet, deals with Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, it is rather clear-cut and negative. For him the novel, which was for long considered as an avant-garde criticism of the British Empire, was just plainly racist. In his opinion, Africa is presented as being opposite to Europe and more largely to civilization.

In an interview to the Guardian (2003), he says Africa is described as a place where intelligence and refinement are non-existent, but rather a place where savagery governs everything. It is difficult to disagree with Achebe when he says it is hurtful, particularly when we teach in a post-colonial country with students who can feel the unfriendliness of such prejudices upon their companions in pain. Bhabha (1994: xi) goes even further, for him the lack of presentation of discordant or disagreeing analyses is hurtful and appears as a silencing and invalidating of otherness. He says:

Remember the awful realization endured by Rahul Singh, V. S. Naipaul's central character in his novel *The Mimic Men*, when it begins to dawn on him that the great stone walls of London don't contain a unique weight and an unsurpassable resonance; *they* are like stones elsewhere and everywhere; other stones are not pale shadows of them. (Bhabha, 1994: xi)

This quote depicts very truthfully the effect of subliming one culture over another, the feeling of being diminished and undervalued. The words "...they are like stones elsewhere and everywhere..." demonstrate of the complex of inferiority so well explained by another post-colonialist, Frantz Fanon in *Peau Noire Masques Blancs*. Undoubtedly, Bhabha cites Fanon repeatedly to make a point: inequality in interpretive voices is inequality in human rights. How would women have earned civil rights such as the right to an education, if they had not reviewed an unsatisfactory situation? Would decolonization have been possible if the oppressed people had not tried the "external" ruler?

Frantz Fanon, in his essay *Peau Noire Masques Blancs* (1952), denounces French amnesia towards the Algerian war of independence, which is still not being taught today in French schools. According to him, the impact of such an obliviousness goes even deeper for the

victimized party. For him the Algerians and their alike post-colonial populations have been subdued by violence to be labelled as what Mannoni (1950) calls ‘le complexe du colonisé’ or ‘the complex of dependency for the colonized’. I agree with his analysis, and further his notion by an observation: the ever changing state of the world is constantly caught up by the subjectivity of our own cultural standpoints making progress towards a global paradigm challenging.

1.3.2.4. The Revision of the Western Canon or Western-centeredness

From ‘reader-response’ to ‘ethnocriticism’, today’s literature study presents a rich pallet of interpretations disrupting the traditional “one right answer for all”. Nonetheless, Mowitt (1997) suggests the revision of the Western canon as well as the diversification of interpretive practices in the past years was just an adjustment caused by the evolution of societies and school populations. Critical theory is simply a convenient label for this shift. Dalvai, M. regrets that for instance, academic publications in English reflect a central point of view, that of the society which originally speaks and writes in that language. He says:

It is perhaps not surprising that most contributions in English should be published in North America which contains most of the world’s English-language publishing houses specialized in the humanities; what is striking, though, is the consensus on the literary approach to be adopted towards the novel. Since the early 1990’s, the critical engagement with literature considered ‘marginal’ has featured high on the agenda in Western academic circles. While this has helped rethink the definition of literature, it might ‘subaltern’ culture assimilated for Western education system interests. (Dalvai, M., 2015: p. 182)

The above quote shows that the English language serves as a characteristic illustration of the English conventional, social and traditional standards of thought. It is

also denied its first function, and that is of a conveyor of ideas to be exchanged equitably and positively. Additionally, English is portrayed to have the function of a Western educational systemic tool that serves only one objective: local cultural consumption. A purpose that can only be rejected by those who have had enough of thinking they were underservant or lower than the Westerners. The post-colonized, or as Bhabha (1994) calls them, ‘the non-Westerners’, ‘the deprived’, or ‘the powerless’. He states:

What was missing from the traditionalist world of English literary study, as I encountered it, was a rich and paradoxical engagement with the pertinence of what lay in an *oblique* or alien relation to the forces of centering. Writers who were off-center; literary texts that had been passed by; themes and topics that had lain dormant or unread in great works of literature – these were the angles of vision and visibility that enchanted me. (Bhabha, 1994: xi)

The above lines are perhaps a recall of the case of *Heart of Darkness*, viewed as a progressive denunciation of the barbarian practices of White man in Africa on the one hand, and the shocked African view who sees in it a legitimization of brutality on Black people, with all the hurting and aversion it inspires them. This not only shows that multiple interpretations are possible even when they contradict each other, but that their confrontation is necessary if we wish to reach an exhaustive meaning creation that is not necessarily Western-centered. For Mowitt (1997) literature is tied to the social fate of the humanities. “Ideological values that are at stake...grip the very heart of literary study, namely, the practice of interpretation. Let us not forget that canons are not simply lists of books; they are more fundamentally the standard points of reference that bound the field of cultural interpretation.” (Mowitt, 1997:pp. 55-56, ed. Kumar) Interpretation today, is more than challenging as it means to overcome the layer of invisibility and to become visible.

The choice of canons irreverently locks out non-traditional post-colonial literature, world literature, or women literature. A key expression, which needs precision, is ‘standard points of reference’. In American academy, according to Bernstein C. (1995), the development of cultural studies brought a division between ‘works of art’ and ‘works of mass’ or ‘popular culture’. The issue is that all classification, ranking of works, and interpretive communities and modes are biased. Hence, whenever a voice is raised to include ‘minorities’ for instance, such as African Americans or women, racism and misogyny step up for dispute. Instead of reevaluating which works should be ranked among the high works, or what canonical works should mean, the reflection is about extending the categories of literary works and their new retheorizing. McCormick, K. in Slevin, J. F. & Young, (1996) says:

During the past two decades, work in literary and cultural studies—most particularly in Britain and more recently in America – has accomplished such retheorizing of the reading subject and the text, but such work has only just begun to be translated into concrete pedagogies. (McCormick, K. in Slevin, J. F. & Young, 1996: p. 295)

Globalization implies the integration of viewpoints never referred to before. This suggests the shift of references, authors, and sources in general. Despite globalization, the lack of appropriateness of Western canons of literature interpretation and its appropriating of EFL contexts of teaching and learning is becoming more and more apparent. Javier, D.P.F. (2013: 63) presents the definition of multicultural literature, a category which from the Western lenses, implies to counterbalance traditionally nationalized literatures and deal with different realities such as African realities that used to be examined from the ‘world

literature' focal point into a more inclusive category alongside 'the queer', 'the disabled' and 'women'. He says:

Multicultural literature is defined as that literature which deals with traditionally marginalized groups such as women, the elder, queers, linguistic and religious minorities, and the disabled (Norton 2005). It is a good medium to foster respect towards other cultures (in the broad sense), to highlight the common features of individuals, and to promote the self-esteem of those who share the same ethnic minority. (Javier, D.P.F., 2013: 63)

Although the importance of valuing otherness, or non-Western traditional interpretive practices are a necessary route, we cannot help noticing that the above quote rests on obsolete, old-fashioned value systems always putting western lenses on in order to observe the rest of the world. It is an ongoing process and relentless effort is needed by the entire international community of scholars to start observing real change and acceptance of difference. The West no longer holds the centrality of opinion nor is it the global standard / norm conveyer. Additionally, as a woman I would like to pinpoint how a gender fight is also insidiously present in the above quote. Not only are we privileging a Western perspective to examine the rest of the world, but we are also adopting a traditionalist/conservative definitely white male and anti-feminist view that has always depreciated half of the entire human population leveling it to that of a minority (numerically women are equal to men; more or less depending on the era).

1.3.3. Intercultural Reading: Valuing Individuals in their Communities

To become proficient readers from an intercultural standpoint, learners need to be taught how to juggle between their own native cultural backgrounds and the target cultural

background needed. For Pérez, D. and Javier, F. (2013) EFL students must learn to avoid contradicting the original context and atmosphere of the text, or at least to do so knowingly.

1.3.3.1. Reader Response or Reading Freely

Others do not have to be in opposition just because they are different. Such theorizing of new standpoints in literature study is the demonstration that there exists a worldwide need for a different kind of expression: a globalized intellectual norm of thinking. It is only in accepting this fact; as scholars and when we are able to teach it to our students benevolently, that we can aspire to change, as Byram (2017: p3) states it:

“Because a reader is thought to have comprehended a text when there is sufficient agreement between his or her recall and the text itself, there is no room for personal readings, for the enactment of specific, simultaneous (and perhaps conflicting) identifications. ...There is no room either for acknowledging the fact that what is visible for one reader can be invisible for another, even within the same social and cultural group.” (Byram: p.3, 2017)

According to Said (2007), it is also the role of literature interpretation to revive the art of examining, reviewing, and even contradicting things as they are or have been customarily presented. He explains that post-colonial theorists reread canonical literary texts focusing on slavery and complicity in colonialism, which earlier readers (Westerners / Orientalists) failed to do. Among the advocates of a cultural equality, with the right to voice one's opinions or to validate one's principles to those driven in the literary works presented to them in class, are the reader-response theorists. Rosenblatt (1937) one of the instigators of this theory, believes that students are denied the right to understand a text with their own feelings, ideas and originality.

Reader-response has often been viewed as the answer to this uniformed pattern of thought without giving consideration to the individuals and to their needs. Otherwise, a strict and unimaginative interpretation is the outcome making the literary art piece a scholarly matter stripped of emotion. However, there are many opponents to reader response. Cited in Montgomery et al (1992: 13), Wimsatt & Beardsley (1949) fear the disruption of the 'affective fallacy' and the risk of overseeing what the text is really transmitting. In other words, for them letting the students of a foreign background present their opinions can create a situation or misunderstanding. Philips in Javier (2013: 129) says: "...the reader never actually learns anything or, perhaps worse, actually reinforces his or her prejudices." Philips in Javier (2013: 129) He goes even further "...male writers tend to celebrate the exploitation of mother earth, while female writers are more likely to lament it... Talking about ecofeminism. This kind of statement is what really hurts our teaching situation.

Reader response on the contrary, we can argue, brings about a certain resistance on the part of the readers who, if they had not taken the words in the text so involvedly would never have unveiled the felony. We not only support this point of view quite firmly, but we also consider in our exploration that the example of Feminism that fights all the currents of thought, wherever and whenever they stand from, is a model for all the minorities to making one's voice heard. In sum, we agree with Fetterley, J. (1978) that any fight for one's opinions and the right to express them is a universal cause.

1.3.3.2. The Resisting Reader

What is commonly referred to as women's fight is the act of contesting all the gender issues in a society leading to gender stereotypes and inequalities. Feminists seek to regain gender equality in all the aspects of life, may it be equal access to resources, financial or other, to opportunities, and to participate in the decision-making at all levels. In a man's world and within white supremacy, it is the role of all declared or undeclared minorities to rattle customary conventions. Fetterley, J. (1978) is the first to have coined the term 'resisting reader' bringing about the variety of possible interpretations. The resisting reader is one who challenges the dominant cultural beliefs of a given community by questioning what is usually viewed as normative, common or socially acceptable. It is an act of denying the author's intention, the putative reader's response and what he could / would have accepted but doing critically and questioningly so. who explains:

One of the main things that keeps the design of our literature unavailable to the consciousness of the woman reader, and hence, impalpable, is the very posture of the apolitical, the pretence that literature speaks universal truths through forms from which all the merely personal, the purely subjective, has been burned away or at least transformed through the medium of art into the representative. When only one reality is encouraged, legitimized. (Fetterley, J., 1978: XI)

This is to emphasize that reader-response creates an identification process that is not uninteresting; as it can allow readers to join emotionally a cause that at first can appear to be far from their own interests or worries. Montgomery et al (1992: p.194) state:

Resisting readings can be produced for most texts, and may focus on the representation of a range of issues including depictions of race, class and sexual preference. For example, Cora Kaplan has questioned the way that white women have assumed that Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* refers to women in general, rather than to black women in particular. (Montgomery et al, 1992: p. 194)

The excision of women is not only a concern specific to sub-Saharan Africa, it is practiced in white conservative Christian communities as well. In the USA, Female Genital Mutilation was performed regularly until the 1980's, and White women were still excised in 2021, the STOP FGM Act of 2020 was signed into law. Hence, we come to understand that the resisting readers do not recognize the assumptions in the text to be true as they are not theirs and resist to create an oppositional reading, their reading. They relate, they feel, they have the right to speak their voice. For Achebe in Nnadi, J., (eds. Amoia & Knapp) (2004), feminism, négritude, and humanism, are all the same struggle: telling one's own stories from one's point of view.

Here is an extract from *Heart of Darkness* (1902) presenting an illustration of gender issues and the necessity for women to give their own side of the story as it stays missing. In the following lines, Conrad, J. (1902: p. 3) gives the description of women and their world from a male perspective in:

It is queer how out of touch with truth women are. They live in a world of their own, and there has never been anything like it, and never can be. It is too beautiful altogether, and if they were to set it up it would go to pieces before the sunset. Some confounded fact we men have been living contentedly with ever since the day of creation would start up and knock the whole thing over. (Conrad, J., 1902: p. 3)

The term 'resisting reader' coined first by Judith Fetterley (1978) is opposed to the inviting reader. The assumption made by Conrad that women are ignorant of the difficulties lived by men is the negation of their sufferings shared by them with men. He totally pushes aside situations where they both coexist and separates their lives as if all humanity had placed both genders in separate vacuums or as if men were on boats and women remained

ashore. It is also interesting to note the silencing of these women by Conrad who never voices the female characters similarly to the black protagonists as explained by Achebe, C. in Bacon (2000). For him it is not enough to denounce Imperialism as done by Conrad we need to condemn the belittling and dehumanizing of the African man who is described in animal-like posture and voiceless. The same can be said about women and how they are depicted in the novel, they are the minority within a minority: a muted group.

1.3.3.3. Muted Group Theory

Shirley Ardener and Edwin Ardener, who are anthropologists, are at the origin of ‘the muted group theory’ and explain how a minority can be silenced by the overwhelmingly powerful majority to the point of being reduced to utter silence and become passive observers of their own existences that they have no control over. Byram (p.2, 2017) describes this phenomenon as an invisibility campaign against the weak. He presents ‘the notion of cultural visibility’ as follows:

...certain human phenomena may appear to be more susceptible of cultural analysis than others.” This is related to the idea of ‘difference’....’differences’ are problematic because they are relative to and determined by the cultural practices of observers. (Byram: p.2, 2017)

We are prejudiced beings because we are shaped socially and a fortiori culturally.

The following statement by Pérez, D. and Javier, F. (2013:12) explains this fairly clearly:

The current study of African languages is being carried out by professional linguists; who have got rid of past serious racial prejudice, and who value African languages as illustrations of cultural diversity to be appreciated and preserved. (Pérez, D. and Javier, F., 2013:12)

The abovementioned quote shows that prejudices and a lack of open-mindedness have long tainted even scientific studies, no matter how meticulously these were undertaken. For Pérez, D. and Javier, F., (2013: 09), critical thinking skills are nothing if values are not engrained early on. They explain: "...appreciation of and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity; commitment to justice, equity, environmental sustainability and civic obligations..." Considering the particular case of the African languages and literatures, if this racial issue has biased years of scientific research, we are in right to ask in what way this has affected the African native reading of Western literature and the reading of African literatures as a foreign literature from the Western point of view.

The object of rejection and silencing of dissonant voices also concerns terminology, concepts, the way they are viewed, practiced as well as who they concern. Aidoo (1996) presents a very intriguing image of the Western-centered feminists who feel the need to explain what the notion of feminism entails to their African counterparts. She says it is: "...white women's ethnocentrism and imperialism..." about the way, 'white feminists handle current feminist discussions ...'. In fact, like many African women who serve the feminist cause and belong to the family of feminists, they too say they feel infantilized in their movement by all knowing white supremacist feminists who speak in their name, defend them without being asked, when there should be debate, exchange, and mutual and concert discussions of ideas. Aidoo (1996) presents an astonishing situation because of such positioning. In a literary workshop, entitled 'Days of African Literature' that took place in Hamburg in October 1988, Aidoo, A. A. (1996) describes a scene where European feminists

exaggeratedly affirmed their disagreement with the African women writers from the panel of speakers. This escalated to the degree, according to the author, of “bullying” them, and on the other hand African men who thought it essential to shed light on a situation that, as men, they forcibly ignored. She says:

...we had to tell both the European feminists and the African men resident in Europe that, strange as it might seem, African women (including we African women writers) are quite capable of making up our own minds and speaking for ourselves. (Aidoo, A. A., 1996: p.168)

Debating and accepting that different viewpoints exist to the degree of defying one’s preconceptions and understanding of the world is a very daunting task. The above quote is a perfect illustration of it and at the basis of life challenges toward the acceptance of all humanity.

1.3.3.4. Restoring Native Culture in the EFL Literature Classroom

Replying to the historically rooted Western-centricity is not advocating a complete turn to Afrocentricity; both perspectives can be equally highlighted for enriching debates. Restoring the students’ native culture in the EFL literature class also implies restoring truths that have been ignored or concealed due to Western-centered understandings. We can for instance recognize that postcolonial theorists and feminists agree that women are oppressed by both male and colonial dominance and that this is a continuing reality for African countries, even after achieving independence. On the other hand, we can note that Western feminists consider that men are not oppressed under patriarchy unlike African feminists for who gender equality means oppression of neither gender. Restoring the native culture of

the EFL students in the classroom allows to balance sources of knowledge in favor of their culture. Furthermore, it can rehabilitate them in their identity. Peter, M.A. (ix, 2003) explains as follows:

...the most important philosophical task is to break free from the 'logocentrism' of Western philosophy—the self-presence, immediacy and univocity—that clouds our view and manifests its nihilistic impulses in Western culture. (Peter, M. A., ix: 2003)

If we consider the feminists' abovementioned quarrels, Aidoo, A.A., (1996) confidently states that African feminists have no lesson to receive from white feminists. Historically, African women were the all-powerful on their lands centuries before the colonizing of Africa and the right to vote was even granted to white women. Africans who valiantly defended themselves with spears against the Western colonizers who had firearms and machine guns counted fighting women as part of most African armies. An illustrious example is Nzingha (1582-1663) who tried to prevent the Portuguese from over-running her country (Angola). Our national Lalla Fatma N'Soumer (1830-1863) fought at the head of 35000 men against the French invader. Another distortion of the African reality is the way Africans were portrayed depending on how Westerners viewed them and wanted to present them. Aidoo (1996) also describes Nefertiti as a 'Black Beauty' not at all resembling the 'alabaster' Western image of her that we are so accustomed to. Cleopatra is said to have spoken fluently Greek, Egyptian, Latin, Ethiopian and Syrian. In Shakespeare she is labelled a strumpet.

Modern Africa came into collision with Europe with the journey of Vasco de Gama (? 1469-1524) travelling from Portugal southward to find Asia. He passed the Cap

of Good Hope in 1496: since then Africa has never known peace. First came the slave trade, the ending of which was literally celebrated with the complete conquest and formal colonization of Africa in the middle of the 19th century. From then on, different Western groups considered Africa their happiest hunting ground. (Aidoo, A.A., 1996: p.157)

Differences from ethnic or religious groups have no need for derision or sarcasm. Nonetheless, the fascination of Westerners for the rest of the world from their pedestal is illustrated by the colonial invasions committed in Africa by the Europeans, equals mocking them for being different. Lazarus (1979), focusing essentially on this particular aspect of foreign cultural acquisition, argues that not only does valuing native culture positively affect the target language acquisition, but finding common features or ideological similarities in both native and target cultures allows students to feel comfortable and learn better the target language. In describing Trauma Theory, Lahrech (2018) explains that the effects of the colonization trauma influences the people who were formerly colonized to this day. Not only is trauma lived by any given population, it remains for generations to come. Furthermore, this is aggravated by the Westerners' annihilation of any proofs or testimonies that could restore the post-colonized countries in their own legitimate identities. On the contrary, only the traumas lived by the West have a mediatized recognition and commemoration. Lahrech (2018: p. 48):

...trauma is often studied in relation to the Holocaust or World War I. yet, if it must be sufficiently explored and understood there ought to be no limitations to its study. Lahrech (2018: p. 48)

What is at stake here is the reciprocity of humanity, acceptance and mutual respect for all human communities that stand in their own right. Legitimizing one's story and negating it for others gives justification to ultimate horrors such as those we have recently been witnessing in Gaza since October the 7th of this year. It seems that the injustices once done to non European people are perpetuated with international complacency.

1.3.3.5. Exotism and Orientalism, Prejudiced Colonialism

Historically, this was tragically true when colonialism allowed on the one hand the exploitation of indigenous populations, and on the other robbing them of their riches because it was accessible. The Western colonizers stole most African riches and works of art spreading them in museums in Europe and in galleries and around the world. The National British Museum for instance, has the biggest collection issued by the 19th C "Egyptomania". There is also the example of the sculpture of Gou, God of iron and war from early 17th century Benin that France refused to return until very recently. Said's work is interesting to uncover the connection between literary works and colonial culture. He explains that Orientalists from the late 18th century movement studying Muslim and other Asian societies, their histories, languages and culture screen out their vision with a fantasized reality from legendary Arabian counts instead of looking at the Eastern countries' real life dimensions with their tribulations and complexities. For Marx, it is the White man's dominance over the rest of the world causing him to go on a safari wherever and whenever he likes "...the fascination with non-Western cultures in the modernist period could almost invariably be categorized as Exotism or Primitivism." (Marx, E: 2004: p.4)

Psychologically this implies “...the primitive is paired with the civilized or modern; the exotic with the familiar or local.” (Marx, E: 2004: p.6). It is only recently that African art and other ethnic / traditional arts around the world have seen their glory restored. Although Picasso asserted he was greatly influenced by traditional and primitive arts straight from the caveman’s paintings, it was something ‘modern’ society was not ready to hear. Instead it belittled the original African creations such as the ones he inspired himself from. These were often qualified as exotic and surprising. For Marx, this is the essence of imperialism. He says:

Isn’t exoticism—the powerful desire to explore, possess, or be subsumed by otherness—an opposing force to imperialism, viewed as a kind of aggressive drive to make it new—necessarily accompanied by a shadow of primitivism, reflecting deep anxieties about the loss of cultural foundations? (Marx, E: 2004: p.12-13)

African artists were highly influential of the White artists; this did not stop the Westerners from portraying the continent and its inhabitants as isolated, famished and underdeveloped. The influence of ‘art nègre’ on Picasso marks the beginning of primitivist modernism. Until very recently, little did we hear of the Algerian surrealist painter Baya whose paintings, inspired by tribal art practices, present an imaginary and unconscious reenacting of joyful and vibrant women. Although she had impressed the inventor of cubism, Pablo Picasso, inspiring him to paint his famous work “Les Femmes d’Alger” in 1955, it is generally acknowledged that he was revisiting the painting of the same name by Eugène Delacroix in 1834. Never did we hear of Baya’s influence in mainstream media.

As teachers and scholars in general, we must be aware of the fact that we are responsible for enlightening our learners towards such privations in visibility. If we do not, we are the first to participate in the putting down of our environments, of our students, and eventually of ourselves. For Freire (1998: p.50) teachers cannot satisfy themselves with theories and educational principles, they must be involved in their practice, in their values and in each one of their interactions with their students and not contradict themselves. Otherwise, they are inauthentic teachers; he adds:

...as inauthentic as someone who talks about combating racism but who, when asked if she / he knows Madalena, a black female student, replies: “yes, I know her. She is black, but she’s a decent soul.” I’ve never heard anyone say: “I know Celia, she is blond with blue eyes, but she’s decent all the same. (Freire, 1998: p.50)

When teachers do not practice what they preach blurring the students’ vision of their own issues with otherness, it becomes pedagogically unsound. Encouraging their students not only to express their opinions whatever these symbolise but most importantly to practice open-mindedness both ways, is daunting but nevertheless extremely rewarding as the students will have the feeling of being heard and understood.

Conclusion

It is necessary today to get rid of the racial or communitarian stereotypes that have weighed on our way toward progress due to Western media hammering as proclaimed by Adichie (2009). This cannot exist without the cooperation of these nations in need to ‘voice’ their indigenized intellectual ideologies and storytelling at a global scale broadcast. Through encouraging the rise of Afrocentrist intellectuals, writers, and debaters for non-

European self-determination. The glory of our independence, just to name this one grand event in our national history is not constrained to the names of our Algerian martyrs and Moudjahiddines only. It is also attached to names from all origins and races like Maurice Audin, Jacques Vergès, Frantz Fanon, or Myriam Makeba who sang “I am free in Algeria” in Arabic on the Algerian National television for the first Pan-African festival in 1969 in honor of the newly freed former French colony. There is no one culture dictating the norms of higher order thinking, the world has a say on every intellectual theory; wherever it may come from.

Chapter Two: Research Design & Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and process of the present research investigation. In this chapter, we detail the methodologies used, the research questions, as well as the setting and participants. We shall also develop our mixed-instrumentation, data collection procedures, as well as the data analysis techniques. This research investigates the cultural gap of EFL readers of the target literature through a case study of 1st year, 2nd year, and 3rd year ‘licence’ students at the English department of the University of Algiers. A premise to our study is that the lack of cultural awareness can limit an individual's ability in a situation requiring new leaning strategies. The researcher here explores the dialectic connection between the target cultural background knowledge and the students’ native cultural upbringing as a means to facilitate their acceptance and their comprehension / interpretation of foreign literatures. Eventually, we wish to uncover whether cultural instruction is needed and advised within literature class. It is part of our interrogation here to understand whether any cultural instruction, explicit or integrated within other literary strategies acquisition for instance is suitable for literature study.

2.1. The Research Questions

Our investigation is exploratory, and its main objective is to assert whether the foreign language learners’ reading comprehension of literature, the teachings they receive,

and their interpretations of EFL literature are in any way affected by a deficiency in target cultural background knowledge. In a previous research (Fasla: 2009) some literature teachers believed that providing background knowledge before reading the text is necessary for the students to know what to expect. Additionally, they asserted that it allowed predicting meanings, which is helpful to grasp the core idea of a text. The downside was the students' responses, which showed a rather weak mastery of any background knowledge needed for their literature class as well as very little capacity to draw inferences and deductions of any literary purpose. Additionally, because they ignored the importance of TCBK, students claimed they did not have enough time to do the necessary research to catch up on their omissions. Therefore, I agree with Belghoul (2017:p.192) in that it is not only reading skill and strategies that are at stake, but emotional and psychological responses that cause EFL readers of literature to connect with their reading. She says:

“In trying to describe the students' deficiencies in their reading comprehension of foreign literary texts, I aimed to depict the experience about the relationship between the text and the reader for sake of decoding meaning; i.e. their interpretations of the literary fiction. This process, as already claimed by Paran (1996) and Bernhardt (2003), sheds light on other parameters related to the readers' background, which are responsible for this connection with the literary text. Instead of considering the latter's criticism solely, other analyses have to be taken into account which can be, for example, of a social or psychological nature in order to try to find efficient strategies to boost a cultural relationship between the student and the text.” (Belghoul, 2017: p.192)

The essential question we ask here is not how much or when to provide the cultural background knowledge, but rather is the target cultural knowledge even tackled in the literature class? If not, are the teachers as well as the students aware of its absence?

Hence, three research questions were elaborated:

1/ Do students truly suffer from a cultural gap in the target culture of the literature they study at the English department of Algiers?

*If so, does it discourage them from pursuing literature study?

*Do they feel that their native voice is silenced in the process?

2/ How do teachers assess the cultural background knowledge gap that exists between the students' native learning environment and that of the texts they are asked to analyze?

*Do teachers underestimate or ignore this cultural factor and its consequence on their students' aptitudes?

*Can literature teachers help their students with background knowledge acquisition for literature reading?

3/ Are students taught to interpret from their Mediterranean / African perspective or do their teachers encourage the western official reading?

*Are the teachers aware of their students' culturally biased perceptions as well as their own?

*Does the literature study practice in the EFL literature classroom conform to the classic Western paradigm?

Our primary goal is to explore how EFL students manage their literary study while still struggling with the confusion they may have regarding the target cultural knowledge. In

addition, is dealing with cultural background knowledge necessary for literature study? Our research questions, design, and procedure were inspired from preceding researches that are presented as follows:

- **Similarities and not Differences**

Lazarus (1979) has given a very interesting interpretation as to the perception we have of others and their cultures. He presents an experimentation showing that when similarities are brought forward, perceptions change favorably. But when differences are brought up first, clichés and stereotypes are strengthened with the negative and disapproving attitude the narrow-minded and the uninformed. In Algeria, the situation is more complex. According to Fanon, we need to free ourselves from our colonized, conditioned minds, mingle with others but present our own points of view, theorize for ourselves, and most importantly impose ourselves truthfully. Although there is no place for adapting what others think, it is useful to consider the cultural newness in foreign language classes and present activities that address it. Lazarus adds (1979: p. 181):

« The affective domain is not one that teachers should leave to chance. Activities should be planned and selected with care so that they lead the students to an empathic understanding of another culture...Presentations which stress the similarities of daily life should be an integral part of such culture teaching.»

Here Lazarus settles with a longitudinal experimentation or series of experimentations (decades of still ongoing research), Vygotsky's theory on the acculturation process in target culture acquisition. Hence, we have been comforted in our

position stating that social constructivism is key in language learning or any new learning for that matter.

- **Social Distance or Perceived Social Distance**

The necessity of restoring any voice in its own right is becoming more apparent at this time. Different readers from different regions of the world appropriate themselves a text that originally did not relate or was not meant to relate neither to their context nor to their issues. Kaced, A. (2016) presents in her study a comparison between the cases of the Algerian colonized people and the African American former slaves' history in the USA. The parallel drawn between the two geographically and ideologically very distinct situations lead to an insightful outcome: the theorization of the White man's supremacy over the other races. In treating the two culturally distant situations in closeness, we apply a principle that Schuman in Brown (1980) refers to as social distance or more precisely, the perceived social distance. He explains what follows:

“...it is not particularly relevant what the actual distance is between cultures, since it is what the learner perceives that forms his own reality. We have already noted that human beings perceive the cultural environment through the filters and screens of their own world view and then act upon that perception, however “biased” it may be.”

Brown (1980: 137)

Kaced, A. (2016) shows that the geographical distance is a virtual one. The context of slavery in the USA is culturally, historically, and emotionally one of many similarities with the Algerian indigenous past. So much so that the Algerian EFL students identified with it and distanced themselves from the closer African reality presented in African literature class.

- **Emotional response to cultural inadequacies or foreignness**

In our Algerian context it is worthwhile inquiring this aspect of preconceived opinions on the part of the students for the cultures they are being taught, English (United Kingdom), American (USA), and African (South African & Nigerian). A previous research has shown a definite distancing of the students from the African literature although it is the closest to their native culture both geographically and culturally (Fasla: 2009). Glas (2012: 13) adds:

“...I had the suspicion that many Chileans held negative attitudes towards the English language and English-speaking cultures (especially in the USA), which created barriers that prevented them from truly engaging with English.” (Glas, 2012: 13)

Also, any differences brought forward would deeply affect their reading strategies as much as their emotional outcome. This is the factor that is affected by their estrangement from otherness, an inability to communicate with others one’s thoughts and arguments. Coupled with a lack of practice in the field of critical thinking the lack of TCBK will keep students from making inferences, deductions and syntheses. Therefore, one cannot learn to master knowledge and develop their thought process by ignoring the cultural meaning of a language.

- **Critical Thinking and Reading**

According to Semara & Slamani (2014), critical thinking is rarely encouraged before University. When observing a high school class they established that teachers made mostly use of teacher talk and rhetorical questions. Procedural questions using ‘how...’ for example, or convergent questions that make use of an open-ended form or again divergent questions that bring about multiple answers are all avoided. Instead, we have a largely

dominant amount of instructional questions, display and referential questions that only serve to unveil surface-level information. In the foreign literature classroom where personal analysis is required, and sharp accurate interpretations follow an investigative scrutiny at the library, literature study without critical thinking skills is impossible. Consequently, this research confirms the existence of what we know in Algeria to be the rote learning tradition, which is composed of a very long time imparted to teacher talk punctuated here and there by rhetorical questions.

2.2. The Case Study, its Data Collection Procedure and Study Sample

2.2.1. The Case Study

The case study allows us to voice the silent complexities of teaching and learning. As Olson (1994) put it: "...all understanding is interpretation helped by 'insider information'". The common feature of the informants' interaction with the researcher is that students and teachers alike were given the choice to participate in the research or not. The teachers were approached with great care, as we know they have busy schedules, and the students were asked to fill the questionnaire and have the possibility to contact the researcher for the results of the present work. We hoped this would interest them enough to overlook the monotony they dread from a session of questionnaire filling. Obtaining volunteers was not an easy task, but this is what I knew to be best in order to obtain the qualitative data needed. Brown, J. D. & Rodgers, T.S. (2002: 47) explain:

"In case studies, unlike experiments, we have little or no control over how the form of content of the data will appear. In this sense, there is chance involved in what we will find and what the relevance of the findings might be. Most researchers who undertake case studies assume, however, that there is going to be a design in their

case study and that they are going to discover and present to the world some heretofore unrecognized insights in connexion with that design. Nevertheless, there is always something chancy about case studies.” (Brown, J. D. & Rodgers, T. S.,: 2002: 47)

Additionally, any reluctance or refusal to participate in the research process, and this at any step of the investigation, is notified and interpreted in our results chapter. Dialoguing with some of the research participants who are peers, informed the methodological tools that I have used. The case study has always been the direction I would follow as I consider that cases are to be studied in-depth and are necessary. Stake (1988: 256) further explains:

‘The principal difference between case studies and other research studies is that the focus of attention is the case, not the whole population of cases. In most other studies, researchers search for an understanding that ignores the uniqueness of individual cases and generalizes beyond particular instances. They search for what is common, pervasive, and lawful. In the case study, there may or may not be an ultimate interest in the generalizable. For the time being, the search is for an understanding of the particular case, in its idiosyncrasy, in its complexity.’ (Stake 1988: 256)

We teach individuals although they are set in large groups and presented in regional or national statistics. Moreover, investigative efforts are needed before we ascertain that we have reached a full understanding of the topic at stake and can issue possible implications for our students’ pedagogical needs.

2.2.2. Data Collection Procedure and Study Sample

2.2.2.1. Data Collection Procedure

In our case study we have a mixed research design where we use mostly qualitative data and data collection process, even though there are some elements of data collection

tools that have a quantitative characteristic, such as the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. Our focus for our research design was mostly exploratory; we wanted to reach an in-depth understanding of the issue at stake. Brown, J. D. & Rodgers, T. S. (2002: 242) present this to be ‘thick’ data. They state:

“Credibility and transferability will be enhanced if you have a very clear, complete, and detailed description of the research (sometimes referred to as a ‘thick description’). Credibility and dependability will be improved if you use triangulation and member checking.” (Brown, J. D. & Rodgers, T. S.,: 2002: 242)

In view of presenting highly qualitative data we have used 3 types of triangulations, as appears in the table on page 112, following the classification by Brown, J. D. & Rodgers, T. S.,: 2002.

1) There is the ‘data triangulation’: using multiple sources of information i.e. teachers, students and corpus analysis; we examined test questions given to us by some literature teachers of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year literature class.

2) Then we have used the ‘methodological triangulation’ as we used multiple data-gathering procedures; there is the questionnaire, the interview, and the cultural references activity, which is a focused reading task.

3) Finally, we have the ‘time triangulation’ as we deal with 1st year, 2nd year, and 3rd year undergraduate students enrolled in the licence at the English department of the University of Algiers II.

DATA TRIANGULATION-using multiple sources of information, usually people with different roles, helps you to understand and moderate the natural biases of those people; e.g. in a language course/program evaluation, you might use students, teachers, and administrators.

INVESTIGATOR TRIANGULATION-using multiple researchers to examine the same data independently helps you to understand and moderate the researchers' biases; e.g. two or three researchers might analyze the same open-response questions on a questionnaire, then compare their conclusions.

THEORY TRIANGULATION-using multiple theoretical frameworks; e.g., you might analyze the open-response questions from a series of interviews based on three theoretical frameworks: error analysis, discourse analysis, and behavioral analysis.

METHODOLOGICAL TRIANGULATION-using multiple data-gathering procedures; e.g. you might choose to use interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations to gather data.

INTERDISCIPLINARY TRIANGULATION-using the perspectives of several disciplines; e.g. you might use perspectives drawn from second language studies, education, and psychology.

TIME TRIANGULATION-using multiple occasions to gather data; e.g. you might gather data at the beginning, middle, and end of a school term.

LOCATION TRIANGULATION-using multiple sites to gather data; e.g. you might gather data from three different high schools, or from two junior high schools, and two high schools.

(Brown, J. D. & Rodgers, T. S., 2002: 244)

Table 2.1. Summary of Seven Types of Triangulation

In what follows, is the presentation of the data collection tools and their objectives.

2.2.2.2. Data Collection Tools Selection

As mentioned in the section above, we have three data collection tools, the questionnaire, the interview, and the reading activity. There are presented as follows:

1) The first research question targets the cultural knowledge mastery of the students, whether they can identify any hidden or encrypted information in a literary text (cognitive strategy). It also deals with how they feel about their lack of knowledge (metacognitive strategy). The tool used to investigate this hindrance is a reading activity we entitled 'Identify Cultural References in the Text'. It is a one-step activity where students were asked to underline any word that represented a culture that was foreign to theirs (Algeria). The task was followed by questions for students to reflect on the task and to express their immediate feelings while doing the task. This reading task is not intended as a testing device to evaluate the students' aptitudes; our focus is rather to describe what happens while students are confronted with culturally loaded information in EFL literature reading comprehension. Essentially, the reading comprehension activity shows the students' weakness in TCBK at the level of cultural symbol identification in the text and they identify, extract and explain any given word or group of words they consider to refer to the target culture.

2) The second research question is directed towards the teachers' beliefs and teaching experience as well as the students' perceptions about TCBK and the literature study teachings they receive. We mean to research whether teachers are aware of their culturally biased perceptions as well as that of their students; similarly the answers of the students either corroborate the teachers' version or complete it with interestingly mismatching insights. The tools selected to research these are the questionnaire and the interview. The teachers were first given a questionnaire with multiple choice items and open-ended

questions. Then the teachers who decided to continue to participate with us were interviewed to share with us their thoughts on TCBK and its value in the literature classroom. The teachers were not given any pre-written questions, as the interviews were unstructured for qualitative data gathering.

3) The third research question also concerns both groups of participants and the dialectic of the TCBK with the students' NCBK; and whether this was considered to be an issue within the literature class. We mean to research whether teachers are aware of their culturally biased perceptions as well as that of their students. Inspired from a previous research that triggered this concern about NCBK (Fasla: 2009), insightful answers on the part of the students are also highly expected. The questionnaires and the interviews are those described in the above section and of course concern both groups of participants.

2.2.2.3. Study Sample

2.2.2.3.1. Teachers

Our second research question is explicitly directed to the teachers of literature. We wish to know if they are aware of the weight a lack of TCBK has in their classrooms or whether they comprise other reasons. The literature teachers were given a questionnaire to fill in and those who accepted were interviewed. The interviews were unstructured as our interest was to have themes raised by the teachers themselves in order to obtain 'their side of the story'. Once identified, these themes will be classified under different headings that reflect teachers' beliefs and the learning practices they would point to. As in classrooms in general, teaching and learning take place simultaneously, my motivation was to have the

teachers express their difficulties, frustrations and their own desires and expectations. Consequently, we would unveil issues that would help the teachers to reflect on the teaching and learning experiences in their literature class. We also wish that by joining their perspectives with those expressed by their students we could allow them to reach a better understanding of their students' needs. Subsequently, all 15 teachers of literature were given a questionnaire to fill in, either in person or by e-mail, depending on their time schedules and availability. They were also asked if they wished to be interviewed, eventually 11 literature teachers accepted.

The themes raised were instigated by the teachers and the length of the interviews was also decided by the teachers. When a teacher had nothing more to say they would signify it by “that’s it” or by lowering the tone of their voice. We wanted them to feel free to say what they wanted and to stop when they wanted to. As a result, some interviews lasted almost an hour when others no more than 10 minutes.

2.2.2.3.2. Students

The students enrolled in this research are 62 individuals, a group of 20 students both in the 1st and 3rd year literature class; and of 22 students in 2nd year (this is the actual attendance rate across groups yearly, as the other students being repeating students their attendance is not mandatory). Each group was randomly selected out of the list of the 14 number of groups of each year, 1st year, 2nd year, and 3rd year.

Our objective was to know if they tackle the TCBK problem knowingly or if on the contrary they enter literature class with the idea that they will find all they expect. While

investigating, only the undergraduate students were the aimed population. Master and doctorate students already specialized and presenting a certain level of academic proficiency were not included. They would only alter and add complexity to the nature and process of our inquiry. The three years of under graduation were our concern as we wish to identify their TCBK acquisition as well as their impressions, interests, and metacognitive thinking on the question. In addition, an intact group of 1st year students was given the students' questionnaire for piloting. As the first year students are usually the ones with the most difficulty to cope with the research process and the use of the English language, we wanted to make sure that they would be able to handle well our research topic before starting our research data collection.

2.3. Presentation of the Data Collection Tools

2.3.1. Presentation of the Students' Questionnaire

Section I: Students' Profile (questions 1 to 5)

- The **questions 1 & 2** of this section concern the students' genders and ages as well as their cultural background with **questions 3 & 4**. Although students are generally Algerians, we do have a certain number of foreign students enrolled at the University of Algiers from other African countries mostly. It is thus important for the scope of our research to verify this element. We also asked the students to present their mother tongue, due to the Algerian multilingual and multicultural characteristics. As to the **question 5**, the students were asked on the different modes of contact they have had

with the target culture; all these are meant to elicit the cultural acquisition environment of our students.

- With this detailed profile section on the student's native cultural background, it is our beginning to implement positivity directed to the students' background and see how that affects them and if it causes them to react openly toward the target culture of the literature they study while filling in the questionnaire. (Lazarus: 1979)

Section II: Reading Practices

- Reading practices have been identified in our previous research (Fasla: 2009) as paramount for cultural enrichment and language learning, but in this digitized era, we want to unveil whether new modes of learning favorably complete reading or on the contrary replace it totally. Hence, the closed-ended **question 6, 'what do you rely on for cultural acquisition', & question 7, 'which topics are more attractive to your generation'**, refers to the generational gap that characterizes the cultural one also identified in our previous research (Fasla: 2009). The **questions 6 and 7**, also inspired from Nunan (1991), concern the students' learning habits as well. Students' learning environment is what shapes them.
- Questions 8, 9, and 10 are directed towards reading as a practice: **Question 8**, Students' Free Association to the word 'Reading', is inspired from Freud's Free Association Theory presented in Brown, J. D. & Rodgers, T.S. (2002). This process is intended to

insist on the topic of ‘reading’ in such a manner that it will allow us to identify what it deeply represents for them.

- **Question 9, ‘identify your reading profile’, & Question 10, ‘what motivates you to read’,** are both closed-ended questions that are meant for the student to think about reading with specific items to help their recollection. All the closed-ended questions are used because of the reluctance students regularly express when asked to fill in questionnaires. Additionally, there is always a ‘comment’ section underneath the question that is analyzed as the qualitative data of interviews for instance.

Section III: Literature Class

- **Questions 11, 12, 13, 14, & 15** are all about the 3 literatures taught at the English Department of Algiers. They are all inspired from Fasla (2009). These questions are here to inquire the preconceptions students have developed about the different literatures they are taught. English literature representing Great Britain, American literature portraying the USA, and African literature (the one written in English) showing students, perhaps for the first time the South African or the Nigerian society. In a previous research (Fasla: 2009) I found that students distanced themselves from African works they studied although it is the closest culture geographically as well as historically. This was intriguing for me and I was inspired or comforted to design those questions as teacher 9 told me a narrative presenting her experience with African literature teaching. It is rewritten in the following document:

At the start of the academic year 2014-2015, as I was introducing the content and the main objectives of the syllabus of the module of Literary Genres to my first year group, I noticed that the students were very reluctant to study the African literary works, which were part of the course of study. They explained their attitude by the fact that they thought these works were of lesser importance than English and American ones that they would rather deal with. Students also believed that they would not find the African texts interesting; that the stories, themes, and characters would be too foreign for them to identify with. For them, the African cultures were too alien to Algerian students. The challenge was to make them change their minds. The first step was a short introduction to the context in which African literature appeared and the main ideas that it defended. The second was to encourage the students to learn more about different African authors who ranked among the most important and most valued in world literature. The third, and most crucial step, was to introduce them to texts that would change their vision of African literature. We started with Chinua Achebe's short story "Marriage Is a Private Affair" which tells the story of a Nigerian couple who meet at university and whose union is rejected by their communities because they are from different tribes that have different customs. Through reading and analyzing the work, the students came to see that the issues Achebe handles are very similar to concerns that can be found in the Algerian society and that the characters he portrays share many common traits with the Algerian people. This allowed the students to start questioning their prejudices and they became more open to the idea of reading African texts. Many of them said that they had unexpectedly enjoyed the story. Later, when we had to read *The Lion and the Jewel* by Wole Soyinka, students were much more inclined; some even looked forward, to read and study the play. Students' pre-conceived opinions result mainly from an almost complete absence of background where Africa is concerned and all they need is to be encouraged to learn more about their continent and their heritage to make them interested in all African subjects.

Figure 2.1. Teaching African Literature: A Narrative by Teacher 9

Section IV: Literary Skills

Question 16, 'While studying literature which tools were most helpful to you', was elaborated with our students' practice of picking rather randomly from wherever they can, teachers' lessons, online info etc... A teacher interviewed by Glas (2012) calls this problem the 'copy and paste culture' when students will pick from internet sources for instance any missing information. I, myself, often heard my students say that they would memorize a bit

here and a bit there and see where that would take them. For McCarter & Jakes (2009: 33)

this appears to be an international “skill” that students master all over the world. They say:

“While preparing for the oral exams, Beatrice and her fellow students worked together in self-help groups. After they had memorized the information, they practiced saying it to each other, so that they would have a series of speeches in their heads. Beatrice commented that she did not think that this was a very effective way of learning as she quickly forgot the information that she had learnt.” McCarter & Jakes (2009: 33)

- In **question 17** students are asked to evaluate their **strengths and weaknesses**; I thought it would be interesting to ask students to reflect if they hadn’t already, on their literary proficiency as academic students. We wish to examine the students’ metacognitive thinking as it would enlighten us on their capacity to do things; that is if they are able to reflect on what they can do in literary analysis and if they are adequately equipped in skillset and content knowledge in TCBK. The original table from McCarter & Jakes (2009: p.17) is in appendix D p. 363.
- **Question 18** is purposefully set after the 2 previous questions that are meant to encourage students to reflect on their academic abilities. Consequently, the question ‘**what does your test mark depend on**’ will show whether students consider they are accountable for their learning outcome and progress.

Section V: Media & Literature

- 1) **Questions 19, 20, 21, & 22** deal with the media implementation within the literature class, as the environment students are evolving in is highly media-centered. **In question**

22 for instance, students were asked to choose between different activities that all concern lively literature activity practices.

- 2) This is one practice that can be perfected as a homework through repetition, with the use of audiobooks, videos, as well as through ‘in class’ reading aloud sessions with the teacher or even by incarnating characters from the plays or novels being studied. The benefits of reading aloud are undeniable as they help with understanding the text as well as in motivating the students to express themselves without fear. Olson (1994: 115) explains as follows:

“All understanding is interpretation, as Gadamer (1975) has pointed out ... But problems of interpretation become serious when one is faced with a transcription of what was said, the transcription capturing only the content of the utterance and not its tone.” (Olson, 1994: 115)

Section V: Reading Comprehension Task

The questionnaire ends with a reading exercise intended to make concrete the topic at stake. With this activity, students will encounter the TCBK, as it appears in references / symbols of the target culture in an EFL literary text. The text is an extract taken from *Daddy Long Legs* (1912) by Jean Webster. This text was specifically chosen because its theme is students suffering from a hindrance in the necessary references to understand the lesson. The main character, Judy, is openly mocked by her classmates for being so ill-informed.

1) Identify elements in the text that are foreign cultural references.

Question 1 of this activity requires the students to identify the EFL cultural references present in the text. These are ‘Michael Angelo’, Maurice Maeterlinck’, ‘Middle Ages’, ‘Freshmen’, ‘Archangel’.

2) How do these elements reflect a foreign culture?

Question 2 aims at explicating / confirming the identification of the cultural symbols present in the text. In this open-ended question nothing was suggested to the students, the responses must stem from the students themselves. This question is meant to shed light on the fact that it is not enough to identify correctly the EFL cultural references present in the text; students need also to be able to contextualize them for the purpose of literary study.

3) Do you know any of these elements? Yes No

Question 3 is intended to search whether students have a developed mastery of those references by asking them to depict the references they identified with **question 1**.

Questions 1, 2, and 3 are a deep exploration of the students’ knowledge of the cultural references present in the text through identification (**Q1**), contextualization (**Q2**), and explanation (**Q3**).

4) Do you sometimes feel the frustration the narrator seems to be going through?

Question 4 is a metacognitive question aimed at allowing students to reflect on what they are reading and to tap into their feelings at the same time. The main character’s frustration

is the reason the researcher chose this particular passage as it describes the feelings of a university student who comes from a foreign background and who is teased for not having the adequate references; a situation that our EFL students are quite familiar with (Fasla: 2009)

Question 5 is an additional question at the end of the questionnaire in case anything different from what was presented to the students happened to occur to them and would shed a new light on our problem. This question comes after both the 22 questions of the questionnaire and the reading comprehension task. The first will have allowed the students to reflect sufficiently on our issue and the second will have allowed them to tackle the cultural references through a task-based activity.

2.3.2. Presentation of the Students' Focus Group Interview

A focus group of five students who have accepted to an interview-discussion session with the researcher to reflect upon their literature study. The focus group is composed of five student-volunteers from the three levels of literature classes altogether. One student of 1st year labeled student 1, two students of the 2nd year, labeled student 2a and student 2b, and two students of third year labeled student 3a and student 3b. All the students volunteered to be interviewed. For Lichtman (2013) a focus group size should be of maximum 12 students to ensure a harmonious, easy to manage interactive assembly. The interview was completely unstructured, as we wished the informants to give us the data willingly and freely without any influence on our part. They have already completed the reading task and filled in the questionnaire, therefore they are well aware of our

investigation. Of course, we suppose they would talk about culture and literature, consider their native culture with pride maybe, or refer to modernity, etc... but these are only suppositions. In addition, the researcher would only probe and repeat the informants' words for development.

2.3.3. Presentation of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Section I: Teachers' Profile (Questions 1 & 2)

- Teachers were asked to give information about their age group and gender.

Section II: Teachers' Cultural Context of Training

- With **questions 3, 4 & 5**, **'were you a student in this department? 'have you been enrolled in a University abroad for a post-graduate degree?' & 'If yes, please state where and when'**, teachers are asked about their exposure to the target culture. If they had ever been in an immersion in the native English speaking countries, that could have an impact on their responses as well. This was inspired from Glas (2012) who states what follows:

“...references to indigenous cultures are nearly nonexistent; what is more, a few teachers seem to display a fairly negative vision of their own (and their students') culture, putting into stark contrast with supposedly more desirable cultural traits associated with English-speaking cultures, such as politeness, punctuality and time-efficiency.” (Glas, 2012: 261)

Section III: Teaching Experience & Expertise

- **Questions 6, 7, & 8** we ask teachers how long, to which year or years they have been teaching literature, and whether they had in the past taught other levels of literature classes?
- In **question 9**, we ask the teachers to reflect on the word teacher using Freud’s free association, similarly to the students and their reflection on the word ‘reading’. The idea is that teachers reflect on their role and the images they constructed about themselves.

