

LITERATURE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING: TEACHER VERSUS STUDENT OPINIONS

VITA KALNBERZINA and DINA SAVLOVSKA

University of Latvia, Latvia

Abstract. Literary texts are returning to school curricula, albeit in a different format: digital and multimodal, in the form of audiobooks and films. Although the theoreticians like Ghosn (2002) and Khatib, Rezaei and Derakhshan (2011) have reminded us about the value of literary text in a language learning curriculum of advanced levels, the views in the classrooms differ as we can see in Ghazali, Setia, Muthusamy and Jusoff, (2009) research on the student and teacher reaction to the use of literature in language learning. Since Latvia is also undergoing curriculum reform, which introduces literary texts in language learning, this research aims at comparing the views of teachers and students on the use of literary texts. The content analysis of the teacher response suggests that their opinions on the benefits of reading literary texts are closer than they realise. The students, just like the teachers, do see the value of literary texts in studying language, learning about culture and developing thinking skills.

Key words: fiction, intercultural context, curriculum reform, language levels, content analysis, language learning

INTRODUCTION

Having been at the centre of traditional language learning for hundreds of years and having experienced almost absolute oblivion in the previous century, the literary text returns to foreign language classes. The return of fiction, however, exposes a controversy among the foreign language teaching specialists: see, for example, Ghosn's (2002: 173) list of reasons for including fiction versus Khatib, Rezaei and Derakhshan's (2011: 203-205) list of difficulties caused by using literary texts in language teaching in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Reasons for including literature in language learning syllabus versus challenges

Reasons for using literary texts in language teaching (Ghosn, 2002: 173)	Difficulties caused by literary texts in language learning (Khatib et al., 2011: 204)
Literature provides motivating and meaningful context for language learning.	Literary concepts and notions: unfamiliarity with literary genres and <i>conventions</i> .
Literature enhances <i>language</i> learning; that is, via literature the learners find an opportunity to see the best uses of language thus leading to an improvement in their language.	Syntax: difficult syntactic structures. Lexis: difficult or outdated vocabulary. Phonetics and Phonology: deviation from normal phonetic and phonological systems. Semantics: variety in meaning.
Literature enhances <i>academic</i> literacy and thinking skills.	Literature and Academic English: place of literature in specialised fields such as biology and zoology.
Literature develops the child emotionally and helps children promote interpersonal and <i>intercultural</i> attitudes.	Selection of Materials: many factors to take into consideration such as age and gender of the learners. <i>Cultural</i> Barriers: different cultural concepts.

As it can be seen from Table 1, while a literary text provides context for language structures by introducing a plot and characters who go through conflicts and solutions, the literary genre itself and its conventions can be unfamiliar to the students, thus creating difficulties at the beginning of learning. Another aspect that Ghosn (2002: 173) sees as a positive one is the richness of language in a literary text, while Khatib et al. (2011: 204) sees the complexity of structures and seldom used words as another barrier for language learning. The academic context can also be seen as an opportunity to develop thinking and literacy skills by Ghosn (2002: 173), while Khatib et al. (2011: 204) see it as a drawback for the teachers and the learners of biology, who are more concerned with practicality than aesthetics of the text. The fourth parameter that both authors comment upon is the emotional and cultural development, and here again both authors see the same object – cultural and emotional content – as an opportunity to learn (Ghosn, 2002: 173) and a barrier of understanding (Khatib et al., 2011).

To resolve this contradiction, between opportunity and challenge we would like to introduce Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and his zone of proximal development (ZPD) which is defined by Vygotsky (1978: 86) as 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers'.

Ghazali, Setia, Muthusamy and Jusoff (2009) also report on a study of the use of literary texts in language teaching, which they carried out in Malaysia, with 110 Form Five students. Their findings suggest the following: half of the students thought that the literary texts should be used in language learning

because it enhanced their motivation, allowed them to improve their grammar, reading, speaking and vocabulary, exposed them to the authentic material, created a meaningful learning/teaching environment. Ghazali et al. (2009: 54) found that 94 per cent of students preferred to choose texts themselves, 86.4 per cent of the students agreed and strongly agreed with the statement 'I would enjoy literature more if I'm good in English'. The most popular topics among students were mystery or investigative stories followed by adventure, science-fiction and fantasy because of their setting and storyline which were 'beyond their imagination'.

