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İngilizce'yi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Öğrencilerin Dil Derslerinde Edebi Metinlerin Kullanılmasına Yönelik Tutumlarının İrdelenmesi
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Gauging EFL Learners' Responsiveness to the Incorporation of Literary Materials into Language Courses

Dr. Rahmouna Zidane
Tlemcen Üniversitesi, Dil ve Edebiyat Fakültesi, mouna_zde@yahoo.com; (ORCID: 0000-000X-XXX-XXXX)

Özet

Literatür İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenimin sürecinde farklı işlemleri yerine getirmektedir. Bu nedenle, sıklıkla bir modül olarak öğrenilmektedir. Bundan başka, dil ile ilgili mödüllerde bütünleşik bir dilsel kaynağı temsil edebilir. Ancak, bazı öğrenciler tarafından takdir edilmeyebilir. Bu çalışmada öğrencilerin dil derslerinde edebi metinlerin entegrasyonuna yönelik tutumlarını ve reaksiyonlarını incelenmiştir. Araştırma aracı olarak bir anket ve sınıf içi gözlemi kullanılmıştır. İncelemenin örneklemini İngiliz dili bölümünden 30 öğrenci oluşturmuştur. Toplanan veriler nicel ve nitel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular ışığında, öğrencilerin dil derslerinde edebi metinlerin kullanılmasına yönelik olumlu tutumları bulunmuştur.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Literatür, dil, reaksiyon, entegrasyon.

JEL Sınıflandırması: I21

Abstract

Literature performs various functions in the process of learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Although it is studied as a subject-matter, it can represent a linguistic resource that is integrated into the language related modules. However, it may not be appreciated by all EFL students. Therefore, the present study attempts to investigate the learners' attitudes and responsiveness to the integration of literary materials in language courses. It relied on the use of a questionnaire and classroom observation as instruments of gathering information from a sample of 30 EFL students. The collected data were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The main findings have revealed that most of the students respond positively to the literary discourse introduced in language tasks.
Keywords: Literature, language, responsiveness, integration.

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INTRODUCTION

Literature plays an important role in foreign language teaching. It is often taught as a module for the purpose of developing the learners' literary competence and writing style through the literary and critical analysis of poetry and prose. In other cases, literary texts are employed as teaching materials in order to promote language learning. However, their effectiveness depends on their suitability to the teaching context and the kind of effect they produce. Accordingly, the present study attempts to explore the EFL students' attitudes towards the incorporation of literary discourse in language courses. Moreover, it aims at eliciting the status of literary materials in the foreign language classroom. Nevertheless, the summary of the research findings has to be preceded by the presentation of a theoretical overview of the distinct positions towards the inclusion of literature in language studies.

Actually, different views exist concerning the intersection between literature and language studies. In fact, some scholars advocate the separation of literature from language teaching. Thus, the former is taught as a separate course to improve the learners' literary competence, creativity and critical abilities whereas the latter aims at promoting the students' linguistic knowledge in order to enable them to communicate effectively whether orally or in writing. This perspective is referred to as the language/literature dichotomy (Kramsch, 1993). It is based on the idea that literary discourse is complex and different from the ordinary one. However, language and literature are inseparable since the former represents the medium of the latter (Burke & Brumfit, 1986). Hence, the two concepts are interrelated. In this way, literature has a central position in the domain of language teaching; it is not only taught separately in a course of literary studies but it also constitutes an authentic material introduced in language courses for the sake of developing the students' linguistic skills. Therefore, this view regards literature and language as allies (Brumfit & Carter, 1986). Such an assumption is rejected by some scholars who claim that language instruction should rely on non-literary materials rather than literary ones (Kramsch, 1993). In reality, the two distinct perspectives justify the degree of variation in using literature

in language teaching throughout history. Consequently, literary discourse was advocated by some teaching methods while it was excluded in others.

From the mid 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, foreign language teaching aimed at supplying the learners with sufficient knowledge about the literature of the target language as well as developing their reading and writing skills. These goals formed the main principles of the grammar translation method which relied on learning activities urging the students to comprehend and translate literary texts (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Thus, this period was shaped by the view of literature as language. During the first half of the 20th century, the employment of literary texts as teaching materials focused on pushing the learners to read for leisure without requiring an analysis of the grammatical structures (Celce Murcia, 2015).