Section IV: Reflective teaching

- In this section, with **questions 10 & 11**, teachers are asked to reflect on their role as teachers.

The questions are closed-ended to give choices to the literature teachers who do not usually tackle the field of educational psychology or pedagogy. On the other hand, **questions 12 & 13** are open-ended and allow the teachers the freedom to express themselves on the practice of reflective teaching. They also state whether they consider it useful.

- Teachers here need to express whether they envisage teacher training in their work routine. The aim of the questions developed in this section is raising their awareness of the need to implement pedagogical and didactic tools in their literature teaching habits, with mention to reflective teaching as an example. This also refers to the necessity of group work and interdisciplinarity. In this context, Farrell (2007) says:

“Reflective practice means that teachers must subject their own beliefs of teaching and learning to critical examination, by articulating these beliefs and comparing

these beliefs to their actual classroom practices to see if there are any contradictions between practice and underlying beliefs.”

Farrell, T. S. C. (2007: p. 7)

Section V: Literature Teaching under Examination

- With **questions 14 & 15**, this section is a diagnosis section. Teachers look into their students’ academic abilities as well as the issues they may have with literature. There is a comment section where teachers can develop their thoughts and these will be analyzed qualitatively.

Section VI: Teaching Methods (Questions 16 to 22)

- Teachers are asked to evaluate their teaching methods, the syllabi they use, as well as their students’ performances in literature study. Farrell (2007) presents also the concept of maxim whereby the teacher is guided in his/ her teaching:
 - Maxim of apprenticeship: teach as I was taught
 - Maxim of planning: finish the program at all cost
 - Maxim of conformity: do as others wish, observers, colleagues etc...
- **Questions 16 & 17** concern the choice of works and the excerpts teachers make. **Question 18** addresses extensive reading, **question 19** inquires about the place of research; and **questions 20 & 21** investigate the students’ native cultural background and whether this is

dealt with in class. As for **question 22**, it focuses on the use of media, reading aloud sessions, or even role-plays in the literature classroom. **Question 22** was inspired from Belghoul. It is about the place of reading aloud in the literature class. Similarly to the students, teachers are asked about reading aloud in class. Teachers' opinion on the specifics of this practice is necessary, as Maley points out:

“Reading aloud performance also attracts favorable attention: This is a far cry from the enfeebling practice of ‘reading aloud’ of earlier days. The advantages of scripting prose text for performance or orchestrating verse or dramatic texts are considerable.” (Maley 1998a, 1999b, Cazden 1992; Kramsch 1993)

- Similarly to the students' questionnaire there is an additional question (**Question 23**) in case what was presented to the teachers did not allow them to fully reflect on our issue.

2.3.4. Presentation of the Teachers' Interview

The teachers' interview, similarly to the students' interview, is unstructured and follows no particular pattern. Our main goal is to have themes be issued by the informants solely. “Expert interviewers”, according to Gilham, B. (2000: p. 3) “always have a structure, which they use flexibly according to what emerges.” What we wanted to aim for with the interview was to have participants exchange with us their information, and possibly their emotions, as utterly and deeply as possible. Furthermore, we did not expect any specific information nor did we have any hidden agenda; we consider interview sessions are meant to unveil aspects that would otherwise remain obscure. The majority of teachers accepted to be interviewed; these were 11 out of the 15 teachers in total.

2.4. Data Analysis

After the data collection, we proceeded to different analyses. Firstly, we have the questionnaires that were filled in by 62 students enrolled in the 3 years licence and 15 teachers of literature. For the questionnaires we proceeded to a mixed data analysis. The multiple choice items required frequencies and percentages, but the open-ended questions were analyzed thematically.

Concerning the reading comprehension activity, it is a reading task for the students who were only asked to identify cultural references in an excerpt of the American novel by Jean Webster *Daddy Long Legs* (1912). The results of the activity were informative and not evaluative; we first separated the correct responses from the incorrect ones and then described both categories. The cultural referents successfully identified by the students were quantified in percentages and the wrong answers as well to allow an accurate description of their nature and the amount of their occurrence. The last two questions of the reading task are meta-cognitive and intended to have the students reflect on the task, being open-ended questions their analysis is purely qualitative and the purpose illustrative / explanatory for the discussion and interpretation of the results.

The information provided by the focus group interviews, for both categories of informants, appear in the data interpretation section alongside the quantitative analyses of the questionnaires for their illustration or description. After the recording and transcribing of the interviews (see appendices F & G) we carried out a content analysis, which seems the right method to identify the different topics and sensibilities of the informants

questioned. We identified substantive points, and then put them into categories (or headings for the variety of data obtained). Gilham, B. (2000)

Conclusion

In this chapter we have described the research methodology, its design and process. The choice of our data collection tools was justified in connection to the research questions that were elaborated for the purpose of our main study objective; the Target Cultural Background Knowledge and its place in the literature classroom within the teacher / student interaction and the student / text interaction within the reading process. The complexity of the subject-matter caused us to privilege an unstructured interview alongside a focused reading comprehension activity aiming at the identification of references in the text. The results of the data analyzed will be presented in the following chapter.

Chapter Three: Presentation and Analysis of the Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of our investigation as well as our analysis of these results in view of answering our research questions. We have classified the results of our study under two separate categories, one for the responses of the teachers and one for the students. First we have the questionnaire results, then the reading comprehension activity (for the students); and the interviews are followed by a documents analysis for the first, second, & third years licence. The documents analyzed are the EFL literature curriculum as well as three literature exam questions, one for each year.

3.1. Presentation of the Results of the Study

Our data analysis concerns qualitative responses mostly; however, the questionnaire responses have a few closed-ended questions with multiple choices or ordinal ones in Likert scales that are the quantitative elements of this research. Consequently, numerical data were set in tables after counting the ticks of the participants as a frequency of occurrence check for both teachers and students. We also used descriptive statistical analysis when we calculated the percentage off some of our participants' answers.

As to the qualitative data of the questionnaires, they stand as highly striking or meaningful responses to the open-ended questions or to the comments that in the questionnaire aim to present in depth data explicating wholly their corresponding sections,

or to clarify the responses to closed-ended questions with additional input. Furthermore, the qualitative responses to the questionnaires were interpreted similarly to interview answers, i.e. qualitatively. The interviews are lengthy; there are over 40 pages for the 11 teachers interviewed and over 20 pages for the five students. I have provided three interview transcripts for both students and teachers as sample data (see appendices F & G). We proceeded to a thematic analysis focusing on the search and generation of themes from the dataset; hence, the data from the interviews were labelled and presented into thematic categories.

3.1.1. Presentation of the Students' Answers

3.1.1.1. Results of the Students' Questionnaire

The background questions are under the heading of Section I.

Section I: Students' Profile

*The questions of this section concern the students' gender and age, with **questions 1 & 2**, as well as their cultural background knowledge acquisition with **questions 3 & 4**. We asked the students to identify their mother tongue, due to the Algerian multilingual and multicultural characteristics. As to the **question 5**, the students were asked on the different modes of contact they have had with the target culture, we wished to elicit the environment of the cultural acquisition the students have evolved in.

- **Question 1: The Students' Gender**

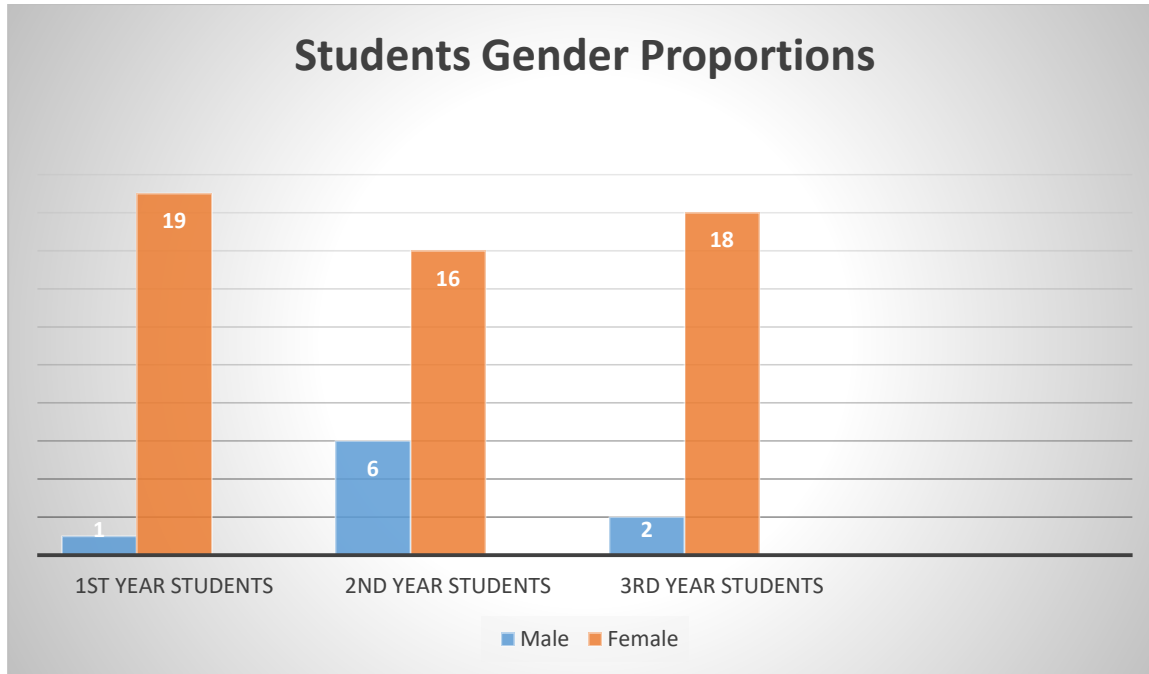


Figure 3.1. The Students' Gender across the Three Groups

- **Question 2: The Students' Ages**

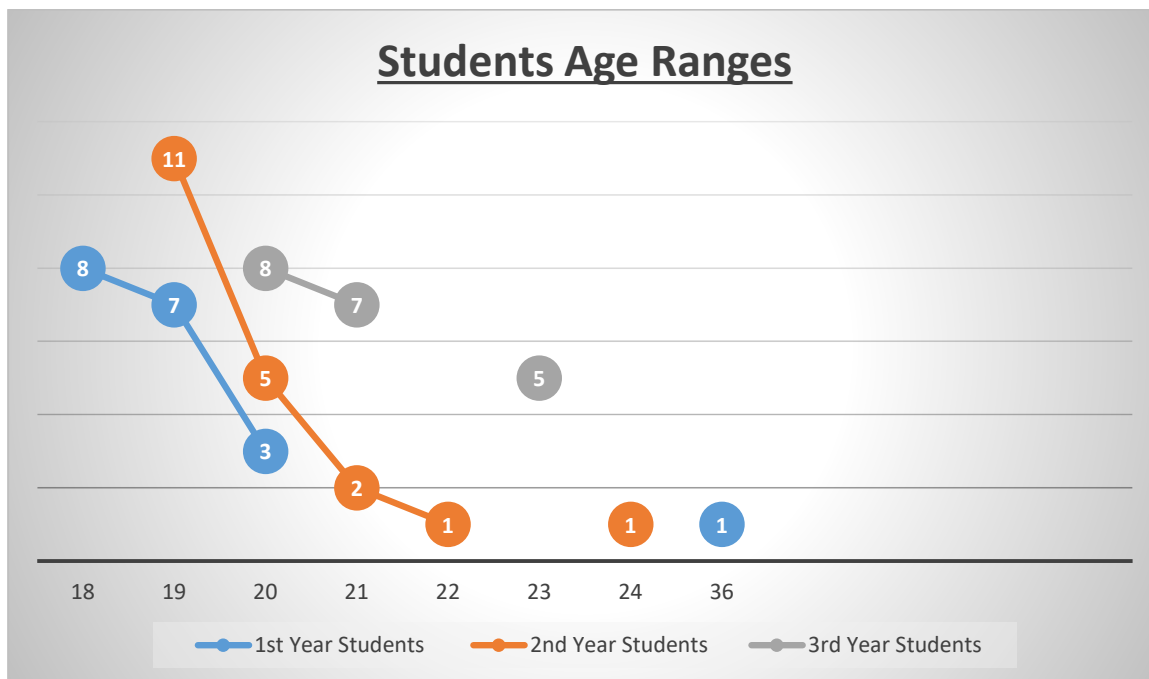


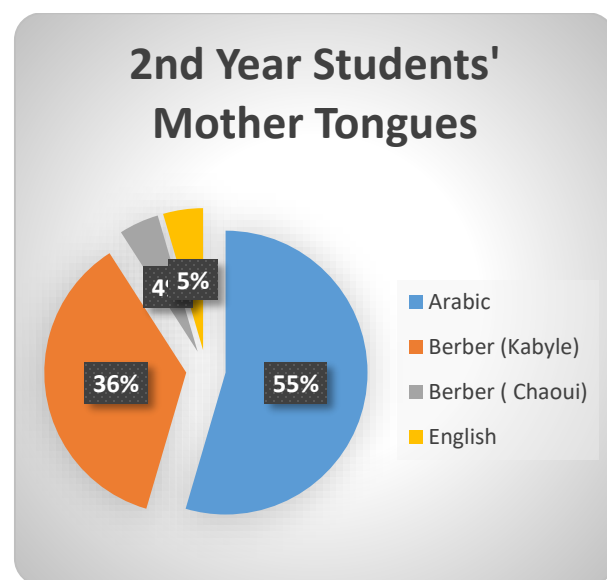
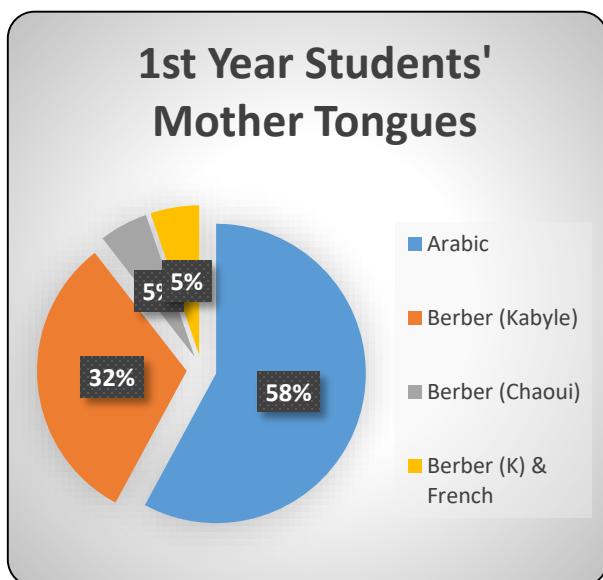
Figure 3.2. The Students' Age Ranges across the Three Groups

*The first two questions present a rather typical profile of EFL Algerian undergraduate students. Their age and gender ranges are homogenous for all three groups of student participants. Their age gaps are typical of undergraduates; the first year students are between 18 and 20 years old with one exception who is 36 years old, the second year students are between 19 and 22 years old with one exception who is 24 years old, and the third year students are between 20 and 23 years old. As to their gender gaps, there is a crushing majority of girls with a ratio of girls per boys of 19 to 01 in first year, 16 to 6 in second year, and 18 to 02 in third year.

- **Question 3: The Students' Nationality**

*All the students in this investigation are Algerian and their linguistic profile confirms it. There is however one student in 2nd year who is an exception and is binational. She is Algerian and American.

- **Question 4: Students' Mother Tongues**



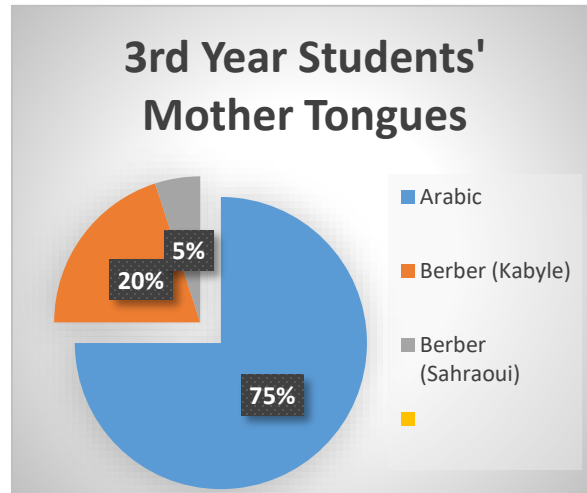


Figure 3.3. Students' Linguistic Profile: the Identification of their Native Language.

***Question 4** presents the mother tongues of the students and the results show the richness of the Algerian linguistic and cultural background, hence its importance for our concern. We have identified three native language groups present at the same level of occurrence across the three groups. The majority of the students are Arabic native speakers with 58% in the first year, 55% in the second year, and 75% in the third year. Next are the Kabyle Berber native speakers, who are 32% in the first year, 36% in the second year, and 20% in the third year. Finally, we have the Chaoui Berber native speakers who are 5% of the first and the second year student population. In the third year group, we have 5% of the students who are Sahraouian Berber native speakers. We also have two exceptions; one is a French native speaker alongside Kabyle Berber in the first year licence and the other is an American English native speaker in second year. These, however, remain marginal with a share of 3.22%.

- **Question 5: Students' Previous Contact with the Target Language and Culture**

First Year Students

	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	Always (%)
In class	5	10	10	15	60
TV, Social Media, Chat rooms (Skype)	5	10	20	20	45
Foreigners in Algeria	45	40	15		
Trips abroad where English is not the official language	60	10	25	5	
England, USA, Australia, Ireland, or other countries where English is the native language	55	5	25	5	10

Table 3.1. First Year Students' Previous Contacts with the English Language

Second Year Students

	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	Always (%)
In class		13.63	18.18	18.18	36.36
TV, Social Media, Chat rooms (Skype)		4.54	18.18	18.18	36.36
Foreigners in Algeria	36.36	22.72	13.63		9.09
Trips abroad where English is not the official language	63.63	13.63	9.09		
England, USA, Australia, Ireland, or other countries where English is the native language	54.54	4.54		4.54	22.72
Speaking with people in English (parents)					4.54

Table 3.2. Second Year Students' Previous Contacts with the English Language

Third Year Students

	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	Always (%)
In class		5	15	20	60
TV, Social Media, Chat rooms (Skype)			15	25	60
Foreigners in Algeria	50	5	20	15	10
Trips abroad where English is not the official language	55	20	10	15	
England, USA, Australia, Ireland, or other countries where English is the native language	75	10	5	5	5
Good Teachers				5	
Books in English (Manga)				5	

Table 3.3. Third Year Students' Previous Contacts with the English Language

*The responses of the students here show that for the three groups of students EFL culture is mainly found in the 'classroom' and on 'social media', rating them both as 'always' being their source for English. For 60% of the first year students, 36.36% of the second year students, and 60% of the third year students, 'the classroom' is their place of connection with English. It is 'social media' for 45% of the first year students, 36.36% of second year students, and 60% of the third year students.

On the other hand, being in contact with 'natives' or 'foreigners' who speak English is much less likely for our students, as 45% of the first year students declare it to never happen against 36.36% for the second year students and 50% for the third year students. As for

‘trips abroad’, where students could make use of English, 60% first year students, 63.63% second year students, and 55% third year students declared they ‘never’ experienced them before. Concerning ‘trips in English speaking countries’, where an English language immersion can be a boost for any learner, 55 % first year students, 54.54% second year students, and 75% third year students rated them as ‘never’ having taken place for them. There is one student declaring to speak with her parents in English, but that is because she is an American English native speaker and her case is an exception.

➤ **Question 6: What do you rely on primarily for cultural acquisition?**

	1 st Year Students (%)	2 nd Year Students (%)	3 rd Year Students (%)
Social Media (YouTube)	50	36.36	40
Teachers	15	13.63	15
TV	30	31.81	20
Book (Novels)	5	9.09	20
Family Discussion		4.54	
Discussion on the Net		4.54	
No Answer			5

Table 3.4. Means used by Students for Cultural Acquisition

*The results to this question show clearly that ‘social media’ is the source of choice for the students of the three groups: 50% in the first year, 36.36% the second year and 40% the third year. ‘Television’ comes next with 30% in the first year, 31.81% in the second year, and 20% in the third year. ‘Teachers’ come only in the third position with 15% in the first year, 13.63% in the second year, and 15% in the third year. A student explains in the comment section:

‘I usually rely on both the teacher’s content and social media, I like to think that the teacher opens the door and social media guide me through the culture.’ (3rd year student)

After the ‘teachers’, we have ‘books’ with 5% in the first year, 9% in the second year, and 20% in the third year. We notice that although the rates for ‘books’ are low there is an evolution, the closer the students get to graduation the more aware they become of the importance of books in their learning.

- **Question 7: Which Topics are more attractive to your generation?**

	1 st Year Students (%)	2 nd Year Students (%)	3 rd Year Students (%)
Topics of your age concerns	75	45.45	35
Colonization & History of Algeria	10	4.54	35
Both	5	40.9	15
No answer	10	10	15

Table 3.5. Topics Preferred by Students for Literature Study

*This question aimed at eliciting the issue raised in a previous research (Fasla: 2009) about the place of native culture in the literature classroom and whether it was topic-related. The first year students are straightforward in their answers as 75% of them state they prefer ‘topics of their age concerns’. Second year students are more inquisitive in their choice as 45.45% prefer topics of their age concerns and 40.9% want to read about both kinds of topics. Whereas the third year students are divided in their choices; 35% of them prefer to read about topics of their age concerns and another 35% want to read about ‘colonization and history’. The following are statements of students who justify their distaste for ‘historical topics and colonialism’. A 1st year student said the following: *“I would rather deal with topics that are closer to our reality in the present, especially mental health issues and growth.”* A third year student adds, *“The topic of colonialism has always been present in our educational system. At some point any other topic feels like a breath of fresh air.”*

Section II: Reading Practices

- **Question 8: Students’ Free Association to the word ‘Reading’:
Results for the First Year Students:**

Novels (11x)	Books (10x)	Fun (9x)	Boring (8x)			
Story (4x)	Culture (4x)	Imagination (4x)	Pleasure (5x)			
Learning (3x)	Knowledge (3x)	Interesting (3x)	Helpful (3x)	Fantasy (3x)		
Relax (2x)	Alone time (2x)	Short story (2x)	Motivate (2x)	Information (2x)	Thoughts (2x)	New words (2x)

Table 3.6. First Year Students’ Free Associations to ‘Reading’ ranked from the mostly repeated to the least repeated words.

Lexical Field	Words of the students presented only once (1x)				
Reading as a skill	Speaking				
Reading & the illusion of transposition	Escapism	travelling			
Frequency of reading	Everyday	rarely			
Reading seen as peaceful	calm	lazy	dream		
Lack of confidence in reading	Mystery activity	Difficulty	achievement	assistance	
Inquisitive reading	Research	website	discovery	internet forum	Text
Moods about reading	Waste of time	kills	depression	Love	Happy

Table 3.7. First Year Students' Free Associations to 'Reading' grouped into Lexical Fields.

Results for the Second Year Students:

Books (15x)				
Pleasure (8x)	Novels (7x)	Knowledge (6x)		
Story (4x)	Newspaper (4x)	Magazine (4x)	Time-consuming (4x)	Fun (4x)
Relaxing (3x)	Interesting (3x)	Article (3x)	Hobby (3x)	
Journal (2x)	Ideas (2x)	Exciting (2x)	Website (2x)	News (2x)
Good (2x)	Information (2x)	Language (2x)	Cool (2x)	Entertainment (2x)

Table 3.8. Second Year Students' Free Associations to 'Reading' ranked from the mostly repeated to the least repeated words.

Lexical Field	Words of the students presented only once (1x)				
Reading & Academics	wise	Intellectual	educative	Good marks	Productive
Reality / Fiction			relatable	fantasy	
Emotions & Reading	Addictive	Life-saving	fascinating	love	distracting
Literary Terms	drama	Poem	characters	action	novella

Table 3.9. Second Year Students' Free Associations to 'Reading' grouped into Lexical Fields.

Results for the Third Year Students:

Books (8x)					
Novels(5x)	Boring(4x)	Stories(4x)	Articles(4x)	Knowledge(4x)	Writing(4x)
Learning (3x)	Fun (3x)	Culture (3x)	Joyful (3x)		
Pleasure (2x)	Escape reality (2x)	Adventure (2x)	Vocabulary (2x)	Comics (2x)	News (2x)

Table 3.10. Third Year Students' Free Associations to 'Reading' ranked from the mostly repeated to the least repeated words.

Inquisitive reading	research	New perspectives	informative			
Reading formats	Koran	magazines	Journal			
Literary skills	Sub skills in English	Structure	Highlighting	Analysis		
Literature study	English literature	Characters	Short stories	Style		
Media & Reading	Lyrics & songs	audiobooks	Website	Movie reviews		
Qualifying Reading	difficult	interesting	Important	Not used to reading		
Creative Pastime	imaginary	Time travel	creative	Hobby	Travel without moving	
Academic reading	School-related books	Expository	argumentative	Essay	studying	
Reading & thinking	Psychology	Mind	Feel better	Self-improvement	Wisdom	Depth
Feelings & Reading	helpful	happiness	empathy	understanding	emotion	Human nature

Table 3.11. Third Year Students' Free Associations to 'Reading' grouped into Lexical Fields.

*In order to identify a pattern for the results of the above question, we categorized the responses of the students in two ways: the first was to list the recurrent words from the mostly repeated to the least, and the second listing was to categorize the words that appeared once in a lexical field.

The first year students associated to 'reading' the words 'novels' (11x), 'books' (10x), 'fun' (9x), and 'boring' (8x). This shows a loose familiarity with the activity. The following words that were repeated are also very inclusive; they can be attributed to various topics in addition to 'reading'. They are 'culture' (4x), 'imagination' (4x), 'learning' (3x), 'interesting' (3x), and 'relax' (2x). We identified the following lexical fields: reading is a skill, reading frequency, inquisitive reading, and reading is transporting, reading is peaceful, and lack of confidence. We note that the skillset for reading appears in the lexical fields of skill, reading frequency, and inquisitive reading side by side with the lexical fields of the emotions reading triggers with transporting, peaceful, and lack of confidence. In addition, the emotions depicted are contradictory; we have peaceful and transporting with lack of confidence.

The second year students associated to 'reading' the words 'books' (15x), 'pleasure' (8x), 'novels' (7x), and 'knowledge' (6x). This shows the same vagueness as the abovementioned first year students' responses. The following words that were repeated are more specific to the task of reading and they are 'newspaper' (4x), 'magazine' (4x), 'time-consuming' (4x), 'article' (3x), 'hobby' (3x), 'journal' (2x), 'ideas' (2x), 'website' (2x), 'news' (2x). The identification of the lexical fields for the second year is as follows: reading & academics, fiction/reality, emotions, and literary terms. The lexical fields show that the students are not oblivious to reading, on the contrary, with words like 'life-saving' and 'addictive'. They also demonstrate a precise account of reading with words like 'drama', 'poem', 'characters', 'action', or 'novella'.

The third year students associated to 'reading' the words 'books' (8x), 'boring' (4x), 'fun' (3x), 'joyful' (3x). We identified the following words that were repeated twice: 'pleasure', 'escape', 'adventure', 'comics', 'vocabulary', and 'news'. There is a certain energy to these words, which shows a new familiarity with the activity of reading. First there is the use of words such as 'boring' or 'joyful' presenting a contradictory nature of emotions about reading and then we have the excitement of young readers described through words like 'escape', 'adventure', and 'comics'.

We also identified the following lexical fields for the rest of the words associated to reading by the third year students: inquisitive reading, reading formats, literary skills, literature study, media & reading, qualifying reading, creative pastime, academic reading, reading & thinking, feelings about reading. We note that the third year students are quite knowledgeable about reading and its characteristics. Their familiarity with reading by means of media support appears within the following words from the lexical group media & reading: 'lyrics of songs', 'audiobooks', 'websites', and 'movie reviews'. With words such as 'empathy', 'understanding', and 'human nature' for the lexical group feelings & reading, we understand that third year students are sensible about the role of emotion in the works they read.

When they qualify reading they are precise with the words 'difficult', 'important', and 'not used to reading'; which are precisely the characteristics generally attributed to students today as being nonreaders. Finally, we can state that third year students' free association to the word 'reading' is not very repetitive as there is a bigger variety of words

compared to the first and second year students. In addition, their responses have generated a rich variety of lexical fields demonstrating personal opinion and perspective on the subject.

- **Question 9: Identify your reading profile.**

	1 st Year Students (%)	2 nd Year Students (%)	3 rd Year Students (%)
a) I never read, as I was not much introduced to literature in school.	20		5
b) I have read novels occasionally for school homework and the like.	25	50	35
c) I was often curious to read and read books during vacations for example	25	50	15
d) I like reading, I recognize its value in my studies, and I do a lot of research.	10		5
e) I love reading I am what we call a 'bookworm' I read for pleasure and for studying.	20		40

Table 3.12. Students' Reading Profiles

*The responses given by the first year students are distributed in all the options provided by the question. 20% of them chose a) "I never read..." 25% stated, b) "I have read occasionally..." 25% selected c) "I was curious to read..." 10% decided on d) "I like reading...", and 20% opted for e) "I love reading..." the responses seem to show us that first year students come with different reading profiles. Despite the options provided by the question, the second year students' responses were clear-cut; 50% said b) "I have read

occasionally...” and 50% took c) “I was curious to read...” In this category, there are no book lovers nor are there any book haters.

Finally, the responses of the third year students are scattered similarly to the first year student responses, but with more nuance. Their answers are as follows: 5% of them picked a) “I never read...” 35% indicated, b) “I have read occasionally...” 15% selected c) “I was curious to read...” 15% d) “I like reading...”, and 40% indicated, e) “I love reading...” We note that the biggest percentages for this group are 35% who declared b) “I have read occasionally...”; and most probably refer to their reading practices at university as third year students, and 40% who indicated e) “I love reading...” most probably as a result to having read all throughout their licence program. Additional explanations come from the comments several students made for this question. Both a first year and a third year student made the same statement as to their experience with reading:

‘I like reading when the topic is chosen by me of course, not the topic of the literature teacher, A Passage to India is not interesting.’ (3rd year student)

‘I like to be able to choose what I read, but when I’m forced to read a long novel that does not interest me, I hate it.’ (1st year student)

Hence, we understand that the choice of the topic is important to the students and they want to be involved in it; for them it is not only the responsibility / privilege of the teacher. The following comments from a second and third year student also depict the students and their love of reading as having emerged away from the classroom:

‘I was introduced to the beauty of books and reading when I was a child, therefore reading is a part of me, and it keeps me happy...’ (2nd year student)

'First of all, I read for myself to develop and improve my skills and sometimes I read just for fun.' (3rd year student)

- **Question 10: What motivates you to read?**

	Yes (%)	No (%)
Topic choice	85	15
Good marks	55	45
The plot / the intrigue	65	35
The movie version	75	25

Table 3.13. First Year Students motivation to Read

	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Answer (%)
Topic choice	77.27	13.63	9.09
Good marks	68.18	22.72	4.54
The plot / the intrigue	72.72	22.72	4.54
The movie version	45.45	45.45	9.09

Table 3.14. Second Year Students motivation to Read

	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Answer (%)
Topic choice	80	10	10
Good marks	60	40	0
The plot / the intrigue	70	15	15
The movie version	65	35	0

Table 3.15. Third Year Students motivation to Read

*The results for the three groups of students position the ‘topic choice’ as the number one motivator to encourage reading. In the first year, 85% of the students place it first against 77.27% of the second year students, and 80% for third years. The results for the other motivators are less definite as the first year students place ‘the plot’ in the third position with 65%, when the second year students and the third year students place it in the second position with respectively 72.72% and 70%. Same thing for the ‘movie version’, the first year students rank it highly in the second position with 75%, when the second year place it last with 45.45% and the third years put it in the third position with 65%. Concerning ‘good marks’, it was surprisingly one of the least preferred motivator. Even though the outcome is important for their future careers, first year and third year students, place it in the fourth and last position with respectfully 55% and 60%. The second year students placed it in the third position with 68.18%.

We understand that the motivators to push students into reading are not clear-cut; additionally, two 1st year students made statements that show that reading is something personal and needs to be handled with care. They say what follows:

‘My dad, because he reads a lot and he is enormously smart and he has a lot of general culture, so that makes me want to read.’

‘I like reading, however when it’s forced upon me it’s a little difficult!’

Section III: Literature Study

- **Question 11: Did you expect to study literature for this licence?**

	Yes (%)	No (%)
1 st Year Licence	50	50
2 nd Year Licence	54.54	45.45
3 rd Year Licence	85	15

Table 3.16. Students' Anticipations toward the Literature Module

- **Question 12: If not, what did you expect instead?**

1 st Year Licence	Linguistics (2x)	Grammar	Listening/ Speaking	Study skills
	Phonetics	Anglophone Culture	No Answer (3x)	
2 nd Year Licence	Linguistics (3x)	Translation (5x)	IT (3x)	No Answer (2x)
3 rd Year Licence	Linguistics	Drama	Literary Theory	

Table 3.17. Students' Expected Modules instead of the Literature Module

***Questions 11 & 12** were intended to unveil the perception students have of the literature module. The first year students are divided as 50% of them did not expect to study literature. Then the situation evolves towards more understanding. A little more than half of the second year students, 54.54%, and 85% in the third year. **Question 12**, an open-ended question, reveals what students had in mind when enrolling in the English licence. The first year students expected English language learning modules with 'grammar', 'Anglophone culture', 'linguistics' and 'phonetics', as well as skills acquisition modules with 'listening & speaking' and 'study skills'. The second year students appear to be more goal-oriented having preferred 'translation' and 'IT', two fields that are very demanded in the workplace.

The third year students dug deeper into literature as a specialization and elected ‘drama’ & ‘literary theory’.

- **Question 13: Which of the three Literatures taught at the department was a surprise to you?**

	African Literature (%)	American Literature (%)	English Literature (%)	None (%)	
1 st Year Licence	25	15	25	35	
2 nd Year Licence	45.45	22.72	9.09	22.72	
3 rd Year Licence	Surprised to Find African Literature In the syllabus	Surprised they were not taught African Literature	American Literature	English Literature	None
	35	20	20	25	0

Table 3.18. Students’ Surprise rate about the Literatures Taught at the Licence

- **Question 14: Which of the three literatures was the easiest to study?**

	English Literature (%)	American Literature (%)	African Literature (%)	None (%)	I don’t know (%)
1 st Year Licence	10	35	15	3	35
2 nd Year Licence	40.9	31.81			27.27
3 rd Year Licence	30	15	15	20	20

Table 3.19. Students Evaluate the Difficulty of the Literatures Studied

***Questions 13 & 14** were directly drawn from a previous research (Fasla: 2009) that shed light on issues with students’ native culture. For **question 13**, the students from all the three groups generally expressed their surprise of having African literature at the program. Although the first year students’ most prominent answer was ‘none’ with 35%, 25%

selected African literature and another 25% picked English literature. A 1st year student commented on why they did not have an opinion saying: “We did not treat all of them, so I have no idea.” The second year students were more straightforward concerning African literature with 45.45%. As for the third year Licence students, they were very specific in their answers and declared by 35% to be surprised to find African literature in their syllabus and 20% surprised not to receive any teaching of African literature.

In **question 14** English literature was considered easy by 40.9% of the second year students and 30% of the third year students. American literature was chosen by 35% of the first year students.

A third year student declared English literature was easier because of the topics they were brought to deal with in class. Additionally, and in spite of the low rates attributed to African literature in this question, 15% first year students and 15% third year students considered African literature to be the easiest. Only one first year student indicated in the comment section that Algeria belonged in the African continent. “*The African literature is easy because it is close to our culture and traditions.*”

- **Question 15: Which of the three literatures was the most interesting?**

	American Literature (%)	English Literature (%)	African Literature (%)	Not one (%)	I don't know (%)
1 st Year Licence	15	15	10	35	25
2 nd Year Licence	18.18	31.81			50
3 rd Year Licence	20	35	10	15	20

Table 3.20. The Most Interesting Literatures according to the Students

***Question 15** comes to complete the portrayal of the three literatures proposed in the licence with the students' perspective. First year students' top answer was 'not one' with 35%. Half of the second year students declared 'I don't know' and 31.81% of them chose English literature. As for the third year students, they chose English literature at 35%. In the comments, some first year students affirmed that the choice of the novel was the issue. They said: *"The novel was not interesting."* Another said, *"Not one, because it's the choice of books."* Moreover, another one declared, *"We prefer things like Jane Eyre, Twilight, or Harry Potter..."* A third year student added a comment to the matter of the topic choice: *"...love stories, short stories (Rip Van Winkle)."* The 3rd Year Licence students who answered 'not one...' added an explanation; one student said: *"It's the novel study I like, the fact that there is more to the book than the story"*. The second year students had mostly comments on African literature: *"I didn't know we have such writers in Africa!"* one says, and *"African literature is something vague to me."* Another second year student confirms. Eventually, one adds, *"African literature was the one that felt a bit different..."*

Section IV: Literary Skills

Question 16: While studying literature, which tools were most helpful to you?

First year students

	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
Reading the novel at the program	30	25	15	25	5
Teacher explanation & monitoring	25	20	20	20	15
Summaries of novel / critics' analyses online	20	15	25	25	15
Research in History/ civilization books	20	30	35	10	5
Background information about the author	15	25	35	20	5

Native University students' online essays	30	35	20	10	5
Small group work	25	10	40	20	5

Table 3.21. Helpful Tools for Studying Literature according to 1st Years Students

Second year students

	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
Reading the novel at the program	9.09	13.63	18.18	40.9	18.18
Teacher explanation & monitoring	13.63	0	13.63	36.36	36.36
Summaries of novel / critics' analyses online	0	9.09	9.09	50	31.81
Research in History/ civilization books	13.63	22.72	27.27	22.72	13.63
Background information about the author	4.54	9.09	31.81	31.81	22.72
Native University students' online essays	13.63	9.09	18.18	40.9	18.18
Small group work	13.63	13.63	31.81	22.72	18.18

Table 3.22. Helpful Tools for Studying Literature according to 2nd Years Students

Third year students

	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
Reading the novel at the program	10	10	25	45	10
Teacher explanation & monitoring	0	5	15	40	40
Summaries of novel / critics' analyses online	15	0	20	35	30
Research in History/ civilization books	0	5	35	45	15
Background information about the author	5	0	10	55	30
Native University students' online essays	10	10	30	30	20
Small group work	5	20	35	30	10
Other... critical thinking					5

Table 3.23. Helpful Tools for Studying Literature according to 3rd Years Students

*First year students 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' with 'reading the novel' at respectively 30% and 25%. The responses to 'teachers' explanations' are distributed rather

equally, around 20% for each segment. For 'summaries of novels' same thing. For 'research in history' 35% respond being 'neutral'. As to 'background knowledge of the author', 35% are 'neutral' as well. Regarding 'native students' essays online' 30% 'strongly disagree' and 35% 'disagree'. As for 'group work', 40% chose to be 'neutral' about it. Second year students 'agree' with 'reading the novel' at 40.9%, while 36.36% 'agree' and 36.36% 'strongly agree' with 'teachers' explanations'. For the 'summaries of novels' 50% 'agree' to consider them helpful. Responses for 'research in history' are spread out evenly.

For the 'background knowledge of the author', 31.8% were neutral and 31.8% agreed. The 'native students' essays online' received a 40% ratio who agreed to consider helpful, however 'small group work' found that 31.8% are neutral towards it. Third year students agree at 45% with 'reading the novel' and 40% agree with another 40% who strongly agree that 'teachers' explanations' are useful to them. Students agreed to say that using the 'summaries of the novels' is helpful at 35% and 45% of the students agreed with 'research in history'. As to the 'background knowledge of the author', it received 55% of agreeing responses. Regarding 'native students' essays online' 30% of students remained neutral. Finally, concerning group work, 35% said they were neutral.

Question 17: What are your strengths and weaknesses in studying Literature?

First year students	Strength (%)	Weakness (%)	I do not know (%)
Analyzing texts through literary devices or stylistic features: metaphors, diction and so on	25	75	0
Summarizing the plot	50	50	0
Paraphrasing ideas from a text	70	25	5
Analyzing texts through character description	65	35	5
Relating information from the text to real historical / cultural information	15	85	0
Drawing inferences	40	60	0
Handling different sources of information / data	20	80	0
Referencing from within a text	30	55	15
Reading a literary text, identifying genre, plot structure, themes, etc...	90	10	0

Table 3.24. Evaluation of Their Strengths and Weaknesses in studying Literature by First Year Students

Second year students	Strength (%)	Weakness (%)	I do not know (%)
Analyzing texts through literary devices or stylistic features: metaphors, diction and so on	54.54	45.45	0
Summarizing the plot	45.45	54.54	0
Paraphrasing ideas from a text	54.54	40.9	4.54
Analyzing texts through character description	72.72	22.72	4.54
Relating information from the text to real historical / cultural information	63.63	31.81	4.54
Drawing inferences	27.27	59.09	13.63
Handling different sources of information / data	50	45.45	4.54
Referencing from within a text	31.81	50	18.18
Reading a literary text, identifying genre, plot structure, themes, etc...	63.63	31.81	4.54

Table 3.25. Evaluation of Their Strengths and Weaknesses in studying Literature by Second Year Students

Third year students	Strength (%)	Weakness (%)	I do not know (%)
Analyzing texts through literary devices or stylistic features: metaphors, diction etc.	65	35	0
Summarizing the plot	80	20	0
Paraphrasing ideas from a text	75	15	10
Analyzing texts through character description	50	50	0
Relating information from the text to real historical / cultural information	40	50	10
Drawing inferences	25	70	5
Handling different sources of information / data	50	40	10
Referencing from within a text	45	45	10
Reading a literary text, identifying genre, plot structure, themes, etc...	75	15	10

Table 3.26. Evaluation of Their Strengths and Weaknesses in studying Literature by Third Year Students

*The results in the tables above indicate the students' own evaluations of their skills for studying literature firstly from a textual standpoint with 'texts analysis through literary devices or stylistic features', 'summarizing the plot', 'character description', and 'identifying genre, plot structure, themes, etc...'. The second level of skillset i.e. connecting the text with its context comes with 'referencing from within a text', 'paraphrasing ideas from a text', and 'relating information from the text to real historical / cultural information'. The third level of higher interpretive skills is present with 'handling different sources of information / data' and 'drawing inferences'.

The first year student responses for each category show that their evaluations match the difficulties of each skill category.

For 'texts analysis through literary devices or stylistic features', 75% answered it was their 'strength'; and for 'summarizing the plot' it was 50%. Regarding 'character description' 65% said it was their strength. However, 'identifying genre, plot structure, themes, etc...' totalized a high rate of 90% of the students who consider it their 'strength'. For the second level of skillset the rates decrease as 45% only declare 'referencing from within a text' to be their 'strength' with an exception for 'paraphrasing ideas from a text' which 70% see it as a 'strength'. Yet, 'relating information from the text to real historical / cultural information' has 85% who assert it to be a 'weakness'. Concerning the interpretive skills such as 'handling different sources of information / data' 80% of students say it is a weakness and 60% affirm that 'drawing inferences' is their 'weakness'.

The responses of the second year students, although similar in evolution as those of the first years, are mitigated. They view 'texts analysis through literary devices or stylistic features' as their 'strength' for 54.54% of them; and for 'summarizing the plot' it was 45.45%. Regarding 'character description' 72.72% said it was their 'strength'. Moreover, 63.63% of the students saw 'identifying genre, plot structure, themes, etc...' as their 'strength'. Similarly to the first year students, the rates of the second level of skillset decrease as only 31.81% declare 'referencing from within a text' to be their 'strength'. Regarding 'paraphrasing ideas from a text', 54.54% see it as a 'strength'. As to 'relating information from the text to real historical / cultural information', it collects 63.63% who assert it to be a 'strength'. Concerning the interpretive skills such as 'handling different

sources of information / data’, 50% of students say it is a ‘strength’ when only 27.27% affirm that ‘drawing inferences’ is their ‘strength’.

For ‘texts analysis through literary devices or stylistic features’, 65% of the third year students answered it was their ‘strength’; and for ‘summarizing the plot’ it was 80%. Regarding ‘character description’ 50% said it was their ‘strength’. Still, ‘identifying genre, plot structure, themes, etc...’ totalized a high rate of 75% of the students who consider it their ‘strength’. For the second level of skillset the rates decrease as 45% only declare ‘referencing from within a text’ to be their ‘strength’, and similarly to their first year counterparts, there is an exception for ‘paraphrasing ideas from a text’ for which 75% see it as a ‘strength’. Yet, ‘relating information from the text to real historical / cultural information’ has only 40% who assert it to be their ‘strength’. Concerning the interpretive skills such as ‘handling different sources of information / data’, 50% of the students say it is a ‘weakness’ and only 25% affirm that ‘drawing inferences’ is their ‘strength’.

- **Question 18: What does your test mark depend on?**

	1st Year Licence	2nd Year Licence	3rd Year Licence
a) The test format.	5%	9.09%	10%
b) The teachers’ correcting style.	50%	40.9%	15%
c) The topic choice.	20%	40.9%	50%
d) Classroom material: themes or techniques taught in class.	25%	9.09%	25%

Table 3.27. Elements that influence the Test Results according to Students

***Question 18** addresses an issue that is quite important for the students, and that is their mark. We wished to identify what the students believed to influence their results. The ‘teachers’ correcting style’ was the top answer for the first year students with a rate of 50%. The second year students place it equally with the topic choice at a rate of 40.9% each. As for the third year students, they place ‘teachers’ correcting style’ in the third position only with a rate of 15%. The following comments by the students in the comment section of the questionnaire are explicit as to the responsibility students attribute to their teachers. They say what follows:

‘Teachers don’t bother to explain well, or at least make lessons memorable or remotely interesting (their correcting style is terrible, but I prefer to blame myself).’
(1st year student)

The comment above drawn by a first year student shows that first year students rely heavily on their teachers, and this can cause resentment. The following comment presents an evolution from the first to the second year. Here is the second year student’s comment:

‘Although teachers’ teaching methods have an effect on my understanding, it’s not what ultimately defines my mark. I think it is more related to how much time I spend thoroughly studying the material at home and alone.’ (2nd year students)

‘Classroom material with themes or techniques taught in classes’ are chosen at a rate of 25% for the first year students who place it in the second position. It is at a rate of 9.09% for the second year students who place it equally with test formats at the third and last position, and at a rate of 25% by the third year students who place it in the second position after topic choice. The above comment by a second year student shows clearly that working

on the material given in class can allow the students to free themselves from external influence, may it be that of their teachers.

‘The topic choice’ for the test also proves to be important for 50% of the third year students who place it in the first position, and the second year students who also place it in the first position alongside teachers’ correcting style with 40.9%. The first year students though, place it in the third position with only 20%. The following comments qualify ‘the topic choice’ to be of importance in their learning.

They say what follows:

‘When I deal with a topic that I actually enjoy and like, I usually feel more motivated and eventually give it my best and rely on my previous knowledge about it.’ (3rd year student)

Another second year student adds:

‘Once I understand the topic, it will be easier to develop my ideas.’ (2nd year students)

Concerning the test format, it is the proposition that obtained the smallest percentages. The first year students put it at the last position with 5%, the second year students put it second alongside classroom material with 9.09%, and the third year students also put it in the last position with 10%. The following comment by a second year student however, gives an interesting insight on the advantage of shifting test formats:

“The test format is quite important and direct questions are far better and easier than the essay.” (2nd year students)

Section IV: Media & Literature

In this section, we inquired the position of students concerning media use and other ways to deliver literary material that do not rely solely on reading silently and studying.

Question 19 is a closed-ended question meant to bring about the very expected result of an overwhelming approval of our ‘digital native’ students for implementing media use and other activities in the literature classroom.

Question 19: Would you like to see movie adaptations of the novels or plays you study in class?

	Yes	No	No Answer
1st Year Licence	90%	5%	5%
2nd Year Licence	68.18%	27.27%	4.54%
3rd Year Licence	90%	5%	5%

Table 3.28. Movie adaptations of the novels or plays Studied

For the open-ended **question 20**, the students provided the following categories and no suggestions were made to them.

- **Question 20: If yes, how did it help?**

First year students

-It helps to visualize / have an idea of the story and the characters	22.22%
-It helps understand the novel better	27.77%
-It makes things fun, not boring	16.66%
-It helps to memorize	05.55%
-No answer	27.55%

Table 3.29. First Year Students on How Movie Adaptations are Helpful to Them

Second year students

-It helps to clarify information taught in class	26.66%
-It helps understand the general idea of the novel	33.33%
-It helps to have more fun & less boredom	6.66%
-No answer	33.33%

Table 3.30. Second Year Students on How Movie Adaptations are Helpful to Them

Third year students

-It helps to understand the novel better	38.88%
-It helps to understand faster	16.66%
-It helps to concentrate more & memorize	16.66%
-It helps to have an idea about the novel	16.66%
-No answer	11.11%

Table 3.31. Third Year Students on How Movie Adaptations are Helpful to Them

*First year students with 27.77%, second year students with 33.33%, and third year students with 38.88%, all assert that movie adaptations allow them to ‘understand the novel’. They put this category at the first position of their answers. First year and third year students claim it helps them ‘have an idea / visualize the novel’ respectively at 22.22% and 16.66%.

First year and second year students declare movie adaptations make literature class ‘fun and less boring’ with respectively 16.66% and 6.66%. Additionally, movie adaptations are said to ‘help memorize’ by 5.55% of the first year students and to ‘help concentrate and memorize’ by 16.66% of the third year students. As to second year students, they believed it helps them ‘clarify the information taught in class’ with a rate of 26.66%. Third year students also affirmed that movie adaptations helped them ‘to understand faster’ with a rate of 16.66%.

It is also important to note that for this question there is a substantial rate of students who did not write any comment in the space allotted. These are 27.55% among the first year students, 33.33% of the second year students, and 11.11% for the third years.

- **Question 21: Which media has your preference?**

	1st Year Licence	2nd Year Licence	3rd Year Licence
a) I watch movies adapted from books in general.	35%	68.18%	50%
b) I watch biopics, or documentaries about authors' lives for class preparation.	5%	4.54%	5%
c) I watch documentaries about ancient periods, countries or societies described in the novels.	10%	13.63%	30%
d) I watch videos about symbols, religions, or mythologies to understand cultural references in the novel.	50%	13.63%	15%

Table 3.32. Media Use of Choice by Students of Literary Study

*First year students declare to ‘watch videos about symbols etc.’ at a rate of 50% making it their top answer before ‘movies adapted from books in general’ for which they answered with a rate of 35%. Both second year and third year students say they ‘watch movies adapted from books in general’ at respectively 68.18% and 50%. Third year students add they ‘watch videos about symbols’ etc. at a rate of 30%. The following comments given by first year students transpire of honesty and goodness. They state what follows:

“I wish teachers make literature easier than that and not a boring module.”

“I am sure literature teachers must be kind and they don’t want to make students bored by this module, they must use techniques to make understanding easier.”