Thus, we can see that students in Malaysia consider literature beneficial for their learning if they are allowed to choose the texts to be read, and their language levels are appropriate for the relevant texts. This agrees with the findings of Khatib et al. (2011: 204) and Ghosn (2002: 174) that the language level of students must match the level of the texts to read, so that they can appreciate and enjoy the cultural references and let their imagination play a role.

Hall (2020: 7) proposes that language learners nowadays have multilingual, multicultural digitally mediated identities, and the use of literature can challenge learners to make independent interpretations of languages and cultures. Hall (2020: 9) contrasts the topics discussed by literary texts such as death, love, life, and relationships with the textbooks avoiding PARSNIP (Politics, Alcohol, Religion, Sex, Narcotics, -isms and Pork) developed by Gray in 2010. Literature is used by the teachers of different foreign languages: Piantanida (2020: 24) while discussing the role of literature in the Italian language learning stresses the role of literature in providing transnational perspectives in teaching intercultural competence, Crahay (2020) provides an example of how theatre can be used in French language learning from the earliest stages, Bohm and Magedera-Hofhansl (2020) discuss creative writing approaches to learning of German, showing how the reader gradually becomes the writer.

Puig (2020: 19), while discussing the challenges of foreign language learning and teaching reform in the UK, also mentions the use of literature: 'Literature is interactive and can take account of social context and student profiles, so students react and produce new meaning while also harnessing the tools provided by new technologies to communicate and share. In this case, the teacher becomes more of a facilitator who transmits enthusiasm rather than imparts information'. Thus Puig (2020) stresses the role of the teacher as a facilitator next to the student the interaction between which will be examined in this research.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Just like our colleagues from Malaysia and the UK, the teachers and students of Latvia have been going through a curriculum reform, and one of the elements that has been introduced into foreign language learning classrooms is the use of literary texts and films in addition to the traditional textbooks. Our research used

a teacher training course as our research context. The aim of the teacher training course, organised by the Ministry of Education of Latvia, is to prepare foreign language teachers for the new advanced language course aiming at enabling secondary school students of Latvia to reach level C1 (CEFR, *Common European Framework for Language learning and assessment, Companion volume*, 2020: 116), where one of the descriptors addresses literature and film use:

Can describe in detail his/her personal interpretation of a work, outlining his/her reactions to certain features and explaining their significance.

Can outline his/her interpretation of a character in a work: their psychological/emotional state, the motives for their actions and the consequences of these actions.

Can give his/her personal interpretation of the development of a plot, the characters and the themes in a story, novel, film, or play.

The new in-service teacher training course is built like a research project during which learners start by choosing a literary work to read and study together, while working on their language skills, studying the structures of the language through translation activities, work on multimodal texts (in particular the screening of the novel or play studied), exploring one of the themes identified in the book and carrying out research by exploring other documents related to the theme and to present their research during a conference. To find out what the teachers and their students think about the new curriculum, our research intends to answer the following questions: (1) How do Latvian teachers react to using literature in a foreign language class in high school? (2) How do students react to including literary texts in their curriculum? (3) Do the opinions of teachers coincide with those of high school students?

RESEARCH METHOD

Our research data was collected using Moodle platform during online teacher training course needs analysis stage. The teacher trainers provided 13 quotes from English, German and French sources in the online forum discussions. There were 183 teachers and 127 students, who were asked to choose a quote which best depicted their attitude to reading in general and fiction in particular and explain their choice. Here are the most popular quotes as chosen by the teachers:

- 1) 'A book is a version of the world. If you do not like it, ignore it; or offer your own version in return' (Rushdie 1990) – commented 46 times.
- 2) 'It is not all books that are as dull as their readers' (Thoreau 1854) – commented 42 times.

The teachers of the course were also invited to distribute the quotes in a Google form among their students and collect the student answers too. Most of the students commented the following quotes:

- 1) 'Literature is the most enjoyable way to ignore life' (Pessoa, 1991: 323) – 31 times.
- 2) 'You open a book; the book opens you' (Chinese proverb from Sealed book project) – 30 times.

Altogether we received 183 responses from the teachers (26182 words in English, Latvian and Russian) and 127 responses from the secondary school students (9467 words in English and Latvian). As we can see in our corpus the teachers wrote nearly 3 times more than their students.

