

ÖĞRENME LİTERATÜRÜNDE EFL ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN MOTİVASYONU: ÖĞRETMENİN ROLÜ İLE ÖĞRENCİLERİN DEMOTİVASYONU ARASINDA BİR İKİLEM: İNGİLİZCE BÖLÜMÜ BİRİNCİ YIL ÖĞRENCİLERİ ÜZERİNDE BİR VAKA ÇALIŞMASI

ÖZ

Chlef Üniversitesi'ndeki İngiliz Dili Bölümü'nde; Cezayir, edebiyat bütün müfredat içerisinde temel bir öğretim birimi olarak kabul edilir. Edebiyat yoluyla öğrencilerin dil becerilerini öğrenmeleri, kültürel zenginleşmelerini geliştirmeleri ve kişisel katılımlarını arttırmaları beklenir. Birinci sınıf öğrencileri ile olan deneyimim boyunca, öğrencilerin “sevgi dolu” edebiyatta motive olduklarını gördüm. Bu araştırma, aşağıdaki soruya ikna edici cevaplar bulmak için birinci sınıf öğrencilerine edebiyat öğretmenin etkili yolunu araştırmak için yapılmıştır:

Bir öğretmen EFL öğrencilerini edebiyat öğrenme konusunda nasıl motive edebilir?

Soru, aşağıdaki hipotezi tahmin etmemize neden oluyor

Öğrenciler, öğretme şekli nedeniyle motive olmuşlardır.

Anketler ve sınıfın birkaç görüşmeye ek olarak gözlemlenmesi, öğrenciler ve öğretmenler arasında veri toplamanın ana yolu olacaktır.

Bu aynı zamanda, öğrencilerin istekli olmalarını, motivasyonlarını artırma ve edebi türlerin bazı eserlerinin bazı parçalarına hayran olma konusundaki yetkinliklerini artırma amacıyla EFL sınıflarındaki öğretmenin etkin rolünün altını çizebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Motivasyon, Edebiyat, Öğretmen, Birinci sınıf öğrencileri-EFL

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MOTIVATING EFL STUDENTS IN LEARNING LITERATURE: A DILEMMA BETWEEN THE TEACHERS'S ROLE AND THE STUDENTS' DEMOTIVATION. CASE STUDY: FIRST YEAR STUDENTS, ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

ABSTRACT

At the department of English language at the university of Chlef; Algeria; literature is considered as an essential teaching unit within the whole curriculum Through literature students are supposed to learn language skills, develop their cultural enrichment and, enhance their personal involvement Along my experience with first year students, I have found that students seem to be demotivated in « loving » literature. This research is carried out to investigate the effective way of teaching literature to the first year students in order to find a persuading answers to the following question:

How can a teacher motivate EFL students in learning literature?

The question leads us to predict the following hypothesis

Students are demotivated due to the way of teaching.

Questionnaires and classroom's observation will be the main means of collecting data among students and teachers.

This paper may also underline the effective role of the teacher in EFL classrooms in order to improving the students willingness, motivation, and stimulates their competence in admiring some of the literary pieces of differents genres writings.

Keywords: Motivation, literatüre, teacher, first year students- EFL

Cite (APA):

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, teaching and learning English as a foreign language in non-speaking English countries, has become highly significant since it is considered the most ubiquitous and widespread language becoming the most important language to people in many parts of the world. In EFL classroom, literature has been at the center of the curriculum of every educational institution. It is the focus of any English class instruction because it is considered as the framework of human development. It is a part of language learning, it is the essence of language teaching and learning. In the current curriculum, artistic literature has been included into the process of language teaching at the university level. Literature is the proper place where language gets the superb position. At the department of English language, Hassiba Benbouali University of Chlef, literature is considered as an essential unit of teaching, as the concept is scheduled by the LMD system, within the whole curriculum. Literature is a means to expanding language awareness, it encourages learner to develop attitudes towards learning a language. However, students, under research seem to be explicitly demotivated in « loving » literature. As a matter of fact, this research work seeks to explore the effective way of teaching literature to the first year students at the university of Hassiba benbouali, Chlef, Algeria. To realize these research objectives, the following peripheral questions are put forward:

How can a teacher motivate EFL students in learning and appreciating literature?

Why are first year students too demotivated to learn literature?

In order to answer these concerns, the following points are hypothesized:

It is hypothesized that students are demotivated due to the way of teaching.

It is predicted that culturally offensive texts are the main cause of such rejection.

LITERARY REVIEW

Literature in The New Encyclopedia Britannica is: a body of written words. The name is often applied to those imaginative word of poetry and prose distinguished by the intensions of their authors and the excellence of their execution » Miller (2002). Few scholars distinguish between literature with a capital L - the classical texts e.g. Shakespeare, Dickens - and literature with a small « l », which refers to popular fiction, fables and song lyrics John McRae (1994). The literature used in EFT classrooms today is no longer restricted to canonical texts.