- **Question 22: Literature class activities you think are needed: Circle ONE answer only.**

	1st Year Licence	2nd Year Licence	3rd Year Licence
a)Role playing the dialogues is fun and motivating	35%	27.27%	30%
b)Reading aloud the extracts with the correct intonation is a good practice	20%	9.09%	20%
c)Class presentations are challenging and force us to study in depth the novel	5%	18.18%	25%
d) Media use makes literature fun and lively we are in the 21st century!	40%	36.36%	25%

Table 3.33. Extra Activities by Students of Literary Study

*First year and second year students consider answer d) ‘media use’ to be their prominent response both with respectively a rate of 40% and 36.36%. Third year students chose answer a) ‘role playing’ as their favorite class activity, a more task-based kinesthetic activity, at 30% placing it at the top position as a consequence. Second year students also value ‘role playing’ with 27.27%, placing it at the second position. Finally, ‘role playing’ seems to be also popular with the first year students who, with 35%, place it in their second best choice as well. The following additional comments by 2 third year and one first year student show they are in demand of practice activities in the literature classroom. They say:

“Doing presentations with media support would be perfect.” (3rd year student)

“Role playing and presentations forces us to search, it is learning by doing.” (3rd year student)

“If I like a book, I will automatically go into a phase of obsession about everything related to it. For example, I’m currently reading Outlander so I find myself looking up and learning a lot about Scotland and Gaelic otters.” (2nd year student)

Moreover, students consider that activities to help them become proficient should be fun and encouraging. They declare what follows:

“Class presentation lowers anxiety.” (3rd year student)

“Role playing is fun and we are not used to do it. It will be entertaining and it will bring the story to life.” (3rd year student)

“Literature and reading books are good; teachers have to encourage students for that.” (1st year student)

3.1.1.2. Results of the Students’ Reading Comprehension Task (in Section V of the questionnaire)

- **Question 1: Identify elements in the text that are foreign cultural references:**

First Year students

Archangel	50%	Encyclopedia	30%
Maurice Maeterlinck	40%	Freshmen	10%
Michael Angelo	40%	Middle Ages	5%

Table 3.34. Cultural References Identified by First Year Students

Second Year students

Michael Angelo	40.9%	Freshmen	9.09%
Maurice Maeterlinck	36.36%	Archangel	9.09%
Middle Ages	13.63%	Encyclopedia	4.54%

Table 3.35. Cultural References Identified by Second Year Students

Third Year students

Michael Angelo	55%	Encyclopedia	20%
Maurice Maeterlinck	45%	Middle Ages	10%
Archangel	15%	Freshmen	10%

Table 3.36. Cultural References Identified by Third Year Students

Wrong Answers given by the three years licence students

	First Year students	Second Year students	Third Year students
Wrong answers	(English literature) 35%	(English literature) 13.63%	(English literature) 15% (Daddy Long Legs) 5%

Table 3.37. Wrong answers of Students from the Three Years Licence

*For **the first question** of this activity, students were asked to identify the EFL cultural references present in the text. These are ‘Michael Angelo’, Maurice Maeterlinck’, ‘Middle Ages’, ‘Freshmen’, ‘Archangel’, and ‘Encyclopedia’. The results show that although the three groups of students have successfully identified all the references that were in the text; not one reference was identified by all, or at least by a vast majority of the students. The biggest score is for the third year students who identified the reference ‘Michael Angelo’ at 55%. The second years found the reference ‘Michael Angelo’ at a rate of 40.9%. As to the first year students, 50% of them identified the reference ‘archangel’. One main analysis we can offer here is that the scores are low, especially if we consider the fact that second and third year students already dealt with the Renaissance as well as all the references that represent this historical period and that are present in the text.

Additionally, there is an interesting finding: the three groups of students identified ‘encyclopedia’ as a cultural reference and this surprised the researcher who habitually made a substantial use of encyclopedias while studying (before internet).

Being one of the great Western achievements that has become obsolete today, the ‘encyclopedia’ as referred to in the text, can be considered a cultural reference even though students sometimes happen to consult ‘Wikipedia’ or ‘Britannica’ on the internet. Actually, the students’ responses show that they do not seem to tell these apart from Google for instance.

The last noticeable result for this question is the wrong answers students gave. The three groups of students identified ‘English literature’ as a cultural reference, when it is the classification of a literature issued in English that does not require any amount of preparation in cultural knowledge in order to be recognized. The third year students are the only ones to indicate that ‘daddy long legs’ is a cultural reference when it is literally a spider and metaphorically describes the main character’s benefactor who allegedly bears long and thin legs. We can say here that the third year students also lack literary/ stylistic proficiency as they failed to identify a literary device (the metaphor) and confused it for a cultural symbol / reference (the allusion).

0) Question 2: How do these elements reflect a foreign culture?

For the open-ended **question 2**, nothing was suggested to the students, the responses were issued by the students themselves. We expected the students’ statements to contain

fragments such as ‘related to this foreign country’, ‘to the history of this country’ or ‘connected to the values, practices or symbols of an era, which is...’

Their statements are as follows:

First year students	- <i>‘They reflect foreign ideologies, religions.’</i>
Second year students	-No answer
Third year students	- <i>‘They are ancient & foreign names / i.e. not Algerian.’</i> - <i>‘These are names I don’t understand.’</i> - <i>‘They are famous names for their achievements.’</i>

Table 3.38. Qualitative Statements of Students about Cultural Symbols in the Text

Reflecting a Foreign Culture

* **Question 2** aims at explicating / confirming the identification of the cultural symbols present in the text, and the responses the students gave prove that they have a frail understanding of the terms they use or are asked to make use of. Among the first year students, only one student gave an answer when the other 19 students gave no answer. None of the second year students gave any answer at all. Finally, the third year students’ first and the third answers are only partially correct, when the second answer is incorrect. Hence, we note that the students were unable to explain adequately what the cultural references indicate or allude to although they had identified them in the text in the previous question.

1) Question 3: Do you know any of these elements?

The three years ‘licence’ students and their knowledge of the sociocultural references:

	First Year Students	Second Year Students	Third Year Students
Yes	30%	27.27%	30%
No	60%	31.81%	35%
No answer	10%	40.9%	35%

Table 3.39. Students' Knowledge of the Sociocultural References in the Text

Question 3 responses are unmistakable; students cannot deepen their presentation of the references they identified for **question 1**. 30% of the first year students declare they know them or at least some of them, against 27.27% of the second years and 30% of the third years. Nonetheless, not one student gives any explanation or presentation of the cultural references of the text although space was provided.

2) Question 4: Do you sometimes feel the frustration the narrator seems to be going through?

	1 st year students	2 nd year students	3 rd year students
Yes	40%	50%	40%
No	30%	9.09%	25%
No Answer	30%	40.9%	35%

Table 3.40. Students from the Three Years Licence Drawing a Parallel with the Protagonist of the Story they Read for the Activity

***Question 4** is a metacognitive question aimed at allowing students to reflect on what they are reading and to tap into their feelings at the same time. The main character's frustration is the reason the researcher chose this particular passage as it describes the feelings of a university student who comes from a foreign background and who is teased

for not having the adequate references; a situation that our EFL students are quite familiar with (Fasla: 2009). The first year students declare at 40% to feel the same way the man character of the story in the text feels about the lack of cultural knowledge, against 50% of the second year students and 40% of the third year students.

Consequently, we can say that the same number of students in the three groups answered the same thing. Furthermore, the following statements that two third year students made, confirm the results abovementioned. They are as follows:

“Obviously yes, and I classify it as the most embarrassing moment.”

“Of course, especially when I watch literature students in English speaking countries. I feel like I know absolutely nothing.”

• **Question 5: Is there anything you would like to add?**

<p>First year students</p>	<p>“Literature is subjective in the same way that all art is, and <u>I feel that teachers enforce a very specific view and it’s overwhelming.</u>”</p> <p>“<u>I want to delete this module because I can’t read novels</u> and things like that.”</p> <p>“I want to omit this module because it’s hard for me.”</p>
<p>Second year students</p>	<p><i>“If the method of literature changed, I think it would be more accepted and learnable.”</i></p> <p><i>“I hate literature, <u>I hate it so hard! It’s boring and makes me depressed.</u>”</i></p>
<p>Third year students</p>	<p><i>‘We need to make <u>literature more interesting</u>, literature is <u>life study not an academic study.</u>’</i></p> <p><i>‘I’m kind of disappointed; when I chose literature <u>I thought I’d study more and that we would discuss more books.</u> We actually didn’t finish the first book yet.’</i></p>

	<p><i>‘...I hope we see a positive change in our studies and the way we study it. Literature is truly a treat and deserves to be recognized as such.’</i></p>
--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Table 3.41. Overall Qualitative Statements of the Students from the Three Years Licence

*We note that in their comments the students appear passionate, at the very least, when discussing literature, particularly the first year students. Additionally, one of the second year students incriminates the teaching methods and the third year students describe their literature learning with a somewhat positive attitude. The comment of a first year student is quite insightful and it goes as follows: ‘...teachers enforce a very specific view and it’s overwhelming.’ This means that students, who are in favor of interpreting personally the literary works in the program, express the wish to be active participants in their study of them. The other two comments though are more dismissive and show that they have abandoned the idea of trying. One says ‘*I want to delete*’ speaking of literature and the other says ‘*I want to omit*’ it. The second year students also have contradictory comments; one says ‘the method’ needs to be improved and the other claims to ‘*hate*’ literature, which is ‘*boring*’ and depressing. The third year students are more subtle and make rather positive comments with expressions such as ‘*literature is life study not an academic study*’ or ‘*I thought I’d study more and that we would discuss more books*’ and the last one, ‘...*I hope we see a positive change.*’

3.1.1.3. Results of the Focus Group Interviews

3.1.1.3.1. High Potential Students with Complexities

- **Theme 1: Most Students are unprepared for the Literature**

Module

In what follows, the student 2a realized that the literature course needs more preparation from the students than the mastery of the English language. Hence, she thinks students need to manage their time strictly and wisely to be ready for the literature module.

Student 2a declares:

'... because we register in September and we don't start studying until October or November so there's a lot of time to listen to the audiobook which is just like 6 or 7 hours. They could even watch the movie. They could watch a lot of BookTube videos about that..., like the basic stuff would have been covered by the student because it's basic, we don't need the teacher to understand the book or to know what the book is about. Then with the teacher you could go like deeper, I don't know ... move on to further...' (Student 2a)

She considers that the two months between registering at university and the actual beginning of the academic lessons should be devoted to preparation by watching the movie adaptations of the works in the program or listening to summaries and explanations of the works at the program that can be found in BookTube videos. The problem is that only a small number of students are ready to sacrifice time, their leisure hobbies and friends to study. She adds:

'Because I just ask, "did you read the book?"... "No, I haven't" ... "did you at least watch the movie?" "No" "did you listen to the audiobook? It's just 5 or 6 hours on

YouTube”... “No, I haven’t” so yeah, that’s how I know they don’t look up stuff because I know they haven’t read the book.’ (Student 2a)

Another misunderstanding between teachers and students is highlighted in the fact that although students are unprepared for the literature module, the teachers do not seem to realize that this is the case. According to student 1, teachers expect their students to know what literature class entails when they do not have a clue about why they are dealing with it, about its significance, and merely need a presentation of the module.

‘...I feel that teachers think that we know what the module is about just with its name. I know it’s literature but I really wanted to know why we are learning it, what is its importance, what is it? I don’t know, like his ideas about this module. An introduction of the module itself, not the syllabus or what we are going to deal with. I find that we need more understanding about the module itself then we can move to the syllabus.’ (Student 1)

- **Theme 2: Students Self-Confidence**

Among the strong and resilient students, we note that their efforts to counterbalance an opaque environment are strong and steady. Student 1 declares being all about looking for the historical background, doing extra work, watching more videos, reading more articles until she eventually obtained the best mark in her class. She says:

‘...the second thing is I had no idea about what I had to do and I got a 07 in the first exam. Then I tried to look for the historical background, do a little bit of extra work, watch more videos, read more articles, worked even more and I got 17 and it’s the best mark in the class. I was in shock, so I discovered that I really needed to know about the module, to know about the historical context, the author’s life so I can have a good mark. This is my story.’ (Student 1)

Another student went above and beyond to learn the language and the culture through conversational classes with natives, a creative way to counter difficulties to travel. Additionally, she found another original hack to pay for those classes, becoming an exchange partner and teaching Algerian Arabic.

'I found lots of language exchange partners and I started to do conversational classes with them. Instead of paying, I would like teach them something back. So it would be English or Arabic most of the time or French yeah. We actually have a lot to offer language wise we Algerians. Some people, some foreign people are even interested in learning our dialect! I am teaching an Italian Edziria. It's crazy.'
(Student 2a)

These two students have great potential and demonstrate talent and creativity, which helped them to gain self-confidence. The first year student was resilient and did not give up until she grasped the method needed to succeed. The second year student found very cunning ways to learn and improve in spite of having limited resources, she also discovered she had knowledge and skills others were interested in.

3.1.1.3.2. Students lacking Target Cultural Background Knowledge

- **Theme 1: TCBK Preparation Prerequisites**

According to the students, this is not taken into in consideration in the literature study requirements, or at least explicitly so. Students are inadequately prepared when they reach first year literature class linguistically and culturally. However, this seems to be ignored as the necessary time to improve is not given to them nor are they given any

explanations or instructions to guide them. Student 2a shows her shock as this issue is so underrated. She says:

'Even some Americans and British people have no idea about how to deal with Shakespeare. So, for someone who doesn't read much, who doesn't have a lot of contact with Anglophone societies, and who doesn't sometimes even know English that well to have to deal with Shakespeare from day one is crazy to me.' (Student 2a)

Students also declare to be in need of an introduction to the literature module.

Student 1:

'I actually did it this semester. I had no idea in the first semester on how to deal with literature. I know what literature is, but I had no idea on how to deal with the module, or how to revise it and stuff. But now, I really need to go back to the history first, check the author's background and stuff, yeah, I think ... this is what I wanted to say, yeah.' (Student 1)

Students have to uncover the different steps behind literature study preparation.

These are many, hidden, and require focus and a certain level of commitment. Student 1 adds:

'The events like how this movement appeared, like what made this movement appear and how was life? For instance, if we're speaking about English literature and some movements, like I'm gonna try to learn about England at that particular time and stuff. So I link it with literature, I feel that this is how I better understand literature.' (Student 1)

Student 2a describes specifically what she does to keep herself informed about any information she comes across and feels will help her with her literary study. She explains

that she uses modern hacks for a better grasping of information that would otherwise need her to be immersed in the region dealt with in the work. She says:

'I guess I'd look it up, read more things that are specific to that one...so for instance if we're reading uh, I don't know... like if we come across a street and like the author keeps referencing things about that street, like how it's dangerous or something, I'd recommend like watching vlogs about that place...or...' (Student 2a)

Even a third year student is not so sure that the cultural background information is a requirement, whether it is not stated by the teacher, or does not appear in the curriculum in verbatim; he says *'I think...'* and *'I guess...'*. Student 3b declares:

'Yeah, I think it relies also on the background of the author, I guess it's good to know when and where the author was born, for instance was it in the 17th C, the 19thC or the 20th C? To know the sociocultural or historical elements and how society was functioning at that time. So yeah.' (Student 3b)

- **Theme 2: The advantage of TCBK acquisition**

Students interviewed are aware of the benefits of becoming culturally proficient and knowledgeable. For student 3a, a literary work informs on elements of 'psychology' and touches humanist dimensions such as 'respect' for one another. Reading literature is reading people. Student 3a explains:

'I think it's helpful because we can then try to understand the differences between cultures with a new version, new people, a new mental... psychology, a new respect.' (Student 3a)

She adds that a literary work provides insight on a given society at a given time. She says:

'I think the period in which this novel was written is important because the work itself is a reflection of that period and a reflection of the author himself...' (Student 3a)

Student 1 discovered that the biography of an author could become the threshold of rich knowledge yet to be unveiled, for her it was Jane Austen that allowed her to be introduced to Feminism. She says:

'I felt I knew... somehow everything about why this work... because it was Jane Eyre and they said it was a very important work and people were criticizing it etc... I really needed to know what the reason was. I remember they said that it was because women were not treated well at that time. So, I really needed to know what were the events. They said they had then started Feminism. So, I really looked at the work differently. Even if the teacher doesn't ask me about Feminism, I feel confident, I feel that answering the question about the character feels simpler. So that's it.' (Student 1)

For student 3a the comparison of one's native culture and the target one can help understand that human kind is one and that cultural or religious practices are in fact different means of expression of the same entity. We are all the same expressing ourselves from different viewpoints and through various practices and customs.

'The comparison between our culture, our religion and relate it to that in different cultures, it's like almost the same. We have dealt with this in Arabic last year in comparative literature with the comparison of Greek mythology and drama with the Arab. Sometimes the versions we did Shakespeare and Jebrane Khalil Jebrane. It's like the same concept with different visions.' (Student 3a)

All these advantages have caused the students to realize that the TCBK presents a dimension in every literary work they study; they also realize that it is their responsibility to acquire it, as it is not explicitly taught to them (as shown in theme 3).

- **Theme 3: TCBK dimension**

As a third year literature student, student 3a has come to understand the importance the background of a work has for its study. About *Pride and Prejudice* for instance, she says it is not the story that needs focus, but Feminism; as it caused the author to create the characters' profiles. She states:

'For example in Pride and Prejudice the story is important, but it's more important to know about Feminism at that time, about Jane Austin and how she managed to create the characters between the social classes and all.' (Student 3a)

As for student 2a, she considers students need to upgrade their overall language mastery level to start studying literature; and according to her, it is essential for students to do so autonomously. She says:

'Definitely the culture because the language mastery should be something the students come with and if they don't master the language I don't believe it's up to the teacher to have to deal with that in class. I feel like it's up to the students to master the language and the teacher should have to deal with things related to the class not the language because we don't have time for that. It's not hard to do by yourself because I can improve my English alone, but I can't necessarily get into literature alone.' (Student 2a)

She further explains how intricate background knowledge acquisition can be for an EFL learner who ignores the various dimensions of TCBK. In the following passage, student 2a explains in her own words how to deal with intertextuality. She says:

'...like in the novel You, I don't know whether you've heard about that book... when you're reading the book, he keeps referencing authors and uh, if you haven't read some of them or don't have an idea about them, it's kind of hard to keep up with the way he thinks. Because he's the narrator in the book. So I'd say maybe pause and like look up those people and authors, and if it's short you can even read it because it does come in handy when you keep reading.' (Student 2a)

We can deduce that the attentive students are the only ones who little by little realize that background knowledge is essential to literary study and is the focus of the literature class. Student 3a declares:

'... in drama and fiction last year, we were so focused on the author himself more than on the story...' (Student 3a)

3.1.1.3.3. Reading and TCBK

- **Theme 1: Reading paves the way to cultural acquisition**

Reading as a skill has more to it than deciphering code, make meaning out of a text, or enjoy a good storyline. For students 2a and 3a find it to be a bridge for other skills, such the higher order skill of analyzing literary works (student 2a), drawing from different fields of knowledge to synthesize one's deductions while comparing and contrasting different works (student 3a). It even allows the reader to transfer various reading skills from their native language to the target language. This is an advantageous specificity for the EFL

learners when the learners have developed their reading skill right from infancy (student 2a). Their comments are the following:

'Yes, because if you've never picked up a book of American or British literature, it would be hard to move on to things like having to analyze them and stuff.' (Student 2a)

'When I think about literature, it doesn't matter if it's a fairy tale we are dealing with or a non-fiction, it's like everything is related to one another. We can take the Greek stories and their mythologies and link them to psychology. Take Snow White, it's a fairy tale, but psychologically the girl is being herself and the way she sees things differently from how she was raised. Also, I am personally very much into the Gothic genre; we dealt with Edgar Allan Poe's The Black Cat and the novel by Stephen King with a cat...' (Student 3a)

'Yes, so when I was a kid my dad used to get me a lot of books in Arabic and my mother would get me books in French. I enjoyed it and kept doing it. When I was in primary school the teacher asked us what we wanted to do when we got older, and I said a writer like Agatha Christie and I completely forgot about that until I picked up her books again in university and I was like "oh, look at me! I did pursue something similar to that after all."' (Student 2a)

- **Theme 2: Reading is The Abandoned Practice**

Student 2a has very clearly stated that the road to cultural knowledge is through developing one's reading practice. She indicates:

'Reading a book is how you get the culture, isn't it?' (Student 2a)

Thus, we can say that this is a strong account in itself as it allows us to assert that any hindrance in reading or its abandonment even as a practice, can have quite alarming consequences for the students' TCBK acquisition, for their capacity to improve and for their overall welfare as university students and intellectuals to be. As a result, the following

passage shows how detrimental the students' unwillingness to read is for their class requirements. Students cannot bring themselves to complete the minimum tasks, such as reading the novels assigned in their literature module curriculum, nor even do extra readings, which are illustrative and helpful to them. Student 2a explains:

'...my classmates sometimes don't even read the book assigned, let alone books that would help them learn more about the book that we're studying...I mean, I don't think so. I don't know, I can't talk for other people but I don't think they read things that would make the understanding of the book better, because sometimes they don't even read the actual book.' (Student 2a)

It seems that only attentive, resilient, and highly motivated students, like student 2a, can be perceptive as to what is required from them and see the benefits of the hard background work expected from them; and this without being constrained nor guided towards doing extra readings. She asserts:

'I think that if you suggest this to them, they would think it's like "double travail". But it's actually the other way round. It makes things easier, if you actually take a look at the book; and then look up stuff related to the book, or that were mentioned in it, or things about that era and come back to the book. It would make it easier and a lot more fun to read and you'd have an idea about what's actually going on.' (Student 2a)

3.1.1.3.4. Internet & Social Media

- **Theme 1: Technology and Cultural Knowledge**

Technology is the learning tool students make use of as a regular learning practice. Whether we agree with it or not, internet is part of the reality that students know and live

in. For these ‘digital natives’¹ cultural knowledge learning, as any other kind of knowledge acquisition for that matter, takes place with technology use. The following declarations by student 1 and 2a confirm this. They are as follows:

‘I Google them and I use YouTube a lot. Like, I prefer YouTube.’ (Student 1)

‘Concerning the media tools there are also podcasts in addition to BookTube, vlogs, videos, and movies.’ (Student 2a)

The next statement shows that students today are image-bound because of their constant exposure to screens. Student 2a suggests movie adaptations in case the other trendy or popular media such as vlogs are unavailable. She recommends:

‘There aren’t any vlogs about, for instance 19th century Jane Eyre environment, but there’s a movie. And there are a lot of movies that are made today that are set in that era, so just watching those would make understanding the book... you’d understand the book better and you’d enjoy it better, which I think is even more important.’ (Student 2a)

- **Theme 2: Internet is a Door to the Classroom Requirements**

According to student 2a, internet use can be redirected towards productivity, progress, learning, and align with the classroom objectives as well. If students do not want to read, she suggests watching vlogs (a format that is well known by the students and most

¹ The concept of digital natives first appeared in 2001 in « *Digital natives, Digital immigrants* » an article by the American researcher Marc Prensky, a specialist about the questions of education and digital learning.

importantly very much appraised by their generation) or YouTube as an introduction. She suggests:

'...it's my way of trying to get my friends into books. I think they're helpful, they can be useful. But like if I tell them, as a classmate to go to the library and pick up this book that will help you understand 20th century England better, I feel like it would be more appealing to them if I say go watch a vlog about this book tuber who said this, this, and that about the book.' (Student 2a)

She also states that it can act as a motivator for her as well, although she considers herself a reader. She elucidates:

'It's what I do, as I said, with my friends who aren't really into it because... for example when I'm in a reading slump, when I don't feel like reading I watch BookTube and it really gets me back into it. So I feel like if someone has never read and they watch BookTube it will really motivate them to pick up the book.' (Student 2a)

Another element of interest is that although internet usually drives students away from their academic responsibilities, such as completing homework assignments, it also contains learning material that is adequate for academic university accomplishments and can be recommended to students. Student 2a adds:

'Because even like me, even though I don't mind doing all of this without technology, it's super motivating to watch book tubers. I love book tubers... It's a community on YouTube of content creators that talk specifically about books. And some of them are just like ... BookTubers would read stuff together and would invite viewers to read with them, and they'd create like live shows on YouTube where the BookTubers themselves discuss the book and then you're watching live so you can comment and they can talk to you as well. Book Tube is an entire community on YouTube; it's amazing.' (Student 2a)

- **Theme 3: Teachers and Social Media Use**

We have seen in the previous sections how the students' lives are intertwined with technological devices and internet use, hence the students expect their teachers to conform.

Student 1 says:

'Some teachers can give us video links and talk more about it in class, give us guidelines...' (Student 1)

Student 2a adds that teachers need to be more knowledgeable about the content found in the internet. She recommends:

'Yeah, but if I was a teacher, I wouldn't just recommend any BookTuber. It would have to be someone who... For instance, my favorite BookTuber studies English literature and classical studies, so she actually knows what she's talking about. Because, I mean... how do we call ...reliability is that it? So if I was a teacher I wouldn't recommend any BookTuber.' (Student 2a)

Student 2a also emphasizes the differences that exist between the rich varieties of content material on the internet and advises teachers to know more about them, as it would allow to impact students in a strong way. She adds:

'There are even teacher BookTubers, like there's this one girl who is doing her PhD, like yourself, on something about Women in Classical Athens. So, she's a teacher, she teaches students our age, English students. So when I listen to her I take information from her differently than from another BookTuber who's just a reader like myself. Yeah, all sorts of BookTubers who are amazing.' (Student 2a)

3.1.1.3.5. Lack of Guidance

▪ **Theme 1: The Syllabus**

Insufficient communication about the syllabus makes things confusing for the students who do not understand what to do or what is expected from them.

'No one gave us the program. I had to look it up on the website.' (Student 2a)

Students 2a asserts that although she had prepared her readings in advance for the literature module, did not receive any external guidance and searched for the syllabus herself; an experience she depicts as being painful. She says:

'Even I struggled, like I did my homework before we started the first year. I checked out like the whole program, the syllabus or whatever it's called, and I did a lot of work during the summer break, for me to be able to keep up with the teacher when we first started. But, if I didn't do all of that background research I never would have been able to keep up.' (Student 2a)

In addition to not clarifying things to the students, the syllabus does not meet their expectations presenting them works that are too difficult for them or that will not be covered due to lack of time for instance. The following comments explain this clearly:

'When I checked the program during the summer break before my first year, I did find Things Fall Apart but we didn't study them. I was really excited to study them but the teacher said we wouldn't have enough time to cover them properly. It never occurred to me to read African authors and the syllabus stirred my attention towards African literature and I read it and I really enjoyed it.' (Student 2a)

Hence, from the passage above we can note that when students are inquisitive enough they can make interesting discoveries that widens their scope of interest, motivating them highly in their pursuits and studies. Student 2a adds in the next comment, an

interesting and important remark; the literature syllabus moves from early works to ones that are more modern. This is a state of things she highly contests being from an ultra-modern generation, the digital one. She declares:

'Yeah, I noticed something recently, I noticed how during our first year we deal with Shakespeare, which is like the 17th century, and then we deal with books from the 18th century and then in third year, we have books from the 20th century. I think it should be the other way round. Because people ...some students barely now enough about today's society, of Anglophone societies. So, I think it would make more sense if we go from today and backwards instead of coming from Shakespeare to...because, how would a student who doesn't even read in English or even has contact with these like English-speaking countries today know anything about Shakespeare.' (Student 2a)

▪ **Theme 2: The Teachers**

Students' comments about their teachers' interventions in the classroom indicate that they consider their teachers' explanations as obsolete. In the following, we understand that students are in need of interaction, more expression and involvement instead of the traditional teacher-talk so common in large classes.

'I'd definitely prefer we discussed the way we relate to the book and how the book makes us feel before actually studying the novel. Algerians, as boys and girls today.' (Student 2a)

'I feel like going down the rabbit hole (Laughs)... We need discussions instead of explanations.' (Student 2a)

Students have become passive, they hear so much explaining and are given so little practice that when they receive their results these are disappointing anyway. Student 1 says:

'Well I remember that in the beginning of the year, the teacher asked us to do, like to search for the author and, yeah he gave us a homework and I didn't do it, and I feel that it came in the exam. There was something in the poem that was related to his life, and then... because he used his wife's mother's name. Everyone knew it, those who looked for the author, knew it was not his mom's name. And I was saying it's his mom! But it wasn't and then I said ok, then I have to check the author's life...' (Student 1)

In what follows, the teacher's explanations do not seem to have much affected the student. Even the explanations she gives are vague with '*similarities of the characters*' '*differences*', or '*analyze the story*', which are commonplace expressions testifying a lack of mastery of the subject.

'When we come to class we read a page or two of the novella and then the teacher explains it. We present similarities of the characters or their differences and then we analyze the story... That's it.' (Student 2b)

The student, to whom the following extract belongs to, feels that she is left out, with an extraordinary amount of work to do because the teachers do not really guide them through. '*I feel that we really need to check everything even the history...*' and '*but the teacher just gave us points...*'

'The teacher told us "I'm not going to give you the historical context you're gonna look for it". So we really need that extra work. We need the historical context and stuff but the teacher just gave us points in the movement itself not about like the historical background and stuff... I feel that we really need to check everything even the history...' (Student 1)

The following student does not feel endangered by her teacher because, and she states it quite well, she did a lot of preparation on her own. She says:

'I don't know, I guess it depends on the teacher; because some classes do need a lot of background research before we actually get into them... for instance, with my literature class, the teacher was not playing, he got there the first day and he was like, "did you read this?" "Did you read that?" and when they said "no" he was like "obviously you have to read them, because we're going to start dealing with this book next week". And he got straight into it. I loved that, but I think I loved it because I was prepared. Those who weren't, really struggled and it showed on their marks, it showed on their faces during the class. They were lost the whole entire time.' (Student 2a)

In the following comment, student 2a is thrilled with her teacher's way of handling things. She presents a hands-on task that the teacher meticulously set in place.

'We have an amazing teacher this year. She would give us the book to read or whatever beforehand, and then she would give us questions to think about at home and then we would come to class and discuss them. And sometimes she would ask us to write things on the spot to analyze certain elements and she would correct them with us.' (Student 2a)

According to student 2a, a successful teaching guidance is a systematically developed task-based activity that is punctually monitored by the teacher. The students have a book to read beforehand. At that point, the teacher gives questions to think about at home, in order to discuss them in class, and finally they write their analyses before having these corrected collectively.

3.1.1.3.6. Native Culture in the EFL Literature Classroom

- **Theme 1: Native Culture a Familiar Space**

When asked about dealing with their native culture in literature class student 2a confirmed that it would be helpful if the works studied were relatable, at least at first. She clarifies:

'I only thought about the timeline, I thought it would be easier if we had to study modern works, even if like the topics were purely Western. As long as we're starting from today and going backwards it would be helpful. I didn't think about the context but yeah I think...yeah I do believe it would make things easier if we could relate.' (Student 2a)

Additionally, dealing with the students' native culture can be stimulating and causing to increase their interests. Student 2a reveals what follows:

'...whereas with the American colonies they did have a lot of comparisons to make between our history and American history. Even students who, some of them I knew for a fact, aren't really interested in history; once they attended some classes of American history and they noticed like they saw the things we were talking about and how they had some knowledge. Not necessarily about the topic itself, but about similar concepts and stuff, they were participating more and they were attending more.' (Student 2a)

Studying literary works from the students' native cultural perspective can allow students to respond to the works from within. They can analyze what they are reading with their own values and standards, causing them to approach gradually culturally foreign literatures. Student 2a says:

'...a lot of things are relatable with African literature. Definitely more than the stuff we read in American or British books ... I actually think we should start with it and then move to American and British literature. And then Shakespeare. Shakespeare is the most unrelatable thing ever! Especially for 18 year olds starting to study.' (Student 2a)

Student 2a describes well her emotional response to *Heart of Darkness*, a novel that treats the topic of slavery and human exploitation. She describes her state in what follows:

'I am currently reading Heart of Darkness and I feel like a monkey...It's interesting but I feel like it's degrading the way they talk about African people in the novel, it's awful.' (Student 2a)

- **Theme 2: Discovering African Culture i.e. Algerian Students' Continental Roots**

We have seen in the previous sections that there was not enough time allotted, according to the students, to study African literature. The following statements of students 1 and 2a show how enthusiastic they are about discovering the newly found literature that is so close to them and to their own heritage. They say what follows:

'I would love to know about African, American African literature...I would love to know about it. We dealt with slavery but it's always related to the English civilization.' (Student 1)

'You just mentioned that we have English, American and African, and I didn't know. I am surprised. We have it in the syllabus, but the teacher just said we are going to deal with English and American, she doesn't speak about the African one.' (Student 1)

The next comment by student 2a is in favor of more native culture references in literature class and proves a point by presenting the Anglophone Culture class where it is already a regular practice. She says:

'In Anglophone culture class, we dealt with colonialism and we enjoyed it. It was a lot of fun. The teacher was open to debate and everyone had something to say about them. And we did make parallels with us.' (Student 2a)

- **Theme 3: Algeria in Africa, a Cultural complexity**

Although the above comments are in favor of starting with African literature for a smooth cultural transitioning, the following statement is a dissonant voice. Student 2b does not view favorably the implementation of African literature in the literature module as she does not feel to belong. She explains in the following comments:

'Although the English have difficult words like Shakespeare's for example, the African has more complicated words. I watch movies, I read some books, it's similar, but the African no. it's difficult for me.' (Student 2b)

'We are in Africa, but Algeria is not really part of Africa. Other countries like South Africa or Congo they speak English, we don't...The Algerian culture there is nothing like it in Africa. It's very big, it's a huge culture. Not like other African countries. I don't feel a connection with the other African countries and their cultures.' (Student 2b)

'Yes, a little bit. This year we studied the African literature, it was a bit difficult because in the essays we have to write the names of the characters... I couldn't really memorize them. Like we did Things Fall Apart and Okonkwo was really hard to write and to memorize also...' (Student 2b)

In spite of the student's rejection of African literature, to which she is entitled, her arguments illustrate a learning path the focus of which was English literature. She claims for example, that the language use in Shakespearean plays is easier for her to understand than the language in the more modern African novels taught in class. One argument that can be retained though is her claim of not feeling connected to other African countries. She also says that in South Africa or Congo people speak English and we do not. This is her personal emotional state and therefore cannot be contested. However, we can assume that

she has had very little information about African culture before university and that no clarifications were given to her at this point to allow her to erase her prejudices.

3.1.2. Presentation of the Teachers' Answers

3.1.2.1. Results of the Teachers' Questionnaires

Section I: Profile Recognition

- **Question 1: To what age group do you belong?**

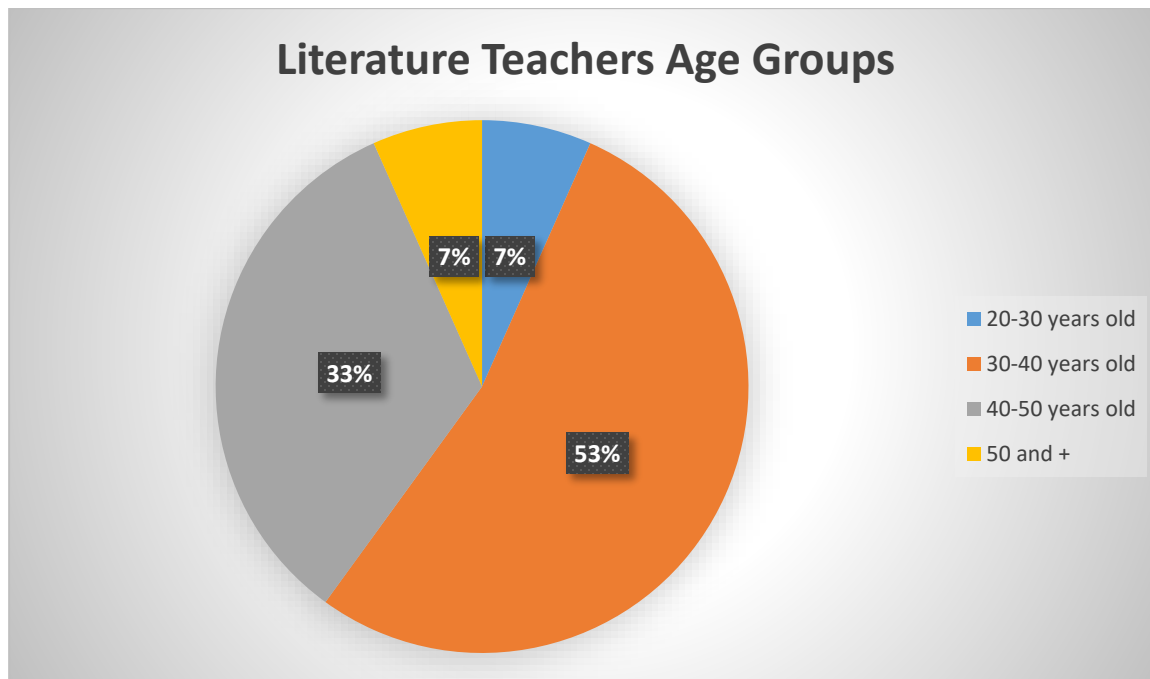


Figure 3.4. Literature Teachers Age Groups

- **Question 2: Teacher's Gender**

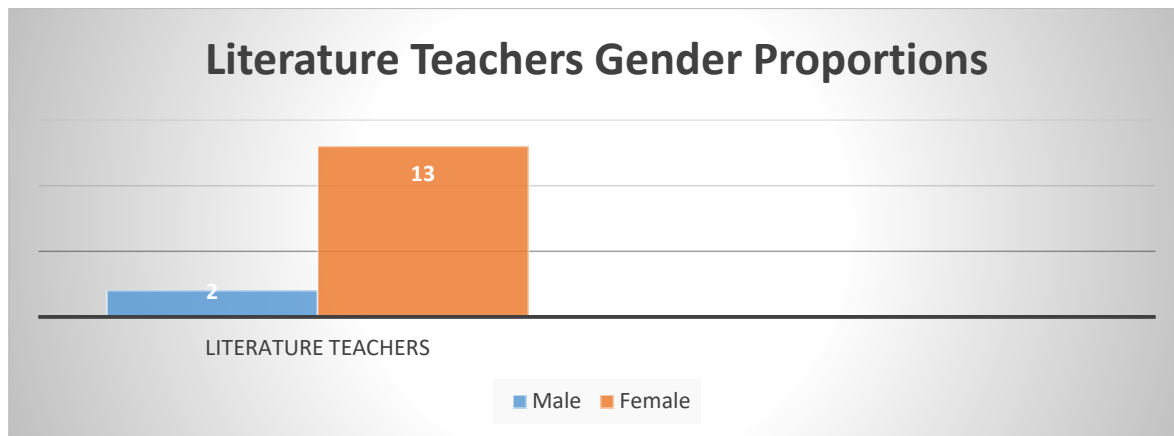


Figure 3.5. Literature Teachers Gender Proportions

*The first two questions are the teachers' profile recognition questions. These concern the ages and the genders of the teaching staff. Most teachers, i.e. 53% of them are between the ages of 30 & 40. The second category of teachers is between 40 & 50 with 33%. As to the extreme age groups, the youngest who are between 20 & 30 years old form only 7% of the teachers and the eldest who are 50 years old and older are also only 7%. Consequently, the majority of teachers are aged between 30 & 50. Regarding their gender proportions, similarly to the students, the teachers are mostly women as there are only two men among the 15 teachers questioned.

Section II: Teachers' Cultural Context of Training

- **Question 3: Were you a student in this department?**

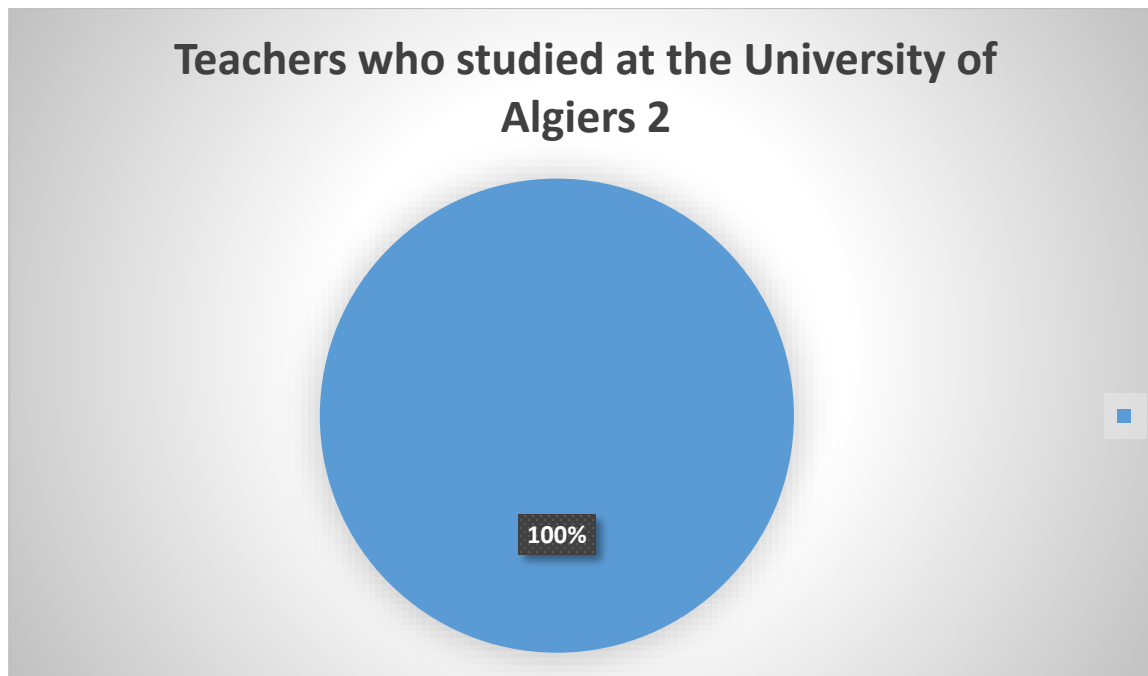


Figure 3.6. Teachers who studied at The University of Algiers 2

*100% of the teachers were students in the Department they are teaching in, i.e. the Department of English Language & Literature of Algiers 2.

- **Question 4: Have you enrolled in a University abroad for a post-graduate degree?**
- **Question 5: If yes, please state where and when.**

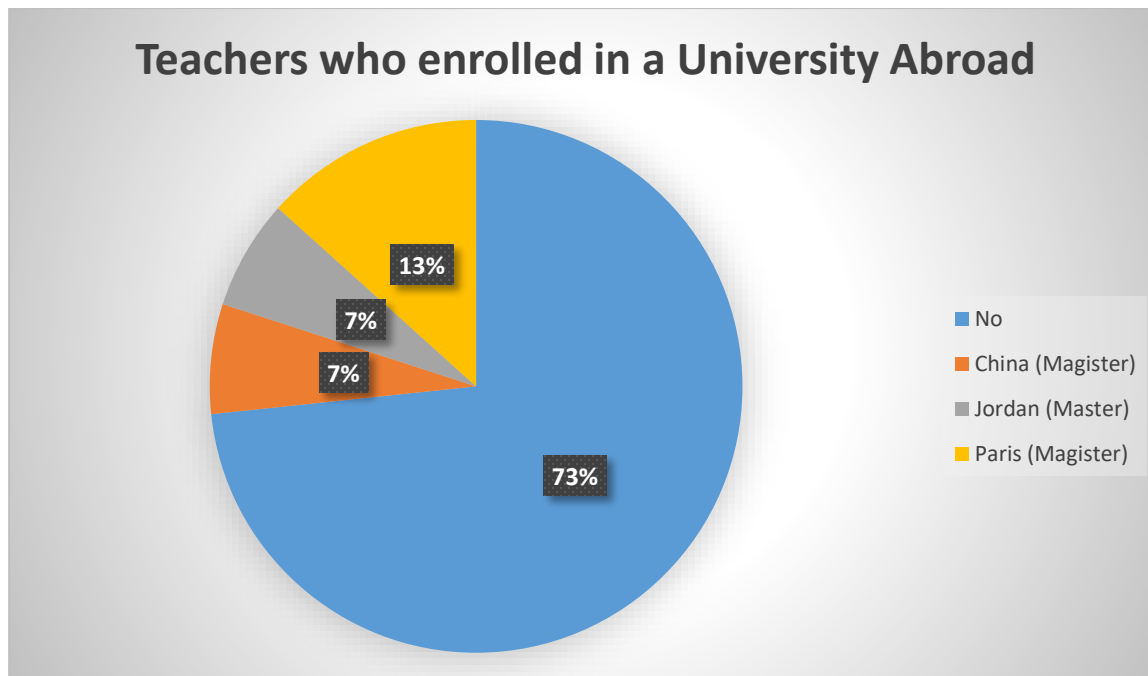


Figure 3.7. Teachers who enrolled in a University Abroad

*The results to **questions 4 & 5** are merged together in figure 3.10. Additionally to the fact that all the teachers were formerly students where they are presently working, none of them have benefited of a stay in an English speaking country. 73% of the teachers never enrolled in a university abroad and among those who did, it was to go to a non-English speaking country, 7% went to China, 7% to Jordan, and 13% to France. The official languages of those countries are respectively Mandarin, Arabic, and French.

Being Algerian teachers and having studied in Algeria with only a few exceptions, who were in non-English speaking countries we can assert that the teaching staff have had little to no previous contact with the target language and culture.

Section III: Teaching Experience & Expertise

➤ **Question 6: How long have you been teaching literature?**

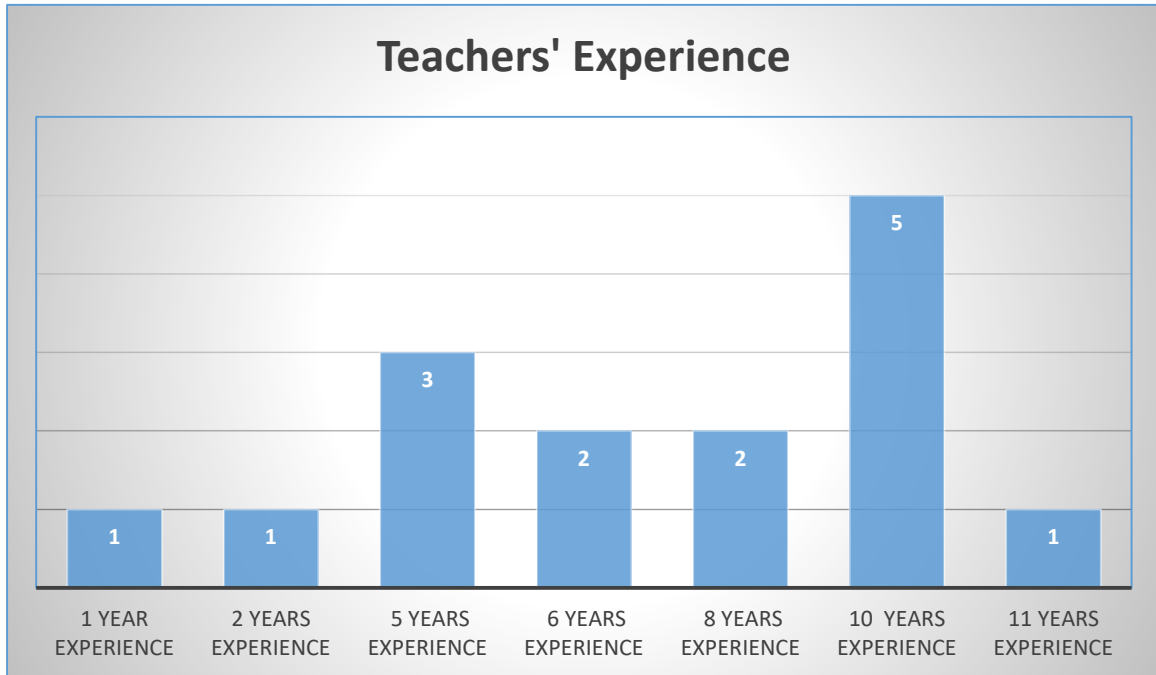


Figure 3.8. Teachers' Experience with the Literature Module

➤ **Question 7: To what year / years are you currently teaching?**

➤ **Question 8: In the past, did you teach other classes?**

	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year
Today	40%	40%	26.66%
From the beginning of their teaching	46.66%	26.66%	13.33%

Table 3.42. Teachers' Experiences with Literature at the Three Levels of the Licence

*We notice that many teachers (07) already taught 1st year licence, and 2nd year, but less teachers had taught 3rd year and moved to 1st or 2nd year licence (03).

Section IV: Reflective teaching

Question 9: When you think of the word ‘teacher’ what comes to your mind?

Guide (8x)				
Research (5x)	Knowledge (5x)			
Helper (4x)				
Responsibility (3x)	creative (3x)	motivate (3x)	Educator (3x)	tutor (3x)
commitment (3x)	inspire (3x)	generosity (3x)		
Learn (2x)	Improve (2x)	reading ability (2x)	supervision (2x)	advisor (2x)
Instructor (2x)	Work (2x)	open-mindedness (2x)	Inquiry (2x)	Patience (2x)

Table 3.43. The Teachers’ Free Associations to ‘Teacher’ Ranked from the Mostly Repeated to the Least Repeated Words.

Coaching	monitor	listen	attention	support	Reward	coach	assis t
Classroom	lesson preparation	class	interaction	correction	examiner	pedagogy	
Emotion soft skills	devotion Punctuality	passion fairness	empathy ethical student	concern transparency	Friend		
literature analysis	Literature	text	information	discover			
sharp intellect	Provoker	explorer	thinker	stimulator			
progress / competence	level up	mastery	developing	study			
Guidance	show how to be independent	model / example	leader	facilitator			
Academics	University	academic	qualification				

Table 3.44. The Teachers’ Free Associations to ‘Teacher’ Grouped into Lexical Fields

*In order to identify a pattern for the results of the above question, similarly to the students' results, we categorized the responses of the teachers in two ways: the first was to list the recurrent words from the mostly repeated to the least, and the second listing was to categorize the words that appeared once in a lexical field. Regarding the words that were repeated most by the teaching staff, it is interesting to note that the word 'guide (8x)' is by far the most repeated one. 'Research (5x)' and 'knowledge (5x)' come in next and 'helper (4x)' follows. Doing 'research' and transmitting 'knowledge' are the two principal activities of a university teacher; hence having these surrounded by 'guide' and 'helper' at the top of the list of words associated to the word teacher shows the humanist character teachers relate to their function and according to the results, the ones they focus on. The second set of words that are most repeated in the list are 'responsibility (3x)', 'commitment (3x)', 'generosity (3x)', 'inspire (3x)', 'motivate (3x)', 'creative (3x)', 'educator (3x)' and 'tutor (3x)'.

We remark here that it is those human qualities such as 'responsibility (3x)', 'commitment (3x)' and 'generosity (3x)', that are as equally ranked as novelty, with 'inspire (3x)', 'motivate (3x)', 'creative (3x)', and 'educator (3x)' and 'tutor (3x)' which both represent the role of teachers in its simplest form. What I can also note is that teachers have a well-rounded and multi-faceted position, and the results obtained prove that they are conscious of their rich contribution to education. The final set of words that are repeated in the list are also tridimensional. We have the human or soft skills with 'open-mindedness (2x)', 'inquiry (2x)', and 'patience (2x)'. Then there is the strictly functional side to

teaching with ‘instructor (2x), advisor (2x), and ‘supervision (2x)’. Finally, we have the academic duties with ‘learn (2x)’, ‘work (2x)’, ‘improve (2x)’, and ‘reading ability (2x)’.

We note that for the lexical fields that have been identified, through the teachers’ choice of words, there is also a tridimensional aspect as identified above. The lexical fields can be separated in three distinct categories based on their level of recurrence. The first field ‘coaching’ is present with a total of 7 words, ‘classroom’ has 6 words, and ‘emotion’ presents 5 words. Then we have the ‘soft skills’, ‘literary analysis’, ‘sharp intellect’, ‘progress / competence’ and ‘guidance’ that all contain 4 words. Finally, there is the field of that comes with an amount of 3 words. The lexical field of ‘coaching’ is present with the words ‘listen’, ‘support’ and ‘assist’. ‘Classroom’ has ‘lesson preparation’, ‘examine’ and ‘correction’. ‘Emotion’ puts forward ‘empathy’, ‘passion’ and ‘friend’. ‘Soft skills’ comes with ‘punctuality’, ‘fairness’ and ‘ethical student’. ‘Literary analysis’ comes with ‘literature’, ‘text’ and ‘information’ and ‘sharp intellect’ has ‘explorer’, ‘thinker’ and ‘stimulator’.

