

L'ANALISI LINGUISTICA E LETTERARIA

FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE LINGUISTICHE E LETTERATURE STRANIERE
UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

2

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*Il Comitato Editoriale ricorda con affetto
la collega Nazarena Fazzari,
mancata durante la lavorazione
di questo fascicolo.*

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES ON THE USE OF LITERATURE AS A TOOL FOR LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Considering the lack of studies to support the theories regarding the advantages of integrating literature into language classes, our aim is to investigate the upsides of the use of literature in TEFL through empirical research. After teaching a set of lessons focused on three literary genres, we try to find out whether students' views towards the use of literature in EFL classes change and which genre pupils perceive as the most beneficial. As for the quantitative research, we make use of a statistical survey through paired t-tests, effect size and ANOVA, while for the qualitative research, we try to uncover what underpins students' viewpoints. Pupils' feedback proves that literature can be a motivating and valuable source in developing linguistic and transversal competences.

Keywords: students' perspective, literature in EFL classes, literary genres, quantitative and qualitative analysis

1. Introduction

Language teachers struggle every day with the need to engage and motivate students and to teach language meaningfully. A way of achieving these two goals could be by teaching language through literature. The possibility of improving language acquisition through literature has been posited by various authors, and recently, theorists' attention has shifted to the empirical investigation of these alleged advantages. As stated by Bloemert – Jansen – van de Grift, “the current trend seems to be to empirically research these acclaimed benefits moving from mere theory to actual evidence”¹, highlighting the need for studies which could prove and confirm the positive effects of using literature in language classes, especially in high school contexts. Taking into account this research gap, the present study has the main objective of analysing the opinions of students attending the first year of high school regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama for EFL, from a linguistic, motivational and cultural point of view. Our intent is to transform the advantages of the different literary genres in language acquisition, as specified in theoretical studies, into learning plans based on literature and into questionnaires and interviews. The paradigm of the investigation is

¹ J. Bloemert – E. Jansen – W. van de Grift, *Exploring EFL literature approaches in Dutch secondary education*, “Language, Culture and Curriculum”, 29, 2016, 2, p. 2.

based on a mixed-method enquiry that involves different combinations of qualitative and quantitative research both in data collection and analysis levels.

We begin by reviewing the primary theoretical assumptions about literature, dividing them into three different categories (language, motivation and culture). The quantitative and qualitative results are then presented and discussed together with relevant pedagogical implications. We end with a discussion of the implications of our findings in both a theoretical and practical light.

2. Literature review

Until the 1940s, literature was extensively adopted in schooling by means of the Grammar-Translation approach, which was used to teach modern languages in the same way that ancient Greek and Latin were taught. However, the use of literature in language teaching started to decline with the advent of the Direct method². This decline continued on through the first years of the rise of the Communicative Approach. The use of literature as a tool for learning a foreign language was seen as “extraneous to language teaching and to everyday communicative needs and as something of an elitist pursuit and was replaced by more functional concerns”³. However, a new paradigm involving the integration of language and culture, with culture including literature, emerged in the late 1980s and developed throughout the 1990s⁴, arising from the communicative need to use authentic materials in class. To provide an overview of theorists’ positions about literature, we listed the advantages suggested to date, dividing them into different components: linguistic aspect, motivation and intercultural competence⁵.

2.1 Linguistic aspect

A plethora of authors have emphasised the usefulness of literature in helping students develop their linguistic skills. Duff – Maley⁶, for instance, stated that literature offers a range of authentic texts in a variety of registers and styles, which can give learners an unequalled richness of inputs, expanding vocabulary, syntax and developing textual cohesion and coherence along with linguistic appropriacy. Another essential point was proposed by Hişmanoğlu⁷,

² Cfr. N. Aydinoglu, *Use of Literature in Language Teaching Course Books*, “International Journal of New Trends in Arts, Sports & Science Education”, 2, 2013, 2, pp. 36-44.

³ R. Carter, *Literature and Language Learning in the EFL Classroom*, in *Literature and Language Learning in the EFL Classroom*, Teranishi – Saito – Wales ed., Palgrave Macmillan, London 2015, p. 316.

⁴ Cfr. A. Duff – A. Maley, *Literature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007.

⁵ This tripartite classification was first used by Duff – Maley (Duff – Maley, *Literature*, p. 5) and then adopted by Férrez Mora – Coyle – Maurandi López (Férrez Mora – Coyle – Maurandi López, *The use of poetry for EFL: Exploring the beliefs of primary school trainees*, “Revista Signos”, 53, 2020, 102, p. 58), who applied these components to their empirical study and demonstrated its validity through a principal component analysis (PCA).

⁶ Cfr. A. Duff – A. Maley, *Literature*, p. 5.

⁷ Cfr. M. Hişmanoğlu, *Teaching English through literature*, “Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies”, 1, 2005, 1, p. 63.

who considered the richness and diversity of literary language useful in improving learners' communicative competence regarding both receptive and productive skills.

2.2 Motivation

A paramount reason to rely on literature to teach language has been pinpointed in the motivation it instils in learners. Motivation can be increased through the power literary texts have to evoke and provoke emotions in readers. Literature entails a great personal involvement and can leave permanent traces in students' memories through the sensations it awakens⁸. Another source for motivation lies in the importance of authentic material, that is not only linked to the self-confidence students acquire from books written for mother-tongue readers but also to the development of the linguistic skills. Through literature, learners are exposed to valuable material that can represent models for the norms of language use⁹. This statement has its roots in the communicative approach to language teaching, which considered authentic material as a resource through which the goal of communicative competence can be achieved.

The creative power of literature has been valued by manifold theorists¹⁰ as a source of motivation, too. Literature can increase students' originality and sensitivity, stimulate them to think imaginatively and improve their problem-solving abilities. Literature can also be a source of motivation for learners because it can enhance critical thinking skills. It can help students to reflect on their lives, expanding their horizon of possibilities and allowing them to question, interpret and explore the complex world they live in. Critical thinking skills provide students with opportunities to better understand themselves and other people, as explained by Hirvela – Boyle¹¹ and Paran¹².

Literary texts can also be a source of motivation for the discussion and conversation that they can inspire, developing learners' listening and speaking skills. Moreover, students can share their experiences and can be stimulated by a divergent individual reality, since literary texts can be highly suggestive, with manifold meanings and associations of ideas that can guarantee class debates¹³.

Some texts also have the potential to change attitudes and perceptions, and to diminish detrimental conduct and prejudices while boosting catharsis, empathy, sympathy, for-

⁸ Cfr. A. Duff – A. Maley, *Literature*, p. 6.

⁹ Cfr. J. Collie – S. Slater, *Literature in the Language Classroom: A Resource Book of Ideas and Activities*, "TESOL Quarterly", 24, 1987, 2, p. 6. Cfr. G. Lazar, *Literature and language teaching: a guide for teachers and trainers*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993, p. 25.

¹⁰ Cfr. M. Hişmanoğlu, *Teaching English through literature*, p. 58 and F. Aghagolzadeh – F. Tajabadi, *A Debate on Literature as a Teaching Material in FLT*, "Journal of Language Teaching and Research", 3, 2012, 1, p. 208.

¹¹ Cfr. A. Hirvela – J. Boyle, *Literature courses and student attitudes*, "ELT Journal", 42, 1988, p. 181.

¹² Cfr. A. Paran, *The Role of literature in Instructed foreign language learning and teaching: An evidence-based survey*, "Language Teaching", 41, 2008, 4, p. 56.

¹³ Cfr. B. Das, *Literature- a pedagogic tool: a defence*, "International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention", 3, 2014, 9, p. 14.

givenness and tolerance, pivotal qualities in an increasingly more selfish world¹⁴. This way, literature, when it deals with intrinsically endearing and pleasurable themes, can increase the awareness of other people's needs, improve social skills and encourage personal involvement¹⁵. Literature can, therefore, attract students' interest and trigger their enthusiasm for reading because its topics are often part of the global human experience¹⁶.

2.3 Intercultural competence

Exposing students to literature from other cultures could be an enriching and exciting way of increasing their awareness of different values, beliefs and social structures; it could stimulate a high level of personal involvement and understanding of their cultural awareness¹⁷. Literature could foster personal development in readers because it might help learners to grow as individuals in their relationships with other people and with the institutions around them¹⁸. This is a crucial educational aspect which tends to be missing from textbooks. The notion of culture is a *vexata quaestio*, because, as some authors have pointed out, it seems increasingly dynamic and co-constructed interactively, as an emergent and specifically linguistic process rather than as a completed product¹⁹. Moreover, people often do not share the same connotation of the term and may have a very biased perception of culture, linking it to conventional stereotypes or deeming some aspects of it as belonging to a second-class category, a culture with a small 'c'²⁰.