From the 1940's to the 1950's, the instruction of literature was disregarded as audiolingualism gave importance to the spoken language (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). During the 1960's, some humanistic approaches advocated the incorporation of literary materials in language teaching. For instance, suggestopedia favoured the use of didactic art including literature, drawing and music (Bancroft, 1999). Also, the silent way gave importance to the target culture and literature (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). However, by the end of the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's, literary texts were not really integrated into the foreign language classroom which was guided by the rules of the communicative approach (Little et al., 1994).

During the 1980's, the sociocultural perspective highlighted the notion of intercultural competence which could be developed through the study of literary texts. Accordingly, literature was regarded as culture. In the 1990's, it was considered as a resource. During this period, the whole language perspective focused on teaching language in contexts. Hence, it viewed literature as an authentic material that can be employed to develop the reading skill (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Consequently, the position of literature in language teaching has altered throughout different historical periods depending on the principles of the teaching method characterizing each era. It has been given importance within certain approaches while it has been

disregarded in others. Nevertheless, it is assumed that literature can constitute a suitable context for learning a foreign language.

1. LITERARY TEXTS AS LINGUISTIC CONTEXTS

Foreign language instruction aims at enabling the learners to use language in real situations. This implies that they have to produce appropriate discourse whether orally or in writing. However, language extends beyond the sentence level; it rarely involves decontextualized utterances. Thus, language teaching should be based on contextualization which implies the depiction of realistic language use through the exploitation of a theme and a situation embodied in a text to facilitate the presentation and elicitation of a linguistic context (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). This context may take the form of literary or non-literary discourse.

In fact, non-literary passages can be effective because they present ordinary language. On the other hand, literary texts may be more difficult to handle since they involve complex structures and tropes. Nevertheless, they may represent a meaningful context as they provide instances of everyday discourse and examples of the linguistic behaviour of the native speakers of the target language. Thus, they constitute authentic materials. Also, literature facilitates the students' recall of the provided information as it is interesting and creates emotional effects (Kramsch, 1993). In this way, it can help to develop the learners' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar as well as the language skills. It is a means of improving reading. Moreover, it can be used to make a distinction between the different genres like prose, poetry and letters; it can be exploited to give information about rhetorical devices like dialogues, description and narration. Literature can contribute to the study of language variations such as dialect, idiolect and jargon via the elicitation of examples of the linguistic varieties used in various literary genres. In addition, it may be a source of historical knowledge (Widdowson, 1999).

Furthermore, the literary text represents a cultural context as it depicts the behaviour of the native speakers of the target language; it portrays their ways of living, their thought and their beliefs. Hence, it helps the learners of a foreign language to get informed about the target culture. Indeed, literature can be widely exploited in language courses for the purpose of promoting the

students' linguistic abilities. However, it may not always produce effective outcomes within such a context due to a set of factors. In certain situations, the literary material may be complex and difficult to handle. In other cases, it may not be appreciated by the students. In fact, the learners' attitude towards the use of literature in the language classroom determines their degree of success or failure in understanding and recalling the taught input. This is why the present investigation attempts to explore the EFL learners' responsiveness to literary materials. Accordingly, the research design and findings are elicited in the next title.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The present study aims at providing information about the EFL students' awareness of the usefulness and effectiveness of employing literature for the purpose of developing their linguistic skills and knowledge. Also, it tries to elicit the students' reaction to literary discourse and their readiness to exploit literary texts to promote their mastery of the target language. In order to tackle these issues, this investigation focused on the study of the case of second year EFL students at Tlemcen University. The following research questions were asked:

1- What are the EFL students' perceptions of language and literature learning?
2- Do the learners favour the use of literary materials over the non-literary ones for learning the target language?
3- How do the students respond to the literary discourse integrated into language tasks?

The above questions led to the formulation of the subsequent hypotheses:

1- EFL learners perceive language and literature learning as enjoyable and accessible processes that may be sometimes challenging.
2- Although most of the students are aware of the impact of literature on language learning, they may favour the use of non-literary materials which are often exploited in language courses.
3- EFL learners may positively respond to the literary discourse integrated into language tasks depending on the content of the given text.