Out of 183 teachers who participated in the online teacher training course, 162 reacted to the quotes chosen and explained their reasons for choosing the particular quote, 131 teachers wrote about their students, their lack of interest in reading and their lack of motivation and the fact that the majority of students do not think that reading is crucial for language learning. The teacher comments suggested that their students prefer short texts or videos, maybe due to the new social platforms like Twitter, Tik Tok, Instagram.

Most of the teachers have had experience in using literary texts in their language teaching classes, 126 out of 183, or 68 per cent of the teachers described their experiences using mostly fragments of literary works. Fifty seven per cent of the teachers wrote about their own relationship with literature, and their own love for reading, how it has changed, and how it helps them in teaching:

I have always liked reading, but there have been times in my life when I do not read a lot and also right now, I would like to spend more time on reading.

The type of books I prefer have changed during my lifetime, but I am sure we can learn something from every book and every author.

There have been books, which inspired me to travel and see the countries I have read so much about and ones which made me cry and feel miserable for people spending their lives in poverty and without any basic human rights.

ANALYSIS OF TEACHER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

Once we had extracted the text from the discussion fora and Google forms, we carried out content analysis. Stemler (2001) defines content analysis as 'a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding' (Stemler, 2001: 1). The teacher and student comments in this research will be analysed using the 4 categories established in the theoretical section of this article, as a result of comparison of

Ghosn's (2002: 173) and Khatib et al.'s (2011: 204) earlier research: the role of literary context and its conventions, language structures, academic interests and cultural contexts on a language learning process.

1 THE ROLE OF LITERARY CONTEXT

As we saw before, Ghosn (2002: 173) stressed the potential of the literary context in providing a motivating and meaningful context for language learning which should provide positive effect on learning, while Khatib et al. (2011: 204) suggested that the literary context will add to the difficulties of language learners. If we examine the comments of the teachers and learners in Table 2 below (here and in the following tables the original language and spelling has been preserved), we can see that both the teachers and the students are aware of the role of plot, characters in creating the literary context and its potential in providing new experiences (Comment 1), bringing joy (Comment 2) and created interest for students to go on reading, comparing it to film adaptations and discussions (Comment 3).

Table 2 Teacher versus student comments on the literary context

Teacher comments on literary context	Student comments on literary context
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. While reading a story one can be taken places where otherwise it would be impossible to go simply because there are too many variations of situations for us to experience (or want to experience) in our personal lives. This is what I have offered my students – analyse the <i>situations, characters, their relationships</i> and choices after reading a story (in reality only excerpts of stories). 2. I have used books in my lessons for years now as a home reading assignment that at the end of the term or semester amount to a book review or analysis. As well as constructing a 'reading lesson' once a week for the whole year, reading one book in the class together, <i>analysing what happens in each chapter, the characters</i>. Both ways of incorporating books in my lessons have brought joy to me and my students and have taught them a lot. I tend to use youth literature to keep the students interested, if I'm the one choosing the book. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Reading books, you go into another world, in another reality, and forget about everything that happens around you. Forget your problems and negativity for a moment. 6. I totally agree with this quote. Literature helps you to forget about problems because when you read a book, you completely immerse yourself in another world, imagine yourself in the place of the <i>characters</i> and kind of forget about everything around. Books help you understand yourself, learn something new and just get away from the boring routine. 7. Literature is truly magical and healing. I am not afraid to say that I love to read and that I have enjoyed every single book I have read. In every book, is it <i>mystery, fantasy or romantic novel</i>, has a true story, even if it's just a small part of 600 pages, we can find a true fact, a situation that has happened in the past and there is no lie at all.

Teacher comments on literary context	Student comments on literary context
<p>3. I haven't used literary works in my lessons much. These were mostly extracts from literary works published in the textbooks. Students got acquainted with the author and analysed the plot and the characters of the book. If students got interested, we sometimes also watched a film adaption of the book and had a discussion afterwards. I have also practiced reading aloud in the classroom and <i>discussing the events, characters and giving some background information</i> while reading. I must admit that students almost always got interested and wanted to continue reading and discussing.</p> <p>4. I love using literary excerpts to teach the English language as well as critical thinking, development of thoughts and ideas, and culture. In the textbooks used in our school, there are always pieces of what is considered good literature and I make sure to explore with my students at least some of them. This has led to good cooperation with teachers of literature, cultural studies and history. Apart from that, students are supposed to read a book of their choice in a semester. It used to be fiction, but now they can choose <i>fiction, biographies, chemistry textbook</i> or a graphic novel, as long as they are interested in what they are reading.</p>	<p>8. Every story that parents were reading or are reading for their kids, teach them how to divide <i>stories</i> from reality.</p> <p>9. Personally, books help me fantasize and turn myself into one of the <i>characters</i> in the book to empathize with every adventure they go through</p> <p>10. All books is dull.</p>