On the other hand, other authors have affirmed that through literary texts readers could become acquainted with other people's lives and environments, and that literature allows students to become intercultural travellers²¹. In fact, the study of a foreign language has persistently been perceived as a way of improving understanding of another culture and its people. As a goal of language teaching, understanding others has been prominent in educational rationales. As underlined by Liddicoat – Scarino, since the processes of "globalization, increased mobility, and technological development started to shape our way of living

¹⁴ Cfr. M. Khatib – A. Derakhshan – S. Rezaei, *Why and Why Not Literature: A Task-Based Approach to Teaching Literature*, "International Journal of English Linguistics", 1, 2011, 1, p. 215.

¹⁵ Cfr. Lazar, *Literature and language teaching*, p. 118; T. Van, *The Relevance of Literary Analysis to Teaching Literature in the EFL Classroom*, "English Teaching Forum", 3, 2009, p. 8.

¹⁶ Cfr. J. Bobkina – E. Dominguez, *The Use of Literature and Literary Texts in the EFL Classroom; Between Consensus and Controversy*, "International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature", 3, 2014, 2, p. 251.

¹⁷ Cfr. P. Ur, *A Course in Language Teaching – Practice and Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1991, p. 208 and Lazar, *Literature and language teaching*, p. 250.

¹⁸ Cfr. F. Floris, *The Power of Literature in EFL Classrooms. The Dazzling Features of Literature*, "K@ta", 6, 2004, 1, p. 3. Cfr. B. Das, *Literature- a pedagogic tool: a defence*, "International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention", 3, 2014, 9, p. 16.

¹⁹ R. Carter, *Literature and language teaching 1986-2006: A review*, "International Journal of Applied Linguistics", 17, 2007, p. 8.

²⁰ Cfr. S. Duncan – A. Paran, *The effectiveness of literature on acquisition of language skills and intercultural understanding in the high school context*, UCL, University College, London 2017, p. 31.

²¹ H. Vural, *Use of Literature to Enhance Motivation in ELT Classes*, "Mevlana International Journal of Education", 3, 2013, 4, p. 18.

and communicating”²², there has been increasing acknowledgement of the fundamental importance of integrating intercultural competences into language teaching and learning. Understanding the culture of a country through its valued artistic creations, such as art, literature and music, has a long tradition. In such contexts, the text produced has been seen as an exemplification of the culture of the nation in which the text was produced, often separately from other circumstances of the text’s production or from the author’s identity²³.

It has also been emphasised how the intercultural reader is incited, through the close encounter with literary texts, not only to appreciate the attitudes, values and beliefs of the target culture with understanding and tolerance, but also to question the system of codes and behaviours of the target culture, and then, in turn, ponder the codes and behaviours of his/her own culture²⁴.

3. Research questions and method

Even the supporters of the use of literature in language education acknowledge that more empirical research is necessary to validate the theoretical positions and to support the use of literature in the language classroom. Edmondson called for “conceptual clarity regarding which role or roles foreign language literature can or should play in language teaching”²⁵ and affirmed that the issue had not been “seriously investigated empirically”²⁶. The general absence of empirical classroom-based research was also mentioned by Carter²⁷, who maintained the necessity to expand empirical investigation. The same objection was raised by Hanauer²⁸, who confirmed that arguments for and against the use of literature in ELT were essentially theoretical. The need to empirically demonstrate the benefits of using literature to teach English was also stressed by Hall²⁹, who argued that its upsides were suggested by theorists as logically and intuitively valuable but never empirically demonstrated.

It’s also important to point out that most of the empirical studies published have been conducted entirely in university settings. Paran³⁰ complained about the lack of research in secondary school settings, especially regarding the way literature is taught in these settings and stressed that there are essential aspects in this context that are still unexplored.

²² A. Liddicoat – A. Scarino, *Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning*, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester 2013, p. 1.

²³ Cfr. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁴ M. MacDonald – M. Dasli – H. Ibrahim, *Literature, Culture and Language Learning*, “Journal of Literary Theory”, 3, 2009, 1, p. 121.

²⁵ W. Edmondson, *The role of literature in foreign language learning and teaching: some valid assumptions and invalid arguments*, “AILA Review”, 6, 1997, 12, p. 44.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²⁷ Cfr. Carter, *Literature and language teaching 1986-2006: A review*, p. 11.

²⁸ Cfr. D. Hanauer, *The task of poetry reading and second language learning*, “Applied Linguistics”, 22, 2001, 3, p. 317.

²⁹ Cfr. G. Hall, *Stylistics in Second Language Contexts: A Critical Perspective*, in Watson and Zyngier (ed.), *Literature and Stylistics for Language Learners*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2007, p. 11.

³⁰ Cfr. Paran, *The Role of literature in Instructed foreign language learning and teaching*, p. 69.

As far as we know, only two studies delved into analysing the effectiveness of stylistics for L2 learning in high schools, both published in 2017. In their analysis, Bloemert – Paran – van de Grift³¹ examined what kind of approach teachers, in Dutch secondary schools, tended to use more and which one was considered more beneficial by pupils. Duncan – Paran³² too, tried to investigate teachers' and students' beliefs about the main benefits of using literature in high school classes. The authors made use of a qualitative and a quantitative approach, elicited teachers' opinions using a Likert scale and then ran t-tests on the data.

A comparison among different studies that tried to prove the validity of the use of literature in EFL classes was carried out by Fogal, who underlined the shortcomings of such inquiries, highlighting the failure to report some relevant data useful to interpret and replicate the research, such as the country where the analyses took place, the number of participants, the L2 proficiency levels and the lack of reporting measures of central tendency. The author concluded his study stating that “the potential for pedagogical stylistics to advance L2 learning remains underdeveloped”³³. He also complained about the shortage of studies in non-university contexts and, consequently, of learners with lower L2 proficiency levels.

Considering the advantages of integrating literature into language classes so far mentioned by theorists and the lack of empirical studies to support these theories, our aim was to investigate the upsides of the use of literature in teaching EFL through empirical research carried out in a high school. After designing and running a set of lessons focused on three literary genres (poetry, prose and drama), we tried to find out whether students' views towards the use of literature in EFL classes changed and which genre pupils perceived as the most beneficial. These objectives led to the following research questions:

1. What are students' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in ELT classes?
2. After teaching some lessons based on three different genres, can pupils' view on learning English through literary texts change?
3. Which genre do pupils find the most valuable and which competence do they deem to be best developed, regarding linguistic, motivational and cultural aspects?

The paradigm of the investigation was based on a mixed-method enquiry that involved different combinations of qualitative and quantitative research. As for the quantitative approach, pupils were administered pre-tests and post-tests based on a 5-points Likert-type scale. The qualitative approach was carried out through semi-structured interviews and participants' written feedback. Verification of the work was done through a detailed and objective investigation of the collected data, which was analysed statistically. The semi-structured interviews took the form of narrative reports of the elements we considered meaningful.

³¹ Cfr. J. Bloemert – A. Paran, E. Jansen – W. van de Grift, *Students' perspective on the benefits of EFL literature education*, “Language Learning Journal”, 47, 2017, 3, pp. 371-384.

³² Cfr. S. Duncan – A. Paran, *The effectiveness of literature on acquisition of language skills and intercultural understanding in the high school context*, UCL, University College, London 2017.

³³ Cfr. G. Fogal, *Pedagogical stylistics in multiple foreign language and second language contexts: A synthesis of empirical research*, “Language and Literature”, 24, 2015, 1, p. 67.

These reports of the educational practice, which is itself a form of experience, and as such, can be narrated, became part of the empirical basis to be analysed and interpreted.

4. Participants, procedure and lesson plans

The sample was composed of 71 students attending the first year of a scientific high school in a northern Italian city. Pupils had not started studying literature in a foreign language yet and attended EFL classes for three hours a week, the same average amount as in other Italian high schools.