In order to validate these hypotheses and provide answers to the research questions, the researcher relied on gathering information from a sample including 30 students. These informants have been learning English as a foreign language for nine years. As second year students, they have studied language-related modules involving grammar, language skills, phonetics and linguistics as well as courses dealing with the target culture and civilization in addition to the literature module. The process of collecting data from the sample hinged on the use of various research tools.

3. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The main research tools employed for data collection embodied a questionnaire and classroom observation.

3.1. The Questionnaire

For the present study, a questionnaire was used to gather data from the sample; it was formulated as follows:

Students' questionnaire

This questionnaire aims at eliciting the EFL students' perceptions of language and literature learning as well as their awareness of the ways of exploiting literary materials for the purpose of developing their linguistic skills. Thus, you are kindly invited to answer the following questions.

1- How do you perceive the EFL learning process?

☐ Very Difficult ☐ Difficult ☐ Moderate ☐ Easy ☐ Very Easy

2- How do you assess literature learning?

☐ Very Difficult ☐ Difficult ☐ Moderate ☐ Easy ☐ Very Easy

3- Do you enjoy studying literature? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Justify you answer...

4- Do you think that you can develop your knowledge of language when reading literary texts?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, how?

....

5- What are the factors that often encumber your success in learning English?

....

6- What are the challenges you encounter in studying literary texts?

....

7- Which materials do you prefer to use for learning the English language?

☐ Literary materials

☐ Non-literary materials

Figure1. Students' questionnaire

Therefore, the questionnaire attempted to provide data about the students' opinion concerning the study of language and literature as well as their attitude towards the use of literary materials as tools for accumulating linguistic knowledge. In fact, the questions included in this questionnaire ranged from close-ended to open-ended items. The first and the second one were scaled-response questions that elicited the students' opinions about language and literature learning. The third and the fourth one represented dichotomous questions that explored the learners' attitudes towards literature and its influence on language learning. The fifth and the sixth question were open-ended; they concerned the difficulties faced by the students in studying the English language and literature. The last question was a multiple-choice item that dealt with the learners' preferable learning materials.

Thus, the questionnaire aimed at gathering both quantitative and qualitative data; it was administered to the students taking into consideration the principle of voluntary participation. In addition to the questionnaire, classroom observation was utilized as a research tool.

3.2. Observation

Classroom observation was employed for the purpose of assessing the EFL learners' responsiveness to the literary materials integrated into language courses. It also represented a means of evaluating the influence of the task content on the students' linguistic behaviour and interaction in the classroom. Actually, observation involved the practical phase of a course dealing with descriptive analysis within the module of linguistics. It focused on the use of literary discourse for the practice of linguistic description. Accordingly, three observation sessions were held. They encompassed the scrutiny of the participants' analysis of instances of English varieties provided in three distinct activities; each session concerned a single task. The first activity was formulated as follows.

Provide a linguistic description of the following statements quoted from Wolfram's 'The Grammar of Urban African American Vernacular English' (2004, p.117-125).

a- They acting silly
b- Sometimes they be playing games
c- She be there in a minute
d- They done used all the good ones
e- They done go
f- They seen it
g- They run there yesterday
h- Nobody don't like him
i- She ain't do it
j- It's they book

Figure 2. Task One

Hence, the first activity involved non-literary items represented in decontextualized utterances. On the other hand, the other tasks embodied literary discourse as it is illustrated below:

Generate a descriptive analysis of the linguistic variety involved in the subsequent lines of poetry extracted from Louise Bennet's poem entitled 'Colonization in Reverse' (1966, p.179).

Wat a joyful news, Miss Mattie,
I feel like me heart gwine burs
Jamaica people colonizin
Englan in reverse.
By de hundred, by de tousan
from country and from town,
by de ship-load, by de plane-load
Jamaica is englan boun.
Dem a pour out a Jamaica
Everybody future plan
is fe get a big-time job
an settle in de mother lan.

Figure 3. Task Two

Therefore, the second activity included three stanzas of a poem. However, the last task was based on literary prose; it is elicited in the following figure.

> Provide a linguistic description of the English variety employed in the following passage excerpted from Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876, p.14).
>
> "…Ole missis she tole me I got to go an' git dis water an' not stop foolin' roun' wid anybody. She say she spec' Ma'rs Tom gwyne to ax me to whitewash, an' so she tole me go 'long an' 'tend to my own business – she 'lowed she' 'd 'tend to de whitewashin'.'