‘Progress / competence’ is brought by ‘level up’, ‘mastery’ and ‘study’, and ‘guidance’ has ‘model’, ‘leader’ and ‘facilitator’. As for ‘academics’, it contains the words ‘university’, ‘academic’ and ‘qualification’.

➤ **Question 10: Have you had any training in educational psychology or pedagogy?**

	Yes	No
Teacher who declare having received a training in educational psychology	46.66%	53.33%

Table 3.45. The Teachers who declared having received a Training in Educational Psychology

➤ **Question 11: Have you thought of ways to practice reflective teaching?**

	Yes	No
Teacher who have thought about practicing reflective teaching	46.66%	53.33%

Table 3.46. The Teachers who are in Favor of Reflective Teaching

The results of questions 10 & 11 show that there is a juxtaposition in the teachers' responses. The teachers who declared having received a training in educational psychology, i.e. 46.66% are the same who are in favor of reflective teaching as a practice as they are also at 46.66%. Likewise, those who declared having not received any training in educational psychology i.e. 53.33% are the same as those who said they were not in favor of reflective teaching as a practice with also 53.33%.

➤ **Question 12: If yes, were you able to implement the necessary changes?**

T12	<i>'I used book reports to have students share their understandings of what was done in class.'</i>
T1	<i>'Discussions with colleagues help us improve our teaching methods.'</i>
T2 & T10	No answer.

T5	<i>'We cannot implement change because of shortness of time.'</i>
T9	<i>'Although it is difficult to appreciate the results, given the large number of students, some students show more interest with time.'</i>
T7	<i>'I was able to adapt lessons to the level of the students.'</i>

Table 3.47. Qualitative Responses of Teachers in favor of Reflective Teaching

*

➤ **Question 13: If no, why not?**

T4	<i>'The time allocated to the module in 2nd year doesn't allow the teacher to give a variety of activities to the students.'</i>
T14	<i>'We do not have the habit or a model; we usually share feedback on our own experiences.'</i>
T15	<i>'The syllabus is one of the obstacles to do so.'</i>
T13	<i>'I don't think I even understand the 'term reflective teaching'.'</i>

T3	<i>‘Because the majority of students doesn’t take research participation seriously (questionnaires & peer observation).’</i>
T6 & T8	<i>‘We are overwhelmed with work.’</i>
T11	<i>‘I develop lessons that would target all the learners in general.’</i>

Table 3.48. The Teachers who do not view Reflective Teaching Favorably

Section V: Literature Teaching under Examination

- **Question 14: What kind of problems do your students seem to encounter when studying literature?**

a) Language issues	12
b) Cultural misunderstandings	8
c) Bad use of lesson indication / teachings	6
d) Wrong interpretations	6
e) Lack of confidence in making personal interpretation	9

Table 3.49. Problems encountered by Students in the Literature Module

‘As the objective of ILMD’s literature syllabus is to initiate students to literary texts, we are bound to deal with historically remote narratives (Short stories and novels). However, students tend to consider this literature with a contemporary perspective, omitting to CONTEXTUALIZE it; thus, they often make wrong interpretations.’ (T12)

T5: ‘Most students don’t enjoy reading in general and are not motivated to study or to focus.’

T13: ‘I cannot provide students with the necessary tools and facilitate the learning process. For example overhead projectors, offline / online dictionaries...’

T14: ‘The main challenge is to make students read the works. They do not read!’

T2: ‘90% of the students learn class notes by heart.’

T3: ‘Students lack reading, they plagiarize teachers’ lessons.’

T6: ‘The majority of our students hate reading. Also, they are not able to analyze and have problems to understand critical thinking and thus cannot apply it.’

T15: ‘The issues are with teaching connotative concepts and metaphors.’

T4: ‘Students lack interest in the module.’

Question 15: How would you evaluate your students’ literary competence?

	Very well	average	Not at all
They can read the text, understand the plot, describe characters, and extract the message.	2	13	0
They can analyze text structure, assess literary devices, and explore characterization deeply.	1	7	7
They can identify cultural, religious, or mythological references.	0	5	10
They can relate the text to other texts with similar themes, style, context, or being from the same author: Intertextual references in the text.	1	2	12
They can relate all the above with hidden meanings and themes they would have inferred.	0	4	11
They can connect the themes or issues of the text with the context of issue of the work or the author’s origin, life or career path for instance.	0	9	6
They can explore the meanings of a work from various perspectives, the literary movement it belongs to, the author’s intended message, different theories of literature, or even challenge the critics’ analyses.	0	8	7

Table 3.50. Evaluation of the Students Literary Study Skills by the Literature Teachers

‘The students’ lack of familiarity with the cultural background that goes with English language. I would say it’s very limited, in a sense that their critical thinking needs to be stimulated for one major reason and that’s the fact that they do not read!’ (T7)

Section V: Teaching Methods

- **Question 16: What do you take into consideration when choosing the works to study in your class?**

Topics of interest to the students	3
Administrative instructions (a list of titles for example)	6
Historical periods at the program (the program is divided in time sequences)	5
Works that are culturally close to the students' native culture	0
Works that are linguistically accessible to the students' understanding of English	1

Table 3.51. The Criteria of the Literature Teachers to select the Works Studied in Class.

T2 says: *I follow the syllabus, but I choose texts that are not imposed by the administration.*

- **Question 17: What do you take into consideration when choosing the excerpts from those works, for classroom activities or for test purposes for instance? Please circle ONE answer only.**

a) Extracts with topics of interest to the students' age interests, or lifestyle issues; even though the novel, play or short story gives little enthusiasm to the students	1
b) Extracts that have cultural references that would help the students grasp better the research process, and literature analysis	12
c) Works that are the least challenging linguistically for the students	2

Table 3.52. The Features used by the Literature Teachers to select the Passages to be studied in Class.

- **Question 18: Do you instruct extensive reading to your students?**

I haven't convinced them to read the book in the program	20%
I suggest titles of the same author / period with different authors	40%
Yes, but they never read	26.66%
I instruct them to read analytical reviews	06.66%
Sometimes	06.66%

Table 3.53. Extensive Reading Instruction

➤ **Question 19: Do you direct your students to do research?**

	Yes	I only recommend it
Teachers who direct their Students to do research	13	2

Table 3.54. Research in the Literature Classroom

➤ **Question 20: Do you include the students' native cultural background in your teaching?**

	Yes	No
Teachers who said they included their students' native cultural background in their teaching	66.6%	33.3%

Table 3.55. The Students' Native Culture in the Literature Classroom

➤ **Question 21: If yes, how do you bridge the gap for your students?**

Teachers explaining how they bridge the cultural gap for their students	(%)
-By enhancing parallels and differences between the cultures	40
-I use recent related sociocultural events	10
-I give examples from Arab literature, movies, cartoons, and even poetry	40
-I ask them about their experiences and they are interested as soon as I talk about native culture	10

Table 3.56. Bridging the Cultural Gap in the Literature Classroom

- **Question 22: Do you view favorably the use of media, reading aloud sessions, or even role-plays to liven the lessons and increase your students' motivation?**

Yes	11
No 'no time & too many students only 'read aloud' is possible	4

Table 3.57. Media Use in the Literature Classroom

'Indeed, I do think using media and other reinforcement activities is beneficial. Unfortunately, practically speaking, it becomes more and more difficult to implement them due to the increasing number of students and the time allocated to the lesson (one hour per week). The only means of reinforcement left is reading aloud.' (T12)

*Qualitative comments of the teachers who answered yes to **question 22:**

*Only for 1st & 2nd year students	*However, we are limited in time
*It can make students interested in literature outside class 2	*I advise them to watch the movie adaptation
*It should be done before class homework preparation	*I would like to use them extensively

Table 3.58. Qualitative comments of the teachers in Favor of Media Use in the Literature Classroom

*No comment (4 teachers did no comment)

➤ **Question 23: Is there anything you would like to add?**

Reading is important.	<p>T7: ‘...it’s never enough to stress active reading, for I deem it to be one of the most pivotal precursors in the development of a literary critical mind.’</p> <p>T12: ‘Teaching literature is very challenging since it requires the students’ involvement. As the other forms of art, when approaching it, we need first to like it and appreciate it. Thus, when teaching literature, the main difficulty stems from the lack of interest of students who do not consider reading as a crucial activity.’</p> <p>T13: ‘...teachers of literature especially should be allowed to use modern tools to attract students’ attention to the habit of reading... choosing works that would raise their interest in knowledge.’</p> <p>T15: ‘...the day we arrive to motivate students to read books, that would probably be a great achievement.’</p>
Technology use is harmful	<p>T5: ‘It seems to me that hybrid teaching contributes to amplify many problems reported by my colleagues with more experience. The drastic reduction of on-site classroom interactions has in my view very negative effects on our students who, for the vast majority, are not prepared to be active and autonomous learners.’</p> <p>T6: ‘I think students became idle and frivolous due to social media & internet as well as hybrid learning. They have become reluctant to dive into active, serious, purposeful tasks.’</p>
More time needed	<p>T1: ‘I wish we could have more time for our literature classes, and students who are more motivated and interested to study literature.’</p> <p>T3: ‘I think that 1st year students need to start with short stories, poems for 1st year students. The novel is too long. This is to allow them to analyze clearly and read repetitively the short selected works. The majority failed to read the novel in S2.’</p>
Teachers are grateful for the analysis of their teaching	<p>T8: ‘I enjoyed going through this questionnaire as it made me reflect on my teaching methods. Thank you. I love teaching literature and making my students love it too, it’s the biggest reward.’</p> <p>T9: ‘Thank you for your interest.’</p>
Critical thinking	<p>T14: ‘Provoking the students to get them to leave their comfort zone is usually a good way to help them develop their critical thinking, which is essential for studying literature.’</p>

Table 3.59. Overall Qualitative Responses of Teachers

*4 teachers did not leave any additional comments.

3.1.2.2. Results of the Teachers' Interviews

3.1.2.2.1. The Place of TCBK in the Literature Classroom

- **Theme 1: TCBK as an essential component of the literature classroom**

The teachers acknowledge the necessity for the students to be culturally proficient in order to be equipped for literary study. Teachers (T2 & T3) present the context of the literary work to be a valuable addition to their subject matter. They state what follows:

'It is! It is necessary. For example, if you are teaching modernism, we have to study the events or the things that made the author write his work, uh... it is the changes that happened in the environment that pushed the authors to write.' (T2)

'Students normally must know about cultural information so that at least they help them to analyze their literary work. When you have for example knowledge of the cultural background of the literary work, you will be able to analyze the passage within its context. It is somehow a must to know the cultural background of the work.' (T3)

For T4, it is mandatory that anyone who undertakes literature comprehension inquires about the contextual circumstances of every aspect of the work studied. She says:

'As a teacher, I consider that students have to know about the cultural background knowledge. For me it is important to understand any work of art of literature. You cannot place yourself as a reader if you do not know the context of the characters the author is talking about, the situations, and the culture he is exposing in his writing.' (T4)

The teachers' comments above show that they agree to say that TCBK should be included in or at least connected to literature class and the implementation mode selected seems to be the pre-reading task as expressed in what follows.

▪ **Theme 2: Teachers who deal with TCBK as a pre-reading phase.**

The teachers' answers in this section confirm that the pre-reading phase is the step through which target culture is presented to the students in the literature class. Teachers 2 & 8 both affirm this is the case:

'...it is very important because I always start with the socio-historical background of the societies that we are going to study and then we go to the literary work that we are doing, to be able to understand what happened, the events, the...' (T2)

We note that teacher 2 uses the word 'always' and so does her colleague teacher 8. She adds:

'I always do an introduction. I always present the cultural context of the literary work I am going to deal with. I feel it's important. Where does the novelist come from? How did she or he live? Where? Ok? And what was happening around when the novel was written, what was the context, I like to do that because it's important, it's very...' (T8)

In the next section, teachers dive into the specifics of what they consider TCBK needs to be in the literature study class. The common trait of their definitions is that they are personal and reflect their own choices in the matter of teaching literature and how to approach it.

▪ **Theme 3: Literature Teachers' Cultural Input in Class**

Teachers here describe what cultural background knowledge is in their understanding. We note that many perspectives are attached to it. For teacher 10, target culture is a technicality within literature study that is taught in class. She explains:

'It is part ... and it is named, when we study or when we analyze literature, it is part of the analytical tools being literary elements, so we have among the literary elements the cultural background. I told you it is technically named the context or the background even, to be simpler for the students. And it can be both cultural, political, and it can take different characteristics, ok? Historical, psychological, autobiographical sometimes if the writer is talking, is narrating telling his life to the reader. So, it can be different from one story to another story based on the context of the characters inside the story and on the biography of the writer.' (T10)

We understand from the above that what we present here as TCBK is technically termed as 'the cultural background' and is presented in class as 'context' or 'background' to the students for clarity. Teacher 9 associates TCBK to intertextuality, she states what follows:

*'Yes, yes, we refer to major texts and we often notice that students do not know them or have never heard of them. If I give the example of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, sometimes we refer to them and we see that students have not heard about them, not in Arabic, not in French and not in English that they had been studying for 6 years in middle school and in high school. And this is just one example.'* (T9)

For teacher 9, intertextuality is an important element to focus on as she finds students to be unaware of previous writings that may have influenced the works they are brought to study in literature class. In the following comment by teacher 3 we understand that even

though TCBK is viewed by the majority of teachers as important in literature, it is not systematically used. T3 explains:

'In Rip Van Winkle I haven't really dealt with the cultural background, however in Jane Eyre we are going to talk about the cultural background of the literary work, and about how the Victorian era was, and describe the features of that time, etc... It's important to know the features of the time to be able to identify the main themes within the work.' (T3)

According to T3, it is not always the teacher's role to issue TCBK; students need to depend on themselves and on their readings. Additionally, even though the above comments agree with the fact that cultural input is part of their teaching tasks, it is not an undisputed belief. In fact, in the following section we can observe that some teachers who were interviewed expressed their surprise when the matter was presented to them.

▪ **Theme 4: Teachers Surprised by TCBK as a Pedagogical Tool for Literature Study.**

When the use of TCBK in literature class came up in the interview discussions, some teachers revealed their astonishment. Teacher 7 for instance, never even considered this element as a knowledge acquisition tool. She declares:

'I was somehow surprised because it's not the type of questions that we really think about when we are teaching such a field. This is actually amazing you know. It made me rethink the whole process of teaching English as a foreign language. Be it in Literature class or any other class in which we use English, you know?' (T7)

Teacher 8 never considered that Algerian students would have any cultural misunderstandings with a novel such as *Heart of Darkness* due to their national colonial past and awareness of it. She asks:

*'So you think it's a matter of culture? I've never thought about it as a problem of culture, this is interesting...I've never thought that *Heart of Darkness* is not grasped by students because they don't know anything about that cultural context.'* (T8)

In what follows we understand that the teacher is puzzled with our research inquiry; as she was never trained in terms of how to use cultural knowledge and to identify its objective. Hence, this issue has not been thought through with the elaboration of didactical tools for instance. She explains:

'I found it interesting in a way that I recognized some of the choices that I make in class. I found some questions that I could answer saying that I actually do that in class. Sometimes we think of ourselves as being original because we did not really get any training as to how to plan our lessons and include some elements that we did not study, or that we did not experience as students in class, so I thought that maybe I was original but in fact, I was not. I was just mainly being intuitive or I don't know, something that we all unconsciously share and I find it in the questionnaire. So, I'm not creating anything new, I'm just using the tools that are already here.' (T11)

Teacher 11 implemented TCBK spontaneously in her course, when T8, in the following comment, questions the systematic presentation of foreign cultural knowledge for every work studied in class. She declares what follows:

'But, I consider that a literary text can be universal. It can talk to everyone...I understand your perspective concerning for example, T.S. Elliot because he uses a

lot of symbols, he refers a lot to mythology and Western tradition, and in order to understand his poetry you need to go through every symbol.’ (T8)

In the above comment, T8 struggles to situate the pedagogical validity of using target culture in her literature course. She cites T. S. Elliot to necessitate such knowledge, but refutes this dimension to be reviewed for all the works at the program. T8 uses the term ‘universal’, hence reflecting on the core of the problem. It is also important to note that the researcher never hinted such an affirmation, it is the teacher’s reflection going back and forth about TCBK use until she again changes her mind to see the ‘symbolic difficulty’ for every work under examination. She adds:

‘The problem with Heart of Darkness, I guess, is the style, the very complex style used. Ok? And not all the students like, as you said, psychological insights, even if now when you look at the movies that are in fashion, you see a lot of psychoanalytical treatments of problems, split personalities for example. Students like those kinds of movies, but when they read Heart of Darkness, they don’t arrive at that because to arrive at that level of psychological analysis you have to go through the symbols and it’s very complex.’ (T8)

In this section, it becomes clear that the teachers did not deal with TCBK at the level of syllabus design or through recurring practice. Their reactions of surprise, puzzlement, and reflection all spontaneously occurred at the moment of the interview. In what follows, we understand that it is easier for teachers to reflect on an issue they have traditionally thought more about: the mastery of the English language.

3.1.2.2.2. TCBK & Language

▪ **Theme 1: Linguistic Competence Prioritized before Cultural Knowledge Acquisition**

Although the TCBK was brought to the attention of the literature teachers, it is another element that remains at the center of their concern: English language proficiency. T3 explains that language mastery is a requirement for EFL students who are enrolled in English studies where literature analysis and interpretation depend on their level of language proficiency. She states what follows:

'Maybe language competency is more important than cultural background. If the students have the ability to analyze their work in a well-written language, I think that if it's readable and understood by the reader I think that it's important to have the language.' (T3)

Hence, in what follows T4 joins T3 as to the need for the Algerian students to master the English language before tackling literary works for study. She adds:

'The language, some don't even understand the words they read. I noticed that a lot with the second year students, we study short stories and analyze short passages in class and they don't have the skills or the ability to understand the content or the language not to mention the culture. The first barrier is the language.' (T4)

If T3 & T4 are concerned about the basic prerequisite of language mastery for EFL university students, T8 explains in what follows that more the students will understand a literary work, better will they respond to it. She states:

'But when they started reading Pride & Prejudice they liked the characters, they liked ... it's as if they had overcome the first obstacles of maybe the language. Language is difficult, and when it's difficult you always go to the dictionary... it gets tiresome with time... It's simple language. The style is also simple and it's very

lively. We see the characters in movement, enjoying... I don't always have these good results. For example, I teach Heart of Darkness in third year, and I don't get them to like it. Okay? Except for a few students because they are excellent. I guess it's the level of English; it plays an important role.' (T8)

The above statement presents linguistic difficulty as the main barrier to adequate and proficient literature study. According to T8, beginner or intermediate level students will better appreciate texts that are easily understandable with simpler language and style than more complex works that demand more effort on their part. T2 joins the previous teachers mentioned in this section and declares that only excellent students, i.e. those who are very proficient in English will do well in literature class. She adds:

'Yes, the minority of them, not all of them of course...just the minority that follows and understands. Those who have the required English or the language background to understand. The others are just 'à côté de la plaque'.' (Laughs) (T2)

Concerning the best students in her literature class, T2 asserts that they are among the most proficient students in the English language. Nonetheless, in spite of the affirmations in this section of the literature teachers who consider that English mastery is the students' passport to literature study, the teachers' statements in the following section seem to demonstrate a different point of view: culture and language are not in opposition in literature study.

- **Theme 2: Culture or Language: the Wrong Dichotomy**

For T7, literature is more than language mastery, she asserts that the endeavor for her is to contextualize the work at hand rather than deal with its language. She says what follows:

'For my part, personally I always, when we tackle a text if it is literature, I always put it in context so that they do understand the impact of culture on the text and not just the language.' (T7)

Therefore, T7 considers that the cultural complexity of literary texts needs to be addressed in literature class. In what follows T10 joins T7 defending a similar position, for her the importance of the cultural background is unquestionable as the cultural element will be needed significantly at each class level, and particularly when students will reach the higher stages of post-graduation. She develops the following:

'Of course the cultural background differs, but as far as the English language is concerned in the department it's going to be either the American or the 'British cultural, and political, and you know historical background because these are the two pillars in the English canon. Of course later on, I guess as having been a literature student myself, I know that in the coming years: the second, the third, and especially in Master, they will be introduced to other backgrounds, speaking or touching on some areas like postcolonialism....So they will be introduced to other cultural backgrounds, but as a beginning, or introduction we touch on the, you know, the paramount ones; namely the British and the American. That's it.' (T10)

T10 pursues to explain the major components of the cultural background of the works taught in the English department at the University of Algiers. Hence, the literature taught at the University of Algiers either belongs to the English canon or to the American one; these two being the most 'paramount' ones taught at the level of the 'licence' or undergraduate levels. Added to the complexity of literature teaching presented by T10, T09

explains that the students' weaknesses are intricate and involve many factors, making the effort required to the teacher massive. She explains:

'They only focus on what they need to do in class in order to pass their module and get a 10 or above. So, it's not really easy to start over, there's so much to read about, so much to know about... Especially as there is also the problem of their level in English, that most of the time does not really allow them to read extensively without the guidance of a teacher or without the help of the analysis that we do in the classroom.' (T9)

Hence, not only do the students have issues with language and culture for literature study, but these issues go a long way back and are deeply rooted in their early years of schooling, as explained by T6 in what follows.

'You know my son is in third year primary school and he has a terrible handwriting; how is he going to assimilate all those notions in Arabic, which are very difficult with grammar for instance? I am supposed to show him how to improve his handwriting and how to improve his reading. Even in Arabic he is reading with difficulty. So we've moved to very difficult notions in grammar, in vocabulary while we forgot or we put aside the basic skills among which is reading. I think that all these concern the educational system from the primary school to the university where everything has to be altered and the priority needs to be given to the reading and the writing skills first. These are the basic skills in all languages.' (T6)

T6 explicates the intricacies of skills acquisition by drawing a parallel with what she herself has observed to be her own son's learning issues in primary school. We understand from the comments of the teachers in this section that the weight of literature teaching seems to fall solely on them. Additionally, the students' level of English, their lack of cultural knowledge, and even their upbringing in the early school days, all seem to create a

distance from what they are expected to achieve in literature class. In the following section, we dive more specifically into their lack of interpretive skills.

- **Theme 3: Students Lack Interpretive Skills**

In the literature classes at the department of English, students are asked to interpret writings from distant times and foreign countries. The writings presented to them are works of art, filled with rich stylistic effects and often highly symbolic references; all to decipher and comment upon. T7 presents another complication to the issue of interpretation: the literary theory. She says what follows:

'That's the problem; actually they cannot do both at the same time. Either they stick to the theoretical background or they do analysis, disregarding theory. It's difficult for them to just maybe link, at least cross over from the theory to the text. At least not all of them.' (T7)

Here, the teacher adds to the complicated matter of language over culture, another complexity proper to the literature study practiced in literature class: the dichotomy of text analysis versus literary theory. Additionally, the compounding factors needed to interpret a literary text successfully cause the students to lose sight of the critical thinking abilities that should have been acquired at this point, them being academic university students. Also, T8 regrets their lack of interpretive skills, but mostly their lack of enthusiasm caused by their absence of knowledge and know-how. T8 states what follows:

'...when I ask them in the middle of the analysis or at the end of the semester: "Do you like the novel as a whole?" they say, "No, it's too dark." This is Heart of Darkness! What do you expect? But it makes you think, makes you question, this is

the purpose of reading such complex novels! I think it's a problem of difficulty.'
(T8)

Through the above statement, T8 sheds light on a valuable core issue: The tackling of art, its interpretation are complex matters presented to students who barely manage to read and write in English! Many steps are involved, all the abovementioned and more, consequently both teachers and students are lost in confusion. For T7 there is one root cause to the problem: lack of reading. She states what follows:

'I'd say that, again the problem lies in reading, it is important to read and that is why most of the students do not have critical thinking. They just receive literature passively, they do not really read actively. So, this is what's missing.' (T7)

T7 in the above statement distinguishes two reading modes, the active and the passive readers. For her, reading was not integrated into the students overall learning process as they appear to only read passively. Had they learned to tackle literature progressively in their earlier school years, they would be able to read with more involvement making use of some critical interpretive proficiency to analyze the texts they are presented in literature class. Hence, our next section presents the teachers' take on the reading skill in the educational system.

3.1.2.2.3. The Place of Reading in Education and the Effect on Literature Study

- **Theme 1: Reading is not taught explicitly**

Reading fiction on a regular basis creates reading automatisms, whereby recurrent themes or topics of preference or on the contrary of distaste are identified. The various reading steps allow us to identify with heroes or anti-heroes, or even flat characters we find to like and discover to our disappointment that they are not more noticeable. These appreciations in novels are difficult for students who do not have the habit of reading and this already at the level of L1. T9 explains what follows:

'I sometimes do ask them to read novels in Arabic and in French or ask them to do the analysis of some works they have read in other languages, but I find that the problem for many students is not only a problem of language but the fact that they have not been taught to read at all. Sometimes I ask them to bring with them to the classroom novels in other languages that they have read or that they are reading so that we can use them, regardless of the language because we can use them in the process of analyzing the major elements of fiction for example. I ask them to analyze themes in any novels they have read, but I find that they have not read sometimes at all. Apart from what was included in the syllabus of middle school and high school. Reading itself is not really a major skill that is taught in the Algerian environment as a habit.' (T9)

T9 demonstrates quite well the effect lack of reading has on her students' ability to even handle fictional literature in any language, not solely in English. Had they been encouraged to pursue reading at a regular and consistent pace, and not only for the syllabus reading list, they would know at the level of the university things like the themes, characterization, stylistic features, so on and so forth. T2 seconds the idea that student readers are a necessity in literature class. She says:

'...we have some students who read but not necessarily in English. I have some students who read in Arabic or in French, and we try always to make the connection with what they have read. I ask them if they...ask them if they can see those

techniques of writing, of analyzing in the works they have read and it is very helpful.’ (T2)

T6 in the next comment confirms what is suggested by T2 above, students who read regularly are rare and most students shared with T6 they never really studied reading before coming to university. T6 explains as follows:

‘In class I ask students in first year, “were you exposed to reading skills before coming to the university? Were you exposed to how you are supposed to deal with a text?” and they said “we never studied a text in high school.”’ (T6)

The comment above is of course to be taken with precaution as we cannot affirm that these students were never taught text analysis. However, could they have forgotten the necessary steps due to a lack of practice? This is more probable, particularly in a world where the reading practice is scarce and entertainment is overly present.

- **Theme 2: Reading is a Motivator to study Literature**

The following statement by T1 clarifies the fact that students nowadays prefer “easy” entertainment to reading. A loss for literature class according to her, she explains:

‘My feeling is that literature classes are losing quality and substance (and even meaning) because of a number of factors: one of them is the fact that the Netflix generation does not read books.’ (T1)

T4 explains further this connection students have with the world of entertainment; for her it is a matter of point of view or preference. There are those who are interested in

the culture and the arts and those who are only here to study the language, perhaps with more pragmatic goals. She says what follows:

'You have some students who know about the cultural differences through their interest in life, through their exposure to the language, students who like reading...Yes, those who read, listen to music and watch movies have a certain background knowledge of the Anglophone societies. The others lack this knowledge, they are here only to study the language they don't see the importance of culture.'
(T4)

We understand, according to T4 that some students' extrinsic motivation calls them to shy away from literature and all it entails. In the next statement T8 shows that some amount of fun needs to be injected in literature study. For her the part of enjoyment in the reading habit is the starting point to analyzing a text, its characters, or its cultural context. She says:

'Once you read the text you enjoy the text and then you can go to the cultural context of that text. So first you enjoy the reading, you like the story, you like the characters and then you have access to the culture of that work. You can for instance not know anything about African culture, but yet you can enjoy reading Things Fall Apart, or any African work.' (T8)

T2 in the following statement suggests the reading task to be privileged compared to the movie version of the novel at stake as it can make the students curious and even interested. She says:

'Yes, I prefer them to read the work. ...And when you read once, twice or three times, you always find something new to see and to discover in a text.' (T2)

T3 goes even further and explain that she pushes her students to read by bringing the material in class. She explains:

'You can motivate them if you bring material to read in class... that is important for them to read. Today for example, I have brought to my students the short story Eveline otherwise if I had asked them to read the work at home I know they wouldn't have done it. You bring the text, you bring the material.' (T3)

The above statement is explicit about how serious the situation of our students is: they clearly lack reading habits.

- **Theme 3: Students lack Reading Habits**

The following comments of T6 and T8 show just how powerless they both feel when they see their students to be so out of touch with the practice of reading as a whole. T6 was shocked to note that that they did not even bother to read compulsory texts at the program.

She states:

'Of course, this is connected to their lack of reading, they never read. You know when I ask them in class "what are you currently reading?" They say "Nothing! We never read." "How come you never read? At least some texts, essays..." They say, "No, we're not interested in reading"... They say, "We never read!" They never read and they do not even read the texts that are compulsory.' (T6)

T8 not only confirms the previous statement, but also adds that reading for students is a boring task in this age and time, she explains:

'They still see reading as something boring. It's a boring activity for them. I think this is the main problem in their difficulty, in the difficulty they have with this module of literature.' (T8)

In the last statement of this section, T6 incriminates the technology advancement in our country where reading was not a preferred activity by the masses to begin with. She states:

'I think it's a national issue. It's become a national problem, it's part of our culture: Algerians do not read, they are not readers. I don't know why. I told them "when I was a student, I read all my novels and short stories in the school bus". But if you have seen them in the school bus they have their earphones listening to music or watching videos. Nothing is related to their studies, to university, to knowledge, nothing.' (T6)

As a matter of fact, as pointed out by T6, technology makes entertainment available to all at the tip of the finger causing the teacher's action, if not impossible extremely difficult to put into place.

3.1.2.2.4. Technology Use

- **Theme 1: Technology hinders Students in their Reading**

Due to technology and its place in our modern life, there is no space for reading as a daily practiced activity. T2 stipulates most students do not read and even prefer watching the movie version of the novel that is at the program. She says:

'Yes, because when they are adults they are used to not reading, more social media for instance. I would say that 95% of the students watch the movie instead of reading the work.' (T2)

She adds in the following statement that the movie does not allow a literary study of the written work and can only be beneficial at a secondary level. She states:

'...just as an overview, just as an overview of the work. But when we are analyzing we need to see the techniques of writing, the themes, and the aim of the author... Those things we can't see in the movie. It can be an extra something but not necessary.' (T2)

What T2 presents in her statement above is that literary study in its process has various elements that students need to be familiarized with. Reading habitually is not only necessary to be culturally proficient, but also to be literarily competent. They acquire through their reading progressively more acute knowledge of techniques and stylistic features usually present in literature. In what follows, T3 adds that had they been reading to begin with, technological tools would only present new platforms, such as blogs or academic websites, for them to pick from. She explains:

'Normally they have to read online, they don't know that this reading can be done by the use of technological means. They are getting farther away from reading.' (T3)

The issue raised by T3 sheds light on an important aspect one of the students' most modern issues, they are constantly in search of fun.

• Theme 2: Technology use or Traditional Reading, Students are in Search of “fun”

T1 in her following comment depicts students who are entirely guided by their desires and will only focus on entertainment. She says:

'I believe that reading classics is most essential for students who want to cultivate knowledge of intellectual quality, but when their interest is only triggered by all what respond to their thirst for sensations and emotions, it is only natural that they do not feel the need to read books. I may appear cynical but I honestly think that there is a visible lack of interest in anything that does not stimulate their hedonistic side.' (T1)

Hence, her analysis of the students is that they will focus on the storyline, the climactic aspect of the unfolding events for the sensational properties, similarly to what they are accustomed to in movies or social media. She adds:

'Sure, they do “like” stories but the stories to which they enthusiastically react are that postmodern concept of the visual story developed by social media.' (T1)

Consequently, T5 dislikes the idea of implementing media use for literature study, and considers it as a possible addition, but not a necessary one. She explains:

'Yes, I am for the use of audio-visual material, etc. However, I am skeptical about the outcome. It seems to me that university should be about studying and of course, it can make the subject more appealing, ok. It can help to get some ideas across etc. But, it will never teach students to focus, to go in depth etc. I'm skeptical about the impact of technology on teaching and learning... I don't know. What I'm saying is let's use it the right way, but let's not assume just because it is there, it is necessarily useful to us when it comes to the core of our job.' (T5)

The following teacher's comment shows how teachers are not all on the same page concerning media use in literature study. T10 says what follows:

'Well, sometimes... because you know the new type of students, they don't read a lot and they hate reading to tell you the truth. So sometimes, I don't mind, as an introduction tell them to go and see the movie adaptation. In my research, I'm dealing with films, ok? And if it is an academic novel, it means that I can teach it in the classroom. So, the film adaptation is not an issue to be among the tools, you know, to be complementary with the scope...' (T10)

According to T10 media use can be a helpful addition to the literature class as it will allow students to enter the realm of literary study and analysis. Hence, our next section which presents the interviewees' impressions on their students' profile of 'digital natives'

3.1.2.2.5. Students' Profile

- **Theme 1: The Digital Natives**

According to some teachers, students have become difficult to approach intellectually. Foreign culture is not acquired, not even understood, a widespread internet use with a lack of concentration as a result brought about a new category of students; they are the 'digital natives'.

'I think the traditional means of cultural transmission are disappearing. I don't think any of the students I taught to ever experience this. I never heard a student telling me they had a grandparent teaching them about their culture in any traditional way. But they are very much interested in what is today, they are image-bound, locked to their screens, and in screens we find either interactive or non-interactive experiences. It's either cinema or television or video games. Students in the recent years are reading less novels and short stories and some of them are reading more and more cartoons, the Manga for instance, they like the Japanese cartoons, not just the American.' (T11)

T11 presents screen-bound students who never have enriching discussions with their family members. Passive and lost in screens, the students today turn to tasks that require little efforts, such as reading comic books instead of novels. T2 thinks that some students pretend reading when they have only watched the movie version of the work at stake. She clarifies:

'Yes, yes, yes...but with the lazy students, they always watch the movie and they come pretending they have read the book.' (T2)

T2 further adds that she tries to have the students connect to the characters and their struggles to interest them in reading. She even manages to have them think about and analyze the readings in class, she says:

'That's it. I make them think for example in the place of the character what would you do? Why do you think the author made the characters in this plight? What is his aim? So they understand it better...They get very interested in the analysis because...they get very interested; they have to put themselves in the place of the characters, so it makes them think. I find it very useful; in my class, I always do it.' (T2)

The students are depicted by their teachers as lazy and isolated. They do not seem to benefit from any cultural transmission, one which would normally occur at the level of the family. According to their teachers, they need to reconnect with their own emotions in order to develop effective patterns for literary analysis in the realm of literature.

- **Theme 2: Discrepancy between Literature and the students**

Entering the world of literature is a complex and challenging endeavor, particularly when university students have not been initiated to it. T9 explains:

'Oh we try to bridge the gap and we sometimes succeed with some students we do, but some students lack the motivation also to catch up. They're really not willing to do extra work, extensive reading, if we give them lists of suggested readings they do not really take them into consideration.' (T9)

According to T9, reading lists for instance, are viewed by students as more efforts that do not automatically guarantee success. T5 adds in what follows that it's a challenge that cannot be easily overcome. She explains:

'And I don't blame students I want to be clear about this, it's not the students' fault, in my perspective anyway. Of course, they have their share for some of them, those who have the ability and don't make the effort. But for the vast majority I think they are victims, just like we are.' (T5)

The above statement by T5 shows that acquiring skills is not the students' priority, graduating is! Furthermore, there is the issue of culturally accepted topics and social realities depicted in western literature students seem to have issues with. T4 states:

'Sometimes students can have a shock, for example when we studied Daisy Miller in class and they read, "Daisy was flirting..."... We have some reactions of some students who are shocked about the content in the book. Same thing with Maggie, when we are analyzing the short story exposing the events or actions that happen, they are shocked.' (T4)

T4 exposes another concern that arises in literature class, causing teachers to handle delicate exchanges with their students. She explained that although they were used to watching movies with the Western society codes, they were less capable to deal with

western fiction while reading and analyzing in class. Being entertained by Western ideals and analyzing these are two completely different situations.

- **Theme 3: Discrepancy between Culture and the students**

Our Algerian EFL students seem to be at the opposite of what we can qualify as the literary profile students. For T9 their ultimate ambition is to obtain their university degree, whatever competence comes with the degree is only a bonus. She explains:

'For them, the real problem today is that they do not think that literature is going to help them in their English studies. They want to learn the language; they're not interested in the culture and they're not interested in the literature. We try to explain to them that literature might contribute immensely to their acquisition of the language itself, but they're not really...What I have noticed for many of them, obviously not all of them, is that they are not really motivated when it comes to learning literature.' (T9)

Students lack TCBK according to T10, this means that they also lack interest in literature. She says:

'Of course, you know the major problem in literature classes in first year (because I teach 'Literary Genres' to students of first year), I am speaking about the three previous years, the challenge as you are mentioning is that students, and I am not generalizing this to all the students; but a good number of them do not have the cultural background. They don't know what it means so they don't feel the interest at the beginning.' (T10)

Hence, the correlation between lack of TCBK and lack of interest in literary study is obvious for T10. Correspondingly, T11 affirms that reaching out to them using media

references that are familiar to them can catch their attention and allow them to be reactive to what is taught in literature class. She says:

'So they're interested in...I even once heard from a friend of a friend, to whom a student said: "you know our teacher in class speaks of Marvel, the latest films". It was me! I was very happy because that student did not interact at all in class, at all. But then she at least went and spoke about this and that this made her interested and this is one of my main goals. It is at least to make students interested in literature and love literature or whatever cultural element we're teaching them, art in general.' (T11)

Of course, creating an interesting and reviving atmosphere is important for the literature teachers, however without losing sight of the necessity to respect the content of the syllabus at hand.

3.1.2.2.6. The syllabus of The Literature Module

- **Theme 1: Time Constraints**

Real life teaching conditions oblige the teachers to reduce the goals they have for their learners, T1 explains:

'The class of literature has become a kind of Balzacian "Peau de Chagrin" with the lessons less and less substantial. We teachers are having a hard time trying to recreate the intellectual atmosphere and even the magic of our first classes when we started teaching a decade ago.' (T1)

When teachers are forced to reduce the content of the syllabus and the amount of the literary works because of time constraints, they have less opportunity to create momentum. T11 shows how difficult it is to adapt to unprepared students when simultaneously there are instructions to follow. She says:

'I would definitely do that in a discussion because I try to provide lessons according to the syllabus. After all, we're asked to follow the syllabus especially this semester with African literature. There has been a meeting in which we were asked to do exactly what we are asked to do because there's a new Master of African literature next year.' (T11)

T11 declares using discussion time with students to provide additional cultural input for her students. T9 also admits it is time consuming and requires lengthy procedures, to not only practice with the students, but to expose them to culturally rich extracts and to have them react and work. She says:

'It does actually, it takes time because they are not really aware of the fact that their own culture, the African culture is... for them it's not relevant enough to the study of English through that literature. But I've had experiences where I was able to convince groups studying African literature by making them read short stories, plays that really represented their own environment and were written in English. They enjoyed them and they understood better than... they related to them better than they would relate to other works they really liked like Jane Eyre or Pride and Prejudice.' (T9)

T9 considers herself having won a battle because the works she refers to, Jane Eyre and Pride and Prejudice, are those habitually preferred by the students for their youthful topics and entertaining plots. She has managed to show students literature they had never considered reading and would have otherwise never discovered. Hence, the choice of works, but also the choice of skills that the teachers present their students with can greatly impact the students' learning quality as we see in what follows.

- **Theme 2: Teaching Literary Skills**

While looking into the details of their teachings, the literature teachers recounted a certain compilation of confusing elements that seems to complicate the literary skills acquisition of their students. T8 lists the works at the program and presents simultaneously their linguistic simplicity as well as the literary movements they belong to. She states what follows:

'So first year is devoted to Realism and Romanticism, I guess? Second year with Maggie: A Girl of the Streets we do Naturalism and in third year Modernism. This progression is quite good for them because it presents them with texts that are easy for them to read.' (T8)

T8 seems to say that with texts that are easy to read, presenting the students with literary movements will be a more manageable exercise. Nonetheless, we are brought to wonder if this is clear for the students themselves. As T7 states, they are supposed to know what to expect already. She states what follows:

'Yeah, hopefully because they do have modules of literature starting from the first year. And this is something that we do in first year. As third year students these should have been picked up already.' (T7)

We understand from the above statement that the understanding of the students is to be handled by them as they are university students. However, nothing is less certain. T7 adds what follows:

'I'm talking about the module that I used to teach which is 'Literary Theory'. So it is much centered on the theoretical tools that we use in order to be able to dissect a text, to analyze it. So we don't really put much focus on these elements.' (T7)

Therefore, once the reading is dealt with in first and second year, literary theory is what students encounter at the level of the third year. Also, according to T7 literary skills are not ‘focused upon much’ and therefore the link between the two is not made obvious to the students who are expected to use their acquired skills and to implement them with their new learning. This can be confusing for unprepared students. In what follows T11 addresses this syllabus complexity. She says what follows:

‘Maybe also our syllabus requires a revision because maybe we should start... why teaching theory separately from a literature class? Why don’t we all start with Formalism? Formalism means that I start with the form, meaning the word. So if I start by teaching students that literature is about first a word, and we analyze the word before looking at the text in general, and looking at the context and so on, maybe this will improve not the teaching, but the outcomes of the teaching. But there are always students who would surprise us and they are very interested to bringing works to class. Because sometimes, to use the word, they are bored with one literary work for the entire semester.’ (T11)

Consequently, T11 explains that the syllabus could benefit from a review to allow the students to see clearly the elements they are to progressively acquire, making their learning more fruitful, and to allow room for challenge that can be brought by the more advanced students. It is interesting to note, as explained underneath, that the proficient students are curious to know about otherness.

3.1.2.2.7. Bridging the cultural gap

- **Theme 1: Cultural misunderstanding**

Similarly to what was declared previously, there are instances where students, who have good profiles according to their teachers, show curiosity and a desire to learn that

surpasses the class level. According to T8, they are also culturally proficient and seekers of deeper investigation. She explains:

'But there are students who are aware of their cultural identity, they are aware that they are African and they can identify with these writers. For example, Adichie, I forgot her first name, is notorious among the young generation, I had a student who mentioned her saying she enjoyed very much reading her works. So this time when I am going to teach Heart of Darkness I am going to mention the Algerian colonization. It'll be very interesting.' (T8)

We understand from the above that the student's profile described by T8 is an exceptional one, the teacher says 'I had a student...' and the cultural distance the students have with the texts they read remains a difficult issue for the teachers to grasp. T1 cannot understand it and even rejects the thought. She says:

'Why do they choose to study in a department of English if it is to seek elements of their own culture? ...Why not join other departments, more in synergy with their cultural background? ...I think that departments such as History, Sociology and Anthropology will constitute a better panel of choice for students who wish to reconnect with their origins.' (T1)

We understand that in the above statement T1 is puzzled and does not feel compassionate for the students who do not seem to have the required profile or skillset. T5 confirms the idea that a cultural 'travel' is necessary and even part of their teaching requirements. For her students are to be uncomfortable to deal with culturally challenging works, she adds:

'This is precisely part of the pleasure of literature and the reason perhaps why we read literature from all over the world. We sometimes feel more comfortable with

one country as opposed to another, it's because we have this ability to get out of our context etc. so maybe I think unconsciously that's what I do. in the literature class I have the tendency to try to bring them, you know, to another culture precisely another set of references etc. but the problem now is that they hardly know anything about this new cultural context, this target culture and so it's very difficult for them to even understand what they read.' (T5)

In the comment above, T5 admits to a failure in the process as her students who 'hardly know anything about this new cultural context', are not able to respond. Additionally, T8 declares to not have tried to relate the topics in the work to the students' own native culture, but addressed issues thematically. She explains:

'I ask for their opinion about racism, what they think of colonization... but a direct reference to our colonized past. I haven't had that chance... it's interesting.' (T8)

T8 shows in her comment that she is not opposed to consider the students' NCBK as a useful addition to her teaching, however she never thought of using it to bridge the gap of the students' lack of background knowledge. In what follows, T11 explains using the students' native culture in her class while explaining or introducing the works studied. She states what follows:

'And each time I would speak about any of the African elements in the studied work, we studied Things Fall Apart, I would try to compare it to the Algerian context. If we take the example of the colonial history, I would try to compare the dates, to compare the independence dates, to compare the way we've been colonized, to compare how the French colonizer acted almost the same way like the English colonizer in Nigeria. So I tried to bring so many elements, and I also compared the fact that our Algerian authors are also writing in different languages. For us they're writing in French, same thing for other fellow African authors who are writing in English; it depends on the language of the colonizer.' (T11)

T11 highlights the fact that she does present TCBK in relation to her students' NCBK in class through explanations and discussions. Interestingly, in what follows, some teachers seem to highlight the existing link between their students' point of view with the addition of their native culture in the classroom discussions.

- **Theme 2: Connecting the Two Worlds**

The literary works studied are issued from the Western societies and a reflection of lifestyles and principles that are proper to the West. Hence, T4 has become aware of the cultural difficulty when teaching EFL literature. She explains what follows:

'Yes, and when they understand this point they start to, ...they try to figure out what is the difference and then you tell them you do not have to judge the character with your own values, you have to understand that the character is behaving in another cultural environment not yours. Things are different and you have to be aware of that. I think this is the major point when you are teaching literature; there is not enough focus on the differences between cultures.' (T4)

Similarly to the above comment, T7 agrees to say there is a need to bridge the gap culturally between the students' native culture and the target culture present in the literature studied in class. She finds her students to respond positively when the two worlds are connected. She says:

'Another interesting thing, you can draw actually parallels between our culture, you know, the indigenous culture versus the foreign culture and they find it pretty interesting. And this is reflected in their writing.' (T7)

T11 sums up the EFL literature teaching situation by choosing the term 'universality' of all cultures. According to her, taking examples from different cultures and drawing them

closer allows the students to transcend the storylines and deal with the thematic issues necessary for their literature study. She says:

'... about universality and how to bring literary theory in literature class, because I taught literary theory, this is exactly what structuralism is about. We speak about how universal everything is and how let's say, all literature, all types of stories or plots for example fall under the same category. So I would take, I don't know, Indian, and then I'll go to Arab, and then to the European, and American and I would find the same pattern. Because there is a shared pattern between the different literatures, this allows me to bring the different literatures to class even if I'm teaching African, and of course after that I make a selection, I select Algerian and I try not to bring Indian for example. But if my lesson requires I speak about postcolonial literature, I would also bring Indian to show the universality of the literature.' (T11)

Eventually, even though some teachers do recognize the value to present and compare the target with the native culture, other teachers seem to focus solely on the presentation of the target culture as a teaching tool.

- **Theme 3: Target Culture Only**

T5 in her following statement expresses her desire to select the act of discovery while teaching literature rather than taking the students back to what they know already. She explains:

'Maybe I'm wrong, but I have this tendency to think of a literature class as something really focused on the target culture. I may be wrong; perhaps this is not the right approach. When I read literature, I am not interested in remaining in my comfort zone; I really enjoy this feeling of being transplanted somewhere else. You see.' (T5)

The reason behind teaching a literature that is foreign to the students according to T5 is then to discover something new and to travel figuratively. T8 agrees and goes even further in the reasoning by comparing herself to her students. Se states what follows:

'I think it would be too limiting for our choice of works. I myself like reading a novel that is completely unfamiliar to me. I need to discover other things, other ways of life, and other ways of thinking. I like it myself so why not the students? You see what I mean?' (T8)

Additionally to the above comment by T8, where target culture seems to be the only focus in the classroom, the next comment reinforces the idea that similar elements are preferred together rather than the differences of two completely different worlds. T11 declares in what follows that for obvious reasons, to present Algerian culture while teaching African literature. She says what follows:

'I do speak about the Algerian culture and I try to refer to Algerian authors or their works, but sometimes the context of a literary work does not allow it, or the students do not have enough knowledge about our own culture or about some examples so that I can connect that to the work we're studying. But when I started teaching African literature this semester, I was able to bring the Algerian culture to class and to connect it and to show students how authentic and how complex it is and how independent it is from any other cultures, at least for the post-colonial period.' (T11)

Hence, bridging the cultural gap from the students' native culture to the texts' target cultural elements they encounter is not an immediate evidence for the teachers interviewed. Consequently, in what follows the teachers' guidance and input is elaborated.

3.1.2.2.8. Teachers' Guidance

- **Theme 1: Students need TCBK input from their Teachers**

T3 points to the fact that students lack autonomy in learning and are dependent on the teachers even for the information they are in fact responsible of collecting.

'No, not really. As teachers we are giving them the cultural background, they don't research...they don't know about...' (T3)

Also, students having a reading flaw, do not understand what is at stake while reading and interpreting literature in class. If they are used to consuming western cinema, T4 says they are less inclined to read its literature with the necessary open-mindedness. She says:

'We have to explain, not everyone is exposed to the culture, or more exactly exposed to the written material the way they are exposed to the film. For the film, with time they have accepted certain things, but in literature they are in front of the material and everyone has to study the material and has to talk about that. So in class sometimes I have to explain, "you should deal with that because it's part of your study and it's not you"' (T4)

All in all, it is a matter of effort and willingness to do the work and to reach out to understand works that are very challenging in the sense that they present an unknown reality.

'Actually, you know, most students don't have background, they don't have cultural knowledge. So what I do is to put the text into context and try to explain that a literary text is always a reflection of the issues, the problems, or the obstacles that the authors may raise and that happened at that time. I also try to clarify things, relate characters or some scenes with themes that are complex and of which students may not understand their hidden implications. From time to time, I need to explain what these cultural implications are, their backgrounds which the students ignore and they do not make the effort to look for.' (T6)

All the teachers' comments lead to the idea that EFL literature teaching is an overwhelming matter that they need help with.

- **Theme 2: Teachers in need of a strategy to teach their EFL students**

In their endeavor to teach literature study, the teachers feel overwhelmed because of their students' hindrances. T5 declares to be at a loss when it comes to deciding what to do with her non-proficient students. She says what follows:

'That's the thing. I don't understand what the outcomes should be. I don't understand what I'm supposed to give them, what they're supposed to demonstrate, etc. "je gère"! I'm just here to... "c'est une garderie pour adultes". I heard someone else say it and that's it: "c'est une garderie pour adultes". I'm sorry for the brutality of the answer, but this is how I feel about the situation.' (T5)

Additionally to the above comments by T5, T11 discovers that her students make several misinterpretations when paraphrasing her ideas; in short, they do not understand her. She explains:

'We have compared in class the cultural elements, the most important foundations of societies, to show what the differences are between our culture and the European Western cultures and some of them understood how rich, or maybe how important our background is. But some of them did not because I've been correcting the exam papers and I've noticed that students are still speaking about African culture as being simple and primitive. These are two words I found in a few copies that I disagree with. And I didn't use those words, I actually used the opposite; I used the word 'complex' and I used the word 'advanced'. For instance, I would say about Africans: "they used to advance in their own way, in their own cultural understanding of what each thing in life is, but there was an advancement.'' (T11)

These two statements reveal a lack of direction, or perhaps a clarity about the teaching objectives set by the group of teachers. In the following interview extract, T5 says feeling the need for pedagogical training or assistance. She declares the following:

'Well, I would say I didn't have a practical training, of course I studied psychopedagogy etc. at the licence level. But I never had a practical training and I think practice is more important when it comes to teaching. Theory is good but practice is priceless. That's what I think.' (T5)

With this final statement about the teachers' issues to improve their teaching methods, we move to their suggestions, which are divided into two categories.