After obtaining official authorization from the school's headmaster and the teachers' board, the researcher administered the pre-tests composed of 18 questions, designed in a 5-point Likert scale, concerning poetry and novel and 20 questions concerning theatre. Then, after our three lesson plans were taught, students answered the equivalent post-tests. We also provided open-ended questions asking participants' reasons and points of view about the use of literature in the language class. Moreover, some interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis to collect further qualitative data.

Our study was aimed at applying the advantages of the different literary genres, as specified in theoretical studies, into learning units based on literature. Therefore, three lesson plans, according to three literary genres, were designed. Apart from being inspired by and founded on literary texts, our lessons were also grounded in the Recommendation of the European Council of 2018 and the suggestions of the Global Digital Citizen Foundation.

Taking into consideration these competencies, and the goals of our study, i.e., the need to investigate the benefits of literature in ELT, the stated teaching aims were divided into linguistic competence, personal and social motivation, and intercultural competence. An outline of the lesson plans is annexed.

5. Quantitative analysis

To answer the first research question about students' views, a quantitative analysis was conducted about pupils' reports. The result of the internal-consistency reliability for the tests, measured with the Cronbach's coefficient, was $\alpha=.9$ for almost all the tests, indicating that the internal consistency was very high and that the scale was reliable. For each test, we provided descriptive statistics and ran paired sample t-tests.

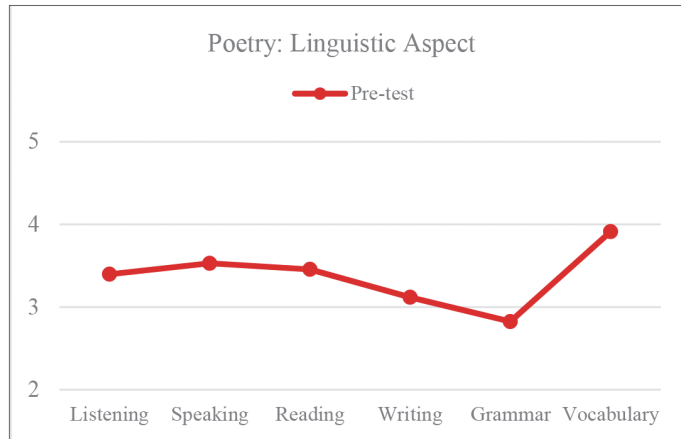
5.1 Pre-tests: poetry

The results showed that students had a somewhat neutral attitude toward the use of poetry. In fact, the general mean was 3.11, a value that is very close to the middle choice pupils had the possibility to select, that, in a 5-point Likert scale, is 3.

The clusters we created to tie the three different aspects of the inquiry together (language, motivation and culture) revealed that students' expectations about the usefulness of literature were close to the general mean (3.37). Analysing in-depth the linguistic as-

pect, pupils, before starting the project, considered literary texts a valuable source to learn Vocabulary, but they didn't consider it useful enough to learn Grammar, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Means related to the linguistic aspect of Poetry in the pre-test



As for motivation, pupils deemed the use of poems not particularly suitable for stimulating their interest, in fact, the general mean was 2.95. The aspect they considered as the most useful was the learning of the Figures of speech (mean=3.34), a distinctive trait of poetry, while the least useful was related to the understanding of Personal and Other people's emotions (means=2.62).

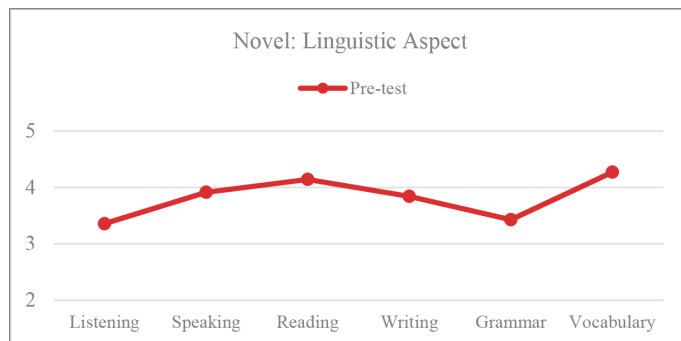
The cultural aspect received a neutral consideration, too. Pupils did not expect learning the Anglophone culture through English poems to be particularly useful (mean=3.37), and reading poems to learn about their own culture was considered even less advantageous (mean=2.91).

5.2 Pre-tests: novel

As shown in Figure 2, pupils considered the possibility of improving their linguistic skills favourably; in fact, the general mean referred to the linguistic aspect, was 3.83. This comes from the forethought that prose is usually considered more accessible by students and closer to a conversational style³⁴. The linguistic skills that students expected to be the most useful were Vocabulary (mean=4.27) and Reading (mean=4.14), while, as for Listening skills and Grammar functions, they did not foresee a significant benefit.

³⁴ Cfr. M. Hişmanoğlu, *Teaching English through literature*, p. 62.

Figure 2 - Means related to the linguistic aspect of Novel in the pre-test

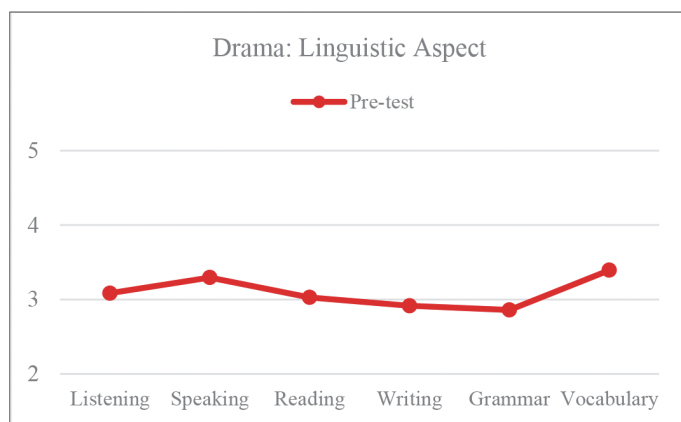


The overall mean related to motivation was lower than the one related to the development of linguistic skills (mean=3.27), even though the aspect pupils appreciated the most was the Point of view (mean=3.86). Furthermore, they did not deem novels useful enough to learn Figures of speech (mean=2.96) and the possibility to understand people's emotions better (mean=2.81). As for the cultural aspect, pupils predicted no increase in either the knowledge of their own culture (mean=2.60) or the knowledge of Anglophone countries (mean=2.91).

5.3 Pre-tests: drama

Pupils thought that drama would not be very beneficial in developing their linguistic skills (mean=3.10). Only the possibility of enriching their Vocabulary was considered by learners, as displayed in Figure 3, while other aspects like Listening and Reading achieved a neutral response.

Figure 3 - Means related to the linguistic aspect of Drama in the pre-test.

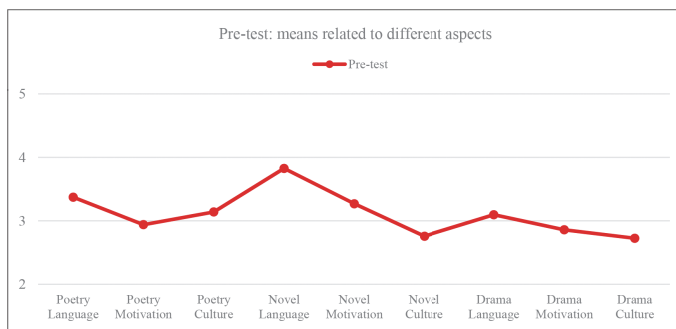


The aspect linked to motivation produced average results, with a general mean under the middle choice (mean=2.86). The most appreciated aspects were those specific to the gen-

re, such as the use of Informal language (mean=3.24) and Real-life settings (mean=3.14), along with the presence of different Points of view in plays (mean=3.03). Pupils did not expect plays to be markedly useful to understand their own personal emotions better (mean=2.37). As for culture, the mean was 2.92, a value slightly below the neutral choice.

We can answer the first research question, stating that, in general, as shown in Figure 4, in the pre-tests pupils considered literary texts sufficiently useful to develop their linguistic skills through novels and poems, while, for drama, they did not expect this genre to be particularly beneficial for their linguistic abilities. Moreover, they considered that the most engaging genre would be the novel, while the least engaging would be drama.