Figure 4. Task Three

These tasks had to be answered in a written form but they were corrected collectively to give the students the possibility to express themselves orally. Consequently, it was possible to assess the students' written performance in each activity. Since the observed tasks constituted integrated activities that involved both writing and speaking, the assessment criteria revolved around the learners' appropriate linguistic description and proper language use; these features were elicited in a scoring rubric elaborated by the researcher as it is illustrated below:

Table 1. Students' Performance Evaluation Grid.

Criteria	Description	Score	Total score
Knowledge Application	- Very Poor	0	5 pts
	- Poor	1	
	- Limited	2	
	- Moderate	3	
	- Good	4	
	- Excellent	5	
Vocabulary Knowledge	-Very Poor	0	5 pts
	- Poor	1	
	- Limited	2	
	- Moderate	3	
	- Good	4	
	- Excellent	5	
Accuracy	-Very Poor	0	5 pts
	- Poor	1	
	- Limited	2	
	- Moderate	3	
	- Good	4	
	- Excellent	5	
Participation	-Very Poor	0	5 pts
	- Poor	1	
	- Limited	2	
	- Moderate	3	

- Good	4
- Excellent	5

Thus, the scoring rubric embodied four features; each criterion was scored on a six-point rating scale; these criteria concerned the learners' ability to undertake an accurate linguistic analysis of the features of the variety embodied in the given task in addition to their vocabulary knowledge, grammatical accuracy and participation.

Since the students' performance assessment was undertaken via observation, the following score sheet was employed.

Criteria / Score N° Student's name	Application Knowledge						Vocabulary Knowledge						Accuracy						Participation						Total Score
	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5	
01																									
02																									
⋮																									
29																									
30																									

Figure 5. A Blank Score Sheet

Hence, the researcher had the opportunity to furnish information about the students' ability to perform the activities and participate in the classroom interaction. Furthermore, observation helped to examine the learners' degree of enjoyment and interest, their capacity to express opinions and the mistakes they made. The gathered data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

4. RESULTS

The analysis of the collected data involved the use of descriptive statistics. Also, inferential statistics were employed for a single-sample hypothesis testing; for Likert-scale responses, a two-tailed t-test was conducted; a two-tailed z-test was utilized for dichotomous data; a two tailed t-test for paired observations was applied to check the significance of the difference mean concerning the observed tasks. In all these tests, the

predetermined level of significance was established at α=0.05. The main findings of the study are summarized in the next section.

4.1. Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire helped to furnish quantitative and qualitative data. Its results are elicited in the subsequent subtitle.

4.1.1. Students' Perceptions of EFL Learning

Regarding to first question, 17 learners representing 57% of the total number of the respondents, claimed that learning was an easy process; 12 students representing 40%, said that it was difficult to learn English. Hence, the majority of the learners confirmed the ease of learning the target language. This result is overwhelmingly significant (t(29)=5.11, p<0.001). In addition to their attitude towards language learning, they were questioned about their perception of literature learning. Their responses are presented below.

4.1.2. Students' Assessment of Literature Learning

Concerning the second question which required the learners to assess the ease of literature learning, four students representing 13% claimed that they found literature difficult to learn; 12 learners representing 40%, said that it was easy; 14 students, representing 47%, asserted that it was moderate to learn. In fact, this result is statistically significant (t(29)=2.11, p=0.04). The findings of the first and second question are summarized in the following Likert plot:
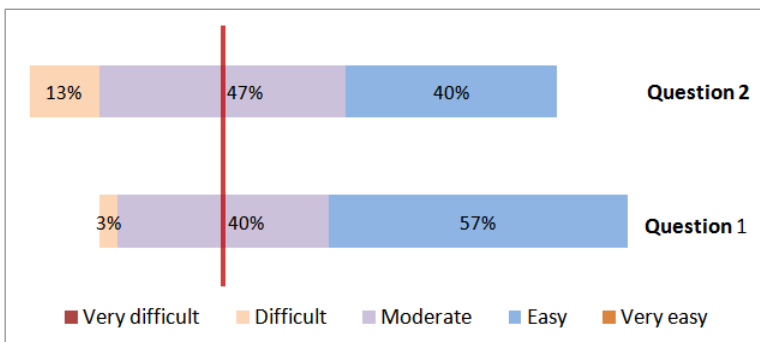
Figure 6. Likert plot of the students' perceptions of language and literature learning.