3.1.2.2.9. Teachers' Suggestions

- **A break with the past**

The suggestions presented by the following three teachers interviewed, show their desire to break with a teaching tradition that has, according to them, proven itself to disadvantage university students. T7 addresses the passivity of the learners and considers the need to introduce practical sessions in the future. She says:

'A lot of practice! We need a lot of practice. You asked (in the questionnaire) about extensive reading, it's important but I don't think it helps as much as the practice. So it's important to have practical sessions plus discussions. These help a lot. We also need to teach them the culture of note taking; most students do not take notes. They have handouts to rely on and if they don't they are completely lost. So it is important that we teach them from first year how to take notes.' (T7)

Contrarily to T7, T9 addresses the middle and high school syllabus the students go through before reaching university. For her, canonic literature should be given to students as early as those formative years to familiarize them with the TCBK. She says:

'So, it would be interesting to have at least some basic texts taught in high schools, in middle schools already so that students would have at least some background. Not necessarily really specific background but at least the most common and major literary texts.' (T9)

For T6 it is the necessity to deal in depth with the reading comprehension skill, during the early formative years of the students as well as through practice sessions. Consequently, we can note that she agrees with her former two colleagues in the need to help students by implementing change early or at least before they reach university. She explains:

'Yes, of course I think that we need to start solving this issue, it's a big issue, from the primary school. We can for example, in primary schools open libraries and they should devote one or two hours a week to reading. They can include reading in different languages, you know that English has been included in the third year of primary school, why not include in reading texts, stories, short texts.' (T6)

The difficulty students have to connect with the literature presented to them is due to the foreignness of the target culture that is exacerbated by their lack of contact with otherness through reading. Accordingly, teachers agree to say that our EFL students are not involved with the target culture deeply enough; they mostly see it on social media or through entertainment. Consequently, the following section presents the teachers' next suggestion category: introducing students to the Target Culture with technology use.

•Introducing Students to Reading with Technology Use

Being aware of their students' current environment, some teachers suggest making use of technology in an advantageous manner, which would help to introduce them to literature study. T7 says the following:

'Well that's the problem you know, students nowadays they don't like to read much, you know? So maybe we can suggest that they listen to some podcasts. They would put them in context. Maybe watch short documentaries... I don't know, yeah.' (T7)

As for T11, she suggests cinema studies can even help with analysis, instead of only having the classical combination of lessons and exams. She explains what follows:

'There is the example of The Witcher, there's a very famous video game that most gamers must have played, the TV series; recently we enjoyed the second season of The Witcher. And there are also the books; there are six books of The Witcher. So, the character the Witcher is one that students maybe like very much. It's just like for example Ironman, as a hero. I wouldn't put Ironman in a film, but I would speak of Ironman as a character. For example, Dr. Strange is a neurosurgeon, and once, I think I had to give them an example about what organic and mechanic mean... So yes, I bring sometimes not just a work, whatever the medium is, but probably a character or a famous place.' (T11)

Eventually, we can say that if the teachers are attentive to their students' difficulties, they seem unaware about which difficulties are the ones to prevail. Furthermore, if we have established in the results above, that cultural intricacies really hinder EFL literary study, we have observed reactions of surprise on the part of several literature teachers about whether it should be addressed in literature class at all.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results obtained from the data collection process as well as a discussion of those results. In the following chapter interpretation of these findings will be dealt with and their pedagogical implications.

Chapter Four: Interpretation, Discussion of the Results and Pedagogical

Implications

Introduction

The present chapter is articulated around the three research questions elaborated at the beginning of this study. The results will be interpreted and discussed under the headings corresponding to the abovementioned research questions. In order to answer those questions and their respective sub-questions, we will interpret the results obtained from all the data collected and presented in the previous chapter. There are the results of the evaluation of the students' hindrance in TCBK as well as results that have been classified under three main categories: the students' learning habits, the teachers' teaching practices, and both the students and teachers' beliefs. Additionally, the pedagogical implications will be presented as well as some research directions for future research.

4.1. Discussion of the Results

4.1.1. The Target Cultural Gap and its Outcome on Algerian EFL Students'

Literature Study

In order to answer our first research question we needed to assess the students' lack in TCBK as well as how the lack appeared and to what extent. The evaluation of their hindrance through the reading comprehension activity has given us an insight into the way the students exhibit that lack particularly through the strategies employed or the excuses provided by them while they could not answer the questions. Accordingly, looking into their hindrance as well as into their learning habits, allows us to answer our first research sub-question: Does this hindrance in TCBK cause them to feel discouraged while trying to pursue literature study?

Firstly, and before looking into the reading task completion, the researcher here feels compelled to present the students' focus group interview responses (3 out of 5), which are

as revealing as they were unexpected. In fact, the EFL students are well aware of their deficiency in TCBK as well as how advantageous its addition would be for their literature course. The following table summarizes the essential statements of these students referring to TCBK.

1. Students lack Preparation for Literature	2. Students aware of the advantages of TCBK acquisition
<p><u>'Even some Americans and British people have no idea about how to deal with Shakespeare. So, for someone who doesn't read much, who doesn't have a lot of contact with Anglophone societies, and who doesn't sometimes even know English that well to have to deal with Shakespeare from day one is crazy to me.'</u> (Student 2a)</p>	<p><u>'I think it's helpful because we can then try to understand the differences between cultures with a new version, new people, a new mental... psychology, a new respect.'</u> (Student 3a)</p>
<p><u>'The events like how this movement appeared, like what made this movement appear and how was life? For instance, if we're speaking about English literature and some movements, like I'm gonna try to learn about England at that particular time and stuff. So I link it with literature, I feel that this is how I better understand literature.'</u> (Student 1)</p>	<p><u>'I think the period in which this novel was written is important because the work itself is a reflection of that period and a reflection of the author himself...'</u> (Student 3a)</p>
<p><u>'I guess I'd look it up, read more things that are specific to that one...so for instance if we're reading uh, I don't know... like if we come across a street and like the author keeps referencing things about that street, like how it's dangerous or something, I'd recommend like watching vlogs about that place...or...'</u> (Student 2a)</p>	<p><u>'I felt I knew... somehow everything about why this work... because it was Jane Eyre and they said it was a very important work and people were criticizing it etc... I really needed to know what the reason was. I remember they said that it was because women were not treated well at that time. So, I really needed to know what were the events. They said they had then started Feminism. So, I really looked at the work differently. Even if the teacher doesn't ask me about Feminism, I feel confident, I feel that answering the question about the character feels simpler. So that's it.'</u> (Student 1)</p>
<p><u>'Yeah, I think it relies also on the background of the author, I guess it's good to know when and where the author was born, for instance was it in the 17th C, the 19th C or the 20th C? To know the sociocultural or historical elements and how society was functioning at that time. So yeah.'</u> (Student 3b)</p>	<p><u>'The comparison between our culture, our religion and relate it to that in different cultures, it's like almost the same. We have dealt with this in Arabic last year in comparative literature with the comparison of Greek mythology and drama with the Arab. Sometimes the versions we did Shakespeare and Jebrane Khalil Jebrane. It's like the same concept with different visions.'</u> (Student 3a)</p>

Table 4.1. Students & TCBK Hindrance

We can note, for instance, that student 3a has come to understand the importance the background of a work has for its study. About *Pride and Prejudice*, she says it is not the story that needs focus, but Feminism; as it caused the author to create the characters' profiles. As for student 2a, she considers students need to upgrade their overall language mastery level to start studying literature; she explains that TCBK has different aspects, such as intertextuality (cf. chapter three p. 196). Here, we deduce that attentive students come to realize that TCBK is essential to literary study and that they are in need of tools to detect them for a correct interpretation / analysis. Glas in Lang, P. (ed.) (2013: p. 266) argues that students lack target cultural knowledge, and that didactic tools ought to be developed, she explains:

“In those instances, teachers might benefit from having scaffolding techniques at their disposition that will allow them to build both linguistic and cultural knowledge with the students that, in turn, will help them to enjoy the comprehension of new, possibly culturally distant contents.” Glas, k. in Lang, P. (ed.) (2013: p. 266)

In fact, the reading comprehension activity demonstrates the lack of TCBK in practice. Essentially, the reading comprehension activity shows the students' weakness in TCBK on three different levels. There is the misuse of compensatory strategies at first, the confusion between literature and culture, and finally the students' issues in research and methodology. The first reference in the extract of the novel *Daddy Long Legs* that was most identified by the students was 'Michael Angelo'. However, in spite of coining it as a reference, not one student could say who he was, what he had accomplished nor at which period in history. Students guessed it was a reference from the context, as it is a proper noun, a compensatory strategy to make up for missing knowledge. In what follows, we notice how far from uncovering the meaning of the references the students are. To the

question: ‘how do these elements reflect a foreign culture?’ students answered what follows:

First year students :	<i>- ‘They reflect foreign ideologies, religions.’</i>
Second year students :	-No answer.
Third year students :	<i>- ‘They are ancient & foreign names / i.e. not Algerian.’</i> <i>- ‘These are names I don’t understand.’</i> <i>- ‘They are famous names for their achievements.’</i>

Table 4.2. Students’ Answers to How the Cultural Elements in the Text Reflect a Foreign Culture

The second case where the students’ lack of target cultural knowledge appears is when students give a wrong answer by confusing the cultural reference with a stylistic device. Indeed, the third year students are the only group to indicate that ‘daddy long legs’ is a cultural reference when it literally refers to a spider and metaphorically describes the main character’s benefactor who allegedly bears long and thin legs. We can say here that the third year students also lack literary/ stylistic proficiency as they failed to identify a literary device (the metaphor) and confused it with a cultural symbol / reference (the allusion). Here, we can juxtapose three hindrances: first in the language because ‘daddy long legs’ is a common word in English, second a weakness in the different literary/ stylistic devices that are usually present in every literary text or extract, and finally the absence of knowledge in the target culture needed to identify the cultural references present in the text.

It is also important for us to note here that contrarily to the three-dimensional hindrance we identified through the results of the reading activity above, the teachers

interviewed assure that students lack interpretive skills without giving precisions by separating the language from the culture or the style of the literary work at hand. For Carter, R. & McCarthy, M. in Cook, G. & Seidlhofer, B., (1995: p.320) this is due to the discrepancy between the students' passivity in class, where they listen to the teachers' expert interpretation of the work, and the active nature of the reading activity. While going through the task the learner is confronted to the tumultuous unfolding of interpretation experiencing first-hand the frustrations of meaning making. We understand then that in the literature classes at the department of English, students are asked to interpret writings that are works of art, presenting stylistic features as well as highly symbolic references, all to decipher and comment upon without them being able to distinguish the different layers. T7 explains what follows:

'That's the problem; actually they cannot do both at the same time. Either they stick to the theoretical background or they do analysis, disregarding theory. It's difficult for them to just maybe link, at least cross over from the theory to the text. At least not all of them.' (T7)

Here, there is the dichotomy of text analysis versus literary theory without any other precision is probably bringing more confusion to the task. For Carter, R. & McCarthy, M. in Cook, G. & Seidlhofer, B. (1995), the students need to recognise their own personal interpretive mode before successfully analyzing a literary text. Furthermore, there are different phases of reading where there is 'acceptance and rejection of a given meaning found at a given time.' (Carter, R. & McCarthy, M. in Cook, G. & Seidlhofer, B., 1995: p.320) As a consequence, the accumulation of elements needed in literary study causes the students to lose sight of the critical thinking abilities that should have been acquired at this

point, them being academic university students who must research missing information and learn autonomously. Hence, the reading activity reveals another confusion on the part of the students, research methods and sources of information.

In the reading comprehension activity, the students pinpointed ‘encyclopedia’ as a cultural reference. This response reveals their issues with library research and methodology. Despite being one of the great Western achievements that has become almost obsolete today due to the worldly famous ‘Google’ search engine, the ‘encyclopedia’ as referred to in the text cannot truthfully be considered a cultural reference because students are expected to consult ‘Wikipedia’ or ‘Britannica’ for instance regularly on the internet, and consequently be aware of what they are. Essentially, the students’ responses show that they do not seem to tell these apart from Google or any other search engine. In addition, these days we have students who research using internet exclusively for its convenience making it difficult to identify some formats such as the encyclopedia and the dictionary for example. Although, we can consider them to have become outdated, they cannot be categorized as foreign cultural references. All in all, we agree with Frigols, Marsh, and Mehisto (2008) about the importance of content teachers’ awareness of how much time needs to be devoted to content learning, to language skills as well as to learning skills development in their class. (Frigols, Marsh, and Mehisto, 2008). However, assessing the students’ lack in TCBK directly enlightens us on their learning habits, which in turn affects their target cultural knowledge acquisition. The following table presents the students’ social media use, which widely dominates their research style.

1. Technology Use for Cultural Knowledge	2. Internet: the Door to Classroom Requirements	3. Teachers and Social Media Use
<u>'I Google them and I use YouTube a lot. Like, I prefer YouTube.'</u> (Student 1)	<u>'...it's my way of trying to get my friends into books. I think they're helpful, they can be useful. But like if I tell them, as a classmate to go to the library and pick up this book that will help you understand 20th century England better, I feel like it would be more appealing to them if I say go watch a vlog about this book tuber who said this, this, and that about the book.'</u> (Student 2a)	<u>'Some teachers can give us video links and talk more about it in class, give us guidelines...'</u> (Student 1)
<u>'Concerning the media tools there are also podcasts in addition to BookTube, vlogs, videos, and movies.'</u> (Student 2a)	<u>'It's what I do, as I said, with my friends who aren't really into it because... for example when I'm in a reading slump, when I don't feel like reading I watch BookTube and it really gets me back into it. So I feel like if someone has never read and they watch BookTube it will really motivate them to pick up the book.'</u> (Student 2a)	<u>'Yeah, but if I was a teacher, I wouldn't just recommend any BookTuber. It would have to be someone who... For instance, my favorite BookTuber studies English literature and classical studies, so she actually knows what she's talking about. Because, I mean... how do we call ...reliability is that it? So if I was a teacher I wouldn't recommend any BookTuber.'</u> (Student 2a)
<u>'There aren't any vlogs about, for instance 19th century Jane Eyre environment, but there's a movie. And there are a lot of movies that are made today that are set in that era, so just watching those would make understanding the book... you'd understand the book better and you'd enjoy it better, which I think is even more important.'</u> (Student 2a)	<u>'Because even like me, even though I don't mind doing all of this without technology, it's super motivating to watch book tubers. I love book tubers... It's a community on YouTube of content creators that talk specifically about books. And some of them are just like ... BookTubers would read stuff together and would invite viewers to read with them, and they'd create like live shows on YouTube where the BookTubers themselves discuss the book and then you're watching live so you can comment and they can talk to you as well. Book Tube is an entire community on YouTube; it's amazing.'</u> (Student 2a)	<u>'There are even teacher BookTubers, like there's this one girl who is doing her PhD, like yourself, on something about Women in Classical Athens. So, she's a teacher, she teaches students our age, English students. So when I listen to her I take information from her differently than from another BookTuber who's just a reader like myself. Yeah, all sorts of BookTubers who are amazing.'</u> (Student 2a)

Table 4.3. Social Media Use

Similarly, in the questionnaire responses, students declared using media to get informed and to learn on a regular basis. Results point to ‘social media’ as the source of choice for the students of the three groups: 50% in the first year, 36.36% the second year and 40% the third year. ‘Television’ comes next with 30% in the first year, 31.81% in the second year, and 20% in the third year. ‘Teachers’ come only in the third position with 15% in the first year, 13.63% in the second year, and 15% in the third year. ‘Books’ with 5% in the first year, 9% in the second year, and 20% in the third year. We notice that although the rates for ‘books’ are low there is an evolution, the closer the students get to graduation the more aware they become of the importance of books in their learning. For Parisi, D. in Anderson & Sara (2012: 313) learners’ thinking abilities such as understanding a lesson or analysing texts or all the activities involving one’s intellect for that matter.

“In the old ecology of the mind verbal language was the main or exclusive means for absorbing and communicating information, for thinking and for interacting with others. Educational systems and educational transmission not only were based on verbal language, the written language of books and the heard language of teacher’s lessons, but they required a particular use of language, a ‘sustained’, intellectually use, made up of analyses, arguments, distinctions, abstractions and cultural references... In the new ecology of the mind the role of verbal language is not only more restricted but verbal language is used in a much more fragmented and intellectually unchallenging way.” (Parisi, D in Anderson & Sara, 2012: p, 313)

We understand from the above-mentioned that media use is what students choose in order to learn, as it is familiar to them. The smartphone is their go-to utensil; it has replaced books of all kinds. Furthermore, these learning habits are disadvantageous for cultural knowledge acquisition especially when combined with a lack in contact opportunities within the EFL culture. Fundamentally, for all three groups of students EFL culture is found

in the 'classroom' or on 'social media' only. They rate them both as 'always' being their source for English. For 60% of the first year students, 36.36% of the second year students, and 60% of the third year students, 'the classroom' is their place of connection with English. Additionally, it is 'social media' for 45% of the first year students, 36.36% of second year students, and 60% of the third year students. The importance of teaching reading is highlighted in the above and teaching interpretation of the content to EFL learners in particular. In what follows, the students' free association to the word 'Reading' was revealing of their overall reading habits.

The first year LMD students show a loose familiarity with the activity of 'reading' with the words 'novels' (11x), 'books' (10x), 'fun' (9x), and 'boring' (8x). We identified the following lexical fields of the skillset needed to read: reading as a skill, reading frequency, inquisitive reading, side by side with the lexical fields of the emotions reading triggers: reading is transporting, reading is peaceful, and lack of confidence transporting, peaceful, and lack of confidence.

The second year students associated to 'reading' the words 'books' (15x), 'pleasure' (8x), 'novels' (7x), and 'knowledge' (6x). This shows the same vagueness as the first year students. The following words specific to the task of reading are 'newspaper' (4x), 'magazine' (4x), 'time-consuming' (4x), 'article' (3x), 'hobby' (3x), 'journal' (2x), 'ideas' (2x), 'website' (2x), 'news' (2x). The identification of the lexical fields for the second year is as follows: reading & academics, fiction/reality, emotions, and literary terms. The lexical field identification shows that the students are not oblivious to the value reading adds to

their lives, on the contrary, with words like ‘life-saving’ and ‘addictive’. They also demonstrate a precise account of reading with words like ‘drama’, ‘poem’, ‘characters’, ‘action’, or ‘novella’.

The third year students associated to ‘reading’ the words ‘books’ (8x), ‘boring’ (4x), ‘fun’ (3x), ‘joyful’ (3x). The following words emerged twice: ‘pleasure’, ‘escape’, ‘adventure’, ‘comics’, ‘vocabulary’, and ‘news’. There is a certain energy to these words, which shows a new familiarity with the activity of reading (which is unlikely for nearly graduate students). Firstly, the use of the words ‘boring’ and ‘joyful’ present contradictory emotions about reading and the excitement of young readers that is also described through words like ‘escape’, ‘adventure’, and ‘comics’. Inquisitive reading, reading formats, literary skills, literature study, media & reading, qualifying reading, creative pastime, academic reading, reading & thinking, feelings about reading. We note that the third year students are quite knowledgeable about reading and its characteristics, particularly when compared with the 1st and 2nd students. They present reading by means of media support with words from the lexical group media & reading: ‘lyrics of songs’, ‘audiobooks’, ‘websites’, and ‘movie reviews’; this indicates a knowledge of an activity of reading 2.0.

The questionnaire answers, regarding the students’ beliefs about reading and its usefulness in the study of literature, are Likert scale results that show progression depending on which year the students are in. For the first element, reading the novel itself, first year students strongly disagree and disagree at respectively 30% and 25%, that it helps them to study literature. In addition, only 5% of them strongly agree with reading the novel

being helpful. Second year students agree with 'reading the novel' at 40.9% and third year students agree at 45%. We note that the percentage increases the more upward we move into the licence, showing that students' awareness has likely evolved. For the second element of reading 'summaries of novels' the rates are evenly low for the first year students, 25% are neutral, 25% agree, and 15% strongly agree. The second year students agree to consider them helpful with 50% when 35% third year students also agree. The first year students demonstrate a lack of experience, when the second year and third year students are more clear-cut in their responses.

First year students present mitigated Likert scale results toward 'teachers' explanations' with 25% who strongly disagree, 20% who disagree, 20% are neutral, 20% agree, and 15% who strongly disagree, while equally 36.36% second year students agree and 36.36% strongly agree to say that teachers' explanations are helpful. Third year students agree with 40% and strongly agree with another 40%, considering that 'teachers' explanations' are useful to them. Regarding 'research in history', only 35% of the first year students are neutral, 10% agree and 5% strongly agree. Second year students neither strongly agree nor strongly disagree with a 13.63% rate for each, they are neutral with 27.27%, and both agree and disagree with a 22.72% rate each. Third year students agree with 45%. As for the 'background knowledge of the author', unsurprisingly the first year students disagree with 25%, are neutral with 35%, and agree with 20%. The second year students are neutral with 31.81% and agree with 31.81%. Finally, background knowledge received 55 % of agreeing responses from third year students.

Regarding 'native students' essays online', apart from the first year students' low results with only 10% who agree and 5% who strongly agree, the second and third year students remained neutral with respectively 40.9% and 30%. Finally, concerning 'small group work', the students from all three years said they were mostly neutral, the first year students with 40%, the second year students with 31.81%, and the third year students with 35%. A third year student adds as an extra statement, "None of this is helpful to get good marks" and "There is nothing that helps to study literature." Overall, Algerian EFL students' reading habits are timid and result in a lack in TCBK as presented above with the students' reading activity responses and interview statements. The inefficiency of a learner is thus due to the inefficiency existing in his background. In fact, Couldry (2006) considers it is the flow of readers and texts in a given society or community that will influence the reading activity and its quality. For example, the more books are present in a given location, the more readers we will have in that place. In addition, if a given group is given the necessary encouragement, this same group of people will become readers. What follows confirms our interpretation.

Here, we have the interview responses of students who believe that students watch movies instead of reading even though they value reading and its benefits.

1. Reading paves the way to cultural acquisition	2. Reading is The Abandoned Practice
<p><u>'When I think about literature, it doesn't matter if it's a fairy tale we are dealing with or a non-fiction, it's like everything is related to one another. We can take the Greek stories and their mythologies and link them to psychology. Take Snow White, it's a fairy tale, but psychologically the girl is being herself and the way she sees things differently from how she was raised. Also, I am personally very much into the Gothic genre; we dealt with Edgar Allan Poe's The Black Cat and the novel by Stephen King with a cat...'</u> (Student 3a)</p>	<p><u>'...my classmates sometimes don't even read the book assigned, let alone books that would help them learn more about the book that we're studying...I mean, I don't think so. I don't know, I can't talk for other people but I don't think they read things that would make the understanding of the book better, because sometimes they don't even read the actual book.'</u> (Student 2a)</p>
<p><u>'Yes, so when I was a kid my dad used to get me a lot of books in Arabic and my mother would get me books in French. I enjoyed it and kept doing it. When I was in primary school the teacher asked us what we wanted to do when we got older, and I said a writer like Agatha Christie and I completely forgot about that until I picked up her books again in university and I was like "oh, look at me! I did pursue something similar to that after all.'"</u> (Student 2a)</p>	<p><u>'I think that if you suggest this to them, they would think it's like "double travail". But it's actually the other way round. It makes things easier, if you actually take a look at the book; and then look up stuff related to the book, or that were mentioned in it, or things about that era and come back to the book. It would make it easier and a lot more fun to read and you'd have an idea about what's actually going on.'</u> (Student 2a)</p>

Table 4.4. Reading from the EFL Students' Point of View

Students suffer from their lack of reading as a practice and consequently resort to media use and other engaging activities in the literature class as a means to feel integrated and to be able to participate in class. We can affirm that the students' learning habits are weak or insufficient causing them to remain within their pattern of extreme media consumption, which in turn feeds a vicious cycle. This directly causes students to lack TCBK and discourages them from pursuing literature study.

Nevertheless, there is evidence of a progression in the students' reading habits that follows their progression in their studies graduation. When the first year students show a loose familiarity with the activity of 'reading', the third year students present a new reading practice: 'media & reading'. This shows a generation who can develop reading habits that

are 2.0 friendly, a promising alternative that deserves to be examined and possibly developed. In what follows, we answer the second sub-question of our first research question; are Algerian EFL students' voices being silenced due to their lack of TCBK?

When given the space to answer freely in the questionnaire, students have openly declared their reluctance to do what was forced upon them. For them 'reading' is an agreeable activity that cannot be pushed. Fallows, S. J., & Ahmet, K. (1999) think it is necessary to inspire students if we want to motivate them towards more efforts and participation. Among different factors, they advise teachers to consider 'each learner's degree of interest in the subject material' as well as 'the learners' attitudes towards the materials being delivered'. One student declares: *'I like reading, however when it's forced upon me it's a little difficult!'* Another student declares that love for reading comes from motivating moments in life and not in literature class. The student affirms what follows: *'My dad, because he reads a lot and he is enormously smart and he has a lot of general culture, so that makes me want to read.'* To an open-ended question in the questionnaire one student declared:

"If I like a book, I will automatically go into a phase of obsession about everything related to it. For example, I'm currently reading Outlander so I find myself looking up and learning a lot about Scotland and Gaelic otters." (2nd year student)

Hence, we understand from the above that students can become passionate about reading literature, but not any literature and certainly not the canonic literature they are served in class. Couldry (2000) alerts to the lack of interest students demonstrate in high order arts literature as opposed to their attention on modern mass culture literature conveyed

by TV programs. Additionally, one of the most repeatedly cited area students declared wishing to be given freedom of choice in is the topic of the reading or the book choice. Forced topics appear to be more crucially challenging for the students than forced reading tasks. In the questionnaire, the results for the three groups of students position the ‘topic choice’ as the number one motivator to encourage reading. Their marks are not the main element of importance, but reading is something personal and needs to be handled with care. They say what follows: “*The novel was not interesting.*” Another said, “*We prefer things like Jane Eyre, Twilight, or Harry Potter...*” A third year student added a comment to the matter of the topic choice: “*...love stories, short stories (Rip Van Winkle!?!).*” Essentially, the topic is a close concern to the students, something that according to them is being overlooked.

During the piloting phase of our study, we identified ‘the Algerian Colonization’ as a difficult topic for students; therefore, we asked them about it in the questionnaire. The first year students were upfront in their answers as 75% of them state they prefer ‘topics of their age concerns’. Second year students are more inquisitive in their choice as 45.45% prefer topics of their age concerns and 40.9% want to read about both kinds of topics. Whereas the third year students are divided in their choices; 35% of them prefer to read about topics of their age concerns and another 35% want to read about ‘colonization and history’. For Rascon-Moreno, D. in Pérez, D. and Javier, F., (2013) Content and Language Integrated Learning’ CLIL involves learner centeredness, initiative and focuses on

knowledge around the world and not language structure exclusively. Cates (1997) in (Pérez, D. and Javier, F., 2013: 18). He explains:

“Cates (1997) states that there is a growing interest in the profession in content-based language teaching and that many educators are proposing to teach world problems or global issues because they are motivating content and because they give educational relevance to the subject of English around the world” teaching is not for communication purposes only...” (Pérez, D. and Javier, F., 2013: 18)

Topics of interest to the students can therefore be used to motivate them to learn and consequently to improve their language skills in the process. However, investigating which topics are of interest to them is even more essential. Messekher, H. 2011: p.11) explains:

“Taking the case of higher education in Algeria, for instance, we have specific courses to be taken and that are compulsory. We do not have core, required, and elective courses. All courses are required and there is no choice whatsoever for students to choose, let alone choose with whom to take a course and when.” (Messekher, H. 2011: p.11)

This was true, she says from 1962 until the 2000’s for all the Algerian pupils whether in primary school or in college. She advocates for ‘liberating pedagogies’. Denouncing the repressive and sometimes alienating one that exists. We agree and consider the following candid explanation that lies in the students questionnaire open comments. One student declares, “*The topic of colonialism has always been present in our educational system. At some point any other topic feels like a breath of fresh air.*” This dumfounding statement confirms previous results on the matter (Fasla, 2009) and eventually adding complexity to the unsuspected nature of the students’ statements when they expressed their beliefs about literature and what they wished to engage in. For Carter, R. & McCarthy, M. in Cook, G.

& Seidlhofer, B., (1995: p.304) the text, if well chosen, can hook the learners and draw them towards literary study with interest and efficacy. They state what follows

“...suitably selected literary texts can provide a motivating and stimulating source of content in the language classroom, serving as a basis for discussion and interpretation in which the response of the individual learner is encouraged.”
(Carter, R. & McCarthy, M. in Cook, G. & Seidlhofer, B., 1995: p.304)

The above statement is even more meaningful when we look into the teachers' responses on their teaching and teaching methods. An important element for our purpose is the teachers' method to select the works they study with their students in their classes. The questionnaire answers show that when choosing the works to study, teachers first take into consideration administration instructions, such as a list of titles for example (for 6/ 15 teachers). Then they consider the historical periods at the program (5 teachers), and finally only 3 teachers tried to select the topics that could interest the students. Not one teacher mentioned using works that are culturally close to the students' native culture. Only one teacher declared choosing works that are linguistically accessible to the students' understanding of English. For the extracts teachers pick to study in class, only 1 teacher selects those that have topics of interest to the students and 2 teachers choose extracts that are linguistically accessible to the students. Ultimately, 80% teachers declare using extracts that have cultural references that would help the students grasp better the research process, and literature analysis. Here lies an important element of answer to our second research sub-question, students are not able to identify symbols or nouns that belong to the target culture of the texts they are studying (asserted by the reading comprehension activity results above) when they are regularly presented with excerpts that are full of references in class.

We also noted earlier that teachers evaluated their students' literary proficiency to be insufficient, and that their level of knowledge in target culture was responsible for that. It becomes clear that the teaching process and most importantly the level of unfamiliarity with the cultural element on the part of the teachers is at stake here. Similarly, the students' following results about their ability to draw inferences from texts is the last data to clarify the students' issues with TCBK and its presence in literary texts.

Students were asked in the questionnaire about their competence in higher level interpretive skills such as 'handling different sources of information / data' and 'drawing inferences'. First year students declare that 'handling different sources of information / data' is a weakness at 80% and 60% affirm that 'drawing inferences' is also their weakness. As for Second year students, 50% say 'handling different sources' is a strength when only 27.27% affirm that 'drawing inferences' is their strength. Concerning of the third year students 50% 'handling different sources' is a weakness and only 25% affirm that 'drawing inferences' is their strength. Thus, with the reading comprehension activity and the teachers' choice of excerpts, the students' awareness of being incapable to handle different sources or to draw inferences divulge that there is a lack of target cultural knowledge and a lack of ability to extract it from the texts in order to infer meaning.

By examining the teachers' selection of literary works to present their students with, we find a contradiction in their criteria that ultimately does not benefit the students. Teachers consider elements such as administrative instructions, or historical periods that are present in their syllabus and do not implement topics that are agreeable to the students,

neither do they choose texts that are culturally close to the students' native culture, nor works that are linguistically accessible to them: they are oblivious of the student perspective. The following statement by a third year student sums up the situation. The declaration is as follows:

'I like reading when the topic is chosen by me of course, not the topic of the literature teacher, A Passage to India is not interesting.' (3rd year student)

The above student statement reveals another factor that completes the equation; the pleasure that students want to find when they read a literary work. Overall, the selection of literary works shows that teachers do not take into consideration the cultural factor and its role in literature study, hence ignoring its importance. Additionally, the students' surprise as to what they were going to be taught in the 'licence' affected them seriously.

Firstly, the questionnaire responses reveal that students expected to deal with the English language or any other professionally oriented skills acquisition, and not with its literature. The first year students are divided as 50% of them did not expect to study literature, as well as 54% of the second year students, and 85% in the third year. 1st year students expected to have 'grammar', 'Anglophone culture', 'linguistics' and 'phonetics', and skills acquisition modules with 'listening & speaking' and 'study skills'. The second year students selected 'translation' and 'IT', two fields that are highly required in the workplace. Additionally, we note that some student responses show a qualitative expectation on the part of students who are dedicated to literature study. A small group of 15% third year students who had originally expected to study literature as a specialty

interestingly chose ‘drama’ & ‘literary theory’. Hence, their aversion is not so much about what they are taught to study, but more about how they are brought to the subject matter.

The student responses show their need to bridge the gap between what they are accustomed to, i.e. media use, and reading canonic literature. Students respond positively to having the possibility to be assisted through movie adaptations. The results of the questionnaire show that the students’ perceptions of movie adaptations are highly positive, 90% for the first year students, 68.18% in the second year, and 90% in the third year. When asked about how movie adaptations help, 27.77% first year students, 33.33% second year students, and 38.88% third year students say they help understand the novels better. We observe the percentage slight increase as the students move from the first, to the second, and to the third year, confirming the fact that for them movie adaptations are helpful. In addition, the detail of their answers highlights ‘digital’ learning habits.

To the question ‘which media has your preference?’ students present what is likely to be a reasonable set of answers for academic students; documentaries and historical movies above entertainment. The first year students put videos about symbols, religions, or mythologies to understand cultural references in the novel in the first position as 50% of the students chose this option before movies with only 35% of students. For the second year students the choice is reverse as 68.18% of them chose movies against only 13.63% who chose documentaries about ancient periods, countries or societies described in the novels. The balance is recuperated with the third year students who choose the movies at 50% and documentaries about ancient periods, countries or societies described in the novels at 30%.

The explanation here is that students are aware they need to get informed about the periods, populations, and overall culture of the novels they study, but comparatively to former generations of students who would get this information at the library by reading content books, they would watch videos or documentaries for learning purposes. This shows their desire to have more lively literature sessions.

First year and second year students consider answer d), 'media use', to be their prominent response both with respectively a rate of 40% and 36.36%. Third year students chose answer a), 'role playing', as their favorite class activity, a more task-based kinesthetic activity, at 30% placing it at the top position. One student declares, "*Doing presentations with media support would be perfect.*" Second year students also value 'role playing' with 27.27%, placing it at the second position. Finally, 'role playing' seems to be also popular with the first year students who, with 35%, place it in their second best choice as well. A third year student adds, "*Role playing and presentations forces us to search, it is learning by doing.*" We can observe that students manifest their enthusiasm and desire for more integration, understanding, as well as participation in their literature course, the issue at stake is perhaps technological. For Del Soldato, T. & Isroff, K. (2014) motivation goes through 'sight or hearing'. Therefore, presenting the students with audiovisual aid is a useful addition to the literature course making it livelier and more enjoyable.

In a high-tech world with screen overexposure, the silent book-reading classroom environment can seem daunting to this generation of students. Hence, the emotional answers students provided in the reading activities that are presented underneath are

understandable. After having just completed the exercise of identification of cultural references and symbols in the text, students were asked to answer questions about their thoughts on their lack of TCBK in the process of completing the task. The majority of their statements show a great deal of emotional feedback about literature as a field of study rather than about the work or effort required in this module; results that confirm the principle in Lazarus (1979) who affirms that the affective domain is essential to the EFL learning environment and should have a predominant position. A first year student declares that literature being art, the rigidity of its study is ‘overwhelming’. One second-year student speaks of the method of teaching literature, which needs to be changed, when a third year student is disappointed that not more was dealt with in class. Lazarus (1979) claims that affective domain should be dealt with carefully and intentionally in EFL teaching, it is the only way to reach ‘empathic understanding of another culture.’ What follows is the table presenting the statements given by the students at the end of the reading activity.

First year students	<p>“Literature is subjective in the same way that all art is, and <u>I feel that teachers enforce a very specific view and it’s overwhelming.</u>”</p> <p>“<u>I want to delete this module because I can’t read novels and things like that.</u>”</p> <p>“I want to omit this module because it’s hard for me.”</p>
Second year students	<p><i>“If the method of literature changed, I think it would be more accepted and learnable.”</i></p> <p><i>“I hate literature, I hate it so hard! It’s boring and makes me depressed.”</i></p>
Third year students	<p><i>‘We need to make <u>literature more interesting</u>, literature is life study not an academic study.’</i></p> <p><i>‘I’m kind of disappointed; when I chose literature I thought I’d study more and that we would discuss more books. We actually didn’t finish the first book yet.’</i></p> <p><i>‘...I hope we see a positive change in our studies and the way we study it. <u>Literature is truly a treat and deserves to be recognized as such.</u>’</i></p>

Table 4.5. Students’ Open Responses about Literature Study

Investigating student beliefs indicates their averseness to reading about topics that are imposed on them without further options to choose from. Also, their beliefs about literature and what they expected prior to coming to the university has negatively impacted their enthusiasm for literature. As to the mismatch between their profile of ‘digital natives’ and what is expected of them, they have responded by emotional outbursts causing a somewhat unexpected reaction from the point of view of the researcher. Their responses expose how deeply affected the students are by the current state of their literature study experience instead of them being indifferent or uninterested in literature.

4.1.2. Teachers’ Assessment of the Cultural Gap between Algerian EFL Students and the Literary Texts they Study

How teachers assess the existing gap between the students’ native learning environment and that of the texts they are asked to analyze is the second research question of the present research. The two sub-questions we developed to investigate our purpose are as follows: Do teachers underestimate or ignore this cultural factor and its consequence on their students’ aptitudes? Can literature teachers help their students with background knowledge acquisition for literature reading? Is it their role?

One of the means of the teachers’ assessment of the existing cultural background knowledge gap is through their evaluation of the students’ literary competence. The examination of the skills needed to study literary texts shows a gradual decrease the more the competencies listed require a higher level of difficulty. The following are three in-text analyses competencies: Firstly, if we consider the entry-level skill, which is to read the text,

understand the plot, describe characters, and extract the message, 13 teachers consider students to be average. Second, for analyzing text structure, assessing literary devices, and exploring characterization deeply, seven teachers qualify students to be ‘average’ and seven teachers qualify them to be ‘incompetent’. Thirdly, in identifying cultural, religious, or mythological references, students are more ‘incompetent’ than ‘average’ for 10 counter to 5 teachers.

For the extra-textual study with higher levels of difficulty, the tendency of having incompetent students is constantly elevated; four levels of competency were identified. One, can relate the text to other texts with similar themes, style, context, or being from the same author: Intertextual references in the text. Students are incompetent for 12 teachers. Two, can relate all the above with hidden meanings and themes they would have inferred; 10 teachers declare students are incompetent against 4 teachers who say they are average. Three, can connect the themes or issues of the text with the context of issue of the work or the author’s origin, life or career path for instance. Students are incompetent according to 6 teachers and average according to 9 teachers. Four, can explore the meanings of a work from various perspectives, the literary movement it belongs to, the author’s intended message, different theories of literature, or even challenge the critics’ analyses. Students are equally average (for 8 teachers) and incompetent (for 7 teachers).

We note that for both groups of competencies, extra-textual content information

needs to be mastered, hence targeting cultural elements. This can be explained by one teacher's comment implicating their standard teaching practice, which aims at trying to remedy the students' lack of general culture. It is *'the fact that information about the author and the literary movements is provided in class by the teacher and the answers can be global without needing the mastery of too thorough or specialized information.'* T7 summarizes it very well, adding *'it is a lack of reading that brings about a lack of familiarity with TCBK, and in turn weak critical thinking skills / analysis.'*

In reviewing the other participants' responses, the students, we confirm the results above. Beneath, we have the students' auto-evaluation of their literary skills. The questionnaire results indicate that the students' own evaluations of their skills for studying literature show similarities with the teachers' assessment of the students' competencies. Firstly, the students were asked to evaluate their abilities from a textual standpoint, with 'texts analysis through literary devices or stylistic features', 'summarizing the plot', 'character description', and 'identifying genre, plot structure, themes, etc...'. Then we have the second level of skillsets i.e. connecting the text with its context that comes with 'referencing from within a text', 'paraphrasing ideas from a text', and 'relating information from the text to real historical / cultural information'.

In the beginning, there are the competencies that are identified from a textual standpoint. First year students consider 'texts analysis through literary devices or stylistic features' to be their strength at 75%, 54.54% of the second year students and 65% of the third year students both answered it was their strength. For 'summarizing the plot' 50% of

the first year students, 45.45% of the second year students and 80% of the third year students declared it to be their strength. Regarding 'character description' 65% first year students said it was their strength. As well as 72.72% second year students and 50% third year students. Finally, 'identifying genre, plot structure, themes, etc...' totalized a high rate of 90% among the first year students, who consider it their strength as well as 63.63% of the second year students and another high rate of 75% for the third year students who consider it their strength. Lastly, we can observe that the more we evolve from the textual to the contextual literary competencies, the students' responses gradually move from recognizing 'strengths' to discerning 'weaknesses' in their ability to study literature.

Here, we present the results for the second level of skillsets i.e. connecting the text with its context. First year students up to 45% declare 'referencing from within a text' to be their strength. Yet, only 31.81% second year students declare it to be their strength. The rates decrease for the third year students as 45% only declare 'referencing from within a text' to be their strength. First year students show an exception for 'paraphrasing ideas from a text' to which 70% say it is a strength, while 54.54% second year students see it as a strength. Similarly to their first year counterparts, there is an exception for 'paraphrasing ideas from a text', for which 75% third year students see it as a strength. Concerning 'relating information from the text to real historical / cultural information' 85% first year students assert it to be a weakness, contrarily to 63.63% second year students who assert it to be a strength. Yet, only 40% third year students who assert it to be their strength.

Both the teachers' assessment of their students' literary competencies and the students' own self-evaluation correlate the students' weaknesses in literature study to their ignorance of the target culture. The following results allow us to answer the first sub-question to our second research question; do teachers ignore the importance of the cultural factor on reading literature?

The teachers who were interviewed consider that TCBK needs to be in the literature study class. The common trait in their comments is that these reflect their personal choices in their manner of presenting TCBK while teaching literature. For teacher 10 target culture is a technicality within literature study, teacher 9 associates TCBK to intertextuality.

1. TCBK as an essential component of the literature classroom	2. Teachers who deal with TCBK as a pre-reading phase.	3. Literature Teachers' Cultural Input in Class
<p><i>'It is! It is necessary. For example, if you are teaching modernism, we have to study the events or the things that made the author write his work, uh... it is the changes that happened in the environment that pushed the authors to write.'</i> (T2)</p>	<p><i>'...it is very important because I always start with the socio-historical background of the societies that we are going to study and then we go to the literary work that we are doing, to be able to understand what happened, the events, the...'</i> (T2)</p>	<p><i>'It is part ... and it is named, when we study or when we analyze literature, it is part of the analytical tools being literary elements, so we have among the literary elements the cultural background. I told you it is technically named the context or the background even, to be simpler for the students. So, it can be different from one story to another story based on the context of the characters inside the story and on the biography of the writer.'</i> (T10)</p>
<p><i>'As a teacher, I consider that students have to know about the cultural background knowledge. For me it is important to understand any work of art of literature. You cannot place yourself as a reader if you do not know the context of the characters the author is talking about, the situations, and the culture he is exposing in his writing.'</i> (T4)</p>	<p><i>'I always do an introduction. I always present the cultural context of the literary work I am going to deal with. I feel it's important. Where does the novelist come from? How did she or he live? Where? Ok? And what was happening around when the novel was written, what was the context, I like to do that because it's important, it's very...'</i> (T8)</p>	
<p><i>'Students normally must know about cultural information so that at least they help them to analyze their literary work. When you have for</i></p>		<p><i>'Yes, yes, we refer to major texts and we often notice that students do not know them or have never heard of them. If I give the example of The</i></p>

<p><i>example knowledge of the cultural background of the literary work, you will be able to analyze the passage within its context. It is somehow a must to know the cultural background of the work.’ (T3)</i></p>		<p><i>Iliad and The Odyssey, sometimes we refer to them and we see that students have not heard about them, not in Arabic, not in French and not in English that they had been studying for 6 years in middle school and in high school. And this is just one example.’ (T9)</i></p> <p><i>‘In Rip Van Winkle I haven’t really dealt with the cultural background, however in Jane Eyre we are going to talk about the cultural background of the literary work, and about how the Victorian era was, and describe the features of that time, etc... It’s important to know the features of the time to be able to identify the main themes within the work.’ (T3)</i></p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Table 4.6. The Place of TCBK in Literature Class

As for T3, it is not systematically the teacher’s role to issue TCBK; students need to depend on themselves and on their readings. Nonetheless, some teachers revealed their astonishment: Teacher 8 never considered that Algerian students would have any cultural misunderstandings with a novel such as *Heart of Darkness* due to their national colonial past and awareness of it. Teachers need to have more insight the students on their viewpoints by allowing them to express themselves. This feedback from their students can enlighten the teachers to identify what it is they need as well as their misunderstandings. For Jagodzinski, J. (2002), the students’ identity components as well as their desires should be an essential aspect of the curriculum design. Hence, their teaching objectives should not be led merely by intuition. This is confirmed by T11 who states she was never trained to use cultural knowledge nor to identify it in terms of teaching objectives. In the following

table, the teachers' interview statements show their puzzlement towards teaching TCBK even though some already do an introduction in class.

'I was somehow surprised because it's not the type of questions that we really think about when we are teaching such a field. This is actually amazing you know. It made me rethink the whole process of teaching English as a foreign language. Be it in Literature class or any other class in which we use English, you know?' (T7)

'So you think it's a matter of culture? I've never thought about it as a problem of culture, this is interesting...I've never thought that Heart of Darkness is not grasped by students because they don't know anything about that cultural context.' (T8)

'I found it interesting in a way that I recognized some of the choices that I make in class. I found some questions that I could answer saying that I actually do that in class. Sometimes we think of ourselves as being original because we did not really get any training as to how to plan our lessons and include some elements that we did not study, or that we did not experience as students in class, so I thought that maybe I was original but in fact, I was not. I was just mainly being intuitive or I don't know, something that we all unconsciously share and I find it in the questionnaire. So, I'm not creating anything new, I'm just using the tools that are already here.' (T11)

Table 4.7. Teachers Surprised by TCBK as a Pedagogical Tool for Literature Study

Hence, teachers present an introduction to TCBK deeming it sufficient. Teachers know that students lack TCBK, but they do not know how to handle it as providing TCBK and encouraging students to read are tools they have used although they reckon them to be unsuccessful. What we determine here is that this parameter is not in their literature course planning equation as they do ignore its didactic importance or how students suffer from such a mismatch and consequently do not prioritize it thus in class they tend to remedy or patch up the problem etc... For Glas the teachers' positioning was already established by their own learning experiences and various contacts with TCBK, as it will influence their teaching method. She explains:

“The teachers’ personal stories of experiences with (cultural) ‘otherness’ are important in that their reflections and beliefs based on their experience will have a certain impact on how they deal with related topics in class.” Glas (2012: 260)

TCBK is brought forward as a sufficient addition to ignored or unlearned information about the culture behind the foreign text without necessarily tapping into NCBK. They ask what the use of NCBK is, misunderstanding how to bridge the gap from NCBK to TCBK. This shows they do not include this parameter in the literature study preparation / teaching process, as they do not understand the teaching objectives of NCBK. According to Hellal, F. “Literary values are not universal; our students have wrong perspective due to an inadequate sense of history, history of ideas or an author’s frame of reference.” Hellal, F. (1988: 105). This explanation reinforces the idea that learners need to contextualize not only what they read, but also themselves as readers. McCormick, K. in Slevin, J. F. & Young (eds.), (1996: 294) explain what follows:

“As one possible solution to this apparent absence of “critical reading”, students need to learn to locate the texts they read as well as themselves as reading subjects within larger social contexts; in short, they need to be able to inquire into and understand the interconnectedness of social conditions and the reading and writing practices of a culture.” McCormick, K. in Slevin, J. F. & Young (eds.), (1996: 294)

However, the following table shows that teachers do not envisage NCBK in relation to their learners’ difficulties.

<i>‘I think it would be too limiting for our choice of works. I myself like reading a novel that is completely unfamiliar to me. I need to discover other things, other ways of life, and other ways of thinking. I like it myself so why not the students? You see what I mean?’ (T8)</i>
<i>‘Why do they choose to study in a department of English if it is to seek elements of their own culture? ... Why not join other departments, more in synergy with their cultural background? ...I think that departments such</i>

as History, Sociology and Anthropology will constitute a better panel of choice for students who wish to reconnect with their origins.’ (T1)

‘This is precisely part of the pleasure of literature and the reason perhaps why we read literature from all over the world. We sometimes feel more comfortable with one country as opposed to another, it’s because we have this ability to get out of our context etc. so maybe I think unconsciously that’s what I do. in the literature class I have the tendency to try to bring them, you know, to another culture precisely another set of references etc. but the problem now is that they hardly know anything about this new cultural context, this target culture and so it’s very difficult for them to even understand what they read.’ (T5)

Table 4.8. Teachers Focusing on Target Culture Only

We understand from the above that the teachers are target culture focused and that the learner’s identity is not something they take into consideration. Additionally, the teachers interviewed also focus more on the language proficiency compared to the target culture acquisition or literary skills acquisition. If the teachers express their uncertainty about TCBK teaching they nevertheless always prioritize language proficiency. For them reading is the key problem as well as too much tech that separates students from studying.

1. Linguistic Competence Prioritized before Cultural Knowledge Acquisition	2. Culture or Language: the Wrong Dichotomy
<i>‘Maybe <u>language competency is more important than cultural background. If the students have the ability to analyze their work in a well-written language. I think that if it’s readable and understood by the reader I think that it’s important to have the language.’ (T3)</u></i>	<i>‘For my part, personally I always, when we tackle a text if it is literature, I always put it in context so that they do understand the impact of culture on the text and not just the language.’ (T7)</i>
<i>‘The language, some don’t even understand the words they read. I noticed that a lot with the second year students, we study short stories and analyze short passages in class and they don’t have the skills or the ability to understand the content or the language not to mention the culture. The first barrier is the language.’ (T4)</i>	<i>‘They only focus on what they need to do in class in order to pass their module and get a 10 or above. So, it’s not really easy to start over, there’s so much to read about, so much to know about... Especially as there is also the problem of their level in English, that most of the time does not really allow them to read extensively without the guidance of a teacher or without the help of the analysis that we do in the classroom.’ (T9)</i>

<p><i>'But when they started reading <u>Pride & Prejudice</u> they liked the characters, they liked ... it's as if they had overcome the first obstacles of maybe the language. Language is difficult, and when it's difficult you always go to the dictionary... it gets tiresome with time... It's simple language. The style is also simple and it's very lively. We see the characters in movement, enjoying... I don't always have these good results. For example, I teach <u>Heart of Darkness</u> in third year, and I don't get them to like it. Okay? Except for a few students because they are excellent. I guess it's the level of English; it plays an important role.'</i> (T8)</p>	<p><i>'I'd say that, again the problem lies in reading, it is important to read and that is why most of the students do not have critical thinking. They just receive literature passively, they do not really read actively. So, this is what's missing.'</i> (T7)</p>
<p><i>'Yes, the minority of them, not all of them of course...just the minority that follows and understands. Those who have the required English or the language background to understand. The others are just 'à côté de la plaque''.</i> (Laughs) (T2)</p>	

Table 4.9. TCBK vs. Language

Teachers in the above statements argue that language needs to be first mastered for literature study. Nonetheless, for Schumann (1978 in Brown 1980) the pidginization of a language is part of the acculturation process necessary for the acceptance and learning of a new language. The learner can simplify the language, its grammar and even make mistakes.