Figure 4 - Means related to different aspects and genres in the pre-test

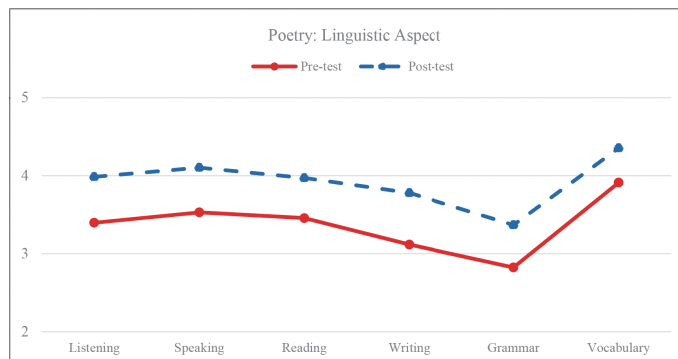


5.4 Post-tests: poetry

Through the following post-test analysis, we tried to answer the second research question of this study, which is how, after teaching our lessons, pupils' views changed regarding learning English through literary texts. We assumed that there would be a difference between students' scores after stimuli were introduced. The paired t-tests were conducted matching each question in the pre-test with its equivalent in the post-test. Then we ran paired t-tests comparing clusters of questions divided according to the analysed aspects linked to linguistic and intercultural motivations, personal and social motivation. To run our statistical analyses, we used both SPSS and MS Excel.

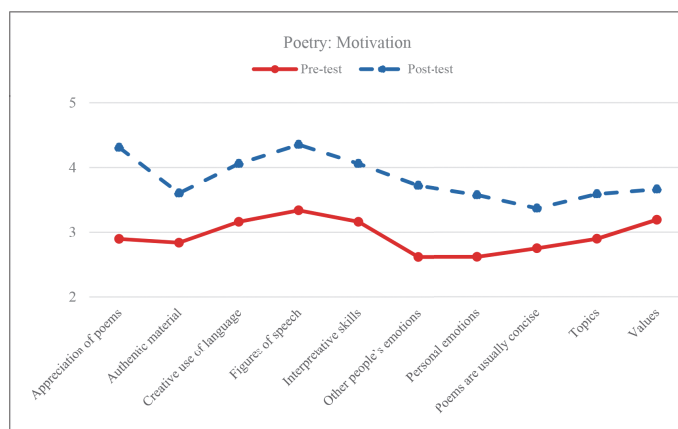
In the post-test, pupils gauged poetry as a useful tool to learn EFL (mean=3.93). The most beneficial elements were considered Vocabulary, Speaking and Reading, as shown in Figure 5, while Grammar was considered the least valuable, even though students had changed their minds and gave it, in the post-test, a higher score.

Figure 5 - Means related to the linguistic aspect of Poetry both in the pre-test and in the post-test



As for motivation, the poem used in class helped students learn some Figures of speech, but it also engaged them and made them appreciate poetry, as displayed in Figure 6. The creative activities carried out in class motivated them and gave them the chance to develop their Interpretative skills and the opportunity to recognize Other people's emotions. However, the difference between the overall mean related to culture in the pre-test (mean=3.14) and in the post-test (mean=3.26) was minimal.

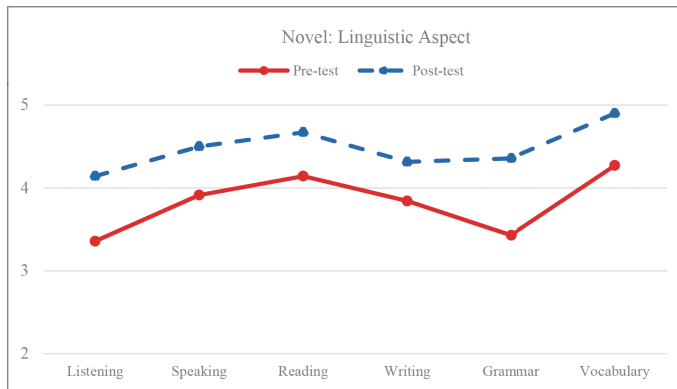
Figure 6 - Means related to motivational aspect of Poetry, both in the pre-test and in the post-test



5.5 Post-tests: novel

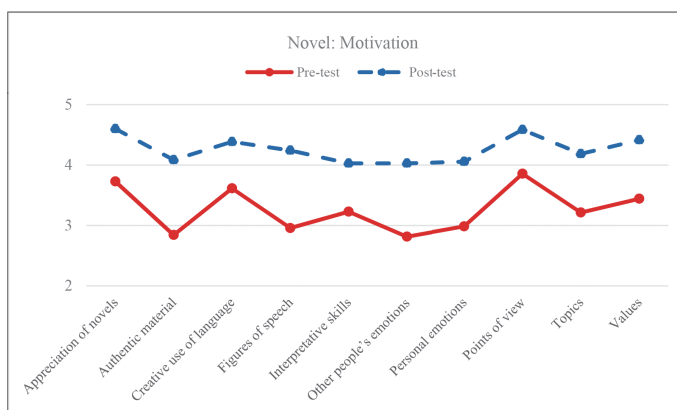
The linguistic aspect in novels was the component most appreciated by pupils (mean=4.48), as shown in Figure 7. Vocabulary was so highly rated that its mean almost reached the highest degree (mean=4.90). Other appreciated linguistic skills were Reading (mean=4.67) and Speaking (mean=4.50), while students changed their opinion about the usefulness of novels to learn Grammar, which increased considerably from 3.43 to 4.36.

Figure 7 - Means related to the linguistic aspect of Novel both in the pre-test and in the post-test



Regarding motivation, students expressed their appreciation of using novels to learn English (mean=4.60) confirming their preference for this genre, as displayed in Figure 8. A significant difference could be found, comparing pre-tests and post-tests, in students' perception of the power novels have to nourish positive Values. Students had to deal with the theme of disability, with the general view on it and their own views on this matter. Their feedback proved that they had appreciated the activities and started thinking critically about the topic (mean-pre-test=3.44; mean-post-test=4.41), as also confirmed by the recognition of Other people's emotions (mean-pre-test=2.81; mean-post-test=4.03). In addition, pupils started to consider the possibility of becoming more acquainted with their own culture and that of Anglophone countries through literature (mean-pre-test=2.76; mean-post-test=3.95).

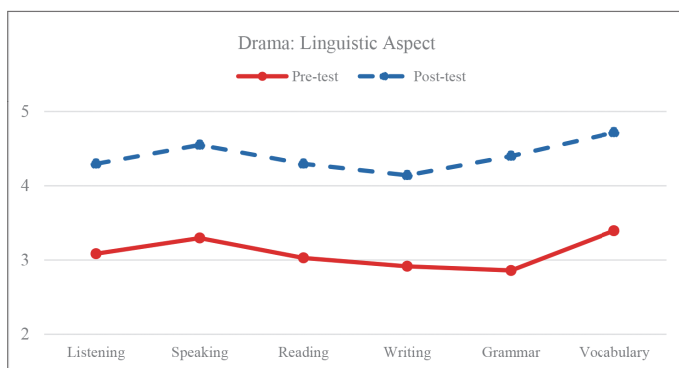
Figure 8 - Means related to the motivational aspect of the Novel, both in the pre-test and in the post-test



5.6 Post-tests: drama

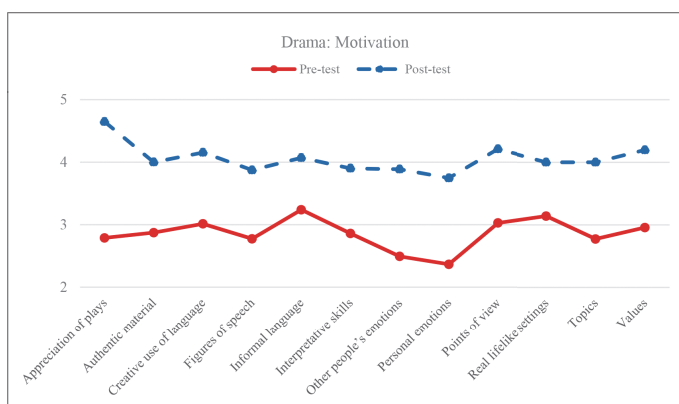
As shown in Figure 9, pupils had not expected that drama could help them develop their linguistic skills (mean-pre-test=3.10, mean-post-test=4.40). Vocabulary was confirmed as the preferred aspect (mean=4.72), while activities aimed at developing Speaking skills were also appreciated (mean=4.55). It is also interesting to note that during the project students started to positively consider the possibility of learning Grammar through literary texts (mean-pre-test=2.86; mean-post-test=4.40).