Literature is related to « thoughts » and « feelings » which are portrayed in plain black and white. According to Mardoch (1950) literature is a world of fantasy, horror, feelings, and visions that are transformed into words. Additionally, literary texts are stories about people, animals, or events that are made up by an author. They represent the author's subjective and personnel reflections on reality, in the same stance with his artistic and emotional intent in transmitting thoughts and feeling. From the language teaching point of view, Arthur Baird states that "Literature is the use of language effectively in suitable conditions" (Arthur Baird 1968:203, cited in Turker 199:p-300). To him literary texts can be used in language teaching, because the language used in literary text is suitable for the contexts of the events. To sum up, literature plays a critical role in our life, often without our notice. It helps us to explore both ourselves and others, to define and redefine who we are, who we might be? In its best sense, literature is intellectually provocative as well as humanizing, allowing to use various angles of vision to examine thoughts, beliefs, and actions » Langer (1995 : 5) .

REASONS BEHIND USING LITERATURE IN AN EFL CLASSROOM

There are a lot of reasons behind the use of literary text when teaching and learning a foreign language; and one of them is that « literary works provided additional material of grammar practice, vocabulary learning, translation (Liaw 2001; cited in Khatib, Hossein and Rahimi 2012:p.32). Students can think about different possibilities in solving problems that occur in the text of particular literature as « literature, which speaks to the heart as much as to the mind, provides material with some emotional color that can make fuller contact with the learner's own life and can thus counter balance the more fragmental effect of many collections of texts used in the classroom » Collie and Slatter (1994)

Literature is a means to expanding language awareness, it encourages learner to develop attitudes towards learning a language. According to Duff and Maley (2007), «Literature is considered as one of the most motivating resources for a language learning ».

Among the purposes of literature, as highlighted in the previous definitions, the most important one is the use of language. Literature is a basic source for teaching basic language skills and areas. It can be fruitful in developing student's linguistic knowledge and enhancing the students' extension to enjoy reading literature; as a result they increase their reading proficiency. Literature may also promote students' understanding of a foreign culture and perhaps "spur their own creation of imaginative works. "In this light, Brumfit (1985) highlights that literature was a skill subject, not a content subject and stressed the potential of literature in enhancing the reading skills (p.277). Correspondingly, literature, for him, is viewed as a rich resource for language learning because literary texts contain lots of meaningful contexts in which linguistic components such as lexical items and grammatical structures are used in a natural way. Because of its timelessness and placeless, a literary text enhances students' motivation to read and push them to write about their reflections and interpretations of the read text, a matter that may improve their reading and writing proficiency as well as give them the opportunity to negotiate meaning. Admittedly, they will be able to be exposed to a variety of unexpected uses and types of linguistic expressions which may help them to develop their reading and writing skills, to practice a language, and develop their reading fluency, proficiency and writing in accuracy way through the transfer of reading and writing skills and strategies from the mother tongue to English, and so, via teaching specific skills, literature may increase the students' general understanding of language and their ability of reading and writing in English (Hedge, 1985). Giving these points, Gajdusek (1988) believes that a literary text may be used as a « means of enriching the learner's communicative competence. Throughout reading or enjoying a literary text, it can be possible for him to express his opinion when interacting with this text and then developing his speaking skill and his communicative competence. Through literature students are supposed to develop their cultural enrichment and, enhance their personal involvement. Literature opens doors for students , exposes them to new ideas and experiences, gives them unique perspectives, allows them to learn and to escape, entertains and informs, makes them ask questions, and ultimately, enriches their lives. In the light of this tight, literature is a basic source for teaching basic language skills. Ramsaran (1983) claims that the use of literature not only enriches linguistic understanding, higher language proficiency and development of creative skills, but it also contributes to literary appreciation. According to Wellek and Warren (1977:24) the term literature « seems best if we limit it to the art of literature, that is, to imaginative literature»; in this sense, it is used to widen student's knowledge of the English language and to be enjoyed. According to Duff and Maley (2007), « Literature as one of the most motivating resources for a language learning ». From the foregoing discussion, literature does not only educate students but also amuses them to

appreciate and enjoy other cultures and values. In short, one can say that literature serves as a dual purpose: It informs and delights. In brief « literature starts in delight but ends in wisdom ».

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Motivating students in learning literature is a hard task for EFL classroom teachers who are considered as a source of knowledge for students. Motivation is viewed as one of the major challenges teachers face in classrooms to create an effective learning environment. Given this oversight on the process of motivating students' learning English literature, it is commonly agreed that it is not easy to sustain, it needs both teacher and student motivation. It depends on both teacher's motivating in teaching and on student's motivating in learning literary texts. Teachers have an important role in enhancing their students' motivational level, since a student may arrive to the class with a certain degree of motivation, but the teacher's behavior, teaching style, the choice of teaching material, and the kind of interaction with the students; all have a large effect in determining the teacher's role in developing the students' attraction to foreign literary texts.