He clarifies:

“Schuman’s hypothesis is that the greater the social distance between two cultures, the greater the difficulty the learner will have in learning the second language, and conversely, the smaller the social distance (the greater the social solidarity between two cultures), the better will be the language learning situation.” (Brown, 1980: 137)

Following the above statement, the actual distance between cultures does not matter for language acquisition; it is rather what the learner perceives that forms his own reality

even if it is biased. Concerning their students' language proficiency, the teachers put the emphasis on poor reading habits and their overuse of technology as two essential causes to their language hindrance opposing it to cultural hindrance. The questionnaire has given us insight into the teachers' teaching practices by showing that Literature teachers are willing to assist their students with TCBK acquisition through reading, despite them admitting this feels inefficient. For Messekher (2011:13) the teachers need to dive into reflective teaching and try to adapt to their students' profiles. She explains:

“...we end up with teachers who have a strong knowledge base but who lack the skills to adapt their knowledge to the idiosyncrasies of the teaching situations. My position is to favor a teacher education framework rather than a teacher-training framework. (Messekher, H. 2011: p.13)

Encouraging their students to practice extensive reading appears to be their most prominent instruction because it is a familiar one to them, something that teacher training can overcome. Teachers assert, at a rate of 40%, to suggest titles of the same author or the same period as the one studied in class but with different authors. 26% of them instruct students to read extensively but declare that their students never read anyhow. Finally, 20% of the teachers declare not having convinced their students to even read the book in the program. Similarly to their meager results with reading, 86.66% of the teachers declare they instruct their students to learn through research despite them failing to do so.

Teachers' beliefs about technology use are opposite to the students' abovementioned standpoint (see section 4.1.1. p.?). For the teachers who responded in the questionnaire on the matter, technology use is more an issue than a tool that assists the students in their

literary study competency acquisition. In their qualitative answers in the questionnaire, teachers declare to have had a negative overview from their knowledge of the hybrid teaching put into place during the covid pandemic. T5 says what follows: *'It seems to me that hybrid teaching contributes to amplify many problems reported by my colleagues with more experience. The drastic reduction of on-site classroom interactions has in my view very negative effects on our students who, for the vast majority, are not prepared to be active and autonomous learners.'* Furthermore, T6 states: *'I think students became idle and frivolous due to social media & internet as well as hybrid learning. They have become reluctant to dive into active, serious, purposeful tasks.'* Hence, following the statement of T6, the students' technology use and media consumption has a pivotal impact upon the students' cultural acquisition as it controls them through entertainment. The questionnaire answers reveal that teachers say they believe in media use in the literature classroom, however their statements do not show that they are very contented with it.

Although, teachers at the rate of 73.33% consider favorably the use of media, reading aloud sessions, or even role-plays to liven the lessons and increase students' motivation, their qualitative statements show that they view them as secondary. One teacher says, *'we are limited in time'*, and another *'it should be done before class as homework preparation'*. Additionally, teachers seem to want to keep the media consumption out of the classroom. A teacher says, *'I advise them to watch the movie adaptation'* another, *'it can make students interested in literature outside class.'* Ultimately, some teachers want to limit the media to beginner students, as one teacher declares: *'only for 1st & 2nd year students.'* We understand that even though the

teachers are making efforts to integrate modern means of learning, it seems nevertheless noticeable they wish to contain media use out of their classrooms.

Students are neither proficient nor mindful enough to understand what the information they manage to retrieve from the internet symbolizes. For Hellal, F. (1988: 105) ‘media invasion’ has brought ‘spoon-fed culture without concern for nuances’. Hence, teachers need to present in class what students cannot discriminate alone while using technology for learning. Furthermore, Bleakley describes learning as a sharing of cultural narratives, as it is how intellectual positioning and theorizing are framed. Bleakley (2014: 169) states what follows:

« the generation, storage and retrieval of a deluge of information now managed by computer technologies are both astonishing and worrying... information is treated as if it were free from social, cultural and historical construction and representation.” Bleakley (2014: 169)

We understand then, the crucial intervention of the teachers and of their guidance particularly at a time where students are encouraged to rely heavily on AI. Consequently, in what follows we will answer our second sub-question to the second research question: Can literature teachers help their students with background knowledge acquisition for literature reading?

In order to answer this second research sub-question, we have looked into the teachers’ beliefs about their teaching practices and their ability to undertake reflective teaching through action research for instance. The questionnaire answers reveal that teachers suffer from the complexity that the task literature teaching has come to be. The

results also hint to academic interdisciplinary research as a probable solution to the lack of communication they have with their students.

The teachers' beliefs about their role is a rather complex one due to the fact that they are teachers-researchers. The word 'guide (8x)' is the most used by the teachers. 'Research (5x)' and 'knowledge (5x)' come next and 'helper (4x)' follows. Doing 'research' and transmitting 'knowledge' are the two principal activities of a university teacher; hence having these surrounded by 'guide' and 'helper' at the top of the list of words associated to the word teacher shows the humanist character teachers relate to their function and according to the results, the ones they focus on. The next most repeated words in the list are: 'responsibility (3x)', 'commitment (3x)', 'generosity (3x)', 'inspire (3x)', 'motivate (3x)', 'creative (3x)', 'educator (3x)' and 'tutor (3x)'. The first field 'coaching' is present with a total of 7 words, 'classroom' has 6 words, and 'emotion' presents 5 words. Then we have the 'soft skills', 'literary analysis', 'sharp intellect', 'progress / competence' and 'guidance' that all contain 4 words.

The qualitative answers of the teachers in the questionnaire were mostly focused on their students' need to read and therefore they consider it their responsibility to encourage them in doing so. For T7 *'...it's never enough to stress active reading, for I deem it to be one of the most pivotal precursors in the development of a literary critical mind.'* T12 says, *'Teaching literature is very challenging since it requires the students' involvement. As the other forms of art, when approaching it, we need first to like it and appreciate it. Thus, when teaching literature, the main difficulty stems from the lack of interest of students who*

do not consider reading as a crucial activity.' As for T15, pushing students to read is a challenge, '*...the day we arrive to motivate students to read books, that would probably be a great achievement.*' We understand through these questionnaire results that the teachers view their role as a mission not only to teach, but also to encourage and assist their students. Truong (2009) says they require 'safety' in their teaching practice. The teacher needs to make students mindful that different ideologies are hidden in the texts, however they are aware that their students need to feel safe in terms of the degree of openness in different societies and cultures.

For him this goes through the selection of texts from within the traditional literary canon with a degree of language difficulty that is not too challenging for them. Hence, Truong (2009) considers that for teachers a text that is accessible and relatable to their EFL learners is not one that presents historical, social or political references. Actually, in the results below the teachers argue that their students are so overwhelmed with many difficulties that TCBK implementation appears to be an overcomplicating endeavor.

In the questionnaire, teachers identified problems students seem to encounter when studying literature. According to the teachers, students do not like reading; hence have difficulty engaging in the task. T5 declares '*Most students don't enjoy reading in general and are not motivated to study or to focus.*' T14 adds '*The main challenge is to make students read the works. They do not read!*' For T6 the lack of reading is coupled with a hindrance in critical thinking abilities. She says, '*The majority of our students hate reading.*

Also, they are not able to analyze and have problems to understand critical thinking and thus cannot apply it. For T3 their hindrances lead to plagiarism. She says, *'Students lack reading, they plagiarize teachers' lessons.'* Teachers also observe that students lack interest in literature study. For T2 it is due to inadequate learning habits, *'90% of the students learn class notes by heart.'* T15 adds, *'The issues are with teaching connotative concepts and metaphors'* and T4 sums it all up with, *'Students lack interest in the module.'* T13 notes that media use is unavailable for teaching, T13 says *'I cannot provide students with the necessary tools and facilitate the learning process. For example overhead projectors, offline / online dictionaries...'* If the teachers consider their role as one of coaching and guiding their students particularly toward reading, the students in turn perceive the impact of their teachers from a completely different viewpoint.

When the students were asked in the questionnaire what their marks in the literature module depended on, the 'teachers' correcting style' was the top answer for the first year students with a rate of 50%. The second year students place it equally with the topic choice at a rate of 40.9% each. As for the third year students, they place 'teachers' correcting style' in the third position only with a rate of 15%. 'The topic choice' for the test also proves to be important for 50% of the third year students who place it in the first position, and the second year students who also place it in the first position alongside teachers' correcting style with 40.9%. The first year students though, place it in the third position with only 20%.

"The test format is quite important and direct questions are far better and easier than the essay." (2nd year students)

Additionally, the following comments show an evolution in the students' metacognitive skills. They explain as follows their viewpoints about the role their teachers have in their understanding:

'Teachers don't bother to explain well, or at least make lessons memorable or remotely interesting (their correcting style is terrible, but I prefer to blame myself).'
(1st year student)

'Although teachers' teaching methods have an effect on my understanding, it's not what ultimately defines my mark. I think it is more related to how much time I spend thoroughly studying the material at home and alone.' (2nd year students)

'When I deal with a topic that I actually enjoy and like, I usually feel more motivated and eventually give it my best and rely on my previous knowledge about it.' (3rd year student)

Furthermore, questionnaire answers reveal that teachers' beliefs about their own teaching practices are affected by whether they have had any training in or not. The teachers who do not view reflective teaching favorably are those who have never been introduced to learning psychology. The first argument against action research or reflective teaching is the amount of work teachers have. Both T6 & T8 say, *'We are overwhelmed with work.'* Moreover, according to T4 *'The time allocated to the module in 2nd year doesn't allow the teacher to give a variety of activities to the students.'* The second argument they present is the normative teaching practice to which they must conform. T15 *'The syllabus is one of the obstacles to do so.'* For T11 it is the student profile that cannot be handled individually,

she says: *‘I develop lessons that would target all the learners in general.’* The third argument advanced is the lack of experience with research that both groups demonstrate. T14 declares, *‘We do not have the habit or a model; we usually share feedback on our own experiences.’* Additionally, T13 very straightforwardly says, *‘I don’t think I even understand the ‘term reflective teaching’.* Finally, T3 addresses a crucial element that reveals itself to be not only an obstacle to research feasibility, but also something the researcher of this present work of investigation has found challenging. T3 says: *‘Because the majority of students doesn’t take research participation seriously (questionnaires & peer observation).’*

<p><i>‘That’s the thing. I don’t understand what the outcomes should be. I don’t understand what I’m supposed to give them, what they’re supposed to demonstrate, etc. “je gère”! I’m just here to... ”c’est une garderie pour adultes”. I heard someone else say it and that’s it: “c’est une garderie pour adultes”. I’m sorry for the brutality of the answer, but this is how I feel about the situation.’ (T5)</i></p>
<p><i>‘We have compared in class the cultural elements, the most important foundations of societies, to show what the differences are between our culture and the European Western cultures and some of them understood how rich, or maybe how important our background is. <u>But some of them did not because I’ve been correcting the exam papers and I’ve noticed that students are still speaking about African culture as being simple and primitive. These are two words I found in a few copies that I disagree with. and I didn’t use those words, I actually used the opposite; I used the word ‘complex’ and I used the word ‘advanced’.</u> For instance, I would say about Africans: “they used to advance in their own way, in their own cultural understanding of what each thing in life is, but there was an advancement.’ (T11)</i></p>

Table 4.10. Teachers in Need of a Strategy to Teach their EFL Students

Inquiring about TCBK has led to uncover issues with the teaching of literary skills and the elaboration of the syllabus. Therefore, once the reading is dealt with in first and second year, literary theory is what students encounter at the level of the third year. Also, according to T7, literary skills are not ‘focused upon much’ and therefore the link between

the two is not made obvious to the students who are expected to use their acquired skills and to implement them with their new learning. This can be confusing for unprepared students. In what follows T11 addresses this syllabus complexity. She says what follows:

'Maybe also our syllabus requires a revision because maybe we should start... why teaching theory separately from a literature class? Why don't we all start with Formalism? Formalism means that I start with the form, meaning the word. So if I start by teaching students that literature is about first a word, and we analyze the word before looking at the text in general, and looking at the context and so on, maybe this will improve not the teaching, but the outcomes of the teaching. But there are always students who would surprise us and they are very interested to bringing works to class. Because sometimes, to use the word, they are bored with one literary work for the entire semester.' (T11)

Consequently, T11 explains that the syllabus could benefit from a review to allow the students to see clearly the elements they are to acquire progressively, making their learning more fruitful, and to allow room for challenge for the more advanced students. It is interesting to note, as explained underneath, that the proficient students are curious to know about otherness. One issue that student 2a drew to our attention was the lack of clarity of the syllabus. The following table presents the student's statements concerning the syllabus issues:

<p>1: The Syllabus</p>	<p><i>'No one gave us the program. I had to look it up on the website.'</i> (Student 2a)</p> <p><i>'Even I struggled, like I did my homework before we started the first year. I checked out like the whole program, the syllabus or whatever it's called, and I did a lot of work during the summer break, for me to be able to keep up with the teacher when we first started. But, if I didn't do all of that background research I never would have been able to keep up.'</i> (Student 2a)</p> <p><i>'When I checked the program during the summer break before my first year, I did find Things Fall Apart but we didn't study them. I was really excited to study them but the teacher said we wouldn't have enough time to cover them properly. It never occurred</i></p>
-------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	<i>to me to read African authors and the syllabus stirred my attention towards African literature and I read it and I really enjoyed it.’ (Student 2a)</i>
	<i>‘Yeah, I noticed something recently, I noticed how during our first year we deal with Shakespeare, which is like the 17th century, and then we deal with books from the 18th century and then in third year, we have books from the 20th century. I think it should be the other way round. Because people ...some students barely now enough about today’s society, of Anglophone societies. So, I think it would make more sense if we go from today and backwards instead of coming from Shakespeare to...because, how would a student who doesn’t even read in English or even has contact with these like English-speaking countries today know anything about Shakespeare.’ (Student 2a)</i>

Table 4.11. Lack of Clarity of the syllabus

We note in the above that the teachers do not rely on the syllabus extensively, particularly when they lack time. Additionally, we have identified through the teacher questionnaire answers that 46.66% teachers have been in an educational training program against 53.33% who have not. Essentially, half of the teacher participants have been familiarized with educational psychology and declared having thought of ways to practice reflective teaching. The qualitative answers given by the teachers via the questionnaire show diverse ways teachers try to implement reflective teaching elements in their daily practices. T12 declares using book reports to check whether her students have understood what was done in class. T1 resorts to discussions with colleagues to improve her teaching. T9 manages to observe her students’ competency evolution in spite of their overwhelming number, and finally T7 states to manage to adapt her lessons to the level of the students. We note that only two teachers do not answer this question (T2 & T10), and one teacher (T5) deems reflective teaching a difficult endeavor due to ‘shortness of time’. Therefore, we present below some teacher suggestions to improve their students’ learning process.

The suggestions presented by the following three teachers interviewed, show their desire to break with an obsolete teaching tradition, T7 addresses the passivity of the learners and considers the need to introduce practical sessions in the future. She says:

'A lot of practice! We need a lot of practice. You asked (in the questionnaire) about extensive reading, it's important but I don't think it helps as much as the practice. So it's important to have practical sessions plus discussions. These help a lot. We also need to teach them the culture of note taking; most students do not take notes. They have handouts to rely on and if they don't they are completely lost. So it is important that we teach them from first year how to take notes.' (T7)

We observe that the suggestion of T7 is already put in place in a module entitled 'study skills' and that despite the existence of this class note taking is still not generalized among the students usual practices. T9 tackles the previous 12 learning circumstances of the students and considers more TCBK is needed at the level of middle and high school years. She adds:

'So, it would be interesting to have at least some basic texts taught in high schools, in middle schools already so that students would have at least some background. Not necessarily really specific background but at least the most common and major literary texts.' (T9)

What T9 suggests is confirmed by T6 who considers that opening libraries in schools would assist the pupils to develop the habit of reading. She says what follows:

'Yes, of course I think that we need to start solving this issue, it's a big issue, from the primary school. We can for example, in primary schools open libraries and they should devote one or two hours a week to reading. They can include reading in different languages, you know that English has been included in the third year of primary school, why not include in reading texts, stories, short texts.' (T6)

Introducing students to reading is also the concern of T7 and T11 who suggest doing so with technology use. They present what follows:

'Well that's the problem you know, students nowadays they don't like to read much, you know? So maybe we can suggest that they listen to some podcasts. They would put them in context. Maybe watch short documentaries... I don't know, yeah.' (T7)

'There is the example of The Witcher, there's a very famous video game that most gamers must have played, the TV series; recently we enjoyed the second season of The Witcher. And there are also the books; there are six books of The Witcher. So, the character the Witcher is one that students maybe like very much. It's just like for example Ironman, as a hero. I wouldn't put Ironman in a film, but I would speak of Ironman as a character. For example, Dr. Strange is a neurosurgeon, and once, I think I had to give them an example about what organic and mechanic mean... So yes, I bring sometimes not just a work, whatever the medium is, but probably a character or a famous place.' (T11)

These suggestions by both T7 and T11 are surprising, but remain interesting as they offer to bridge a cultural gap that can be helpful if well managed. Making the literature class vivid and sensory can appeal to students who were raised in an environment where entertainment is pervasive. As Hellal, F. points out (1988: 110) taking elements of the target culture can create an emulating atmosphere to the class. She states:

"Selected ballads from various periods would sensitize him to specific aspects of Anglo-Saxon sensitivity and to deeply ingrained attitudes on both sides of the Atlantic about other cultures, particularly the Eastern. A text featuring Halloween could be the starting point of a discussion on the importance of the gothic or the uncanny in this sensitivity."

However, the following is a rare success story in this investigation where none of the abovementioned suggestions were used. Teacher 9 managed to bridge the gap between

NCBK and TCBK in her literature class, and successfully taught her students to analyze literary works.

'It does actually, it takes time because they are not really aware of the fact that their own culture, the African culture is... for them it's not relevant enough to the study of English through that literature. But I've had experiences where I was able to convince groups studying African literature by making them read short stories, plays that really represented their own environment and were written in English. They enjoyed them and they understood better than... they related to them better than they would relate to other works they really liked like Jane Eyre or Pride and Prejudice.' (T9)

T9 considers herself having won a battle because the works she refers to, Jane Eyre and Pride and Prejudice, are those habitually preferred by the students for their youthful topics and entertaining plots. She has managed to show students literature they had never considered reading and would have otherwise never discovered. Hence, the choice of works, but also the choice of skills that the teachers present their students with can greatly impact the students' learning quality as we see in what follows.

This success story has a student version to it with student 2a. She describes a successful teaching guidance through a systematically developed task-based activity that is punctually monitored by the teacher. The students have a book to read beforehand. At that point, the teacher gives questions to think about at home, in order to discuss them in class, and finally they write their analyses before having these corrected collectively. With her teacher's way of handling things, she presents a hands-on task that the teacher meticulously set in place.

'We have an amazing teacher this year. She would give us the book to read or whatever beforehand, and then she would give us questions to think about at home

and then we would come to class and discuss them. And sometimes she would ask us to write things on the spot to analyze certain elements and she would correct them with us. ' (Student 2a)

In this case, the teacher asked her students how they read in L1 or L2 before EFL, she was looking into the skills transfer from L1 to L2. Memory is not developed by reminders or in-class presentations, but rather through practice and repetition. For Anderson and Wilson (1986:32) such an instruction can bridge a hindering gap for the reader. They say:

A reader, for example, could fill information gaps by drawing on previous experience. Ausubel believed that knowledge is structured in hierarchical fashion, with the most abstract and inclusive ideas at the apex. His main contribution was the “advance organizer,” a short introduction to a text that provides the abstract structure needed to assimilate the more detailed information that follows. In Ausubel’s words, an advance organizer provides the “ideational scaffolding” that bridges the gap from the student’s prior knowledge to the new information.

(Anderson and Wilson, 1986:32)

For Kramsch (1993) interpretation is to look at things from perspectives that are different from our own to understand foreign ways of thinking. We understand through the above successful results, that a teacher / students collaboration to enhance critical thinking skills to identify, compare, or relate to various cultural backgrounds, although rare, remains interesting to consider. Yamada (2015: 77) explains:

“To understand multiple realities and the conditions influenced by globalization progress, critical research on language education is needed. In his analysis of Japan’s English language textbooks, Nakamura (1993) suggested that English language textbooks used in Japan should offer content that makes students think of those contexts. That is, it is important to foster “critical thinking” skills in EFL courses. Textbooks (and everyday classes) do not have to give students answers to everything but rather should offer opportunities for both students and teachers to think and work together toward *kyosei* or co-living.” (Yamada, 2015: 77)

Additionally to their involvement in their teaching, testing and curriculum design, many teachers seem to view favorably research done about the teaching of their specialty; encouraging the application of an interdisciplinary cooperation in one form or another within the realm of academic research. T8 says it was an as enjoyable experience as it proved to be helpful, she declares: *‘I enjoyed going through this questionnaire as it made me reflect on my teaching methods. Thank you. I love teaching literature and making my students love it too, it’s the biggest reward.’* Also, T9 is simply happy to have been heard. She says: *‘Thank you for your interest.’* Although these expressions of gratitude show discreetness and politeness towards the researcher, they do transpire as marks of isolation or feeling unheard. If the students manifested clearly their frustration with the mismatch between what they were taught and their profiles, teachers remain inconspicuous about their difficulties. Consequently, we can say that it appears necessary for interdisciplinary research to be encouraged and developed.

4.1.3. Literature Interpretation: from Eurocentricism to Afrocentricism?

We have now reached the examination of the results in order to answer our third research question: Are students taught to interpret from their Mediterranean / African perspective or do their teachers encourage the western official reading? This question delves deeply into both the students and teachers’ cultural identities, an area of focus that does not seem to have been given much importance by either group of participants, as we shall see in this section. Hence, our first sub question is as follows:

Are the teachers aware of their students' culturally biased perceptions as well as their own?

To begin with, we have identified through the questionnaire that the student participants are a fully Algerian population without any foreigners. We have identified three native language groups, all Algerian, present at the same level of occurrence across the three groups. The majority of the students are native speakers of Arabic with 58% in the first year, 55% in the second year, and 75% in the third year. Next are the Kabyle Berber native speakers, who are 32% in the first year, 36% in the second year, and 20% in the third year. Finally, we have the Chaoui Berber native speakers who are 5% of the first and the second year student population. In the third year group, we have 5% of the students who are Sahraouian Berber native speakers. Similarly to their student counterpart sample, the teachers present a homogenous profile as well.

Essentially, the teacher participants are Algerian and 100% of them were students in the Department they are teaching in, i.e. the Department of English Language & Literature of Algiers 2. Furthermore, the results of the teachers' questionnaires show that the majority of teachers are aged between 30 & 50. Regarding their gender proportions, here again not unlike the students, the teachers are mostly women as there are only two men among the 15 teachers questioned. The homogeneity found in both groups of participants allows us to eliminate outside factors that would have otherwise complicated the analysis of our research findings, moreover our attention here is focused on the discovery that both populations not only are 100% Algerian, but that their contact opportunities with the Anglophone culture or TCBK is limited as we shall see below. This data reflecting both

populations' identity being Algerian in their entirety gives more meaning to our first research sub-question as well as our concern to uncover whether either population is self-aware of having culturally biased perceptions or not.

We have seen in a previous section of this chapter (section 4.1.1. p. 273) that the lack of contact opportunities within the EFL culture causes students to resort to 'social media' use. They also declare to discover most of what they learn about TCBK in the 'classroom'. Consequently, the teachers' practice is at stake here. In what follows Yamada (2015: 77) emphasizes the importance of textbooks content, as it is in the EFL classroom the only threshold for the learners to an unknown world. He explains:

“Both audiences as well as textbook authors/editors shape the nature of the world represented in the textbooks. Acknowledging the limitation of textbooks, educators have to keep in mind the many possible situations that students will face in the future when they communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds....Japanese students who study in their own country may receive or even produce unfair treatment on the basis of their class, gender, race/ethnicity without their recognizing it.” (Yamada, 2015: 77)

Adding to the difficulty to teach the EFL literature at the program, the circumstances of students, their learning habits as well as their cultural profile, all enhance the responsibility of the teacher. This is particularly sensitive when we learn that 73% of the teachers never enrolled in a university abroad and among those who did, it was to go to a non-English speaking country. Altogether, 7% went to China, 7% to Jordan, and 13% to France. The official languages of those countries are respectively Mandarin, Arabic, and French. Hence, if English is spoken to tourists, during official ceremonies, or at conferences; the culture of the language with the lifestyle or symbols, folklore, traditions

etc... are absent for a teacher who needs to be immersed in the target culture. We have presented the profiles of both groups of participants to highlight the fact that they both are Algerian-immersed and view EFL literature from their nationalistic point of view, the teachers from their own learning experiences and the students from their media-centered point of view.

To begin with, there is the students' excessive media use that causes them to feel out of place or unaccustomed to literature or its study. In the reading activity, after the students had to identify the cultural references in the extract from *Daddy Long Legs*, the students were given the following question; 'do you sometimes feel the frustration the narrator seems to be going through?' The main character's frustration is the reason the researcher chose this particular passage as it describes the feelings of a university student who comes from a foreign background and who is teased for not having the adequate references; a situation that our EFL students are quite familiar with (Fasla: 2009). The first year students declare at 40% to feel the same way the main character of the story in the text feels about the lack of cultural knowledge, against 50% of the second year students and 40% of the third year students. Hence, we can observe that the feeling of frustration and anxiety due to a lack of knowledge does not diminish with the years spent studying EFL literature. The road is long and filled with obstacles as students are far from the cultural, literary, and artistic spheres of knowledge. The following table presents the teachers' interview statements about their students' discrepancies with the EFL culture present in the works they study as well as those works themselves.

<u>1. Discrepancy between Culture and the students</u>	<u>2. Discrepancy between Literature and the students</u>
<i>'For them, the real problem today is that they do not think that literature is going to help them in their English studies. They want to learn the language; they're not interested in the culture and they're not interested in the literature. We try to explain to them that literature might contribute immensely to their acquisition of the language itself, but they're not really...What I have noticed for many of them, obviously not all of them, is that they are not really motivated when it comes to learning literature.'</i> (T9)	<i>'Oh we try to bridge the gap and we sometimes succeed with some students we do, but some students lack the motivation also to catch up. They're really not willing to do extra work, extensive reading, if we give them lists of suggested readings they do not really take them into consideration.'</i> (T9)
<i>'...the challenge as you are mentioning is that students, and I am not generalizing this to all the students; but a good number of them do not have the cultural background. They don't know what it means so they don't feel the interest at the beginning.'</i> (T10)	<i>'And I don't blame students I want to be clear about this, it's not the students' fault, in my perspective anyway. Of course, they have their share for some of them, those who have the ability and don't make the effort. But for the vast majority I think they are victims, just like we are.'</i> (T5)
<i>'So they're interested in...I even once heard from a friend of a friend, to whom a student said: "you know our teacher in class speaks of Marvel, the latest films". It was me! I was very happy because that student did not interact at all in class, at all. But then she at least went and spoke about this and that this made her interested and this is one of my main goals. It is at least to make students interested in literature and love literature or whatever cultural element we're teaching them, art in general.'</i> (T11)	<i>'Sometimes students can have a shock, for example when we studied Daisy Miller in class and they read, "Daisy was flirting..."... We have some reactions of some students who are shocked about the content in the book. Same thing with Maggie, when we are analyzing the short story exposing the events or actions that happen, they are shocked.'</i> (T4)

Table 4.12. Students' Discrepancies with EFL Literature & Culture

We note from the table above that teachers are well aware of their students' disadvantageous learning habits that do not facilitate literary or cultural skills acquisition or development. Additionally, when we identify these learning habits through their reading profile in the questionnaire to the students, we immediately note that the students do not read or do not even have a connection to reading, as one would expect university students to be. First year students present disparate answers as 20% declare they never read, 25%

say they only read occasionally (for homework for instance) and 25% declare to be reading often (vacation / free time). The second year students' responses were clear-cut; 50% said b) "I have read occasionally..." and 50% took c) "I was curious to read..." In this category, there are no book lovers nor are there any book haters. Third year students have more nuance, with 5% of them who declare to have "never read..." 35% indicated b) "I have read occasionally..." 15% selected c) "I was curious to read..." 15% d) "I like reading...", and 40% indicated, e) "I love reading..." The biggest percentages of this group are the 35% who declared "reading occasionally..." probably due to their reading practices at university as third year students, and 40% who indicated e) "I love reading..." Furthermore, the teachers interviewed regret this actual state of students' lack in reading as a habitual practice and more so of the weight this hindrance carries into the literature study realm.

1: Reading is not taught explicitly	2. Reading is a Motivator to study Literature	3. Students lack Reading Habits
<p><i>'I sometimes do ask them to read novels in Arabic and in French or ask them to do the analysis of some works they have read in other languages, but I find that the problem for many students is not only a problem of language but the fact that they have not been taught to read at all. Sometimes I ask them to bring with them to the classroom novels in other languages that they have read or that they are reading so that we can use them, regardless of the language because we can use them in the process of analyzing the major elements of fiction for example. I ask them to analyze themes in any novels they have read, but I find that they have not read sometimes at all. Apart from what was included in the syllabus of middle school and high school. Reading itself is not really a major</i></p>	<p><i>'My feeling is that literature classes are losing quality and substance (and even meaning) because of a number of factors: one of them is the fact that the Netflix generation does not read books.'</i> (T1)</p>	<p><i>'You can motivate them if you bring material to read in class... that is important for them to read. Today for example, I have brought to my students the short story Eveline otherwise if I had asked them to read the work at home I know they wouldn't have done it. You bring the text, you bring the material.'</i> (T3)</p>

<p><i>skill that is taught in the Algerian environment as a habit.’ (T9)</i></p>		
<p><i>‘...we have some students who read but not necessarily in English. I have some students who read in Arabic or in French, and we try always to make the connection with what they have read. I ask them if they...ask them if they can see those techniques of writing, of analyzing in the works they have read and it is very helpful.’ (T2)</i></p>	<p><i>‘You have some students who know about the cultural differences through their interest in life, through their exposure to the language, students who like reading...Yes, those who read, listen to music and watch movies have a certain background knowledge of the Anglophone societies. The others lack this knowledge, they are here only to study the language they don’t see the importance of culture.’ (T4)</i></p>	<p><i>‘Of course, this is connected to their lack of reading, they never read. You know when I ask them in class “what are you currently reading?” They say “Nothing! We never read.” “How come you never read? At least some texts, essays...” They say, “No, we’re not interested in reading”...They say, “We never read!” They never read and they do not even read the texts that are compulsory.’ (T6)</i></p>
<p><i>‘In class I ask students in first year, “were you exposed to reading skills before coming to the university? Were you exposed to how you are supposed to deal with a text?” and they said “we never studied a text in high school.”’ (T6)</i></p>	<p><i>‘Once you read the text you enjoy the text and then you can go to the cultural context of that text. So first you enjoy the reading, you like the story, you like the characters and then you have access to the culture of that work. You can for instance not know anything about African culture, but yet you can enjoy reading <i>Things Fall Apart</i>, or any African work.’ (T8)</i></p>	<p><i>‘They still see reading as something boring. It’s a boring activity for them. I think this is the main problem in their difficulty, in the difficulty they have with this module of literature.’ (T8)</i></p>

Table 4.13. The Place of Reading in Education and the Effect on Literature Study

Although we have already dealt with the issues of reading and technology use in previous sections, we wish to emphasize these subject matters here. We are dealing with an Algerian difficulty that emerged from historical and economic circumstances that are specific to the country. Hellal (1988) affirms that the sudden exposure of Algerian students to worldwide media has thrown them into the spoon-feeding of knowledge. She adds that this was more hurtful to these newly independent Algerians in comparison to their

international counterparts. T11 confirms this as she observes a shift in this new generation who seem to have thrown themselves in modernity rejecting traditional means of cultural transmission. She says:

'I think the traditional means of cultural transmission are disappearing. I don't think any of the students I taught to ever experience this. I never heard a student telling me they had a grandparent teaching them about their culture in any traditional way. But they are very much interested in what is today, they are image-bound, locked to their screens, and in screens we find either interactive or non-interactive experiences. It's either cinema or television or video games. Students in the recent years are reading less novels and short stories and some of them are reading more and more cartoons, the Manga for instance, they like the Japanese cartoons, not just the American.' (T11)

Additionally to the reading results above that show little immersion into the English context through books, teacher 11 describes her students to be distant from their native cultural acquisition, let alone any EFL cultural knowledge. T11 presents screen-bound students lacking enriching discussions with their families. Passive and lost in screens, the students today turn to tasks that require little efforts, such as reading comic books instead of novels.

1. Technology hinders Students in their Reading	2. Technology use or Traditional Reading, Students are in Search of “fun”
<i>'Yes, because when they are adults they are used to not reading, more social media for instance. I would say that 95% of the students watch the movie instead of reading the work.'</i> (T2)	<i>'I believe that reading classics is most essential for students who want to cultivate knowledge of intellectual quality, but when their interest is only triggered by all what respond to their thirst for sensations and emotions, it is only natural that they do not feel the need to read books. I may appear cynical but I honestly think that there is a visible lack of interest in anything that does not stimulate their hedonistic side.'</i> (T1)
<i>'Normally they have to read online, they don't know that this reading can be done by the use of technological</i>	<i>'Sure, they do “like” stories but the stories to which they enthusiastically react are that postmodern</i>

<i>means. They are getting farther away from reading.'</i> (T3)	<i>concept of the visual story developed by social media.'</i> (T1)
<i>'...just as an overview, just as an overview of the work. But when we are analyzing we need to see the techniques of writing, the themes, and the aim of the author... Those things we can't see in the movie. It can be an extra something but not necessary.'</i> (T2)	<i>'Yes, I am for the use of audio-visual material, etc. However, I am skeptical about the outcome. It seems to me that university should be about studying and of course, it can make the subject more appealing, ok. It can help to get some ideas across etc. But, it will never teach students to focus, to go in depth etc. I'm skeptical about the impact of technology on teaching and learning... I don't know. What I'm saying is let's use it the right way, but let's not assume just because it is there, it is necessarily useful to us when it comes to the core of our job.'</i> (T5)

Table 4.14. Students Profiled as Digital Natives by Teachers

We can notice the students lack the necessary potential due to their overuse of technology and social media consumption; so much so, they demonstrate an inability to read and even have issues with the willingness to make the necessary efforts to analyze and interpret EFL literature. This generational limitation is worsened with their TCBK drawback; particularly as this latter is not addressed in practice in the literature course, as we shall see in what follows. Hence, our second sub-question to our third research question:

Does the literature study practice in the EFL literature classroom transcend the classic Western paradigm of interpretation or does it align to it?

As we mentioned several times in this investigation the intercultural reading process, i.e. in this case Algerian students reading EFL literature, goes through bridging the gap between NCBK and TCBK. However, the place of African / Algerian culture in the literature class is rarely acknowledged as is unclear the teaching of African Literature, although it is in the literature course syllabus. First, regarding the students' native culture and its place in the literature classroom, teachers declared at 66.6% to include the students'

native cultural background in literature teaching. A surprising statement because their method to select the works they teach in their classes, that was dealt with in section 4.1.2., shows otherwise. Results reveal that not one teacher mentioned using works that are culturally close to the students' native culture. Indeed, while explaining how they bridge the cultural gap for their students, teachers presented the classroom context through discussion rather than the works themselves. 40% say they enhance parallels and differences between the cultures, 10% use recent related sociocultural events, 40% give examples from Arab literature, movies, cartoons, and even poetry, and 10% ask them about their experiences to arouse their interest. This is very interesting but fruitless if it does not translate into cultural knowledge mastery and in turn to the literary competence required from the students.

Another interesting data concerning the students is for them to discover they would deal with African literature. It was the second year students who had mostly comments on African literature: "*I didn't know we have such writers in Africa!*" one says, and another second year student confirms, "*African literature is something vague to me.*" Eventually, one adds, "*African literature was the one that felt a bit different...*" These declarations show the students were agreeably surprised by such a discovery. The three groups generally expressed their surprise of having African literature as a subject matter. Although the first year students' most prominent answer was 'none' with 35%, a 1st year student said "We did not treat all of them, so I have no idea." The second year students were more straightforward concerning African literature with 45.45%. As for the third year Licence

students, they were very specific in their answers and declared by 35% to be surprised to find African literature in their syllabus and 20% surprised not to receive any teaching of African literature.

Only one first year student indicated in the comment section that Algeria belonged in the African continent. “*The African literature is easy because it is close to our culture and traditions.*” In the table below, we find all sorts of comments students made in the interviews concerning African literature and how they feel about it.

Native Culture a Familiar Space	Discovering African Culture i.e. Algerian Students’ Continental Roots	Algeria in Africa, a Cultural complexity
<p><i>‘I only thought about the timeline, I thought it would be easier if we had to study modern works, even if like the topics were purely Western. <u>As long as we’re starting from today and going backwards it would be helpful.</u> I didn’t think about the context but yeah I think...yeah I do believe <u>it would make things easier if we could relate.</u>’ (Student 2a)</i></p>	<p><i>‘I would love to know about African, American African literature...I would love to know about it. We dealt with slavery but it’s always related to the English civilization.’ (Student 1)</i></p>	<p><i>‘We are in Africa, but Algeria is not really part of Africa. Other countries like South Africa or Congo they speak English, we don’t...The Algerian culture there is nothing like it in Africa. It’s very big, it’s a huge culture. Not like other African countries. <u>I don’t feel a connection with the other African countries and their cultures.</u>’ (Student 2b)</i></p>
<p><i>‘...whereas with the American colonies they did have a lot of comparisons to make between our history and American history. Even students who, some of them I knew for a fact, aren’t really interested in history; <u>once they attended some classes of American history and they noticed like they saw the things we were talking about and how they had some knowledge. Not necessarily about the topic itself, but about similar concepts and stuff, they were participating more and they were attending more.</u>’ (Student 2a)</i></p>	<p><i>‘I am currently reading Heart of Darkness and I feel like a monkey...It’s interesting but I feel like <u>it’s degrading the way they talk about African people in the novel, it’s awful.</u>’ (Student 2a)</i></p>	<p><i>‘Yes, a little bit. <u>This year we studied the African literature, it was a bit difficult because in the essays we have to write the names of the characters...</u> I couldn’t really memorize them. Like we did Things Fall Apart and Okonkwo was really hard to write and to memorize also...’ (Student 2b)</i></p>

Table 4.15. Native Culture in the EFL Literature Classroom

It is interesting to note how contradictory the students' declarations are, and how these certainly need to be addressed. Some students are quite eager to learn more about African culture and one student says "...it would make things easier if we could relate..." It is also important to note that one student reacts vividly as to how her culture is portrayed in EFL literature; about Heart of Darkness, student 2a declares "...I feel like a monkey..." An observation well present in Achebe's criticism of the same novel. Other students with very little information about African culture before university do not feel connected to other African countries. Student 2b claims the language use in Shakespearean plays is easier than the language in the more modern African novels. It is clear she was never presented with cultural elements to help her discriminate the close from the far culturally and that she has had no clarifications at this point to allow her to erase her prejudices. The ambiguity as to whether or not to bring the native or the environmental culture in the literature debates in class is made by some teachers who argue in favor of the universality of culture.

We understand that the teachers did not deal with TCBK in the syllabus design or through recurring practice. Their reactions of surprise, puzzlement, and reflection all spontaneously occurred the moment of the interviews. The argument brought forward several times by teachers is the 'universality' of literature; which is supposed to be addressed to everyone whatever their origin. The following table shows that even this argument by which literature is viewed as universal does not completely settle the problem.

Statement by teacher 8 refuting TCBK	Statement by teacher 8 accepting TCBK
---------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------

<p><i>'But, I consider that a literary text can be <u>universal</u>. It can talk to everyone...I understand your perspective concerning for example, T.S. Elliot because he uses a lot of symbols, he refers a lot to mythology and Western tradition, and in order to understand his poetry you need to go through every symbol.'</i> (T8)</p>	<p><i>'The problem with <u>Heart of Darkness</u>, I guess, is the style, the very complex style used. Ok? And not all the students like, as you said, psychological insights, even if now when you look at the movies that are in fashion, you see a lot of psychoanalytical treatments of problems, split personalities for example. Students like those kinds of movies, but when they read <u>Heart of Darkness</u>, they don't arrive at that because <u>to arrive at that level of psychological analysis you have to go through the symbols and it's very complex.</u>'</i> (T8)</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Table 4.16. Teacher 8 contradictory statements about TCBK Pedagogy

It is important to note that the researcher never hinted to any one affirmation, it is the teacher's reflection going back and forth about TCBK use until she again changes her mind to see the 'symbolic difficulty' for every work under examination.

“...recommendations for the choice of cultural contents can only be given after considering the 'ecological' context of English teaching here, of which the teachers' personal stories, experiences and belief systems form part.”(Glas, 2012:260)

T11 sums up the EFL literature-teaching situation by choosing the term 'universality' of all cultures. According to her, taking examples from different cultures and drawing them closer allows the students to transcend the storylines and deal with the thematic issues necessary for their literature study.

'We speak about how universal everything is and how let's say, all literature, all types of stories or plots for example fall under the same category...I select Algerian and I try not to bring Indian for example. But if my lesson requires I speak about postcolonial literature, I would also bring Indian to show the universality of the literature... and I would bring the cultural references we are all familiar with pointing to the fact that we might even disagree on the most basic things because

we might come from different regions of the same country. But we definitely share some knowledge that we can think of as even continental before being universal. Algeria is part of Africa, so we already share things with African cultures before being universal as a culture. I try to bring everything I can and limiting it to the concept I am teaching.’ (T11)

We can identify how difficult it is for the teachers to deal with the cultural layer in literature texts as explained above by T11. Eventually, some teachers seem to focus solely on the presentation of the target culture as a teaching tool, misunderstanding the purpose of NCBK addition in any intercultural communication even before it becomes analytical or interpretive. In literature, we need culture-free analytical tools as much as the ability to identify cultural specific concepts. Teaching EFL literature, a cross-cultural communication, is a matter of helping the students to find the balance between universal concepts and their own point of view to reach personal analysis. Bensemmane (2006:88) explains, “In any case, even early classics of literature can be revisited by students, and considered from more holistic standpoints.” (Bensemmane, 2006:88). Additionally, the following statement confirms the link between context and interpretation. T12 says what follows:

‘As the objective of ILMD’s literature syllabus is to initiate students to literary texts, we are bound to deal with historically remote narratives (Short stories and novels). However, students tend to consider this literature with a contemporary perspective, omitting to CONTEXTUALIZE it; thus, they often make wrong interpretations.’ (T12)

Literature teaching is in need of a pedagogy with EFL as well as native cultural elements to be taken into consideration. Although Western literature teaching is chronological, with cultural distance, it seems difficult for our EFL students who have so

much to handle in terms of cultural foreignness. Personal Interpretation can also mean developing one’s awareness of their native perspective. In the following table, we understand they are lost in translation even though some of the most resilient students manage quite well.

1 Students are unprepared for Literature		2 Resilient students are self-Confident	
Context does not prepare students for literature study. Literature class is more than mastering the language.	<i>‘Because I just ask, “did you read the book?”... “No, I haven’t” ... “did you at least watch the movie? “No” “did you listen to the audiobook? It’s just 5 or 6 hours on YouTube”... “No, I haven’t” so yeah, that’s how I know they don’t look up stuff because I know they haven’t read the book.’ (Student 2a)</i>	Resilient students do extra work, find historical background, watch more videos, and read articles.	<i>‘...the second thing is I had no idea about what I had to do and I got a 07 in the first exam. Then I tried to look for the historical background, do a little bit of extra work, watch more videos, read more articles, worked even more and I got 17 and it’s the best mark in the class. I was in shock, so I discovered that I really needed to know about the module, to know about the historical context, the author’s life so I can have a good mark. This is my story.’ (Student 1)</i>
Teachers expect students to know literature study.	<i>‘...I feel that teachers think that we know what the module is about just with its name. I know it’s literature but I really wanted to know why we are learning it, what is its importance, what is it? I don’t know, like his ideas about this module. An introduction of the module itself, not the syllabus or what we are going to deal with. I find that we need more understanding about the module itself then we can move to the syllabus.’ (Student 1)</i>	Another student learned the language and the culture through conversational classes with natives, a creative way to counter difficulties to travel.	<i>‘I found lots of language exchange partners and I started to do conversational classes with them. Instead of paying, I would like teach them something back. So it would be English or Arabic most of the time or French yeah. We actually have a lot to offer language wise we Algerians. Some people, some foreign people are even interested in learning our dialect! I am teaching an Italian Edziria. It’s crazy.’ (Student 2a)</i>

Table 4.17. High Potential Students Lacking Preparation

All the data converge to the students’ need for more explanations, guidance and discussions provided by their teachers. The following table demonstrates this clearly:

2: The Teachers Students' interview statements show they demand to contribute to the literature class; they want more participation instead of the traditional teacher-talk.	<i>'I'd definitely prefer we discussed the way we relate to the book and how the book makes us feel before actually studying the novel. Algerians, as boys and girls today.'</i> (Student 2a)
	<i>'When we come to class we read a page or two of the novella and then <u>the teacher explains it. We present similarities of the characters or their differences and then we analyze the story... That's it.</u>'</i> (Student 2b)
	<i>'The teacher told us "I'm not going to give you the historical context you're gonna look for it". So we really need that extra work. We need the historical context and stuff but the teacher just gave us points in the movement itself not about like the historical background and stuff ... I feel that we really need to check everything even the history...'</i> (Student 1)
	<i>'I feel like going down the rabbit hole (Laughs)... We need discussions instead of explanations.'</i> (Student 2a)

Table 4.18. Lack of Guidance of the Teachers

The last table of this section provides very insightful data as to the level of awareness of the students, who not only see the literature module as a difficult module, but the teachers' role and the students' role as complementary for their success.

Students need to sacrifice time, leisure hobbies and friends	<i>'... because we register in September and we don't start studying until October or November so there's a lot of time to listen to the audiobook which is just like 6 or 7 hours. They could even watch the movie. They could watch a lot of BookTube videos about that..., like the basic stuff would have been covered by the student because it's basic, we don't need the teacher to understand the book or to know what the book is about. Then with the teacher you could go like deeper, I don't know ... move on to further...'</i> (Student 2a)
Students say they need an introduction to the literature module.	<i>'I actually did it this semester. I had no idea in the first semester on how to deal with literature. I know what literature is, but I had no idea on how to deal with the module, or how to revise it and stuff. But now, I really need to go back to the history first, check the author's background and stuff, yeah, I think ... this is what I wanted to say, yeah.'</i> (Student 1)
	<i>'...a lot of things are relatable with African literature. Definitely more than the stuff we read in American or British books ... I actually think we should start with it and then move to American and British literature. And then Shakespeare. Shakespeare is the most unrelatable thing ever! Especially for 18 year olds starting to study.'</i> (Student 2a)
Student 2a is in favor of more native culture references in literature class and proves a point by presenting the Anglophone	<i>'In Anglophone culture class, we dealt with colonialism and we enjoyed it. It was a lot of fun. The teacher was open to debate and everyone had something to say about them. <u>And we did make parallels with us.</u>'</i> (Student 2a)

Culture class where it is already a regular practice.	
-------------------------------------------------------	--

Table 4.19. Excerpts of Student Interviews Presenting Suggestions.

Students present us with suggestions that transpire of a certain maturity and level of awareness about their learning needs. The table above shows that students incriminate themselves above all, as they understand their own limitations that require many ‘sacrifices’ on their part. They also understand that they must somehow increase their target cultural background knowledge. They are also very critical of the syllabus of the literature course and quite logically deduce that first year students with the weaknesses noticed cannot study Shakespeare or equivalently difficult works to begin with. Finally, it is perceptively that the students compare the way culture parallels are applied in the civilization courses that the students find the inspiration from to suggest to do the same in literature class.

4.2. Pedagogical Implications

In the light of the aforementioned results, the most significant outcome to note is the certainty that our students are deficient in both TCBK and NCBK. This in turn, is damaging to their knowledge of the different world contexts as well as to acquiring the critical thinking abilities needed to develop effective reading strategies as suggested in Bloom’s Taxonomy in Bloom, B. S. et al (1956). Additionally, rote learning coupled with social media overconsumption shapes their learning habits imprisoning them in a knowledge-storing logic instead of learning how to think, understand and interpret. EFL reading skills

are part of a complex process that involves the learner's response and affect, both influenced by the learner's understanding of the world or his/ her NCBK with what was learned in terms of TCBK. The results show that teachers of literature have endeavoured to provide the necessary TCBK without success and according to Byram (2017); we understand that it is due to the dynamic process of target culture acquisition. He affirms that the acceptance of the target culture by EFL students goes through the association / dissociation of their understanding from the NCBK to the TCBK. Furthermore, both students and teachers have declared feeling lost as to the teaching outcomes and the different elements that ought to compose the literature course.

Firstly, there is the reader's response to the text at stake. Hence, before even analysing the text by turning to literary theory or discourse analysis, students need to be able to respond to the text and express how they feel about it. Similarly to Graff (1997), McCormick, K. in Slevin, J. F. & Young (eds., 1996) presents the 'response statement'. Following the reader-response theorists of the 1970s led by Rosenblatt, they value the pedagogical addition to having students respond to the texts studied in class in a free response with the permission to express their emotions towards the literary work at stake. In the 'response statement', students draft a free non-academic piece of writing where they express their feelings, tastes, concerns about the work studied as part of their literary skills acquisition. Thus, if we want to reinvent a positive and joyful environment where students will feel secure, their native cultural background needs to be valued in order to smoothly transition to an acceptance of the target cultural background knowledge acquisition as

proclaimed by Vygotsky (1978). In addition, Freire (1998) states that we must never lose sight of the students' affect / prejudice towards the target culture or risk severe consequences for the learners. Frigols, Marsh, and Mehisto (2008: 185) also suggest to equip students with useful vocabulary that cannot only help them to express their emotions towards what they read, but also can have an encouraging effect to do so in class. They state:

“Students would also benefit from a language support sheet listing emotions. These words might be organized under headings such as *positive emotions* and *potentially destructive emotions*, or under headings such as *adjectives, adverbs, verbs, etc....*It will also help the student to better understand his or her own investment in an assignment. Also, it is an act of recognition of student effort.” Frigols, Marsh, and Mehisto (2008: 185)

Allowing the students to express their feelings about what they are reading helps them to enter the field with the acknowledgement of their tastes, their personalities, and their cultural identities. When teachers provide the necessary contextual background of the novel studied for instance, they negate the students' identity and context creating discomfort or rejection leaving them passive and irresponsive. On the surface, schema theory should help to develop “more active roles” for readers in the classroom. For McCormick, K. in Slevin, J. F. & Young (eds.), (1996: 296), EFL readers will not only become passive learners, but they will feel that their interpretation is not wanted and that they should conform to the intended readers' correct / target point of view. Hence, the objective is not to be critical, but rather to copy or become a shadow to the putative reader. Therefore, Montgomery et al (1992: 31) argue that in order to avoid misunderstandings due

to cultural disinformation, guidelines about the original context of the literary work at stake should be supplied for the students who are of a different cultural background. They say:

“Where the social context of the text is very different from the reader’s own, then alongside works of reference and general histories, a graphical timeline may be useful as a means of orientation.” (Montgomery et al, 1992: 31)

Here ‘orientation’ does not mean having a chronological listing of literature works; as is traditionally done. Instead, we could be moving the other way round, i.e. from the newest, or closest to the students’ world, to the oldest, most distant linguistically and culturally which is also more difficult to grasp. Consequently, the first of the guidelines for target culture acquisition is habituating students to critical thinking and reading by presenting them with parallel situations of different cultural settings. This will allow them to internalize similarities, accept differences without feeling denigrated in their own identity. As explained in Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (1978), the phase of acceptance is the scaffolding for every other learning phase. If we take for example the African American and the Algerian histories, the results show that when we present our EFL Algerian students with their similarities it is fruitful: teacher 9 found her students to successfully analyse the work studied and student 2a declared that even students who rarely attended became suddenly invested in classroom debates! Below is an example of what can be done to link the students’ NCBK and the TCBK to be acquired.