Figure 9 - Means related to the linguistic aspect of Drama both in the pre-test and in the post-test



As for the motivational aspect, as displayed in Figure 10, learners showed their appreciation of using a play in class giving this aspect the highest score, which increases in value if we compare it to their expectations (mean-pre-test=2.79; mean-post-test=4.65). Almost all the components linked to motivation in plays were appreciated by pupils, such as Point of View (mean=4.21) and Values (mean=4.20), items linked to the topic of the lesson plan – bullying and cyberbullying – which profoundly engaged students. There was also an increase for the cultural aspect, from 2.73 to 3.61, which indicated that pupils changed their mind about the possibility of discovering new cultural aspects through plays.

Figure 10 - Means related to motivational aspect of Drama, both in the pre-test and in the post-test



For the paired t-tests, the results of each question were merged in order to grasp the overall differences among the various aspects (language, motivation and culture). In all genres, the results showed that the differences were statistically significant, with p-values=.00 in all the paired questions and in the analysed collective clusters. The only exception was represented by the cultural aspect of poetry, where there was $t(68) = -0.93$ and a p-value=.18, which meant non-statistically significant difference between pre-tests and post-tests.

5.7 Pre-tests vs post-tests

To answer the third research question, which genre pupils found the most valuable and which competence they deemed could be best developed, the tests were compared in relation to the three genres, along with the three different examined aspects, and, in turn, the latter in relation to the two phases of the survey (pre- and post-tests). For this test, a repeated-measures ANOVA was employed and applied to three factors: genre, aspect and moment. The factor 'genre' consisted of the levels: poetry, prose and drama; the factor 'aspect' comprised the levels: language, motivation and culture; the factor 'moment' included the levels: pre-tests and post-tests.

To demonstrate the statistical significance of the comparison among the three aspects and the three genres referred to the two different phases of the data collection, we ran a Mauchly's test, applying a Greenhouse-Geisser correction (displayed in Table 1).

Table 1 - ANOVA test: *Within-Subjects Effects Test*

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Genre	Greenhouse-Geisser	14.67	1.77	8.28	5.34	0.01	0.07
Aspect	Greenhouse-Geisser	94.67	1.46	64.98	92.30	0.00	0.58
Moment	Greenhouse-Geisser	201.26	1.00	201.26	545.95	0.00	0.89
Genre * Aspect	Greenhouse-Geisser	10.63	2.58	4.12	6.69	0.00	0.09
Genre * Moment	Sphericity Assumed	18.10	2.00	9.05	20.36	0.00	0.23
Aspect * Moment	Sphericity Assumed	10.19	2.00	5.09	23.64	0.00	0.26
Aspect * Moment	Greenhouse-Geisser	10.19	1.84	5.55	23.64	0.00	0.26
Genre * Aspect * Moment	Greenhouse-Geisser	6.34	3.21	1.98	8.08	0.00	0.11

The p-values, referred to the assumed sphericity, showed significant figures for all the factors and for all the interactions (p-value<.05). The values of the partial eta squared showed

that the 'aspect' (.579) and the 'moment' (.891) were the most critical factors in determining the differences in the means.

5.8 Pairwise comparisons

Pairwise comparisons were run to analyse whether significant differences between the means could be found, considering each factor individually and in interaction. As for the pairwise comparison referred to the genre, as shown in Tables 2 and 3, significant differences were found. Poetry had a lower mean than the novel (difference=-.35), while the novel had a mean higher than the play (difference=.29). Considering the p -value<.05, it can be therefore statistically affirmed that the novel was the most appreciated genre.

Table 2 - ANOVA test: General means according to each genre

<i>Genre</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>
Poetry	3.41	.07
Novel	3.76	.06
Play	3.47	.05

Note. Means are referred to each genre taken in its entirety (all the aspects both in pre- and post-tests).

Table 3 - ANOVA test: Pairwise Comparisons according to the Genre

<i>(I) Genre</i>	<i>(J) Genre</i>	<i>Mean Difference (I-J)</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Poetry	Novel	-.35	.07	.00
Novel	Play	.29	.07	.00
Play	Poetry	.06	.09	.65

The pairwise comparison referred to the aspect, displayed in Tables 4 and 5, showed significant differences among the means of the three aspects. The linguistic aspect had a higher score than the motivation (difference=.32) and the cultural aspect (difference=.681), while the motivational aspect had a higher score than the cultural aspect (difference=.361). We can, therefore, affirm that the linguistic aspect was the most appreciated.

Table 4 - ANOVA test: General means according to each Aspect

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>
Language	3.85	.042
Motivation	3.54	.037
Culture	3.24	.064

Note. Means are referred to each aspect considering all genres both in pre- and post-tests.

Table 5 - ANOVA test: Pairwise Comparisons according to the Aspect

(I) Aspect	(J) Aspect	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Language	Motivation	.320	.036	.000
	Culture	.681	.063	.000
Motivation	Language	-.320	.036	.000
	Culture	.361	.048	.000
Culture	Language	-.681	.063	.000
	Motivation	-.361	.048	.000

As for the pairwise comparison referred to the moment, displayed in Tables 6 and 7, significant differences occur between the two means (difference=.87) and it can be statistically affirmed that the difference between students' scores in the tests showed that pupils changed their mind about the use of literature in ELT.

Table 6 - ANOVA test: General means according to each Moment

Moment	Mean	Std. Error
Pre-test	3.11	.046
Post-test	3.98	.040

Note. Means are referred to all the results in pre- and post-tests both for genre and aspect.

Table 7 - ANOVA test: Pairwise Comparisons according to the Moment

(I) Moment	(J) Moment	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Pre-test	Post-test	-.87	.035	.000
Post-test	Pre-test	.87	.035	.000

6. Qualitative analysis

Our qualitative research was underpinned by semi-structured interviews and participants' voluntary written comments. Students' feedback was indexed to sort answers so that material with similar content or properties could be viewed as a whole. This way, topics could be focused on in turn, so that details and distinctions that lay within, could be scrutinised. Data were gathered into clusters according to the theme it entailed; then research went into what underpinned attitudes and motivations, distinguishing factors that lead to different perspectives among subgroups within the sample, suggesting features that were formative or behaviours that were difficult to understand. Processes that were based on a complex interplay of perceptions, expectations, resources or barriers were identified.

During the interviews, pupils gave extremely positive feedback regarding the project. The adjectives most frequently used were 'interesting', 'hard but fun', 'alternative', 'interactive', 'different', 'effective', 'useful', 'unusual', 'exciting', 'cool'. Many comments highlighted the difference between their low expectations and their astonishment at finding that literature could capture their attention. The interest that topics emerging from literary passages could elicit has been highlighted by authors such as Lazar³⁵ and Duff – Maley³⁶, who emphasised the possibility offered by literature to display meaningful and memorable contexts.

Linked to the topics, there is reference to one of the most important competences we aimed at developing: critical thinking. The participants pointed out the ability literature has to trigger reflection about the prevalent way of thinking:

"I changed my opinion about disabled people".

"I think that it helped us to open our minds about different topics".

"Poems make you think".

"I realised that racism may seem 'trivial'...but it is not".

"We talked about racism, and I can see I'm part of this group of people without being aware of it".

"I understood that in the world there are people who are different from us, but we must not discriminate against them for this reason".

"We opened our minds and our hearts"³⁷.

Other comments underlined the need for less frontal-type lessons which, despite the recommendations by modern didactics, are still prevalent in our classrooms.

"It [this method] allows you to learn English in a less frontal and boring way".

"I think that my interest in the English language has changed".

"Now I see English as a more colourful language and not a cold one, as I thought before".

"I changed my opinion about plays".

"Now I believe more in my abilities"³⁸.

The importance of literature as a springboard for holistic learning and critical thinking has also been confirmed by Hirvela – Boyle³⁹.

Regarding the possibility pupils had to share their emotions and opinions and to develop their emotional awareness, it is important to stress how this kind of task might be seen as rather difficult to tackle and potentially disheartening in class. Conversely, according to participants' feedback, literature allowed students to feel that they could speak openly without being afraid of judgement and, moreover, they highlighted the positive effects of this exchange of opinions:

³⁵ Cfr. Lazar, *Literature and language teaching: a guide for teachers and trainers*, p. 27.

³⁶ Cfr. A. Duff – A. Maley, *Literature*, p. 5.

³⁷ Pupils' opinions about the project.