THE PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study are both teachers and students. The students are 60 first year informants at the Department of English. Aged from 18 to 20 years old male and female, they are from the same environment and have an equivalent language background. In Algeria, at the university students possess an important level of English language, since that, they have studied it before reaching the university for seven years. For sure, they pay handle long English texts, understand the topic aims behind them. Only 25 students representing one group of the first year level was the subject of in-class observation. The research was also supported by the participation of 20 teachers belonging to the same department, who have different years of experience, their age was between 30 and 50 years old.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

This research follows a mixed method designed, which includes both qualitative and quantitative research methods, such method involves both approaches to provide a much more detailed and comprehensive picture of that which is being investigated.

The qualitative data (classroom observation) are collected after the quantitative data collection for better understanding. In order to investigate the role of teachers in developing students' motivation and in what way it is correlated with the students' motivation level, the researcher used the following tools for data collection: A classroom observation: one class was observed, to record the effectiveness of the teaching method, how do students focus on the teacher's instructions, and the teacher-student relationship. Two different questionnaires were designed and administered to eighty informants; sixty students representing the three existing groups of the whole first year, and twenty teachers chosen randomly from the same department. However, only forty-seven of the students and fifteen teachers returned the questionnaire with full answers of the questions. Forty-five of the informants were females and seventeen were males, since that the number of females « students and teachers » within the faculty of languages is almost tangible, their age was between 18 and 50 years old.

The sample of the study are to provide their opinions and attitudes towards learning English literature as a significant unit of teaching. The questionnaire consisted of three sections, the first one is about the participants' age and gender, and the second one is devoted to test their attitudes towards learning English literary texts; while the last section is assigned to take an overview about the teacher's method and strategies in choosing and teaching literary materials. Therefore,

the researcher took the most important questions that have a great link with the peripheral questions.

The teacher's questionnaire aims at to explore their views and opinions about students' levels and the way of their teaching. The questionnaire consists of both open ended and close ended questions.

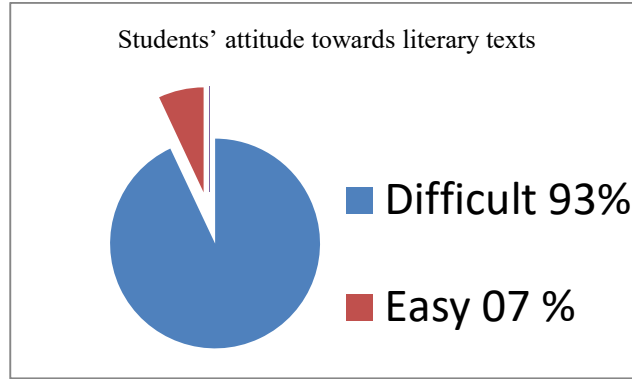
The study is limited to scopes of time, and location, sample of study was limited to first year students at HBBU in Chlef; the data were collected during the limited period of the time which is conducted in the first semester of the academic year 2018/2019.

THE PROCEDURES

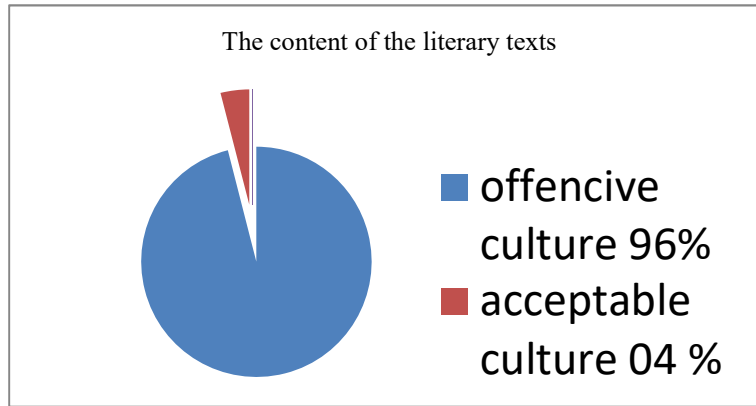
For the classroom observation the researcher attended the same class twice a week with the teacher in charge of Literature unit of teaching, and took notes regarding the teachers' procedure and the interaction of the students with it. The researcher conducted the questionnaire to the students of the same group who had been observed before. The questionnaire was given to the students in order to find out their attitude towards the learning situation, their opinion vis-à-vis foreign culture literary texts, and the kinds of literary genres they like /dislike? Lastly and most importantly the teacher's way of motivating them shaped in both positive and negative frames. Besides having observed the teacher in charge of the unit of teaching, and to support this research, other teachers took part by responding the handed out questionnaire in order to explore their teaching experiences and underline their strategies in motivating students accepting foreign literary texts.