Teachers can describe the African Americans at the abolition of slavery and how formerly Black slaves in the USA were found jobless, owned nothing, and had to be reinserted anew in society. The Algerians after the independence of their country, with their

newly reattributed land, also had to go through a difficult transitional phase. The Algerians had to go to school, many for the first time, adapt to new housing, new professional positions, etc...Although both situations are very different, students can identify with the suffering while being ruled by another people, or with the handicap and feeling of lack. While the newly independent Algerians filled empty houses and occupied new work positions, newly freed African slaves in America were put at the margin of society since former slave owners could not afford to pay them for what they used to do for free. Schools were a restricted area, not to mention the voting policy. Being adequately informed of the history means being able 'to feel' how history affects peoples of all origins. When students are brought to compare what their elders or ancestors have been through with what others around the world have lived, we give them the kind of empathy and understanding necessary to hook their interest; they feel safe because the target community has had tribulations that were similar to their own. We allow them to first give their opinion, be open to learn how to fix a positioning, and think critically in order to answer questions such as, where is the freedom there?

Our focus here is didactic in helping students learn to value their identity while they rediscover the target one. Media broadcasting throughout history has always been comparative, putting Western ideas and principles above the rest. Reaching out to otherness must go through creating an Algerian vision of the world and not the other way round. The issue is not about 'others' being different from 'us', it is a matter of perspective and to prove to the students that not one culture is better than the other is (Adichie, C. N., 2009). Many

ideas, artworks, symbols were developed or derived from an African origin, something that is rarely professed. Aidoo, A. A. in Jarrett-Macauley, D. (ed., 1996: 157) wishes to restore African truths by shedding light on the unsuspected power of Africans and African civilizations. Aidoo, A. A. (in Jarrett-Macauley, D. (ed.), 1996: 158) explains:

“In fact in pre-colonial times, fighting women were part of most African armies, a well-known example being the all-female battalions of Dahomey (ancient Benin; early nineteenth century), who sought to protect their empire against invaders and internal treachery.” Aidoo, A. A. in Jarrett-Macauley, D. (ed.), 1996: 158)

Aidoo, A.A. lays bare the myth of the technically advanced White civilization invading poor Africa. In fact, the invasion of Africa was lengthy, sequential and opposed the Africans, who fought using arrows and bows, to the Europeans who had firearms. Additionally, the Portuguese who initiated the triangular transatlantic Slave Trade of the 17th century did so deceitfully with the help of queen Nzingha selling them their first slaves. Slavery in Africa was originally a domestic and social class system to manage populations from defeated tribes, victims of poverty, divorce, draught and so on. (Reader, J. 1997). Aidoo, A. A. also describes queen Nzingha (1582-1663) of present Angola who tried to stop the Portuguese from invading her country. Although she did not succeed, it was a long series of battles and sacrifices. In order to teach this historical information more particularly, teachers could present parallels that are modern and attractive to our young student population. In the famous series *Games of Thrones*, there is a scene where the main protagonist Daenerys’ best friend / sister is decapitated in front of her to destabilize and weaken her. This fact is historically true as it was in reality queen Nzingha’s own sister who was beheaded by the Portuguese who gave a final blow to the queen’s unwavering will

to combat. Using modern and famous references is not only for attracting or fascinating students, the reason is to call to their sensory skills because of our audio-visual bound environment. Hence, presenting the students with pictures, music, and videos is a necessary channel to the classroom and its reading requirements.

As our results have shown several times, media use in the classroom can assist students to learn in an environment close to them. In contrast, books are far from them and hardly ever present in their homes or given any part in their leisure activities. DVDs and USB sticks have long ago replaced library shelves with comics and novels of all kinds. As for the activities of reading, drawing or even cutting and pasting colored papers or magazines have all been abandoned in favour of the smartphone. Parisi, D in Anderson & Sara (2012: p, 318) explain:

“The new digital technologies make it possible to learn by participating in a ‘horizontal’ social network including other students, teachers and experts, compared with the ‘star-like’ network with the teacher at the centre of the star...”
(Parisi, D in Anderson & Sara, 2012: p, 318)

In fact, even without this outburst about technology invading our lives, researchers have sought to focus on the use of different original and lively ways to make the learner aware of his learning and in helping him/ her feel included. Tarasheva, E.& Davcheva, L in Byram, M.,Nichols, A. & Stevens, D. (2001) asked students to reflect on aspects of their own cultural heritage; stories and myths they have read or heard of from their infancy. The authors claim that this method can help the learners in an EFL classroom grasp a deeper thinking and draw their own conclusions as to that which was taken for granted in their

native culture. Drawing a parallel with that which they come across in the target culture can be helpful. They explain that the use of pictures can lead to profound understanding because the subject matter comes to be relatable. Another example can shed light on how connected students can start feeling due to the use of images: The study of *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad at the third year licence. We suggest the presentation of the controversial comic *Tintin au Congo*, the excerpt of which is below:



Fig. 4.1. Excerpt of *Tintin au Congo*

The above comic belongs to the Primitivism movement presenting the unsophisticated behaviors of primitive communities in contrast of the civilized ones. This comic was specifically ordered to present a positive image of the Belgian population status while living and ruling the newly acquired Congo, a country that was previously the personal property of King Leopold II of Belgium. It is the perfect allegory for *Heart of Darkness* or its visual representation. Congo is the setting for both works and the White man is the main protagonist. A parallel between the two can raise the students' awareness in a tangible manner; students will be brought to 'see' the racism and the aggressive imperialism in practice as described in Conrad's novel.

For Adichie, C. N. (2009) the storytelling in literature impacts our vision, not only of the world but also of our own image as it is projected on us while we read how the author describes our kind. *In Heart of Darkness*, women are viewed as weak and delusional with the European fiancée of Kurtz, or crazy with the description of the witchy Black concubine he has in Congo. These two archetypes are limiting options for a woman reader who can feel denigrated or even insulted. Adichie, C. N. (2009) asserts that we are robbed of our dignity in such defamatory descriptions, hence the infuriated reaction of Achebe, C. (2000) about the animal-like description of Africans by Conrad. As formerly colonized Africans, we see ourselves as helpless, passive shadowy living beings; student 2a declared, "I feel like a monkey"! This makes our need to declare ourselves equal with the rest of humanity a difficult enterprise Adichie, C.N. (2009) adds.

Besides technology use and visual support, our next suggestion is reading aloud or role-playing. Pushing students towards acting is giving them the possibility to have fun while learning, another way to make them feel involved within the story and the characters' persona. Olson, D., (1994: p. 115) declares that if not read aloud the novel is simply transcribed. He explains:

« But problems of interpretation become serious when one is faced with a transcription of what was said, the transcription capturing only the content of the utterance and not its tone.» Olson, D., (1994: p. 115)

Hence, reading aloud or acting out extracts in class or in groups within extracurricular activities seem to be alternatives to consider in order to help the students to 'capture' better the meaning of the work. We assert that all the strategies mentioned in this section are presented to give our EFL students tools to enter the realm of literary interpretation. What follows exposes the methodology we deem crucial for the autonomy of students to study EFL literary texts. This work is specifically dealing with the cultural referents within texts as one of the characteristics of cultural symbols present in a literary with the contextual dimension of this same text (such as the author's biography/ the socioeconomic environment of the release of a literary work etc...). Cultural acquisition can take place in spite of the students' language issues. McCarter & Jakes (2009: 86) detail a listing of language elements to give in literature class during interpretive activities to provide freedom to the EFL students. They state what follows:

To help your students develop their position in a logical manner you can use a range of activities. You could:

- get students started by giving them several sentences which they can use to take a stance, or can adapt to suit their personal opinion;
- give them a list of adjectives to help evaluate an idea, eg, ... *is beneficial/ crucial/ dangerous/ harmful/ important*. Then encourage the development of a reasoned argument by using the questions on page 82. The questions can be generated before the writing takes place and can be used as a template to evaluate and analyse the writing once it has been written or redraft, and number each version of the questions. After the final redraft, students can compare not only the drafts but also the development of their thinking through their questions. You can:
 - i. use any kind of evaluative words, including nouns (advantages/ benefits/ dangers);
 - ii. focus on a grammar feature that highlights differences, such as comparisons, eg, *this argument/ reason is not as strong as/ is weaker/ stronger than ...*;
 - iii. as a pre-writing exercise, give your students a list of sentences or a text containing strong assertions. Ask them to take a very clear stance and refute the ideas in the sentences/ text using a range of devices, eg, *while/ whereas some people ..., it is argued that ..., I think the idea is important/ not important*;
 - iv. give students sentences that express strong opinions and ask them to modulate them using modal verbs, eg, *can, have to, may, must, need* and *should*. Students could also rewrite the sentences using adjectives and nouns, eg, *likely/ likelihood, necessary/ necessity, possible/ possibility* and *probable/ probability*.

Mc Carter & Jakes (2009: 86)

Montgomery et al (1992: 31) argue that in order to avoid misunderstandings due to cultural disinformation, guidelines about the original context of the literary work at stake should be supplied for the students who are of a different cultural background. They say: “Where the social context of the text is very different from the reader’s own, then alongside works of reference and general histories, a graphical timeline may be useful as a means of orientation.” (Montgomery et al, 1992: 31)

Algeria has inherited from its colonizer a tradition in institution management, department division, or teaching principles as well as a continuous inspiration for the academics, the scientific or the arts from expert academic research that is also instigated in the West. Consequently, post-colonial studies for instance, the cross-cultural interdisciplinary practice, are institutionalized and remain undisputed. Chandramohan, B. (2013: 150) gives the following definition to this discipline:

“It draws on different traditional subject areas such as history, politics, and literature with the primary purpose of exploring text and past and contemporary social institutions to consider how those have been affected by the experience of colonialism” Chandramohan, B. (2013: 150)

The definition is clear and reflects well the role of of post-colonial studies which highlight the impact of colonialism on the oppressed populations. However, it is the positioning for such a discipline that we contest. Chandramohan, B. (2013: 151) adds:

... the undergraduate students get to “acquire an in-depth knowledge of societies and cultures of Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America.” Chandramohan, B. (2013: 151)

It is perhaps also necessary to design a department where third world countries examine the colonial and Imperialistic practices of White civilizations from an Afro-centrist point of view in the Imperialism studies division or department. Le Grange L. (2018) advocates the Decolonization, Africanization, indigenization, and internationalization of the educational curriculum. The problem according to her is that African countries have focused too much on nationalism dismissing the need for the population to reestablish itself

both nationally and internationally. She says, “The academic study of curriculum in South Africa, as is the case in many countries, has focused on matters of national interest.” le Grange L. (2018). Even Westerners are questioning the hegemony of the literary canon of Western literature. The universality of texts is brought forward as is the Western Cultural Hegemony concept. Mowitt 1997 in (ed) Kumar, reports that the world hegemony of Western cultural values in Bloom (1988) is a White “entitlement program” withholding the moral compass for the world. In order to decide what steps to follow and which segment to begin with alongside which tool, etc..., teachers need to undertake research. Henceforth, the teachers’ role in shaping the minds of the new generations is crucial and need to be reflected upon. The following is a definition of reflective teaching by Bartlett, L. (1990. pp. 202-214.)

« It is a response to past experience and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience as a basis for evaluation and decision-making, and as a source for planning and action. » Bartlett, L. (1990. pp 202-214.)

The above quote is a confirmation to the results of the teachers’ results whereby they express their desire to reflect more on their teachings through reflective teaching or through research in general. They expressed gratitude and interest in participating in this exploration and that is a good starting point for improvement and growth.

4.3. The Limitation of the Study

Really, some methodological limitations that exist in our real life context can be highly discouraging. Classroom observation for instance is negatively thought of, so much

so that every observation is lived by the observees as intrusive and judgmental (Malek, D. E. Master Thesis University of Algiers, 2015). Hence, we have not been able to use observation in the present investigation. Finally, teachers work in overwhelming conditions and a busy timetable. There is also no dedicated space for academic research, such as library hours for guided research for instance, or research labs or classes where students can try to develop their research skills. Consequently, the data collection process was lengthy and even overwhelming at times.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have presented the interpretation of the results collected during our investigation along with some research guidelines issued from our pedagogical implications. Although TCBK is acquired in the teaching process through activities (Fasla: 2009), a longitudinal experimental investigation could better set its implementation. The objective of our investigation was met, we have highlighted the lack of participation of the students, except for some rare cases; and we definitely encourage more diverse activities in the classroom.

General Conclusion

The present research proposed to highlight the role TCBK plays in literature study for the case of EFL Algerian students at the department of English language and literature. Globalization poses an extension to the context one reads from, as people are more exposed to different cultures and ways of thinking. The dialog inside a foreign language learner and a fortiori, inside a foreign literature reader's head is bound to be a dialog between his / her native culture and the target culture. Today, it becomes impossible to ignore international news or facts, or artistic realizations that are completed around the world. Cross-cultural thinking and communicating are a modern reality that is slowly but surely entering the EFL classroom.

We have established in chapter one that it is necessary today to fight against ethnic, cultural or indigenous labelling that have for long been disseminated by the Western normative dogmas developed by their scholars, as was exposed by Adichie (2009). Therefore, third world countries need to cooperate and 'voice' their indigenized intellectual ideologies and retell their versions of History. We need to encourage the rise of Afrocentrist intellectuals whatever their origin and not repeat any form of exclusion as was perpetuated by the White colonizers. The independence of Algeria is a testimony of vivacious solidarity of all sorts of people who joined forces together with the Algerian martyrs and Moudjahiddines in the name of freedom and justice. Ahmed Zabana, Ali la Pointe, Hassiba Ben Bouali, or Djamila Bouhired just to name these stand in golden letters alongside

international names such as Maurice Audin, Jacques Vergès, Frantz Fanon and others. Noble principles dictating human rights have no origin and the world has a say on every intellectual theory; whoever issues it.

From a didactic point of view, teaching a foreign Literature to local students from distant / foreign lenses is unnatural to learning. If we consider Vygotsky's zone of proximal learning, learning new things is initiated from the learner's familiar environment to a foreign one. We then should be moving from the known to the unknown and allow students to bridge the gap between what is culturally comprehensive and comfortable to the surprising and sometimes challenging cultural norms and ways. In addition, according to Bloom's taxonomy, if learners are equipped with the necessary skills, they can work through biases, identify cultural norms, put them into question, and even cause them to change!

Additionally, the Algerian EFL students need to understand where they stand in cultural, spatial, and geographical distance from the intended readers of any text they are presented with before they can effectively analyze it. Otherwise, there will be misunderstandings and avoidable deviations. Literature does not have to abide by institutionalized Western or local cultural norms of any kind, it could be the bridge between them. For Vygotsky, valuing the native environment in comparison to the target culture allows a smoother transition to approaching the target language in the realm of mutual acceptance.

We have seen that literature study is subject to international norms that remain unquestioned because they are global. The educational institutions wherever they stand do not allow much change as this would cause too many interrogations societies are not ready to address. Cross-cultural literature reading calls for continuous negotiating from the students' native cultural background knowledge to the target language culture present in the text. The setting for such readings has been modified relentlessly through a historically documented evolution of the interpretive practices in EFL. Nonetheless, several elements need to be taken care of in the globalized world we live in today: we have the EFL context, the resisting reader, a revision of the Western canon, and last but not least the establishment of a new era where all the viewpoints are expressed and accepted in equity with the birth of non-Western International Standards.

“Nous, les Arabes, ne sommes pas paresseux. Nous prenons seulement le temps de vivre. Ce qui n'est pas le cas des Occidentaux. Pour eux, le temps, c'est de l'argent. Pour nous, le temps ça n'a pas de prix. Un verre de thé suffit à notre bonheur, alors qu'aucun bonheur ne leur suffit. Toute la différence est là.” Yasmina Khadra, *Ce que le jour doit à la nuit* (2008)

Additionally to the teachers' beliefs on teaching literature, cultural identity issues have been revealed at the phase of the data analysis as well as the place of presenting the students with cultural information that would be useful in their handling of the EFL literary works. Our investigation is a case study of EFL Algerian students at the department of English in the University of Algiers 2. The research design is a mixed method where the first research tool is the questionnaire for both teachers and students. Then there are the interview responses that are theme-coded and grouped for an easy read; these concern a

focus group of 5 students that voluntarily accepted to be interviewed as well as 15 teachers of literature from the department of English language and literature. Finally, there is the reading comprehension activity where students were asked to identify specific referents of the target culture present in an excerpt from *Daddy Long Legs* (1912) by Jean Webster. Through this particular task completion and several additional meta-cognitive questions, we intended to foresee the students' knowledge in target culture and how it appears in any given text of literature and whether students could express their feelings when they had difficulties with this parameter.

Additionally, the point of view of the reader, which is culturally bound, appears to be a sensitive topic as the cultural realm adds questionings and worries the teachers who have never reconsidered that the EFL culture was thought provoking to their students. The results showed that the native culture of both the students and the teachers has been identified as needing tackling.

We have answered our first research question thus we tackle target cultural gap and its outcome on Algerian EFL students' literature study. Firstly, results show the students are aware of their TCBK deficiency as well as how helpful it is for the literature course. The reading comprehension activity unveils the students' weakness in TCBK on three levels. There is the misuse of compensatory strategies, the confusion between literature and culture, and finally the students' issues in research and methodology. Additionally, assessing the students' lack in TCBK directly informs us on their learning habits, which in

turn affect their TCBK acquisition. Similarly, in the questionnaire responses, students declared using media to get informed and to learn on a regular basis.

The students' learning habits are not only disadvantageous for cultural knowledge acquisition, but are coupled with a lack in contact opportunities/ situations with the EFL culture in Algeria. Overall, Algerian EFL students' reading habits are timid and result in a lack in TCBK. Although teachers consider that reading paves the way to cultural acquisition they admit it to be an abandoned practice by most students. Consequently, EFL students wish for more media use and other engaging activities in the literature class to be able to participate. To conclude, we can affirm that this situation directly causes students to lack TCBK and discourages them from pursuing literature study.

To address the silencing of the Algerian EFL students' voices we have asked questions about the students' free will in literature class. The students' free responses to the questionnaire unveil their reluctance to do what was forced upon them. For them 'reading' is an agreeable activity that cannot be pushed. Furthermore, forced topics appear to be more crucially challenging for the students than forced reading tasks; one of the most repeatedly cited area by the students is the book selection alongside topic choice. Surprisingly, during the piloting phase of our investigation 'the Algerian Colonization' was declared a difficult topic for students. We have come to understand that the complex nature of literature conceals the cultural factor necessary to its study. Students are asked to interpret writings

that are works of art, presenting stylistic features as well as highly symbolic references, all to decipher and comment upon in a simultaneous manner.

We have answered our second research question as to teachers' assessment of the cultural gap between Algerian EFL students and the literary texts they study.

Both the teachers' assessment of the students' competencies and the students' own self-evaluation correlate the students' weaknesses in literature study to their ignorance of the target culture. Subsequently is how teachers have underestimated the cultural factor and its impact on their students' aptitudes.

In spite of having different manners to present TCBK while teaching literature, the teachers interviewed consider that TCBK needs to be in the literature class. We understand from the results that the teachers are target culture focused and that the learner's identity is not something they take into consideration. According to Hellal, F. "Literary values are not universal; our students have wrong perspective due to an inadequate sense of history, history of ideas or an author's frame of reference." Hellal, F. (1988: 105). Teachers put the emphasis on poor reading habits and their overuse of technology as two essential causes to their language hindrance opposing it to cultural hindrance. Encouraging their students to practice extensive reading appears to be their main instruction because familiar, something that teacher training can overcome. Actually, literature teachers can help their students with TCBK acquisition for literature reading even though the conditions make the task a difficult one.

TCBK is brought forward as a sufficient addition to ignored or unlearned information about the culture behind the foreign text without necessarily tapping into NCBK. They ask what the use of NCBK is, misunderstanding how to bridge the gap from NCBK to TCBK. This shows they do not include this parameter in the literature study preparation / teaching process, as they do not understand the teaching objectives of NCBK. Results also show that teachers focus on language proficiency opposing it directly to culture. Nonetheless, for Schumann (1978 in Brown 1980) the pidginization of a language is part of the acculturation process necessary for the acceptance and learning of a new language as it allows the learner to validate his / her perception that forms his own reality even if it is biased. We understand that even though the teachers are making efforts to integrate modern means of learning, it seems nevertheless noticeable they wish to contain media use out of their classrooms, particularly at a time when students rely heavily on AI. The results also hint to academic interdisciplinary research as a probable solution to the lack of communication teachers have with their students. Furthermore, questionnaire answers reveal that the teachers who do not view reflective teaching favorably are those who have never been introduced to learning psychology. The first argument against research or reflective teaching is the amount of work teachers have.

Although the teachers need to make students mindful of the different ideologies hidden in the texts, they consider that students must feel safe in terms of the degree of openness in different societies and cultures. Additionally, inquiring about TCBK has led to uncover issues with the teaching of literary skills and the elaboration of the syllabus.

Therefore, once the reading is dealt with in first and second year, literary theory is what students encounter at the level of the third year.

We have answered our third research question about literature interpretation: from Eurocentricism to Afrocentricism.

This question delves deeply into both the students and teachers' cultural identities, an area of focus that does not seem to have been given much importance. The teachers are in fact unaware of their students' culturally biased perceptions.

To begin with, our results show that the student participants are a fully Algerian population without any foreigners. Similarly, the teacher participants are Algerian and 100% of them were students in the Department they are teaching in, i.e. the Department of English Language & Literature of Algiers 2. When questioned about their teaching, some teachers were astonished to consider they had any limited / limiting perceptions themselves. Moreover, the teachers profile their students as digital natives and we can notice that they lack the necessary potential due to their overuse of technology and social media consumption; according to Hellal (1988), this excessive use of technology coupled with their cultural ignorance makes them unable to read, analyze and interpret EFL literature. Consequently, the literature study practice in the EFL literature classroom neither transcends the classic Western paradigm of interpretation nor aligns to it. It simply does not acknowledge the cultural dimension of literature, but rather its "correct" interpretation.

As we mentioned several times in this investigation the intercultural reading process, i.e. in this case Algerian students reading EFL literature, goes through bridging the gap

between NCBK and TCBK. However, the place of African / Algerian culture in the literature class is rarely acknowledged as is unclear the teaching of African Literature, although it is in the literature course syllabus. An interesting data concerning the students is for them to discover they would deal with African literature. Only one first year student indicated in the comment section that Algeria belonged in the African continent.

Eventually, results show that some teachers seem to focus solely on the presentation of the target culture as a teaching tool, misunderstanding the purpose of NCBK addition in any intercultural communication even before it becomes analytical or interpretive. In literature, we need culture-free analytical tools as much as the ability to identify cultural specific concepts. Teaching EFL literature, a cross-cultural communication, is a matter of helping the students to find the balance between universal concepts and their own point of view to reach personal analysis Wierzbicka (1992: p.27).

Students' suggestions portray their awareness about their learning; they know they need to make 'sacrifices' to increase their TCBK. First year students with a lack in TCBK cannot handle literature study without any introduction to literary skills acquisition. Finally, students suggest doing the same cultural link between NCBK and TCBK that is done in civilization class in literature class.

We present here an additional element we did not cover in this investigation, which can shed light on future possible areas to explore for deeper understanding of the TCBK teaching in an EFL context. We did not look into characterization in the excerpt presented to the students in the reading comprehension task. We deliberately decided to focus on the

explicit cultural references in the literary works that would be selected by the students. Further research should address the implicit or hidden references such as the cultural profile of the character in the texts and compare the different strategies needed to identify explicit vs. implicit cultural references. For instance, in the case of *Daddy Long Legs*' main protagonist, Jerusha Abbott, she was an exceptionally lucky orphan to have been sent to college by a generous benefactor. In 1912 America, only rich families could afford to pay an education to their daughters and this took place in expensive residences for girls.

Likewise, our pedagogical implications focus on teaching cultural knowledge, both from the target and native backgrounds. In the light of the aforementioned results, the most significant outcome to note is the certainty that our students are deficient in both TCBK and NCBK. Our focus here is didactic in helping students learn to value their identity while they rediscover the target one.

- Allowing the students to express their feelings about what they are reading, as claimed by reader-response theorists, helps them to enter the field with the acknowledgement of their tastes, their personalities, and their cultural identities.
- Drawing parallels between NCBK and TCBK through historical examples taken from both cultures, stressing on similarities before the existing differences.
- 'Re'storytelling Africa as preconized by Achebe, C (2001). The issue is not about 'others' being different from 'us', it is a matter of perspective and to the students that not one culture is better than the other is (Adichie, C. N., 2009). Many ideas,

artworks, symbols were developed or derived from an African origin, which is rarely avowed.

- Bring media use in the classroom in an assisting manner for students to learn in lively and modern way. Even without this outburst about technology invading our lives, researchers have sought to focus on the use of different original and lively ways to make the learner aware of his learning and in helping him/ her feel included.
- Making use of illustrations or music. We took the example of the comic *Tintin au Congo* that illustrates vividly the harsh, and perhaps cryptic for the students, descriptions in *Heart of Darkness*. A picture is worth a thousand words.
- Besides technology use and visual support, our next suggestion is reading aloud or role-playing. Hence, reading aloud or acting out extracts in class or in groups within extracurricular activities seem to be alternatives to consider in order to help the students to ‘capture’ better the meaning of the work.
- Cultural acquisition can take place in spite of the students’ language issues. Therefore, the cultural teaching can be in the students’ mother tongue or this session can be a privileged conversation session where students will not be evaluated language-wise.
- It is perhaps also time to design a department where third world countries examine the colonial and Imperialistic practices of White civilizations from an Afro-centrist point of view in the ‘Imperialism Studies’ division or department.

Lastly, we end with our guidelines for further research and suggestions for experimentations:

- Interdisciplinarity is our key concept in our research findings. Ethnographic longitudinal research is needed within a laboratory of mixed-members from the both the didactic and the literary fields.

- Research practice ought to be integrated within our teachers and students habitual academic practice / routine. This is lacking in our department and making research mandatory or part of the curriculum could be an incentive for more research investment to both parties.

- Observation, to which students and teachers alike are both reluctant, is also our main limitation. In his Master research paper Malek, M. D. E. (2015) identified the student and teacher averseness to participate in any research making use of observation, despite them recognizing its advantages and informative characteristics.

- We need to consider the interesting case of literature teacher 9 who managed to successfully, not only draw her students towards more reading and participating in class, but also have her students interpret the texts at stake with the required literary tools. A reproduction of her process through several trials for adaptation, modification, or generalization, could serve the rest of the students to study EFL literature effectively.

- Finally, cultural identity and bridging the gap with other foreign cultures need to be addressed in our Faculty of Foreign Languages at the level of all the languages taught, meaning French, German, Spanish and Italian. We cannot take it for granted that our students know foreign culture. We have seen here that this highly sensitive topic is ignored or underestimated in our literature teaching practice. We have established that even the literature teachers ignore the significance for the students of feeling endangered by having one's identity being run down when compared to a foreign culture. For Nabilla. N. V. (2019), EFL learners shift from local to global identities depending on their degree of EFL language proficiency and she brings forward the concept of 'glocal' identity for EFL users depending on their level cultural acceptance.

We wish through this work to challenge our educational institution and to reorient our teaching, and why not perhaps to reinvent new teaching practices towards more understanding of the needs of our students, and particularly their need for recognition and significance as Algerians in these modern times. Similarly to our South African counterpart Le Grange, L. (2018), we call for the indigenization of the Algerian curriculums at all levels of education.

REFERENCES

Adichie, C. N. (2009). *The danger of a single story*.

Aidoo, A. A. (1996). 'Literature, feminism and the African woman today', In Jarrett-Macauley, D. (ed.) *Reconstructing Womanhood, Reconstructing Feminism*, Routledge, London.

Allen, C. (1988). *Louise Rosenblatt and theories of reader-response*. Reader, 20, 32.

Anderson, R. C., & Pearson, P. D. (1984). *A schema-theoretic view of basic processes in reading comprehension*. In P. D. Pearson, R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, & P. Mosenthal (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research* (Vol. 1, pp. 255-291). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Anderson, M. C., & Wilson, J. H. (1986). Automaticity: An emerging paradigm for the study of attention. In R. J. Davidson, G. E. Schwartz, & D. Shapiro (Eds.), *Consciousness and self-regulation: Advances in research and theory* (Vol. 4, pp. 267-295). Plenum Press.

Bacon, K., (2000), *An African Voice: Chinua Achebe, the author of one of the enduring works of modern African literature, sees postcolonial cultures taking shape story by story*, August 2000 ISSUE, The Atlantic,

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2000/08/an-african-voice/306020/>

Bartlett, F. C. (1932). *Remembering: A study in experimental and social psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). *The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), 497-529. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7777651>

Beach, R., & Swiss, T. (2010). *Literary Theory and the English Language Arts*. In D. Lapp, & D. Fisher (Eds.), *The Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts* Erlbaum/Taylor Francis.

Belghoul, H., (2017-2018), *Using Students' Schemata to Get Access to Effective Reading of Literary Texts: The Case of Undergraduate Students at Abd Al Hamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem*, Unpublished PhD. Thesis.

Bell, J., (1988), *Doing your Research Project: A Guide for First Time Researches in Education and Social Science*, OUP, England.

Bennabi, M., (1959), *Le Problème de La Culture*, El Borhane éditions, Algérie.

Bensemmane, M., (2007). “Critical Thinking and Autonomy in EFL Students of Literature”, *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference of E. Lge. Teaching New Directions in Teaching and Learning English for Academic and Professional Purposes*. (Algiers, 10-12 Dec 2005), Thala Editions, El Biar, Algiers.

Bernstein, C. (1995). Provisional institutions: alternative presses and poetic innovation. *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory*, 51(1), 133-146.

Beyer, B.K. (1987). *Practical Strategies for the Teaching of thinking*. Boston MA. Allyn and Bacon. Inc.

Bhabha, H. K., (1994). *The Location of Culture*, Routledge Classics, New York.

Bianchi, C., & Gieri, M. (2009). *New Essays on Umberto Eco*, CUP.

Blaxter, et al, (1996). *How to Research*, Open University Press.

Bleakley, A. (2014). Learning as an aesthetic practice: motivation through beauty in higher education. In *Motivating Students* (pp. 165-172). Routledge.

Bloom, B.S., Engelhart, M. D., Furst, E. J., Hill, W. H., & Krathwohl, D. R. (1956). Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals. Handbook I: Cognitive domain. New York: David McKay Company

Bollas, C. (2002). Ideas in psychoanalysis: Free association. *Cambridge, UK: Cox and Wyman, Ltd.*

Boulbina, S. L., (2018). *Les miroirs vagabonds ou la décolonisation des savoirs (art, littérature, philosophie)*, Les Presses du réel, France.

Brown, H. D. (1980). *Principles of language learning and teaching*, Prentice-Hall: UK.

Brown, J. D. & Rodgers, T. S., (2002). *Doing Second Language Research*, Oxford University Press, USA.

Browne, M. N, & Keeley, S. M., (1994). *Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking*, 8th ed., Pearson, New Jersey, USA.

Burden, P.R., & Byrd, D.M. (1994). *Methods for effective teaching*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Burden, R. L. & Williams, M., (1997). *Psychology for language teachers: A social constructivist approach (Vol. 5)*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press.

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M., Nichols, A., & Stevens, D. (Eds.). (2001). *Developing intercultural competence in practice (Vol. 1)*. Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M., (2003), *Context and Culture in Language Teaching and Learning*, Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M., (2012). Language Awareness and (Critical) Cultural Awareness-Relationships, Comparisons and contrasts. *Language awareness*.

Byram, M. & Wagner, M., Perugini, D. C. (2017). *Teaching intercultural competence across the age range: From theory to practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M., Holmes, P., & Savvides, N. (2013). Intercultural communicative competence in foreign language education: Questions of theory, practice and research. *The Language Learning Journal*.

Cabré, M. T. (1999). *Terminology: Theory, methods, and applications* (Vol. 1). John Benjamins Publishing.

Camus, A. (1942). *L'Etranger*, Gallimard.

Carter, R., & Long, M. N. (1990). Testing literature in EFL classes: Tradition and innovation. *ELT Journal*, 44(3), 215-221.

Carter, R. & McCarthy, M. (1995). *Discourse and Creativity: Bridging the Gap between Language and Literature*, In Cook, G. & Seidlhofer, B., *Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics*, Oxford University Press.

Chandramohan, B. (2013). Introducing an interdisciplinary course. In *Inspiring Students* (pp. 149-157). Routledge.

Collini, S. (1992). *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Couldry, N. (2000). *Inside Culture: Re-imagining the Method of Cultural Studies*. Sage.

Culler, J. D. (Ed.). (2003). *Deconstruction: Critical concepts in literary and cultural studies* (Vol. 4). Routledge.

Daoud, K. (2014). *Mersault, Contre-enquête*, Actes Sud.

Davcheva, L. & Tarasheva, E. (2001). 'Up the Hills of Identity', In Byram, M., Nichols, A. & Stevens, D. (eds.), *Developing Intercultural Competence in Practice*, Multilingual Matters LTD, UK

Dawadi, S. (2020). Thematic analysis approach: A Step-by-Step Guide for ELT Research Practitioners. *Journal of NELTA*, 25(1-2), 62-71.

Del Soldato, T. & Isroff, K. (2014). Students' motivation in Higher Education Contexts. In *Motivating students* (pp. 73-82). Routledge.

Derrida, J. (1992). *Acts of Literature*, Routledge, UK.

De Saussure, F. (1916). *Cours de Linguistique Générale*, Payot, Paris.

Echevarria et al, (2000) citing Gall 1984, Watson & Young 1986,

Fallows, S. J., & Ahmet, K. (1999). *Inspiring students: Case studies in motivating the learner*. Psychology Press.

Fanon, F. (1952). *Peau Noire Masques Blancs*, Editions du Seuil.

Fanon, F. (1961). *Les Damnés de La Terre*, éditions Maspero, Algeria.

Fanon, F. (1964). *Pour la Révolution Africaine / Toward the African Revolution: Political essays*, translated from French by Chevalier, H., Grove Press.

Fasla, M. (2009). *Socio-cultural background in reading EFL literature* (Magister dissertation, Tlemcen, University Abou Bekr Belkaïd. Faculty of Arts, Social and Human Sciences).

Fetterley, J. (1978). *The Resisting Reader, A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*, Indiana University Press, USA.

Flynn, E. A., & Schweickart, P. P. (1986). *Gender and reading: Essays on readers, texts, and contexts.*

Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of Freedom, Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. USA.

Glas, K. (2013). *Teaching English in Chile: A Study of Teacher Perceptions of Their Professional Identity, Student Motivation and Pertinent Learning Contents*, Jena, University Dissertation, 2012, Peter Lang Edition.

Graff, G. (1997). *Organizing the Conflicts in the Curriculum*, In Slevin, J. F. & Young, A. (eds.), *Critical Theory and the Teaching of Literature*, National Council of Teachers of English, University of Chicago, USA.

Hellal, F. (1988). “Teaching a Foreign Literature in Algeria: The Case of British and American Literatures” in *Langues et Littératures*, numéro spécial.

Hergé, (1947). *Tintin au Congo*, Tournai-Paris, Casterman.

Hilbrink, D. A. (2014). *The Effect of an Instructional Intervention Grounded in the Four Resources Model on Social Studies Content Knowledge*. Cardinal Stritch University.

Hinkel, E. (Ed.). (1999). *Culture in second language teaching and learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Hyland, K. (2002). *Teaching and Researching Writing*, Pearson Education Limited, UK.

Jagodzinski, J. (2002). *Pedagogical Desire: Authority, Seduction, Transference, and the Question of Ethics*, USA.

Johnson-Roullier, C. E. (2000). *Reading on the Edge: Exiles, Modernities, and Cultural Transformation in Proust, Joyce, and Baldwin*. SUNY Press.

Joyce, J. (1922). *Ulysses*, OUP.

Kaced, A. (2015). *Self and Other in the Works of African American Novelists during the Black Renaissance and Algerian Novelists during the Algerian War of Independence*, (Doctoral dissertation, Algiers, University Abou El Kassem Saad Allah University, Algiers II, Faculty of Letters and Languages).

Kachru, B. B. (1995). *Transcultural creativity in world Englishes and literary canons*. In Cook, G. & Seidlhofer, B. (Eds.), *Principle and practice in applied linguistics: Studies in honor of H. G. Widdowson* (pp. 271–287). Oxford: Oxford University Press

Karolides, N. J. (1999). *Reader response in secondary and college classrooms*. Routledge.

Kermezli, A. (2018). *Post-Colonial Discourse As Mediation of the Western Ideological References. Two Literary Works as a Case Study* (Doctoral dissertation, Algiers, University Abou El Kassem Saad Allah University, Algiers II, Faculty of Letters and Languages).

Klarer, M. (1999). *An Introduction to Literary Studies*, Routledge, UK.

Khadra, Y. (2008). *Ce que le jour doit à la nuit*. Paris: Julliard.

Kramersch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Kramersch, C. (1998). *Language and Culture*. Oxford University Press.

Krathwohl, D., Bloom, B., Masia, B. (1964). Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals. New York, NY: Longman, Inc. and <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html>

Lado, R. (1964). *Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach*, McGraw-Hill. Inc. USA.

Lahrech, L. (2018). *Trauma Narrative and Stylistic study in Don Dellilo's Falling man and Leila Aboulela's Minaret*, (Doctoral dissertation, Tlemcen, University Abou Bekr Belkaïd, Faculty of Letters and Languages).

Lazarus, F. M. (1979). "Community Expectations and the Foreign Language Program." *The Modern Language Journal*, 63: 182–187. Doc: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.1979.tb02441.x

Le Grange, L. (2018). Decolonising, Africanising, Indigenising, and Internationalising curriculum studies: Opportunities to (re)imagine the field. *Journal of Education (University of KwaZulu-Natal)*, (74), 4-18. <https://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2520-9868/i74a01>

Lyons, J. (1996). *Language and Linguistics*, CUP.

Mackey, M. (1993). "The Many Faces of Resistant Reading." *The English Journal*, 82(5), 69-74.

Malek, M. D. E. (2015). *Exploring Algerian University Teachers' Attitudes towards Classroom Observation: The Case of EFL Teachers of the English Department of the University of Algiers 2*, Unpublished Master Thesis in Applied Linguistics and TEFL, Algiers, University Abou El Kassem Saad Allah University, Algiers II, Faculty of Letters and Languages)

Maley, A. (1998). *Literature Teaching: A Scientific Approach*, McGraw-Hill. Inc. USA.

Mannoni, O. (1950). *Psychologie de la colonisation*. Paris, Éditions Universitaires.

Marx, E. (2004). *The Idea of a Colony: Cross-Culturalism in Modern Poetry*, University of Toronto Press, Canada.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). "A Theory of Human Motivation." *Psychological Review* 50.4: 370-396. <http://psycnet.apa.org/record/1943-03751-001>

Mbom, C. (2004). “Frantz Fanon”, In Amoia, A., & Knapp, B. L. (Eds.), *Multicultural writers since 1945: an A-to-Z guide*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

McCarter, S. and Jakes, P. (2009). *Uncovering EAP: How to Teach Academic Writing and Reading*, (ed.) Underhill. A.

Mehisto, P., Marsh, D., & Frigols, M. J. (2008). *Uncovering CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning in Bilingual and Multilingual Education*. Oxford: Macmillan Education.

Messekher, H. (2011). *Voices of Pedagogy, Positionality, and Power, a Narrative Inquiry of Identity and Ideology (Re) Construction of Algerian Graduate Students at American Universities*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA.

Milton, J. (1667). *Paradise Lost*, London.

Montgomery et al. (1992). *Ways of Reading: Advanced Reading Skills for Students of English Literature*, Routledge, UK.

Moretti, F. (2013). *Distant Reading*, Verso New Left Books, London, UK.

Mortimer, J. (2014). “Motivating Student Learning Through Facilitating Independence: Self and Peer Assessment of Reflective Practice-an Action Research Project” in *Motivating Students* (pp. 173-188). Routledge.

Mowitt, J. (1997). “Survey and Discipline: Literary Pedagogy in the Context of Cultural Studies”, In Kumar, A. (ed.), *Class Issues: Pedagogy, Cultural Studies, and the Public Sphere*, New York University Press.

Muted group theory excerpts. (n.d.) >*The Free Library*. (2014). Retrieved Jan 10 2023 from <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Muted+group+theory+excerpts.-a0141493522>

Nabilla, N. V. (2019). *Global, local, or glocal identity of EFL learners as ELF users* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim).

Nnadi, J. (2004). *Chinua Achebe*, In Amoia, A., & Knapp, B. L. (Eds.), *Multicultural writers since 1945: an A-to-Z guide*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

Olson, D. R. (1994), *The World on Paper: the conceptual and cognitive implications of writing and reading*, CUP, USA.

Parisi, D. (2012). *Schools and the new ecology of the human mind*. In Della Sala, S. & Anderson, M. (Eds.). *Neuroscience in Education: the good, the bad and the ugly*. Oxford University Press.

Patrikis, P. C. (ed.) (2003). *Reading between the lines: perspectives on foreign language literacy*, Yale University, USA.

Díaz-Pérez, F. J. (2013). Introduction to Global Issues in the Teaching of Language, Literature and Linguistics. Díaz-Pérez, FJ, Belén Díez-Bedmar, M., García-Ramírez, P. & Rascón-Moreno, D. (Eds.), *Global Issues in the Teaching of Language, Literature and Linguistics*, 7-14.

Porto, M., & Byram, M. (2017). *New perspectives on intercultural language research and teaching: Exploring learners' understandings of texts from other cultures*. Routledge.

Reader, J. (1998). *Africa: A biography of the continent*. Penguin UK.

Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism*. Vintage.

Sapkowski, A. (1990). *The Witcher*, Reporter, Poland.

Semara, S. & Slamani, D., (2014), *Exploring the Use of Questions as an Instructional Tool in the EFL Classroom*, Unpublished Master Thesis in Applied Linguistics and TEFL,

Algiers, University Abou El Kassem Saad Allah University, Algiers II, Faculty of Letters and Languages).

Slevin, J. F. & Young (eds.), (1996), *Critical Theory and the Teaching of Literature*,

Schogt, H. G. (1988), *Linguistics, Literary Analysis and Literary Translation*, University of Toronto Press, Canada.

Topuzova, K. (2001). 'British and Bulgarian Christmas Cards: A Research Project for Students', In Byram, M., Nichols, A. & Stevens, D., (Eds.), *Developing Intercultural Competence in Practice*, Multilingual Matters LTD, UK.

Trifonas, P.P. & Peters, M.A. (eds.) (2003). *Derrida, Deconstruction, and Education: Ethics of Pedagogy and Research*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Vygotsky, L. S., & Cole, M. (1978). *Mind in Society: Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard university press.

Wallace, C. (2003). *Critical reading in language education*. Palgrave-Macmillan.

Wareing, S. (2009). Understanding "How Students Learn, Both Generally and in the Subject". In Chandramohan, B. & Fallows, S., *Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (pp. 58-65), Routledge.

Webster, J. (1912). *Daddy-Long-Legs*, Penguin Books, USA.

Widdowson, H. G. (1970). *An Applied Linguistic Approach to Discourse Analysis*.

Widdowson, H.G. (1975). *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature*, Longman.

Wierzbicka, A. (1992), *Semantics, Culture, and Cognition: Universal Human Concepts in Culture-Specific Configurations*, Oxford University Press, USA.

Yamada, M. (2015). *The role of English teaching in modern Japan: Diversity and multiculturalism through English language education in a globalized era.* London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Yapaar, S. in Abdul Manan, S. & Sinha, L. (eds.), (2008), *Another Place, Another Form: Hang Tuah in the Netherlands of the Nineteenth Century,* in *Exploring Space: Trends in Literature, Linguistics and Translation,* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, UK.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire to the students' (version of the piloting session)

The presentation of the questionnaire and our research topic was done orally here as this was a pilot.

Section I: Literature class. Circle the correct answer:

1) To attend literature class:

I read the literature works of the program in advance of the literature class	yes	no
I research information about the authors I study in class	yes	no
I do not read outside the class, literature is not my favorite module	yes	no

2) Teachers in the literature class:

My implication in and out of class both depend on the teacher's personality and ability to encourage me	yes	no
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----	----

The choice of the text is the determinant factor for increasing efforts to understand the literary work at the program	yes	no
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----	----

I need specific and step by step guidelines by the teacher to well interpret the literature work	yes	no
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----	----

The teacher must provide us with adequate information that can be reused at the exam	yes	no
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----	----

3) Literature class activities:

Role plays would increase our motivation	yes	no
------------------------------------------	-----	----

Reading aloud in class is an interesting and challenging activity	yes	no
-------------------------------------------------------------------	-----	----

Class presentations would be more motivating to study	yes	no
-------------------------------------------------------	-----	----

Media use in class as well as for homework assignments is a bonus	yes	no
-------------------------------------------------------------------	-----	----

Section II: Literature Examination. Circle the correct answer:

1) Direct note taking use and literature exam:

I use the teacher's info because I lack time yes no

I use the teacher's info because I ignore the method of analysis yes no

I use the teacher's info because I am not interested and literature is a mandatory class yes no

I use the teacher's info because that is what the teacher wants me to do yes no

2) Indirect note taking use in the literature exam:

I pick literary devices specific to the text studied in class yes no

I focus on the themes and / or sub-themes built into the text yes no

I pay attention to the teacher's explanation of the text and reuse it yes no

Section III: In the English department you have three main groups of literatures to study all along your curriculum: English literature, American literature, and African literature.

1) Which literature do you have a preference for? Please explain in a few words:

.....
.....

2) Which literature do you feel closest to? Please explain:

.....
.....

3) Do you consider any of the three groups of literatures to be in opposition or contradictory to your own culture or belief system causing you to feel uncomfortable or even irritated? Please explain:

.....
.....

Thank you for your cooperation Ms. Fasla-Lakrouf. M.
The researcher.

6) What do you rely on for target cultural acquisition? Teachers' content? Social media? TV? Please explain:

.....
.....

7) Because Algeria is a post-colonized country, is the topic of war of liberation, colonialism, or slavery in literature something you gladly participate in? Or would you rather deal with topics that are closer to your age and concerns in this millennial era?

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

Section II: Reading Practices

8) When you think of the activity of 'reading' what words come to your mind?

Reading Reading
Reading Reading
Reading Reading
Reading Reading
Reading Reading

9) How would you describe your reading profile? Circle your profile:

a) I never read as I wasn't much introduced to literature in school	b) I have read novels occasionally for homework and the like	c)I was often curious to read and read books during vacations for example	d)I like reading, I recognize its value in my studies, I do a lot of research	e)I love reading I am what we call a 'bookworm' I read for pleasure and for studying
---------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Please comment:

.....
.....

10) What motivates you to read?

	Yes	No
Topic choice, identification with characters; if I like the topic and the main characters are close to who I am I will read the novel and not because it is a class requirement.		
Good marks; doing the homework and participating in class is helpful in more than one way.		
The plot or the intrigue, I really like stories and I want to know how they end.		
If there is a movie version or an audio book of the work we are studying in class; if I am already 'hooked' I will read the book as it takes longer to finish and I will have more details and a deeper explanation of events, etc...		

Other.....
.....
.....

Section III: Literature Study

11) Did you expect to study literature in this 'licence' program? Yes No

12) If not, what kind of modules were you expecting?

.....

13) Concerning the three literatures, African, American, and English literature; which one was a surprise to you?

Please explain:

14) Which of the three literatures above was the easiest to study and why?

.....

.....

15) Which one was the most interesting and what was interesting about it?

.....

.....

16) While studying literature which means were most helpful to you?

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	agree	Strongly agree
Reading the novel at the program					
Teacher explanation & monitoring					
Summaries of the novel & critics' analyses found online					
Research in History/ civilization books					
Background information about the author					
Native University students' online essays					
Small group work					
Other.....					

17) What are your strengths and weaknesses in studying Literature?

	strength	Weakness
Analyzing texts through literary devices or stylistic features: metaphors, diction and so on		
Summarizing the plot		
Paraphrasing ideas from a text		
Analyzing texts through character description		
Relating information from the text to real historical / cultural or contextual		
Drawing inferences		
Handling different sources of information / data		
Referencing from within a text		
Reading a literary text, identifying genre, plot structure, themes, etc...		

18) Your test mark depends on: Circle ONE answer only.

- a) The test format; the essay for example is more difficult than direct questions or a text analysis. This will influence my test scores.
- b) The teacher's correcting style is what will mostly influence my test mark.
- c) The topic choice is relatively important; if the topic is one I have well understood or if the topic is one I have preferred I will perform better in the test.
- d) Classroom material (themes or techniques taught in class) and activities being repeated in the test allows a better performance and brings good results.
- e) The test format.
- f) The teacher's correcting style.
- g) The topic choice.
- h) Classroom material: themes or techniques taught in class.

Please comment:

.....

.....

.....

Section IV: Media and Literature reading

19) Would you like to see movie adaptations of the novels or plays you study in class?

yes

no

20) If yes, how would it help you?

.....

.....

21) Consider the following table: Circle the answer or answers that suit you.

a) I like to watch movies adapted from books in general.	b) I watch biopics, or documentaries about authors' lives for class preparation.	c) I watch documentaries about ancient periods, countries or societies described in the novels to get into the mood of the novel we are studying.	d) I watch videos about symbols, religious doctrines, or mythological creatures to understand cultural references in the novel.
----------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Please comment

.....

.....

22) Literature class activities: Circle ONE answer only.

Role playing the dialogues is fun and motivating	Reading aloud the extracts with the correct intonation is a good practice	Class presentations are challenging and force us to study in depth the novel	Media use makes literature fun and lively we are in the 21 st century!
--------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Please comment

.....

.....

Section V: Reading Comprehension Task

Read the following extract and answer the comprehension questions:

Dear Daddy-Long Legs,

10th October

Did you ever hear of Michael Angelo?

He was a famous artist who lived in Italy in the middle ages. Everybody in English Literature seemed to know about him, and the whole class laughed because I thought he was an archangel. He sounds like an archangel, doesn't he? The trouble with college is that you are expected to know such a lot of things you've never learned. It's very embarrassing at times. But now, when the girls talk about things that I never heard of, I just keep still and look them up in the encyclopedia.

I made an awful mistake the first day. Somebody mentioned Maurice Maeterlinck, and I asked if she was a freshman. That joke has gone all over college. But anyway, I'm just as bright in class as any of the others -- and brighter than some of them!

From Daddy Long Legs (1912) by Jean Webster

1) Identify elements in the text that seem characteristic of cultural references to you:

.....

2) How do these elements reflect a foreign culture?

.....

3) Do you know any of these elements? Yes No

4) Do you sometimes feel the frustration the narrator seems to be going through?

.....
.....

5) Is there anything you would like to add?

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

Please write your e-mail address if you would like the results of this study to be sent to you:

.....

Thank you very much.