³⁸ Pupils' opinions about the project.

³⁹ Cfr. A. Hirvela – J. Boyle, *Literature courses and student attitudes*, p. 181.

“Listening to your friends can be comforting”.

“This activity was very motivating because, by listening to other people describing their feelings or emotions, you can get involved and do some soul-searching. This also allows you to learn to appreciate other people’s ideas”⁴⁰.

Some students also highlighted the potential this activity had to establish a closer-knit group.

“By allowing me and my classmates to open up, this activity could help us explore ideas together as a class”.

Students mentioned that the most challenging part of the project was the analysis of Figures of speech. This was mainly due to the novelty of studying this in the foreign language. However, they appreciated learning to find hidden and deeper meanings in apparently trivial and straightforward poems. They also indicated their initial underestimation of the poem *Mort Aux Chats*, by Peter Porter, and their shallow interpretation based on a cursory reading. Examining the poem in-depth with its denotations, a world of hidden and more profound meanings was disclosed to them, unveiling the evocative power of poetry.

“I didn’t expect that so many ways of expressing an idea existed”.

“I liked the hidden meaning of the poems because it leads to thinking and discussion”.

“I really liked how a simple poem contains many meanings”⁴¹.

As stressed by Hanauer⁴², writing a poem in a foreign language could stimulate the activation of processes linked to the development of personal, self-reflective understandings which can rouse an intrinsic personal motivation to learn a foreign language. A consistent number of students appreciated the proposed creative writing exercises. These activities not only put students in contact with foreign literature but made them value poetry, and even inspired an aesthetic sense of appreciation for literature.

“You might get passionate about poetry and even start writing poems”.

“I liked the activity of creative poetry”.

“This project can bring out the creative side of each of us”.

“When we wrote together, it was interesting to see everyone’s ideas and put them together”⁴³.

The creative power of literature has been endorsed by manifold theorists. For Hişmanoğlu⁴⁴, literature gives students the opportunity to make use of their creativity. It can increase their originality and sensitivity and trigger their problem-solving abilities.

⁴⁰ Pupils’ opinions about the project.

⁴¹ Pupils’ opinions about the project.

⁴² Cfr. D. Hanauer, *Multicultural moments in poetry: The importance of the unique*, “The Canadian Modern Language Review”, 60, 2003, 1, p. 77.

⁴³ Pupils’ opinions about the project.

⁴⁴ Cfr. M. Hişmanoğlu, *Teaching English through literature*, p. 62.

Linked to the motivation which came from the creation of poems, there was the widespread opinion that acting was one of the most engaging moments of the project. Students found the activity very original, reporting that they were not used to moving the desks and acting in the middle of the classroom during ordinary lessons. Through this creative task, they could speak English without affective filters and, moreover, found it fun.

“We learnt while having fun”.

“We learned new things by acting”.

“The acted part was an engaging moment”⁴⁵.

Adherents of the Communicative approach have for years been advocating the use of authentic language materials to overcome the typical problem that students cannot transfer what they learn in class to the outside world, as well as to expose students to natural language in a variety of situations. As stated by scholars, such as Duff – Maley⁴⁶ and Lazar⁴⁷, teachers usually avoid using literature in class because it can be considered too ‘dense’ by learners. The difficulty of using authentic material with young learners should not be underestimated, but the difficulty of this task proved to be a positive challenge that, in the end, increased students’ motivation. Furthermore, the protagonists of the literary texts were young students and the topics dealt with were related to the same age level as the participants.

“The play we studied was set in a school and characters were students as young as we are”.

“Yes, this [authentic material] is exciting, because you say: ‘Gosh, I read a poem in English!’ This is really a good initiative”.

“Yes, because these things happen in real life”.

“This way you can learn real English”.

“If you consider that the story is real, this makes people think”.

“This way you learn a more informal and spoken English”.

“We understood the daily life that a ‘different’ teenager has to face”⁴⁸.

7. Results

It was statistically demonstrated that the means in the post-tests were higher than those in the pre-tests, therefore it can be stated that our intervention effectively changed students’ views on the use of literature in class. It was also statistically and qualitatively discovered which genre and which aspect were considered the most valuable for pupils.

⁴⁵ Pupils’ opinions about the project.

⁴⁶ Cfr. A. Duff – A. Maley, *Literature*, p. 6.

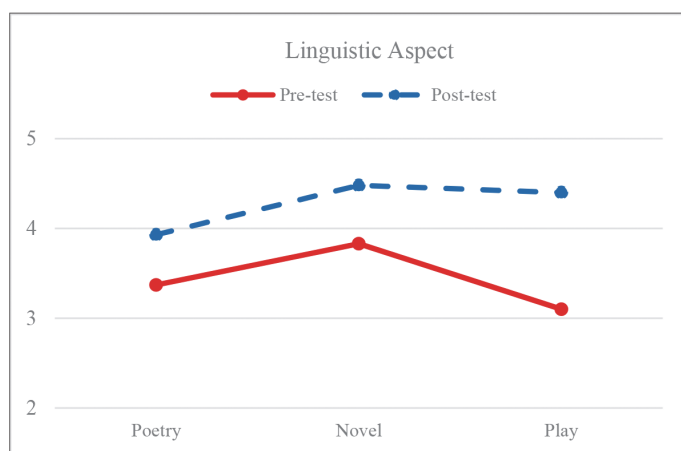
⁴⁷ Cfr. Lazar, *Literature and language teaching*, p. 207.

⁴⁸ Pupils’ opinions about the project.

7.1 Linguistic aspect

The analysis of data showed that before the intervention, students had a neutral attitude toward the use of literature in learning linguistic abilities, whereas, after our lessons, pupils changed their mind and considered the possibility of learning through literature extremely favourably. As shown in Figure 11, the means are decidedly higher in the post-test for each genre, while the difference between pre- and post-tests, as for the play, is remarkable.

Figure 11 - Means related to the linguistic aspect in the three genres, both in the pre-tests and in the post-tests



In their comments, pupils commonly asserted that they improved their listening skills thanks to the multimedia devices and the linguistic exchanges in class. This was also asserted by Hişmanoğlu⁴⁹, who affirmed that having students read literature aloud together in class, with the use of ITC, contributes to developing listening abilities.

The most widespread advantage mentioned by the learners was related to the speaking activities. In their remarks, they referred to the request made by the researcher to use only the foreign language, and found they had to work very hard in order to develop this skill. The importance of the development of the speaking skill was emphasised by Babae – Yahya⁵⁰, who stated that oral group activities could improve productive and receptive skills. Concerning the reading skill and the enrichment of vocabulary, participants were not surprised about having to read a lot and about coming across new words, but they were extremely surprised at having to write so extensively. Even though the improvement of vocabulary was considered as the most beneficial, pupil's consideration of grammar showed a significant increase in the post-tests.

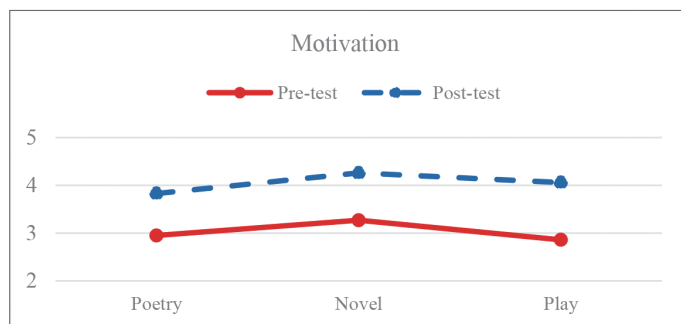
⁴⁹ Cfr. M. Hişmanoğlu, *Teaching English through literature*, p. 59.

⁵⁰ Cfr. R. Babae – R. Yahya, *Significance of Literature in Foreign Language Teaching*, "International Education Studies", 7, 2014, 4, p. 82.

7.2 Motivation

As displayed in Figure 12, in the pre-tests students gave a neutral score, whereas, after our lessons, pupils became aware of the potential to learn EFL through literary texts, which can provide a source of motivation and personal involvement. The difference between the tests confirmed, once again, that pupils had not expected that plays would be so engaging.