Therefore, EFL learners perceive language learning as an easy task. Moreover, they have approximately the same view concerning the study of literary discourse. Beside their discernment of literature learning, their degree of enjoyment of this subject-matter was elicited.

4.1.3. Students' Appreciation of Literature Learning

For the third question, 24 students, representing 80% of the total number of the respondents claimed that they enjoyed studying literature while the remaining did not find the study of this subject-matter interesting. In reality there is a highly significant evidence asserting the learners' satisfaction and enjoyment of literature courses (z=3.29, p=0.001).

When asked to justify their answers, the students providing positive responses claimed that literature was interesting and easy to learn. On the other hand, the learners expressing a negative attitude affirmed that they did not appreciate literary texts mainly due to the complexity of the language used in literature. Hence, it can be inferred that a few students display a lack of interest in reading literary texts. In addition to their responses regarding their enjoyment of the study of literature, the learners expressed their opinion about its impact on language learning.

4.1.4. Students' Perceptions of the Role of Literature in Developing Linguistic Knowledge

Regarding the impact of reading literary texts on linguistic knowledge, seven students, representing 23%, gave a negative response whereas 23 learners representing 77% answered affirmatively. Therefore, the majority of the students think that literature reading helps them to develop their knowledge of the target language. This result is highly statistically significant (z=2.95; p=0.003).

In order to check the students' degree of awareness of the impact of literature on language learning, the fourth question also urged the learners providing a positive response to state how they could improve their linguistic knowledge through reading literary texts. They replied by asserting that literature helped them to develop their understanding of vocabulary and grammatical structures, broaden their imagination and get informed about the

target culture. Some of them added that reading literary works gave them the opportunity to use the dictionary in order to search for the meaning of new words. The students' responses to the third and fourth question are illustrated in the following bar chart.
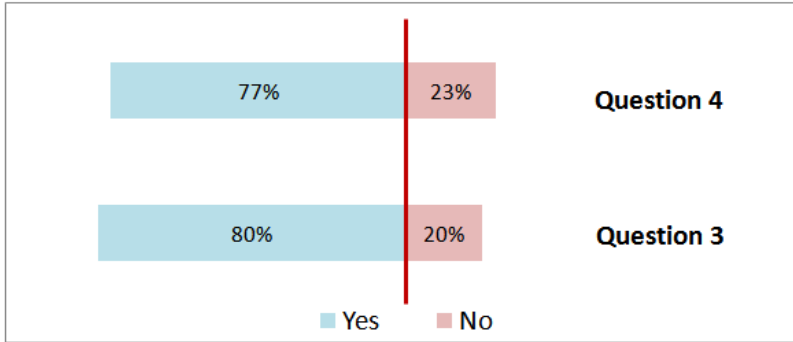
Figure 7. Bar chart of the students' attitudes towards literature and its use as a resource.

Thus, EFL learners enjoy studying literature and consider literary texts as a means of developing their linguistic knowledge. Furthermore, the respondents listed the difficulties faced when learning literature.

4.1.5. Challenges Encountered in Studying Literary Texts

When asked about the challenges they encounter in studying literary texts, the majority of the students (60%) mentioned the problem of vocabulary comprehension; they asserted that the new and unfamiliar words encountered in literary texts prevented them from grasping the ideas of the given passages. Some learners (15%) expressed their inability to understand poetry. A few of them (10%) pointed out the difficulty of studying prose as they found it hard to cope with details. Other students (15%) said that literary analysis, figures of speech and dialect use in literature constituted the main challenging aspects. In addition to these data, the learners gave their opinion regarding the difficulties of learning the English language.

4.1.6. Factors Encumbering the Students' Success in Learning English

As far as the factors that hampered their success in learning English, the majority of them mentioned the lack of vocabulary, writing deficiencies and