The researcher

Ms. M. Fasla-Lakrouf

Appendix C: Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to kindly ask you to help me by completing the following questionnaire, which is part of my doctoral research. Teaching Literature is a challenging venture nowadays and this is particularly true in our difficult conditions. Being in a *TEFL environment, I could not help but noticing through my own experience both as a student and later as a teacher, that issues in a foreign language meant issues in a foreign culture, and more so in the Literature class. Hence, my interest in pursuing this research is to identify difficulties students may encounter in your Literature course due to a gap in culture acquisition. Of course, my interpretation is exclusively from a didactical perspective and I am counting on your participation in this study as only this will guarantee the success of my investigation. Also, I can assure you that the opinions and experiences that you will share with me will remain anonymous. My only objective in this inquiry is to help our students succeed and allow us teachers to thrive.

Thank you

Meriem Fasla Lakrouf

*TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Section I: Please answer the following questions for your profile recognition.

1) What age group do you belong to?

20-30 years old

30-40 years old

40-50 years old

50 and +

2) Sex F M

Section II: Teachers' Cultural Context of Training

3) Were you a student in this department?

100% teachers were students in the Department they are teaching in, i.e. the Department of English Language & Literature of Algiers.

4) Have you been enrolled in a University abroad for a post-graduate degree?

yes

no

5) If yes, please state where and when:

University of yearDuring

University of yearDuring

University of yearDuring

6) How long have you been teaching literature?

.....

7) To what year / years are you currently teaching literature?

1st year

2nd year

3rd year

8) In the past did you teach other classes?

1st year

2nd year

3rd year

Section II: teaching and pedagogy; from theory to practice.

k) Other, please explain:

.....

15) How would you evaluate your students' literary competence?

	Very well	average	Not at all
They can read the text, understand the plot, describe characters, and extract the message.			
They can analyze text structure, assess literary devices, and explore characterization deeply.			
They can identify cultural, religious, or mythological references.			
They can relate the text to other texts with similar themes, style, context, or being from the same author: Intertextual references in the text.			
They can relate all the above with hidden meanings and themes they would have inferred.			
They can connect the themes or issues of the text with the context of issue of the work or the author's origin, life or career path for instance.			
They can explore the meanings of a work from various perspectives, the literary movement it belongs to, the author's intended message, different theories of literature, or even challenge the critics' analyses.			

Section III: Teaching methods.

16) What do you take into consideration when choosing the works to study in your class?

Please circle ONE answer:

- a) Topics of interest to the students

22) Do you view favorably the use of media, reading aloud sessions, or even role plays to liven the lessons and increase your students' motivation?

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

23) Is there anything you would like to add?

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

Thank you very much.

The researcher

Ms. M. Fasla-Lakrouf

Please write your e-mail address if you would like to follow up on an interview to allow me to ask you further questions and gain a deeper insight on your teaching experience.

Appendix D:

Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Condensed Version in Appendix

APPENDIX

201

Condensed Version of the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives
Cognitive Domain

KNOWLEDGE

1.00 KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge, as defined here, involves the recall of specifics and universals, the recall of methods and processes, or the recall of a pattern, structure, or setting. For measurement purposes, the recall situation involves little more than bringing to mind the appropriate material. Although some alteration of the material may be required, this is a relatively minor part of the task. The knowledge objectives emphasize most the psychological processes of remembering. The process of relating is also involved in that a knowledge test situation requires the organization and reorganization of a problem such that it will furnish the appropriate signals and cues for the information and knowledge the individual possesses. To use an analogy, if one thinks of the mind as a file, the problem in a knowledge test situation is that of finding in the problem or task the appropriate signals, cues, and clues which will most effectively bring out whatever knowledge is filed or stored.

1.10 KNOWLEDGE OF SPECIFICS

The recall of specific and isolable bits of information. The emphasis is on symbols with concrete referents. This material, which is at a very low level of abstraction, may be thought of as the elements from which more complex and abstract forms of knowledge are built.

1.11 KNOWLEDGE OF TERMINOLOGY

Knowledge of the referents for specific symbols (verbal and non-verbal). This may include knowledge of the most generally accepted symbol referent, knowledge of the variety of symbols which may be used for a single referent, or knowledge of the referent most appropriate to a given use of a symbol.

*To define technical terms by giving their attributes, properties, or relations.

*Familiarity with a large number of words in their common range of meanings.

1.12 KNOWLEDGE OF SPECIFIC FACTS

Knowledge of dates, events, persons, places etc. This may include very precise and specific information such as the **specific date or exact** magnitude of a phenomenon. It may also include approximate or relative information such as an...

*illustrative educational objectives selected from the literature.

approximate time period or the general order of magnitude of a phenomenon.

*The recall of major facts about particular cultures.

*The possession of a minimum knowledge about the organisms studied in the laboratory.

1.20 KNOWLEDGE OF WAYS AND MEANS OF DEALING WITH SPECIFICS

Knowledge of the ways of organizing, studying, judging, and criticizing. This includes the methods of inquiry, the chronological sequences, and the standards of judgment within a field as well as the patterns of organization through which the areas of the fields themselves are determined and internally organized. This knowledge is at an intermediate level of abstraction between specific knowledge on the one hand and knowledge of universals on the other. It does not so much demand the activity of the student in using the materials as it does a more passive awareness of their nature.

1.21 KNOWLEDGE OF CONVENTIONS

Knowledge of characteristic ways of treating and presenting ideas and phenomena. For purposes of communication and consistency, workers in a field employ usages, styles, practices, and forms which best suit their purposes and/or which appear to suit best the phenomena with which they deal. It should be recognized that although these forms and conventions are likely to be set up on arbitrary, accidental, or authoritative bases, they are retained because of the general agreement or concurrence of individuals concerned with the subject, phenomena, or problem.

*Familiarity with the forms and conventions of the major types of works, e.g., verse, plays, scientific papers, etc.

*To make pupils conscious of correct form and usage in speech and writing.

1.22 KNOWLEDGE OF TRENDS AND SEQUENCES

Knowledge of the processes, directions, and movements of phenomena with respect to time.

*Understanding of the continuity and development of American culture as exemplified in American life.

*Knowledge of the basic trends underlying the development of public assistance programs.

1.23 KNOWLEDGE OF CLASSIFICATIONS AND CATEGORIES

Knowledge of the classes, sets, divisions, and arrangements which are regarded as fundamental for a given subject field, purpose, argument, or problem.

*To recognize the area encompassed by various kinds of problems or materials.

*Becoming familiar with a range of types of literature.

1.24 KNOWLEDGE OF CRITERIA

Knowledge of the criteria by which facts, principles, opinions, and conduct are tested or judged.

*Familiarity with criteria for judgment appropriate to the type of work and the purpose for which it is read.

*Knowledge of criteria for the evaluation of recreational activities.

1.25 KNOWLEDGE OF METHODOLOGY

Knowledge of the methods of inquiry, techniques, and procedures employed in a particular subject field as well as those employed in investigating particular problems and phenomena. The emphasis here is on the individual's knowledge of the method rather than his ability to use the method.

*Knowledge of scientific methods for evaluating health concepts.

*The student shall know the methods of attack relevant to the kinds of problems of concern to the social sciences.

1.30 KNOWLEDGE OF THE UNIVERSALS AND ABSTRACTIONS IN A FIELD

Knowledge of the major schemes and patterns by which phenomena and ideas are organized. These are the large structures, theories, and generalizations which dominate a subject field or which are quite generally used in studying phenomena or solving problems. These are at the highest levels of abstraction and complexity.

1.31 KNOWLEDGE OF PRINCIPLES AND GENERALIZATIONS

Knowledge of particular abstractions which summarize observations of phenomena. These are the abstractions which are of value in explaining, describing, predicting, or in determining the most appropriate and relevant action or direction to be taken.

*Knowledge of the important principles by which our experience with biological phenomena is summarized.

*The recall of major generalizations about particular cultures.

1.32 KNOWLEDGE OF THEORIES AND STRUCTURES

Knowledge of the body of principles and generalizations together with their interrelations which present a clear, rounded, and systematic view of a complex phenomenon, problem, or field. These are the most abstract formulations, and they can be used to show the interrelation and organization of a great range of specifics.

*The recall of major theories about particular cultures.

*Knowledge of a relatively complete formulation of the theory of evolution.

INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES AND SKILLS

Abilities and skills refer to organized modes of operation and generalized techniques for dealing with materials and problems. The materials and problems may be of such a nature that little or no specialized and technical information is required. Such information as is required can be assumed to be part of the individual's general fund of knowledge. Other problems may require specialized and technical information at a rather high level such that specific knowledge and skill in dealing with the problem and the materials are required. The abilities and skills objectives emphasize the mental processes of organizing and reorganizing material to achieve a particular purpose. The materials may be given or remembered.

2.00 COMPREHENSION

This represents the lowest level of understanding. It refers to a type of understanding or apprehension such that the individual knows what is being communicated and can make use of the material or idea being communicated without necessarily relating it to other material or seeing its fullest implications.

2.10 TRANSLATION

Comprehension as evidenced by the care and accuracy with which the communication is paraphrased or rendered from one language or form of communication to another. Translation is judged on the basis of faithfulness and accuracy, that is, on the extent to which the material in the original communication is preserved although the form of the communication has been altered.

*The ability to understand non-literal statements (metaphor, symbolism, irony, exaggeration).

*Skill in translating mathematical verbal material into symbolic statements and vice versa.

2.20 INTERPRETATION

The explanation or summarization of a communication. Where-as translation involves an objective part-for-part rendering of a communication, interpretation involves a reordering, re-arrangement, or a new view of the material.

*The ability to grasp the thought of the work as a whole at any desired level of generality.

*The ability to interpret various types of social data.

2.30 EXTRAPOLATION

The extension of trends or tendencies beyond the given data to determine implications, consequences, corollaries, effects, etc., which are in accordance with the conditions described in the original communication.

*The ability to deal with the conclusions of a work in terms of the immediate inference made from the explicit statements.

*Skill in predicting continuation of trends.

3.00 APPLICATION

The use of abstractions in particular and concrete situations. The abstractions may be in the form of general ideas, rules of procedures, or generalized methods. The abstractions may also be technical principles, ideas, and theories which must be remembered and applied.

*Application to the phenomena discussed in one paper of the scientific terms or concepts used in other papers.

*The ability to predict the probable effect of a change in a factor on a biological situation previously at equilibrium.

4.00 ANALYSIS

The breakdown of a communication into its constituent elements or parts such that the relative hierarchy of ideas is made clear and/or the relations between the ideas expressed are made explicit. Such analyses are intended to clarify the communication, to indicate how the communication is organized, and the way in which it manages to convey its effects, as well as its basis and arrangement.

4.10 ANALYSIS OF ELEMENTS

Identification of the elements included in a communication.

*The ability to recognize unrelated assumptions.

*Skill in distinguishing facts from hypotheses.

4.30 ANALYSES OF RELATIONSHIPS

The connections and interactions between elements and parts of a communication.

- *Ability to check the consistency of hypotheses with given information and assumptions.
- *Skill in comprehending the interrelationships among the ideas in a passage.

4.30 ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The organization, systematic arrangement, and structure which hold the communication together. This includes the "explicit" as well as "implicit" structure. It includes the bases, necessary arrangement, and the mechanics which make the communication a unit.

- *The ability to recognize form and pattern in literary or artistic works as a means of understanding their meaning.
- *Ability to recognize the general techniques used in persuasive materials, such as advertising, propaganda, etc.

5.00 SYNTHESIS

The putting together of elements and parts so as to form a whole. This involves the process of working with pieces, parts, elements, etc., and arranging and combining them in such a way as to constitute a pattern or structure not clearly there before.

5.10 PRODUCTION OF A UNIQUE COMMUNICATION

The development of a communication in which the writer or speaker attempts to convey ideas, feelings, and/or experiences to others.

- *Skill in writing, using an excellent organization of ideas and statements.
- *Ability to tell a personal experience effectively.

5.20 PRODUCTION OF A PLAN OR PROPOSED SET OF OPERATIONS

The development of a plan of work or the proposal of a plan of operations. The plan should satisfy requirements of the task which may be given to the student or which he may develop for himself.

- *Ability to propose ways of testing hypotheses.
- *Ability to plan a unit of instruction for a particular teaching situation.

5.30 DERIVATION OF A SET OF ABSTRACT RELATIONS

The development of a set of abstract relations either to classify or explain particular data or phenomena, or the deduction of propositions and relations from a set of basic propositions or symbolic representations.

- *Ability to formulate appropriate hypotheses based upon an analysis of factors involved, and to modify such hypotheses in the light of new factors and considerations.
- *Ability to make mathematical discoveries and generalizations.

6.00 EVALUATION

Judgments about the value of material and methods for given purposes. Quantitative and qualitative judgments about the extent to which material and methods satisfy criteria. Use of a standard of appraisal. The criteria may be those determined by the student or those which are given to him.

6.10 JUDGMENTS IN TERMS OF INTERNAL EVIDENCE

Evaluation of the accuracy of a communication from such evidence as logical accuracy, consistency, and other internal criteria.

- *Judging by internal standards, the ability to assess general probability of accuracy in reporting facts from the care given to exactness of statement, documentation, proof, etc.
- *The ability to indicate logical fallacies in arguments.

6.20 JUDGMENTS IN TERMS OF EXTERNAL CRITERIA

Evaluation of material with reference to selected or remembered criteria.

- *The comparison of major theories, generalizations, and facts about particular cultures.
- *Judging by external standards, the ability to compare a work with the highest known standards in its field--especially with other works of recognized excellence.

Appendix E: Taxonomy of the Affective Domain

II A condensed version of the affective domain of the taxonomy of educational objectives

1. Receiving (attending)
2. Awareness
3. Willingness to receive
4. Controlled or selected attention
5. Responding
6. Acquiescence in responding
7. Willingness to respond
8. Satisfaction in response
9. Valuing
10. Acceptance of a value
11. Preference for a value
12. Commitment
13. Organization
14. Conceptualization of a value
15. Organization of a value system
16. Characterization by a value or value complex
17. Generalized set
18. Characterization: internalized code of behavior

Appendix F: Interview Transcripts of the Students

Interview with student 1

The researcher: Go ahead.

Student 1: I would love to know about African, American African literature.

The researcher: Ah, American African! Do you mean African American?

Student 1: What is it?

The researcher: We have African American literature, which is included in American literature. Do you mean South African or Nigerian literature, literature from the African continent?

Student 1: Yes, oh, that's interesting.

The researcher: Why are you interested in the African American literature?

Student 1: Well, I would love to know every literature written in English.

The researcher: Do you draw parallels between the African American cause and maybe our Algerian cause? Slavery and colonialism?

Student 1: Yeah, maybe. I would love to know about it. We dealt with slavery but it's always related to the English civilization

The researcher: Not the American? With the cotton plantations?

Student 1: Yes, we do have it.

The researcher: You mean if you studied these in literature, it would be interesting?

Student 1: Yeah.

The researcher: Can you think of any novel in particular, or movie that deals with these themes?

Student 1: No, not really. You just mentioned that we have English, American and African, and I didn't know. I am surprised. We have it in the syllabus, but the teacher just said we are going to deal with English and American, she doesn't speak about the African one.

The researcher: In terms of culture acquisition, do you feel that dealing with Algerian culture and then moving to English culture, do you think that would be interesting, or do you prefer to go directly to the English culture?

Student 1: This seems interesting really ... comparisons finding similarities, I would like to know about these.

The researcher: What are the challenges when you're studying literature, do you understand well the culture?

Student 1: The teacher told us "I'm not going to give you the historical context you're gonna look for it". So we really need that extra work. We need the historical context and stuff but the teacher just gave us points in the movement itself not about like the historical background and stuff ... I feel that we really need to check everything even the history...

The researcher: Did you ever prepare this cultural information?

Student 1: I actually did it this semester. I had no idea in the first semester on how to deal with literature. I know what literature is, but I had no idea on how to deal with the module, or how to revise it and stuff. But now, I really need to go back to the history first, check the author's background and stuff, yeah, I think ... this is what I wanted to say, yeah.

The researcher: When you research history, what elements are you going to research?

Student 1: The events like how this movement appeared, like what made this movement appear and how was life? For instance if we're speaking about English literature and some movements, like I'm gonna try to learn about England at that particular time and stuff. So I link it with literature, I feel that this is how I better understand literature.

The researcher: Where would you look for such information? In past lessons?

Student 1: I Google them and I use YouTube a lot. Like, I prefer YouTube.

The researcher: It's vivid with documentaries...

Student 1: Even the speaker, when someone speaks and uses the board...

The researcher: It's helpful...

Student 1: Yes, it's helpful.

The researcher: What about the author? What would you look up in the authors' lives?

Student 1: Everything. Even if it's his life. Yeah, like I would love to know, uhm... like... I feel better dealing with his work if I know him. I kind of know him in person. Even if, like Charlotte Bronte, I really love knowing about her and her life. I started doing comparisons with Jane Eyre and stuff and I found that there are similarities and stuff, so I really like it. And I think that, yeah, that I have to look for the authors' lives. Yeah.

The researcher: Alright, and did the teachers guide you in this research of history and background information?

Student 1: Not really. Well I remember that in the beginning of the year, the teacher asked us to do, like to search for the author and, yeah he gave us a homework and I didn't do it, and I feel that it came in the exam.

There was something in the poem that was related to his life, and then... because he used his wife's mother's name. Everyone knew it, those who looked for the author, knew it was not his mom's name. And I was saying it's his mom! But it wasn't and then I said ok, then I have to check the author's life...

The researcher: Did you do an exercise or did you find this in the text directly?

Student 1: First, it was in class he asked us to do the homework, but then it showed up in the exam...but after that like, I think I will do it all the time, like search for the authors...

The researcher: What about when you encounter a word that has a significance because of the context, you mentioned for example the mother's name,

Student 1: I don't really check the hard words that I didn't understand.

The researcher: Words with cultural info, if we take the "phoenix", meaning the character is so strong and resilient.

Student 1: If it's that important. If it concerns the main character maybe...

The researcher: Can something be done to help students with cultural difficulties?

Student 1: Some teachers can give us videos links and talk more about it in class, give us guidelines...

The researcher: What about activities?

Student 1: We lack activities. It's my first year and as I told you previously, I had no idea about how to deal with the module, and I feel that teachers think that we know what the module is about just with its name. I know it's literature but I really wanted to know why we are learning it, what is its importance, what is it? I don't know, like his ideas about this module.

An introduction of the module itself, not the syllabus or what we are going to deal with. I find that we need more understanding about the module itself then we can move to the syllabus. This is the first thing, the second thing is I had no idea about what I had to do and I got a 07 in the first exam. Then I tried to look for the historical background, do a little bit of extra work, watch more videos, read more articles, worked even more and I got 17 and it's the best mark in the class. I was in shock, so I discovered that I really needed to know about the module, to know about the historical context, the author's life so I can have a good mark. This is my story.

The researcher: You were happy!

Student 1: I was very happy because I felt that I worked for it. Yeah, I really needed work with literature. It's not just reading the papers, I really needed to put effort.

The researcher: So, the historical information you looked up was to interpret? How did it help you specifically?

Student 1: I felt I knew... somehow everything about why this work... because it was Jane Eyre and they said it was a very important work and people were criticizing it etc... I really needed to know what the reason was. I remember they said that it was because women were not treated well at that time. So, I really needed to know what were the events. They said they had then started Feminism. So, I really looked at the work differently.

Even if the teacher doesn't ask me about Feminism, I feel confident, I feel that answering the question about the character feels simpler. So that's it.

The researcher: Thank you very much.

Student 1: No, thank you.

Interview with Student 2b

The researcher: I am interested in understanding your difficulties with cultural information that is foreign to you and how you deal with it while studying literature. First of all did you notice you had issues with cultural foreignness, if you want, in literature?

Student 2b: Yes, a little bit. This year we studied the African literature, it was a bit difficult because in the essays we have to write the names of the characters... I couldn't really memorize them. Like we did *Things Fall Apart* and Okonkwo was really hard to write and to memorize. Also...

The researcher: You mean the names were foreign to you?

Student 2b: Yeah, it's not like the names we are used to.

The researcher: How come African literature came to your mind and not British or American literatures?

Student 2b: The names that come to my mind, the African ones are difficult. If I read an English novel it will be easier than the African.

The researcher: Why?

Student 2b: Although the English have difficult words like Shakespeare's for example, the African has more complicated words. I watch movies, I read some books, it's similar, but the African no. it's difficult for me.

The researcher: Do you think you have this difficulty because you've never dealt with African literature before?

Student 2b: Yes.

The researcher: What about the fact that we are in an African country? And that African cultures are rather similar... What is your say on that?

Student 5: We are in Africa, but Algeria is not really part of Africa. Other countries like South Africa or Congo they speak English, we don't.

The researcher: So for you that's the reason we're different?

Student 2b: Yes!

The researcher: But countries like Cameroun speak French like us as a foreign language... Niger, the Ivory Coast, Mali...

Student 2b: The short story we dealt with was in Congo and South Africa I guess; and we studied in Civilization that they were colonized by the British that's why I think it's not the same as Algeria. If I read in French it's very easy for me as an Algerian. Although we study English we don't practice it in real life.

The researcher: So you think that the difference lies in the fact that those countries speak and write in English and that we don't?

Student 2b: Yes.

The researcher: In our country we have Mouloud Feraoun in French, and Kateb Yacine... So you would feel more comfortable with writers like Aimé Césaire or our national Frantz Fanon? Did you read Frantz Fanon for example?

Student 2b: I didn't, but I heard about him.

The researcher: What do you know about Frantz Fanon?

Student 2b: He came to Algeria I guess and helped when the French colonizer was here. He wrote in French about Algeria and its culture and he showed a bright image of it. That's it.

The researcher: Ok. So do you think that the difference between Algeria and sub-Saharan countries is mainly due the languages spoken or is there something else?

Student 2b: The difference of culture also. We also don't have the same culture. Like we don't have the same religion... there are many things that are not similar.

The researcher: Wait you are including so much. There is Mali, which is also a Muslim country like us, and they speak French like us. Would you say that you are closer to the Malian culture?

Student 2b: Um, not really. The Algerian culture there is nothing like it in Africa. It's very big, it's a huge culture. Not like other African countries. I don't feel a connection with the other African countries and their cultures.

The researcher: So do you think that Algeria has a connection with the other countries of the Maghreb, like Tunisia or Morocco rather than with the Black African countries?

Student 2b: Yes.

The researcher: What about the oral transmission of culture we share? Did you not study that with *Things Fall Apart* for instance, concerning the fight of Okonkwo with his wife during the harvest week and our tradition of sacred holidays (El Aouacher)?

Student 2b: No, we dealt with the differences existing between *Things Fall Apart* and *Heart of Darkness*.

The researcher: Ok, such as?

Student 2b: *Heart of Darkness* is full of racism, but *Things Fall Apart* isn't. In *Heart of Darkness* the Whites were racist toward the Black people and the same thing exists in *Things Fall Apart*. It's a common feature for the two novels.

The researcher: Ok and when you tackled this topic in class, did you feel implied as an Algerian? Concerning the White people and racism towards the Black people?

Student 2b: Yes. We still have this. Not as Black and White, but as Africans and Europeans when the French came to Algeria as the colonizers.

The researcher: Do you mean there is a different racism?

Student 2b: No, it's the same racism, but for us it's Africans and Europeans.

The researcher: You consider yourself now as African!

Student 2b: Yes.

The researcher: ...in the colonizers' eyes?

Student 2b: Yes. We are underdeveloped and they are developed, so they treated the Algerians like animals...

The researcher: Let me get this straight, in the beginning you said you didn't feel connected to the Black Africans. And now you feel connected?

Student 2b: Because of colonization.

The researcher: Ok, so it's the colonization that has connected you?

Student 2b: Yes.

The researcher: Do you ever study the cultural dimension in the literature class?

Student 2b: Individually. We studied two novellas so we did that individually for each work. We study the first one and when we finish it we study the second.

The researcher: Do you deal with your native culture in connexion to the work you study?

Student 2b: No, we don't.

The researcher: What about the activities in class?

Student 2b: When we come to class we read a page or two of the novella and then the teacher explains it. We present similarities of the characters or their differences and then we analyze the story... That's it.

The researcher: So you don't have discussions, debates or role plays? Researches to do on the cultural elements behind the work...

Student 2b: We had a homework about the importance of women in African literature. We said that women are important in *Things Fall Apart*, but that men have more power than women in the cultural, or in the country even.... Yeah, that's all.

The researcher: Thank you.

Student 2b: You're welcome.

Interview with Students 3a & 3b

The researcher: What do you think about the cultural background knowledge or the sociocultural background of the novels you're studying? The cultural references in texts, etc...? Are these important in your literature study?

Student 3a: Yes of course.

Student 3b: Yeah, I think it relies also on the background of the author, I guess. It's good to know when and where the author was born, for instance was it in the 17th C, the 19thC or the 20th C? To know the sociocultural or historical elements and how society was functioning at that time. So yeah.

Student 3a: I think the period in which this novel was written is important because the work itself is a reflection of that period, and a reflection of the author himself and his psychological state.

The researcher: So you think it's important?

Student 3a: Yes, of course.

The researcher: Were you taught this in literature class?

Students 3a&3b: Yes, yes.

Student 3b: Indeed yes, I think it was in English literature...

Student 3a: ... in drama and fiction last year. We were so focused on the author himself more than on the story...

The researcher: ... more than the text.

Student 3a: The story is just a path to take you to the main thing in literature.

The researcher: The expression is the text is a pretext..

Student 3a: For example in *Pride and Prejudice* the story is important, but it's more important to know about Feminism at that time, about Jane Austin and how she managed to create the characters between the social classes and all.

The researcher: You mentioned you dealt with this in English literature last year. What about first and third year?

Student 3a: In first year, we dealt more like with the literary genres...

Student 3b: I remember in First year *Rip Van Winkle*...

Student 3a: Exactly! Yes.

Student 3b: We dealt more with the story, about how the...

The researcher: ...The plot?

Student 3b: Yeah, the plot indeed!

Student 3a: ...the climax, the falling actions and all...

The researcher: Ok! For that particular example, would you have liked to deal with the mythology or the sociocultural origin of the myth of Rip Van W? Do you think that it would have interested you more?

Student 3b: Yeah! I like this element, to deal with ... Rip Van Winkle is like another story of a man who slept for 20 years, I do like these types of stories. To sleep a hundred years and to wake up to find that society has completely changed... so that element was uh... I was interested in that element. To wake up in a new society... change and stuff, yeah.

Student 3a: His mental state would be like so disturbed... he'd just wake up and everything is just changed...

The researcher: ...of course...do you know of a myth of your own sociocultural background that is exactly the same as that?

Student 3a: Yes, of course...Ahl

Students 3a & 3b: Ahl El Kahf

Student 3a: it's almost the same.

The researcher: Did you deal with this comparison in class?

Students 3a & 3b: No, we didn't.

The researcher: Would you have liked to deal with it?

Student 3a: Of course!

Student 3b: Yeah, why not?

Student 3a: The comparison between our culture, our religion and relate it to that in different cultures, it's like almost the same. We have dealt with this in Arabic last year in comparative literature with the comparison of Greek mythology and drama with the Arab. Sometimes the versions we did Shakespeare and Jebrane Khalil Jebrane. It's like the same concept with different visions.

The researcher: Ok!

Student 3b: I just remembered another story in culture. The one who slept a hundred years, in a verse in the Koran, I forgot the verse...

Student 3a: Is it the one who found, when he woke up, his donkey had died and the water I guess dried, I don't quite remember...

The researcher: Culture is transmittable, but expressed differently in different cultures. If classes made these parallels between cultures, would you find it motivating or helpful as a literature study tool?

Student 3a: I think it's helpful because we can then try to understand the differences between cultures with a new version, new people, a new mental... psychology, a new respect.

The researcher: So if you have your own culture represented or explained in class, you would understand better what the other feels?

Student 3a: Exactly!

Student 3b: I guess, as you said it's transmittable. We also see this element in comic books with super heroes, I don't know if it counts...

The researcher: Of course, culture is everywhere.

Student 3b: For instance, this story of Rip Van Winkle we see it with the story of Captain America. He fought in World War II and slept for 70 years. He woke up in the modern world and he was baffled by the technology and science so uh... I guess it's interesting to deal with this...

The researcher: ... so, it's motivating...

Student 3b: Yeah.

The researcher: So students with difficulties in literature would get interested, comparing Rip Van Winkle with Marvel characters would make him cool. (Laugh)

Student 3a: Exactly.

Student 3b: I used to draw similarities in second year, when we were studying Gothic literature. I used to bring examples from comic books, for instance Marvel or DC, to show how the literature also influenced the comic books, and that comic books can be counted as part of the literature. For me, they must be.

The researcher: There is definitely a link.

Student 3a: When I think about literature, it doesn't matter if it's a fairy tale we are dealing with or a non-fiction, it's like everything is related to one another. We can take the Greek stories and their mythologies and link them to psychology. Take Snow White, it's a fairy tale, but psychologically the girl is being herself and the way she sees things differently from how she was

raised. Also, I am personally very much into the Gothic genre; we dealt with Edgar Allan Poe's *The Black Cat* and the novel by Stephen King with a cat...

The researcher: Yes, so you make a comparison with a modern novel.

Student 3a: ... Both stories deal with the return of the revengeful cat from the Dead to destroy the one who's responsible for his death.

The researcher: This smells of intertextuality.

Student 3a: Exactly! There is some Edgar Allan Poe in Stephen King.

The researcher: Well thank you very much. You've responded so positively to the topic.

Students 3a & 3b: You are welcome madam.

Appendix G: Interview Transcripts of the Teachers

Interview with Teacher 1

The researcher: Could you please share with me elements that you feel are important concerning your literature class? We'll start from there.

Teacher 1: My feeling is that literature classes are losing quality and substance (and even meaning) because of a number of factors: one of them is the fact that the Netflix generation does not read books.

The researcher: Alright, but does a lack in the reading practice necessarily bring a lack in cultural knowledge?

Teacher 1: I believe that reading classics is most essential for students who want to cultivate knowledge of intellectual quality, but when their interest is only triggered by all what respond to their thirst for sensations and emotions, it is only natural that they do not feel the need to read books. I may appear cynical but I honestly think that there is a visible lack of interest in anything that does not stimulate their hedonistic side.

The researcher: Do you have any suggestions, thoughts?

Teacher 1: Sure, they do “like” stories but the stories to which they enthusiastically react are that postmodern concept of the visual story developed by social media.

Teacher 1: Another factor is the fact that the teachers cannot do otherwise than reduce the content of the syllabus and the amount of the literary works that support the module.

Teacher 1: The class of literature has become a kind of Balzacian “Peau de Chagrin” with the lessons less and less substantial. We teachers are having a hard time trying to recreate the intellectual atmosphere and even the magic of our first classes when we started teaching a decade ago.

Teacher 1: It seems like the teachers are just performing the swan song of the department of literature.

The researcher: Could bridging the gap between their own culture and the foreign one presented in the novels/ short stories be useful to this new generation of students?

Teacher 1: May I answer your question with another question? Why do they choose to study in a department of English if it is to seek elements of their own culture?...Why not join other departments, more in synergy with their cultural background?

Teacher 1: I think that departments such as History, Sociology and Anthropology will constitute a better panel of choice for students who wish to reconnect with their origins.

The researcher: So do you think they ought to start searching themselves for foreign cultural elements on their own?

Teacher 1: Absolutely! They need to have a better understanding of the characteristics of the studies before they engage in them.

The researcher: Anything you would like to add?

Teacher 1: What I would like to suggest is to reconsider the necessity to have the module of literature as part of the fundamental unit. If the class of literature is made optional with students really interested in the subjects, and with a number of students that does not exceed 25 or 30, I think we will manage to have literature classes of excellent quality.

The researcher: Thank you so much for your participation, it was very insightful.

Teacher 1: It was a pleasure.

Interview with Teacher 5

The researcher: Could you sum up what you were saying about the literature teaching questionnaire? That was interesting.

Teacher 5: It seems to me that the objectives of teaching are not clear anymore, as far as I'm concerned they're not clear for me. That's the point ... because it gave me the opportunity to uhm, perhaps phrase, you know, those hazy ideas going around in my head... at times I could put words you know, on the issue. My feelings...my, my reaction to the context, the way it impacts me and why...

The thing that struck me most was my inability to think of something after the word "teacher".

The researcher: That's one of the questions in the questionnaire...

Teacher 5: Yes, for me it was a good indication of a profound "malaise", something wrong going on.

The researcher: Ok, would you say that this kind of questionnaire about cultural issues is relevant to the teaching that you're doing?

Teacher 5: Of course

The researcher: So you would say it's an important factor or a secondary factor?

Teacher 5: Absolutely! Absolutely important!

The researcher: What about now, can you give me a synonym to the word "teacher"?

Interestingly because of the few words we exchanged right before you switched on your recorder, yes: I am here just to manage a situation. That's my job: "je gère, c'est tout". "Je gère une situation anormale". I don't see where we're heading, I don't understand why they are here? I don't understand what the output should be. That's the thing. I don't understand what the outcomes should be. I don't understand what I'm supposed to give them, what they're supposed to demonstrate, etc. "je gère"! I'm just here to... "c'est une garderie pour adultes". I heard someone else say it and that's it: "c'est une garderie pour adultes". I'm sorry for the brutality of the answer, but this is how I feel about the situation. And I don't blame students I want to be clear about this, it's not the students' fault, in my perspective anyway. Of course, they have their share for some of them, those who have the ability and don't make the effort. But for the vast majority I think they are victims, just like we are.

The researcher: Several teachers said they didn't receive a training in teaching,

Teacher 5: No.

The researcher: ...any specific pedagogy, theories of teaching or...

Teacher 5: Well, I would say I didn't have a practical training, of course I studied psychopedagogy etc. at the licence level. But I never had a practical training and I think practice is more important when it comes to teaching. Theory is good but practice is priceless. That's what I think.

The researcher: How would a suitable training be? Would you consider training sessions or some meetings...?

Teacher 5: I think that meetings help a lot, uh; I think that class observation for example might be a plus.

The researcher: Is it not being done?

Teacher 5: No. I considered this practice a while ago, but then I guess given the circumstances etc. it's no longer a priority.

The researcher: Yes, of course...

Teacher 5: We show up once a month and so...but we'll see.

The researcher: Would you say that situations like these, for example classroom observations, dialogs, maybe...sharing

Teacher 5: Absolutely, dialogs, exchange...the ability to exchange...

The only thing that I applied was the questionnaire at the end of the year. Something that I did, that I used to do when I started working here. So that was a way to get feedback from the students themselves which helped a lot, but exchanging with peers is not organized in my view in this institution.

The researcher: Alright, what about adapting the extracts to the students and not having enough time to cover the program?

Teacher 5: I learned in retrospect that it was possible for the teacher to pick the text they want. But when it comes to the syllabus, we are basically tied to the official one. Had I known that it was possible to pick the texts, had I known that the teacher was free to decide which work of fiction would be studied, I would have gone for a different choice altogether.

The researcher: Why did you not know?

Teacher 5: Because I wasn't told so

The researcher: It's a matter of communication then...

Teacher 5: Yes, I remember when I started teaching we had many opportunities to exchange with colleagues etc... I teach this year “Literary Genres” and “Anglophone Culture” for example and there have been several modifications over the years that don’t appear in the syllabus with the outcomes, the course objectives etc....

The researcher: According to you, would a cooperation between the didactics teachers and literature teachers be helpful?

Teacher 5: Yes and I would like to add something. We’ve been going through a major shift by adopting this so-called hybrid teaching and we haven’t discussed the implications when it comes to the program, the way we teach ... it seems to me that teachers have been abandoned basically with the task of adjusting to the situation, we haven’t been prepared for it. I don’t understand why we haven’t had a true discussion, I believe that we have maybe some specialists here that maybe can help. Why haven’t we had some guidelines, help us find some literature, help us with some concepts to rethink our teaching. We are given the syllabus, “here is what students should know something about and go ahead, good luck!” I don’t understand the situation.

The researcher: You said in the questionnaire that students are not motivated by the stories they read.

Teacher 5: I noticed this with *Rip Van Winkle* for example

The researcher: A student told me an interesting parallel; he connected the supernatural element in the story with another supernatural element from their native background. He took the example of ‘Surat el Kahf’. Would drawing such parallels motivate them to read?

Teacher 5: It's very interesting because I use this strategy in civilization. In civilization I try to, you know, appeal to their imagination as Muslims, as Algerians, etc. so that they understand and get interested. Maybe I'm wrong, but I have this tendency to think of a literature class as something really focused on the target culture. I may be wrong; perhaps this is not the right approach. When I read literature, I am not interested in remaining in my comfort zone; I really enjoy this feeling of being transplanted somewhere else. You see.

The researcher: The foreignness of the context.

Teacher 5: Absolutely, "ce sont d'autres repères". This is precisely part of the pleasure of literature and the reason perhaps why we read literature from all over the world. We sometimes feel more comfortable with one country as opposed to another, it's because we have this ability to get out of our context etc. so maybe I think unconsciously that's what I do. in the literature class I have the tendency to try to bring them, you know, to another culture precisely another set of references etc. but the problem now is that they hardly know anything about this new cultural context this target culture and so it's very difficult for them to even understand what they read.

The researcher: All right, what do you think of bridging the cultural gap this generation of students? Are the themes found in the works studied important?

Teacher 5: The funny thing about prejudice regarding the target culture is.... I was impressed many years ago with a statement saying when you learn a foreign language and you get introduced to a new culture there is a kind of impulse to precisely be more daring and more open. I don't know if I am explaining it properly, but the idea is that you have more freedom in your way of thinking, of appreciating any given situation, etc. Take a simple example, it's easier to swear in a foreign language compared to your own language, there is a kind of freedom, there is a kind of liberation

that comes with this transplantation, I would say. The fact of using another language, which is not your mother tongue ..., so you don't feel guilty in fact. And so my idea precisely is to set them free by trying to bring them... what I would like for them is to feel like they are in another country when they arrive in my class. My idea is for them to feel free when they enter my class; they are no longer trapped in this country, no longer trapped in their original culture, in their society, their problems at home, etc. I want them to experience something different.

The researcher: Do you think we need some modern technology to implement movies or music to make literature livelier?

Teacher 5: Yes, I am for the use of audio-visual material, etc. However, I am skeptical about the outcome. It seems to me that university should be about studying and of course, it can make the subject more appealing, ok? It can help to get some ideas across etc. but it will never teach students to focus, to go in depth etc. I'm skeptical about the impact of technology on teaching and learning... I don't know. What I'm saying is let's use it the right way, but let's not assume just because it is there, it is necessarily useful to us when it comes to the core of our job.

The researcher: Thank you very much.

Teacher 5: You're welcome.

Interview with Teacher 9

The researcher: Could you please share with me your impressions on the cultural background that the students need in order to read adequately literary texts?

Teacher 9: All right, well, uh, it is a real problem, the fact that students today have almost no cultural, historical background concerning literature. They do not know much about the culture, the target culture, they do not know much about the canon, and about the basic texts that they need to make reference to or have knowledge of. So, it would be interesting to have at least some basic texts taught in high schools, in middle schools already so that students would have at least some background. Not necessarily really specific background but at least the most common and major literary texts.

The researcher: You're speaking about intertextuality... cultural references in texts that you do in class....

Teacher 9: Yes, yes, we refer to major texts and we often notice that students do not know them or have never heard of them. If I give the example of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, sometimes we refer to them and we see that students have not heard about them, not in Arabic, not in French and not in English that they had been studying for 6 years in middle school and in high school. And this is just one example.

The researcher: Do you think that as literature teachers you can help them bridge the gap or is it something that they should have absolutely done before coming to University?

Teacher 9: Oh we try to bridge the gap and we sometimes succeed with some students we do, but some students lack the motivation also to catch up, They're really not willing to do extra work, extensive reading, if we give them lists of suggested readings they do not really take them into consideration.

They only focus on what they need to do in class in order to pass their module and get a 10 or above. So, it's not really easy to start over, there's so much to read about, so much to know about... Especially as there is also the problem of their level in English, that most of the time does not really allow them to read extensively. Without the guidance of a teacher or without the help of the analysis that we do in the classroom.

The researcher: Could asking them to read about the missing cultural elements in French or Arabic be of help? A list of readings in Arabic or French..?

Teacher 9: I sometimes do ask them to read novels in Arabic and in French or ask them to do the analysis of some works they have read in other languages, but I find that the problem for many students is not only a problem of language but the fact that they have not been taught to read at all. Sometimes I ask them to bring with them to the classroom novels in other languages that they have read or that they are reading so that we can use them, regardless of the language because we can use them in the process of analyzing the major elements of fiction for example. I ask them to analyze themes in any novels they have read, but I find that they have not read sometimes at all. Apart from what was included in the syllabus of middle school and high school. Reading itself, is not really a major skill that is taught in the Algerian environment as a habit.

The researcher: What about technology use? Since students are on social media, could they be helped with videos, tutorials on criticism, reading analysis or stuff like that...?

Teacher 9: Yes, I try to do this with them, I advise them to listen to audiobooks also, to listen to conferences, Ted talks sometimes. But they, I mean they do not find the motivation, they're not interested enough. For them, the real problem today is that they do not think that literature is going to help them in their English studies. They want to learn the language; they're not interested in the culture and they're not interested in the literature. We try to explain to them that literature might contribute immensely to their acquisition of the language itself, but they're not really...

What I have noticed for many of them, obviously not all of them, is that they are not really motivated when it comes to learning literature.

The researcher: what about activities such as role playing, reading aloud, that are more kinesthetic? Would that be motivating? Could you integrate that?

Teacher 9: I do these types of activities in another module actually, in listening and speaking. For some students it is interesting, they really enjoy it, but for the majority of students say that they are socially anxious, that they are shy. When I see them outside the classroom they are not so shy at all, but in the classroom they are not really willing to...

The researcher: What about drawing parallels between their native culture and the sociocultural background of the works? Because you said in the questionnaire that you do it. Does it give any results?

Teacher 9: It does actually, it takes time because they are not really aware of the fact that their own culture, the African culture is... for them it's not relevant enough to the study of English through that literature. But I've had experiences where I was able to convince groups studying African literature by making them read short stories, plays that really represented their own environment and were written in English. They enjoyed them and they understood better than... they related to them better than they would relate to other works they really liked like *Jane Eyre* or *Pride and Prejudice*. But today we have to limit ourselves to the texts imposed in the program, although I advise students to..., I give them homework, but I am not really able to do the follow up on their reading of the African material.

The researcher: Thank you very much.

Teacher 9: You're welcome.

Interview with Teacher 11

The researcher: What did you think of the questionnaire? Was there something surprising or something that you expected concerning the cultural dimension?

Teacher 11: I found it interesting in a way that I recognized some of the choices that I make in class. I found some questions that I could answer saying that I actually do that in class. Sometimes we think of ourselves as being original because we did not really get any training as to how to plan our lessons and include some elements that we did not study, or that we did not experience as students in class, so I thought that maybe I was original but in fact I was not. I was just mainly being intuitive or I don't know, something that we all unconsciously share and I find it in the questionnaire. So, I'm not creating anything new, I'm just using the tools that are already here.

The researcher: You talked earlier about bringing the culture to the students in the classroom and you spoke of the space-time frame of the cultural element, so the students learn through the media, movies, etc...?

Teacher 11: I think the traditional means of cultural transmission are disappearing. I don't think any of the students I taught ever experience this. I never heard a student telling me they had a grandparent teaching them about their culture in any traditional way. But they are very much interested in what is today, they are image-bound, locked to their screens, and in screens we find either interactive or non-interactive experiences. It's either cinema or television or video games. Students in the recent years are reading less novels and short stories and some of them are reading more and more cartoons, the Manga for instance, they like the Japanese cartoons, not just the American. So, I try also to bring some examples that relate either to the cultural background of the literary work we're studying or any other element or concept of choice we are studying in class that I find might have similarities with the period's most known or blockbuster films, or video games, or characters because sometimes there are famous characters.

There is the example of *The Witcher*, there's a very famous video game that most gamers must have played, the TV series; recently we enjoyed the second season of *The Witcher*. And there are also the books; there are six books of *The Witcher*. So the character the Witcher is one that students maybe like very much. It's just like for example Ironman, as a hero. I wouldn't put Ironman in a film, but I would speak of Ironman as a character. For example, Dr. Strange is a neurosurgeon, and once, I think I had to give them an example about what organic and mechanic mean, so I brought Dr. Strange as a very talented surgeon who probably, with that talent, wouldn't create that organic element of a literary work if it's not there. By giving an example of a surgeon operating on a dead person, they wouldn't bring their life back. So yes, I bring sometimes not just a work, whatever the medium is, but probably a character or a famous place. The places are also very important in literature, so for example if we speak about the Wonderland or Neverland, the land where Peter Pan goes, or the lands where we have fantasy films, for example *Harry Potter*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbits*, *the Narnias*, and so on, these I feel relate to students' interests today...

The researcher: This is what they are consuming.

Teacher 11: Yes, they're consuming these works a lot, be them as a film, as a literary text or other versions of the work. So, that's what I try to do.

The researcher: So you use their interest in these fantastic works to allow them to connect with their thinking abilities. And what about their identity as independent Algerians, as Africans? Do you speak of their native culture in class? Or do you rather focus on the foreignness of a literary work?

Teacher 11: I do speak about the Algerian culture and I try to refer to Algerian authors or their works, but sometimes the context of a literary work does not allow it, or the students do not have enough knowledge about our own culture or about some examples so that I can connect that to the work we're studying. But when I started teaching African literature this semester, I was able to bring the Algerian culture to class and to connect it and to show students how authentic and how complex it is and how independent it is from any other cultures, at least for the post-colonial period.

The precolonial literature shows that all the colonized regions of Africa have had their own culture, with a complexity to their culture. We have compared in class the cultural elements, the most important foundations of societies, to show what the differences are between our culture and the European Western cultures and some of them understood how rich, or maybe how important our background is. But some of them did not because I've been correcting the exam papers and I've noticed that students are still speaking about African culture as being simple and primitive. These are two words I found in a few copies that I disagree with. And I didn't use those words, I actually used the opposite; I used the word 'complex' and I used the word 'advanced'. For instance, I would say about Africans: "they used to advance in their own way, in their own cultural understanding of what each thing in life is, but there was an advancement". And each time I would speak about any of the African elements in the studied work, we studied *Things Fall Apart*, I would try to compare it to the Algerian context. If we take the example of the colonial history, I would try to compare the dates, to compare the independence dates, to compare the way we've been colonized, to compare how the French colonizer acted almost the same way like the English colonizer in Nigeria. So I tried to bring so many elements, and I also compared the fact that our Algerian authors are also writing in different languages. For us they're writing in French, same thing for other fellow African authors who are writing in English; it depends on the language of the colonizer. But I try to bring... and I also mention a lot of Algerian literary works by Algerian authors; I try to always mention names and to also show them how critical and how important and how valued some of the literary works are even if they are not aware of them. Because they don't read Algerian literature so they're not familiar with it. I even tackle the point of whether we do have an Algerian literature because some Algerian academics would say we don't have an Algerian literature, I would try to discuss with them why it's yes, why it's no...

The researcher: This is very deep, so you get to do that with third year students?

Teacher 11: it's just... let's say... it's just a discussion in class.

The researcher: But they do respond to that?

Teacher 11: They do respond, yes. I try to bring them to class by interesting them, I get to insert some of these elements. The way I do it is that I increase their interest by showing them that I am also interested in what they are interested in; all the pop culture background. We share films, video games, cinema, and so on and then after that I bring them to my own space or my own cultural understanding of what literature is by asking them to discuss with me these elements that they're not so familiar with. So, this is a give and take let's say, classroom situation where I go to them and bring them to me in an exchange of knowledge sometimes. And I try to agree with their own understanding of certain elements as much as I can so that maybe they are interested and they would probably participate and agree with, at least discussing. Not agreeing necessarily with everything I say, but to agree on a certain level to have a discussion in class. And we're doing African literature so it's very important we deal with Algerian literature as well. So I tried to take only a passage from *Things Fall Apart* so that I am able to study other works at the same time...

The researcher: To make comparisons.

Teacher 11: To make comparisons and to put it in context. Every session, especially on-site sessions, in my lessons you wouldn't find Algeria mentioned or any other culture. I would put points that really follow the syllabus, but in class discussions I would put that in the Algerian context.

The researcher: So you would bring the cultural background knowledge in a discussion...

Teacher 11: I would definitely do that in a discussion because I try to provide lessons according to the syllabus. After all, we're asked to follow the syllabus especially this semester with African literature. There has been a meeting in which we were asked to do exactly what we are asked to do because there's a new Master of African literature next year.

The researcher: What about the cultural references in texts? Let me be more specific, when for example Okonkwo beats his wife during the harvest week, a situation that we can compare with our tradition of sacred holidays (El Aouacher) and the rule of no fight for instance. Do you deal in such a way with specific cultural references?

Teacher 11: I have not done it this way. Thinking exactly about specific... maybe because we are bound in time and we didn't really have that much time to really introduce elements in such specificity. In general I try to...I would have given this example if I had it in mind, I'm sure. I will definitely use that in class. I would bring these specific examples to class if I am ready and if I have the background, and if I am prepared for it. But as I said, sometimes we have so many elements or so many elements to teach in the lesson that the discussion brings the cultural referencing together. So I try to give as much as comes to my mind...

You spoke about universality and how to bring literary theory in literature class, because I taught literary theory, this is exactly what structuralism is about. We speak about how universal everything is and how let's say, all literature, all types of stories or plots for example fall under the same category. So I would take, I don't know, Indian, and then I'll go to Arab, and then to the European, and American and I would find the same pattern. Because there is a shared pattern between the different literatures, this allows me to bring the different literatures to class even if I'm teaching African, and of course after that I make a selection, I select Algerian and I try not to bring Indian for example. But if my lesson requires I speak about postcolonial literature, I would also bring Indian to show the universality of the literature. But of course I favor what students are interested in, which is the films and so on, and I would bring the cultural references we are all familiar with pointing to the fact that we might even disagree on the most basic things because we might come from different regions of the same country. But we definitely share some knowledge that we can think of as even continental before being universal. Algeria is part of Africa, so we already share things with African cultures before being universal as a culture. I try to bring everything I can and limiting it to the concept, I am teaching.

The researcher: This is interesting. You have well thought out the elements to be taught...

Teacher 11: Maybe also our syllabus requires a revision because maybe we should start... why teaching theory separately from a literature class? Why don't we all start with Formalism?

Formalism means that I start with the form, meaning the word. So if I start by teaching students that literature is about first a word, and we analyze the word before looking at the text in general,

and looking at the context and so on, maybe this will improve not the teaching, but the outcomes of the teaching. But there are always students who would surprise us and they are very interested to bringing works to class. Because sometimes, to use the word, they are bored with one literary work for the entire semester. So they're interested in...I even once heard from a friend of a friend, to whom a student said: "you know our teacher in class speaks of Marvel, the latest films". It was me! I was very happy because that student did not interact at all in class, at all. But then she at least went and spoke about this and that this made her interested and this is one of my main goals. It is at least to make students interested in literature and love literature or whatever cultural element we're teaching them, art in general. Now there are a lot of cinema studies, although we don't do that here, and they are interested in cinema why not introduce that in class?

The researcher: ...it can be a tool.

Teacher 11: Exactly. So, that's at least one thing I am happy about because that's the feedback I would love to hear as a teacher, adding something, not just teaching the syllabus, exams and so on, maybe adding a small value or maybe interest to students who would later on speak with passion about that literature or cinema or whatever. And knowing that they went out of this university with that passion instead of just complaining about the whole university life and process, and this is what we hear.

The researcher: Thank you very much.

Teacher 11: You're welcome.