Figure 12 - Means related to the motivational aspect in the three genres, both in the pre-tests and in the post-tests



In general, learners appreciated the proposed topics, stating that they were close to their interests. In their remarks, they emphasised how these themes were motivating since they are connected to real everyday life and could help them become better adults and citizens. A consistent number of comments were related to the debates that topics gave rise to, confirming their usefulness as a source of motivation. Therefore, the assertions made by authors like Das⁵¹, Bobkina – Dominguez⁵² about the intense power literature has in engaging students because it can deal with everlasting themes: “Literature is news that STAYS news”⁵³, was empirically confirmed.

In the era of globalization, there is a growing concern of universally shared needs rather than individual needs. As stated by Lazar⁵⁴, since literature deals with universal concepts such as love, hatred, nature, that are common to all languages and cultures, there is an urge to take advantage of literature as an input source for successful language learners’ competence. As a consequence, similarities and even differences between cultures and languages can increase our understanding of the world.

7.3 Intercultural competence

The questions about intercultural competence were linked to the possibility students had of becoming acquainted with the culture of Anglophone countries and of understanding their own culture better.

⁵¹ Cfr. Das, *Literature- a pedagogic tool: a defence*, p. 14.

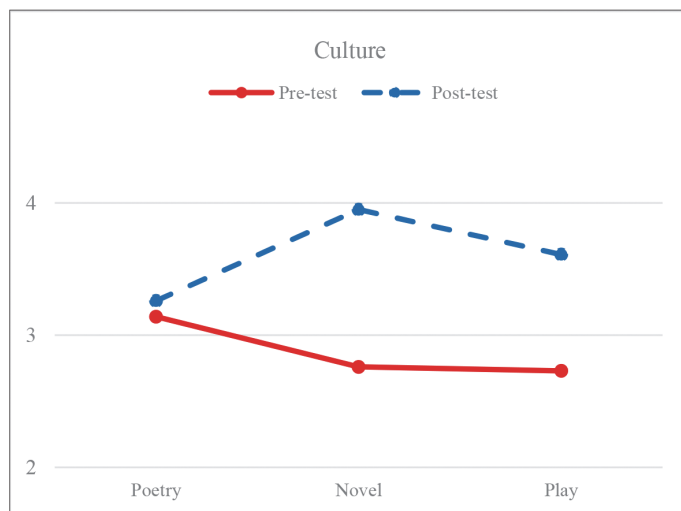
⁵² Cfr. J. Bobkina – E. Dominguez, *The Use of Literature and Literary Texts in the EFL Classroom*, p. 251.

⁵³ E. Pound, *ABC of Reading*, Faber and Faber, London 1951 p. 29.

⁵⁴ Cfr. Lazar, *Literature and language teaching*, p. 207.

As shown in Figure 13, in the beginning, students lacked a clear idea about the cultural implications of using literature in their language classes, but then changed their minds, and in fact, except for poetry, the means were higher in the post-tests.

Figure 13 - Means related to the cultural aspect in the three genres, both in the pre-tests and in the post-tests



Concerning poetry, the difference between means was not statistically significant, which unveiled a prejudice about the connotation of the term ‘culture’, confirmed by the qualitative research. To figure this out, after the first post-test, the issue was discussed in class. It came to light that students and teachers had a very biased perception of culture, linking it to conventional subjects like famous monuments, traditional food, picturesque places and tourist attractions. In their opinion, talking about racism was not dealing with ‘culture’. Other authors had to confront the issue of clarifying the connotation of ‘culture’, too⁵⁵. After the researcher explained that culture, according to the CEFR, could have a broader meaning, learners started to consider the possibility of expanding the range of its significance. This way, students began to compare their own culture to one of the Anglophone countries and began to consider how essential themes, like racism, sexism, disability and bullying, are dealt with in different societies. They started developing their intercultural competence, that, according to Byram, in its aims, include “moral or ethical education, education leading to action in the world”⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ Cfr. Duncan – Paran, *The effectiveness of literature on acquisition of language skills and intercultural understanding in the high school context*, p. 20.

⁵⁶ M. Byram, *Foreign Language Teaching and Intercultural Citizenship*, “Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research”, 1, 2013, 3, p. 59.

8. Conclusion

Theorists have stated the benefits of using literature to learn English as a foreign language, but the potential of this collection of studies has been underdeveloped because of the call for more empirical research. We have tried to show that, from several points of view, students were favourable towards the use of literature to learn EFL. Their beliefs were positively expressed, especially concerning the novelty of the project. They recognized an improvement in their linguistic skills, especially in their speaking skill and the expansion of vocabulary. Moreover, in their feedback, pupils appreciated the request to use only the foreign language in class and the motivation to speak that came from the interactive exercises. The aspect linked to motivation was also crucial to students. They were engaged by the topics, and this aspect turned out to be a surprise because they had not expected that literary topics could be so current and touch on their lives and experiences. Perhaps this came from the general idea that literature is only represented by the traditional canon, made up of famous, classic, award-winning literary works that often contain language that is difficult for a learner to comprehend and deal with topics that are far from pupils' reality⁵⁷. Supporters of the use of literature in EFL classes have indeed advised teachers to choose texts that are easily accessible to students, are related to their interests and can stimulate motivation⁵⁸.

The key point about motivation is that although students often say that their primary purpose in learning English is to be able to speak it, they don't talk readily in class and the discussion lesson "in which the teacher does most of the talking is still too prevalent"⁵⁹. The choice of topics which were motivating and the attainment of a positive atmosphere of trust within the group, where making mistakes was not a problem, promoted the exchange of personal information and confidence among students. In this way, the interactional authenticity represented a learning task that could bring about the same interactive processes which occur in spontaneous linguistic practice. Pupils appreciated that the teacher only spoke in English, which meant for them the request to use only the foreign language. The essence of the chosen literary texts connected pupils to concerns about literacy (reading and writing skills) as well as oracy (listening and speaking skills). This supported discourse skills and made language pleasurable and substantial for learners.

A very compelling finding was represented by the appreciation of the plays. Students thought that the most useful way of developing their speaking skills was through the play used in our learning plan. Students pointed out that they had not expected that reading and working on plays in class could be so enthralling. They very much enjoyed the role-play as well as having a 'different' type of lesson, both physically and logistically, in which there was no longer the conventional class space and pupils could communicate both linguistically and using a kind of Total Physical Response method to the linguistic stimulations, fully expressing themselves.

⁵⁷ Cfr. Van, *The Relevance of Literary Analysis to Teaching Literature in the EFL Classroom*, p. 3.

⁵⁸ Cfr. Lazar, *Literature and language teaching*, p. 198.

⁵⁹ R. Nolasco – L. Arthur, *Conversation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2015, p. 15.

Another noteworthy issue was linked to the development of critical thinking. In our rapidly changing societies, there is now a growing realisation that new approaches are needed to meet the ever-changing educational needs of pupils. Many scholars have recommended that schools should embrace the development of 21st-century skills, focusing on cultivating such abilities⁶⁰. Dealing with notable topics could introduce a range of benefits that affect the self-development of young students. These include raised self-esteem, increased confidence, development of transferable skills, sharpening of critical thinking, heightened ethical awareness, enhanced problem-solving abilities, more effective communication, development of independent learning, increased participation in other aspects affecting their adolescence and contribution to knowledge being valued. Overall, the benefits were holistic and, we hope, long-lasting.

A point highlighted by students was linked to the opportunity they had to write creatively alone and in a group. Hanauer⁶¹ stressed how the English language classroom has become dehumanized because of the desire to design language learning in terms drawn from the world of business management, in which abstract standards are imposed, and evaluation is tied to external standardized tests. Conversely, after our lessons, students found the creative activities engaging, and some pupils stated that this kind of exercise inspired them to start writing poems.

To an observational research concept based on a survey about people, we preferred research 'with' people. We chose to give them the right of speech, right not only to speak of themselves, of the contexts of learning, but also of interpretations. This way the observation not only uncovered objective data, but constructed sufficiently good interpretations of reality, whose strength lies fundamentally in their ability to be discussed, tested and accepted on the basis of a process-shared negotiation. The information and the tools mentioned represented means to help create exciting, engaging and effective activities for learners, which can be achieved by learning about, implementing and redesigning our teaching units to enrich the syllabus in the areas of creativity and innovation, collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving and communication.