the difficulty of remembering grammatical rules. Some learners listed comprehension and pronunciation deficiencies. A few of them stated that their learning problems were due to the lack of practice outside the classroom. The challenges encountered by the students in learning the English language and literature are summarized in the diagram below.
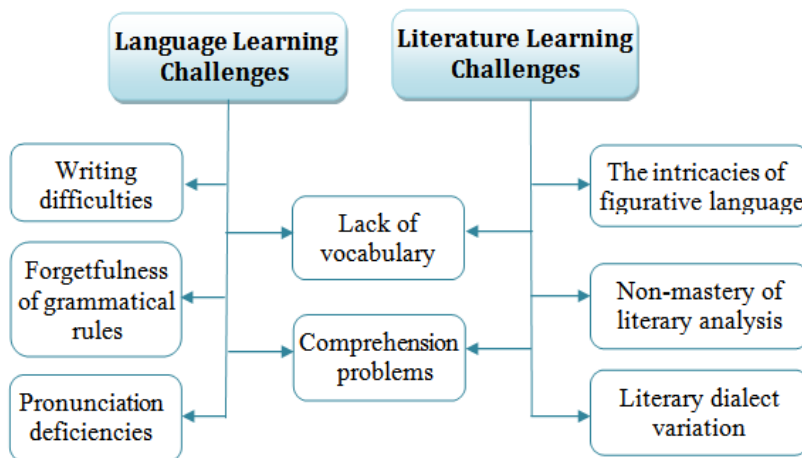
Figure 8. Diagram illustrating language and literature learning challenges

Hence, the lack of vocabulary and comprehension problems represent the most common difficulties encountered by EFL learners in learning the English language and literature. After enumerating their problems, the students elicited their opinions concerning the kind of texts they favoured.

4.1.7. Preferable Learning Materials

When asked about the types of materials they preferred to use for learning the English language, 21 students representing 70% opted for non-literary ones while nine learners representing 30%, claimed that they liked to employ literary materials. This finding is statistically significant (z=2.19; p=0.02).

Generally speaking, the questionnaire results revealed the students' positive attitude towards the use of literature in the language classroom despite their preference of non-literary materials over literary ones. In order to verify these findings, it was necessary to explore the learners' degree of

responsiveness to the literary discourse integrated into language tasks via the analysis of the data collected from the observational study.

4.2. Observation Results

Concerning the students' performance in the given tasks, 20 learners, representing 67%, performed well in the first activity (M=11.07, SD=2.38); the number of good performers in the second task was twenty two students, representing 73% (M= 11.70, SD=2.32). For the last activity, 18 learners, representing 60% performed well (M= 10.57, SD=2.03). The differences in the results of the students' performance in the observed tasks are summarized in the following table:

Table 2. Paired observations results

	Paired differences						
			95% CI of difference				
	M	SD	Lower	Higher	t	df	*p*
Pair1 Task 1- Task 2	0.63	1.27	0.16	1.11	2.73	29	0.01
Pair2 Task 1- Task 3	0.50	1.31	0.01	0.99	2.10	29	0.04
Pair3 Task 2- Task 3	1.13	0.82	0.83	1.44	7.58	29	0.00

Hence, the students' performance in the second task is better than the first one. The difference of means is statistically significant (t(29)=2.73, p=0.01). Their achievement in the first task is greater than the third one. The difference mean concerning these two activities is statistically significant (t(29)=2.10, p=0.04). The learners performance in the second task is better than the third one; the difference mean is highly significant (t=7.58, p<0.001). From the above results, one can infer that the degree of the students' responsiveness to literary discourse is acceptable.

Since the observed tasks were corrected orally, the researcher had the opportunity to observe the learners' verbal behaviour and interaction. Regarding the first activity, the students' participation was quite good; they provided responses and explanations referring to the rules of linguistic description already learnt in the courses related to language study; since the task involved decontextualized sentences, they were more concerned with

their successful application of the knowledge related to linguistic analysis. Concerning the second task, it was noticed that the degree of the learners' interest and enjoyment was higher than the previous task; their participation was good. The students dealt with the description of the linguistic features of the literary discourse involved in the activity. Moreover, they tackled the theme of the poem; the majority of them discussed the issues of colonization and immigration pointing out to the generalization of the fact that the people of the former colonized nations often immigrated to the erstwhile colonizing countries. They even mentioned the impact of colonization on language contact.

As far as the last task was concerned, the students were interested in assessing their mastery of linguistic analysis; their participation was satisfactory. However, they did not give importance to the linguistic context denoted by the given statements. In this way, they reflected an attitude that resembled their reaction towards the first activity. Hence, it can be stated that the learners are more active and eager to participate in the language task that presents an interesting or outstanding context that may be either literary or non-literary.