DATA ANALYSIS

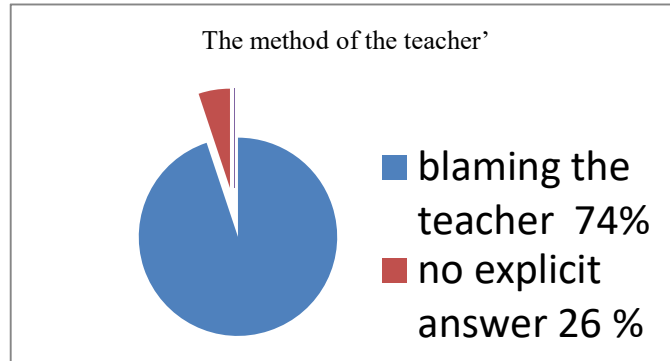
The findings of first section of the students' questionnaire that included their age and gender revealed that the age of participants is between 18 and 20 years old. Giving these points, one should inform that a common age of student's increases the student's interests vis-à-vis the text they read; very naive short stories for example may not be liked by mature learners, (Lazar 1993). When we look at the second section, the majority of the students '44' (93%) found that most of the English literary texts are very difficult to understand because of their authenticity. The '03' rest students said that they had no problem to understand those texts. In this light, Little, Devit and Singleton (1989:25) highlight that: authentic texts are often assumed to be more difficult for language learners to cope with than texts designed for language learners ». As a matter of fact, before choosing a literary text, teachers have to check the linguistic level of their students through a placement test which will reveal their actual platform before prescribing any literary text. Once again, a great number of the students '45' (96%) found those authentic texts a bit hedonistic, an over dose of an offensive and explicit culture that does not correlate with their –conservative- culture. Admittedly, this affects and belittles the student's personal beliefs and cultural conventions. This view is supported by Lazar (1993: 45) when he highlights that « it was pointed out that readers invariably interpret text in the light of their own world-view and cultural background ». In the third section related to the teacher's method and strategies in making his students admiring the joy of reading those literary materials ; '35' (74%) of the students explicitly blame their teacher's methodology in enforcing 'those' texts ; a fact that may never boost their reading ability. The other '7' students did not give explicit answers.



Graphic 01: Section 02 of the students' questionnaire



Graphic 02: Section 02 of the students' questionnaire



Graphic 03: Section 03 of the students' questionnaire

Admittedly, when attending those classes, I observed that their teacher gave them bunches of handouts and asked them to read them, checking difficult words via dictionaries, and try to decipher literary included images. It is commonly agreed that, to have students motivated, teachers should allow students to choose, or to dislike books. Think of it like Facebook students can give a “thumbs up” if they like it, or a “thumbs down” if they don't.

In the light of this tight, the teacher is to choose texts that may intrigue his student's interests at a snail's pace Carell (1988). Texts which are closer or similar to their own cultural values, or at least which are written by writers of the close culture, may be a good choice.

Regarding the teachers' questionnaires, most of them '14' (94%), keep grumbling about the weak level of their students, at different levels vocabulary, syntax, and semantics. And the last item of the questionnaire was about their opinions about cultural conflict when choosing a literary text! '12' (80%) claimed that an EFL student should have an eye on all what is different to his own culture. He may acquire a new language, a new culture, which is the culture of the target language. However, this may handicap their interest since it may represent an imposition on the learners' own "life space" Dornyei (2001:14).

Only '3' (20%) of the teachers raised the importance of adapting texts they are teaching in accordance with their students' own culture. Via comparative means utilized by the learner between his own cultural background and the acquired culture, he steps forward gradually to decipher the literary content, its hidden values and images.

RESULTS

This research clearly shows that learners have negative attitudes to literature learning. The method and strategy of their teacher contributed highly in the students' anxiety and in the decline of their motivation.

CONCLUSION

Literature doesn't only educate students but also helps them to appreciate, enjoy, and coexist with other cultures and values. The aim of this study was to gain information about the reasons behind students' demotivation in admiring the joy of reading literary pieces of writing. In order to assemble and build up adequate data, two questionnaires survey were carried out which revealed the main reasons behind students' less eagerness to enjoy literature. In the light of this tight, the focal point behind this research does not lie in students' rejection, but it lies in the ability to enhance literature learning strategies, a matter that undoubtedly falls on the teacher's shoulders. No doubt that, this pedagogical problem is not limited within the Algerian universities, scholars should make more researches throughout other universities and institutions. This study contributes in providing some humble data which reveal students' innocence in disliking literature. These data might help future researches to be dug deeper on the issue.

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