With our research, we tried to analyse the advantages of the use of literature in language education and to respond to the need for empirical studies which could validate the theoretical positions regarding this issue. As far as we know, studies of this kind have never been carried out, especially concerning the comparison among three different literary genres, connected to three different aspects of competence and its relationship to students' beliefs, opinions and perceptions, observed in two different moments through pre- and post-tests. We found out that literary texts can support learners in the development of rich lexical representations and can promote creative speaking, reading and writing skills in TEFL. However, studying literature can be valuable in its own right, as well as being educationally

⁶⁰ Cfr. Saptuti – Salimi – Hidayah, *Research Based Learning (RBL): How to Improve Critical Thinking Skills?*, "SHS Web of Conferences", 42, 2018, p. 2.

⁶¹ Cfr. D. Hanauer, *Meaningful literacy: Writing poetry in the language classroom*, "Language Teaching", 45, 2012, 1, p. 105.

beneficial: it opens windows into other worlds, gives aesthetic pleasure and stimulates critical thinking, essential skills in an increasingly frenetic and globalized world.

Annex 1 - *Lesson plans*

School: Upper Secondary School (Scientific High School)

Class: Year 1

Approach: Integrated approach

Pre-Requisites: Present, future and past tenses

1. Linguistic competences. Students can:
 - develop the basic four linguistic skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing);
 - interpret the unsaid of the text;
 - read, enjoy and analyse a contemporary piece of literature;
 - explore the way that literature can work at different levels;
 - develop an aesthetic sense;
 - develop linguistic metacognitive awareness;
 - recognize essential structures of narrative, poetic and dramatic texts.
2. Competences related to intrinsic motivation. Students can:
 - recognise their own feelings and reactions in different situations and compare them with those of a character they have portrayed;
 - develop their empathetic and creative thinking;
 - develop their critical thinking and problem-solving attitudes;
 - take different points of view;
 - practice role-playing in order to better understand the thoughts, feelings, and motivations of others.
 - negotiate and cooperate with others in the creation of oral and written texts;
 - sustain a role with increasing confidence;
 - interact by listening to others' opinion, being willing to change their own;
 - learn by doing.
3. Intercultural and social competences. Students can:
 - see their own culture, stereotypes and prejudices from an external point of view;
 - identify the founding elements of civil partnership;
 - understand the motivations behind bullying behaviour;
 - prepare those who are being victimised by bullies to better deal with their situations.

In particular, the main themes dealt with in each teaching unit were:

Lesson plan 1. Prejudice vs hospitality policies – poem: *Mort aux chats*, by Peter Porter.

Lesson plan 2. Disability vs 'ordinariness' – novel: *Wonder*, by R.J. Palacio.

Lesson plan 3. Bullying and cyber-bullying – drama: *The Shape of a Girl*, by Joan Macleod.

The framework of the lesson plans consisted of:

4. Presentation
 - a. Warm-up (the teacher uses, as a trigger, something that is relevant to the lives of students and is linked into the texts).
 - b. The presentation phase starts with a bridge, i.e., a sentence that can connect the trigger of the warm-up phase to the text to be read.
 - c. Listening and reading of the texts.
 - d. Reading comprehension questionnaires.
 - e. Semantic field: in order to explain new words and expand students' vocabulary, the teacher proposes exercises to brainstorm words and expressions according to their semantic area.
5. Practice
 - a. The teacher provides exercises aiming at developing a more in-depth insight into the texts. Moreover, students can understand how texts are built from a formal and rhetorical point of view and how their eloquence is developed. In particular, the teacher tries to elicit the provocative intent or the hidden meaning contained in the texts proposing different options.
 - b. Analysis of the structure of the poem/novel/play.
 - c. Analysis of some expressions: through the denotative and connotative point of view, students are required to discuss together to find a literal, symbolic or emotional meaning in the texts.
 - d. Grammar corner:
 - i. Some grammatical rules are inferred from the texts and discussed in class.
 - ii. Written and oral exercises are presented to allow learners to practice the grammatical forms.
 - iii. Some questions related to the literary texts, containing the grammatical forms being focused on, are provided. Students are asked to share their answers in an open class debate.
 - e. Figures of sound and speech. This activity aims at introducing some poetical devices. Students are asked to find and create some poetic effects.
6. Production
 - a. Learners are asked to develop some written tasks related to the texts.
 - b. Role plays: in groups, learners are asked to create and act out a dialogue related to the topics dealt with in the texts, using the grammar structures learnt in class.
 - c. Class writing activity: Emotional words through Group poetry: students are required to write a collective poem.

Annex 2 - *Questionnaire for students**Questionnaire about Poetry*

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>N°</i>	<i>Question</i>
<i>Language</i>	1	Employing poems as a means of learning English can improve my listening skills
	2	Employing poems as a means of learning English can enhance my speaking skills
	3	Employing poems as a means of learning English can develop my reading skills
	4	Employing poems as a means of learning English can strengthen my writing skills
	5	Employing poems as a means of learning English can enrich my vocabulary
	6	Looking over some structures employed in poems can ameliorate my understanding of grammar
<i>Motivation</i>	7	Employing poems as a means of learning English can motivate me because they help me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings
	8	Employing poems as a means of learning English can motivate me because they help me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings
	9	Employing poems as a means of learning English can develop my interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings)
	10	Employing poems as a means of learning English can make me familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.)
	11	Employing poems as a means of learning English can reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language
	12	Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates me because poems normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.
	13	Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates me because poems deal with non-trivial topics.
	14	Reading poems in my English class can motivate me because they are authentic material
	15	Employing poems as a means of learning English is an enjoyable experience
16	Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates me because poems are usually concise	
<i>Culture</i>	17	By reading poems in my English class, I can be acquainted with the culture of Anglophone countries
	18	By reading poems in my English class, I can better understand my own culture

Questionnaire about Novel

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>N°</i>	<i>Question</i>
<i>Language</i>	1	Employing novels as a means of learning English can improve my listening skills
	2	Employing novels as a means of learning English can enhance my speaking skills
	3	Employing novels as a means of learning English can develop my reading skills
	4	Employing novels as a means of learning English can strengthen my writing skills
	5	Employing novels as a means of learning English can enrich my vocabulary
	6	Looking over some structures employed in novels can ameliorate my understanding of grammar
<i>Motivation</i>	7	Employing novels as a means of learning English can motivate me because they help me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings
	8	Employing novels as a means of learning English can motivate me because they help me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings
	9	Employing novels as a means of learning English can develop my interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings)
	10	Employing novels as a means of learning English can make me familiar with figures of speech
	11	Employing novels as a means of learning English can reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language
	12	Employing novels as a means of learning English motivates me because novels normally include values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.
	13	Employing novels as a means of learning English motivates me because novels deal with non-trivial topics.
	14	Reading novels in my English class can motivate me because they are authentic material
	15	Employing novels as a means of learning English is an enjoyable experience
16	Reading novels in my English class can help me understand different points of view because in novels reality is often seen from several perspectives	
<i>Culture</i>	17	By reading novels in my English class, I can be acquainted with the culture of Anglophone countries
	18	By reading novels in my English class, I can better understand my own culture

Questionnaire about Drama

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>N°</i>	<i>Question</i>
<i>Language</i>	1	Employing plays as a means of learning English can improve my listening skills
	2	Employing plays as a means of learning English can enhance my speaking skills
	3	Employing plays as a means of learning English can develop my reading skills
	4	Employing plays as a means of learning English can strengthen my writing skills
	5	Employing plays as a means of learning English can enrich my vocabulary
	6	Looking over some structures employed in plays can ameliorate my understanding of grammar
<i>Motivation</i>	7	Employing plays as a means of learning English can motivate me because they help me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings
	8	Employing plays as a means of learning English can motivate me because they help me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings
	9	Employing plays as a means of learning English can develop my interpretative and thinking skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings)
	10	Employing plays as a means of learning English can make me familiar with figures of speech
	11	Employing plays as a means of learning English can reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language
	12	Employing plays as a means of learning English motivates me because plays normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.
	13	Employing plays as a means of learning English motivates me because plays deal with non-trivial topics.
	14	Reading plays in my English class can motivate me because they are authentic material
	15	Employing plays as a means of learning English is an enjoyable experience
	16	Employing plays as a means of learning English motivates me because plays usually offer real lifelike settings
	17	Reading plays in my English class can help me understand different points of view because in plays reality is often seen from several perspectives
18	Reading plays in my English class can motivate me because I can find examples of colloquial and informal language	
<i>Culture</i>	19	Reading plays in my English class can motivate me because I can get an insight into social, political and cultural aspects of Anglophone countries
	20	By reading plays in my English class, I can better understand my own culture

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