Concerning the types of errors made in writing, the majority of the students produced spelling and punctuation mistakes. Some of them failed in applying the grammatical rules of the target language including subject-verb agreement and tenses. A few of them generated incomplete sentences. At the level of the speaking skill, the most common mistakes were related to pronunciation, fluency and the lack of vocabulary.

5. DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The effectiveness of the integration of literary materials into language courses depends on various factors. First, EFL learners should have a good command of language to be able to understand the literary text. Also, they should find the study of literature uncomplicated and enjoyable in order to adopt a positive view towards the use of literary texts as language materials. Hence, the ease of learning language affects the way of learning literature as content which will engender a sort of influence on employing literary discourse as a resource. In fact, the questionnaire results revealed that the

responses of the majority of EFL learners highlighted the accessibility of the linguistic input and literature learning; they even asserted that they enjoyed studying literary texts. Nevertheless, they listed some challenging aspects that may hinder their success in learning language and acquiring literary knowledge. These findings corroborate the first hypothesis which postulates that language and literature learning represent uncomplicated tasks but they may be sometimes challenging.

Furthermore, the scrutinization of the set of difficulties listed by the students leads to the conclusion that the lack of vocabulary and comprehension problems constitute the main challenges faced when studying language and literature. Actually, these obstacles can be overcome through reading which is a means of acquiring new words and developing the other linguistic skills via a context. In reality, the perusal of literary texts can help to achieve these objectives. However, the effectiveness of such an activity depends on the awareness and willingness of the learners to exploit literature for the purpose of mastering the target language. In this respect, the data collected from the questionnaire elicited that most of the students are aware of the impact of reading literary texts on the improvement of vocabulary and grammar knowledge. However, they affirmed that they preferred to learn English through the non-literary materials. Such a result denotes the confirmation of the second hypothesis.

Although the students have asserted their awareness of the influence of literature on the acquisition of linguistic knowledge, they do not favour the employment of literary texts as a resource; such an attitude seems to stem from a habitual behaviour driven by the predominance of the use of non-literary materials in language courses. Thus, one may suggest that they may not react negatively when they are presented with literary texts for the purpose of studying linguistic elements. This conclusion can be drawn from the observation results. In fact, the students' performance in the activity involving poetry was higher than the other activities; their achievement in the task embodying non-literary items was good while it was acceptable in the activity that included literary prose. Consequently, literary materials can approximately produce similar effects as non-literary ones. Moreover, the

learners' level of participation in the second task was quite higher than the other two activities. Hence, the thematic context may have an influence on the students' degree of responsiveness to literary materials. These findings confirm the third hypothesis which assumes the existence of a positive response towards the literary discourse introduced in language tasks.

From the above results, one can infer that literature can be a powerful means of learning and teaching language. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the literary resources lies in their ability to arouse the students' interest. In fact, language teachers may employ literary discourse to achieve various teaching purposes including the improvement of the learners' vocabulary, linguistic skills and style. They can also use it to provide information about language varieties. However, they have to select interesting and appropriate texts that suit the learners' cognitive levels and increase their motivation to learn. In addition to this, teacher training should not only develop the educators' skill in designing and selecting teaching materials but also foster the sense of interdisciplinarity between language and literature. In this way, the teachers will manipulate linguistic items depending on the given context shifting from non-literary materials to literary ones when necessary.

CONCLUSION

Literature employs language as a means of expression. Thus, it can constitute a beneficial linguistic resource for EFL learners. However, it may not be appropriate for all contexts. Even when it can serve as a learning material, it may be disregarded by some language teachers who prefer to utilize non-literary items which will lead the students to adopt the same attitude towards the use of literary discourse for acquiring knowledge. Hence, the present study has attempted to explore the EFL learners' responsiveness to the incorporation of literary materials in language learning tasks.

The research results have led to the conclusion that the majority of the students enjoy studying literature and consider such a subject-matter as a valuable way of encoding vocabulary and grammar. Despite their awareness of its advantages, they favour the exploitation of non-literary items. Nevertheless, they seem to adopt a positive reaction towards the integration of literary discourse in language tasks; their degree of responsiveness tends to

increase once the given material furnishes a meaningful context that has the potential to raise their interest and make the learning and teaching process more enjoyable. This implies that language teachers can exploit literature for linguistic purposes but they have to know when and how to use it. Therefore, the selection of a comprehensible, influential and appropriate material is necessary.

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