Not only teachers, but also students remark on the potential of literary texts to create imaginary worlds that allow us to escape the reality (Comments 5 and 6). Students also show familiarity with the different types of literary texts (fantasy, romantic novels exploring present day and past events and its effects on readers (Comments 6 and 7). Some students find books inspirational (Comment 8) while another one depressing (Comment 9). Comment 9 stands out not only because of its meaning, but also because of its shortness and grammar, suggesting that Khatib et al. (2011: 204) had his reasons for stressing the role of language level as students cannot enjoy the plot or learn anything if the language is too complex for them, therefore Table 3 will address teacher and student comments about language use.

2 LANGUAGE USE IN LITERARY TEXTS

The second category examined here is the role language plays when literary texts are used in language learning; see Table 3 for the comparison of the teacher and student comments on language use in literary texts. Looking through the comments it is easy to see that the primary role of English language classes is to study the language (Comment 1). Teachers are also aware of the different competences (lexical and grammatical) and different language skills that can be developed while teaching literature (Comments 2 and 3). Comment 3 is especially interesting as it suggests the active role students can take not only in the choice of the texts to be read, but also their willingness to take up a linguistic challenge. Comment 4 also suggests how discussing literary symbolism, morals and values depicted in texts not only expand student thinking, but also can be used for teaching vocabulary and developing interaction strategies.

Table 3. Teacher and student comments on language learning in literary context

Teacher comments on language use	Student comments on language use
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A teacher of a foreign language should always stick to teaching their subject – for example, English, not Literature, even though they both are “made of the same material”- language. 2. We have the practice at school to have home reading lessons for senior students. They are allowed to choose the book themselves. I believe that reading books improves students’ language skills, especially broadens their <i>lexical repertoire</i>, improves understanding of <i>grammar structures</i> and helps to develop their speaking, presentation and public speaking skills. 3. If I let them choose, then they choose a book that matches <i>their level of language</i>. Sounds risky because at first I thought they would just choose easy to read books, but most of the time when asked about the difficulty of the book they respond with something like ‘I wanted to challenge myself with this book and see if I could understand it.’ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Great writers will <i>play with words</i> so when you don’t take them literally, it has a whole new meaning and gives interesting ideas and insights on a certain topic. 6. I understand that due to the great job of parents, their personal love towards reading, their desire to explain their younger generation necessity of reading and finding treasures of everything deeply dug in books, only thus we can make our children read and find the beauty of language and knowledge hidden in them. 7. Lots of people who enjoy reading and are doing it on regular bases says that “Books have <i>strong words</i> which only the chosen ones can understand.” and I fully agree to this saying because when I finished my first book which was “Metro 2033” and after that played videogame based on the book I couldn’t believe that videogame creators cut out so much meaning things that was talked about in book. However, the game was amazing and after reading Metro I was fully interested on reading another book based on favourite movie or videogame but then I realized that there really aren’t that much out there.

Teacher comments on language use	Student comments on language use
<p>4. In our school students have to do book review presentations twice a year. During these presentations they introduce others with the book they have read, talk about symbolism, moral, values they have found in the book. Besides, it has to be done in an interactive way – involving the peers in discussion, asking to participate into different quizzes, crosswords, teaching them <i>new vocabulary</i> from the book.</p>	<p>8. When a couple of years ago, I was trying to find my first literature piece that wouldn't feel like a waste of time while reading it, I found it in Japanese manga. There is a lot to discuss regarding books and my experience with them, for example comparing different genres and mediums, comparing movies/tv-shows to literature, but I guess there is only space here for one thing, so I chose what in my experience was the biggest issue with <i>reading</i>.</p>

In contrast to teacher comments, which contain 15 comments on the role of literature in vocabulary learning alone, students mention vocabulary only 2 times, neither do they write much about grammar or words in general. The only exception is Comment 5, which clearly references the role of literature in learning the idiomatic use of vocabulary. Instead of discussing vocabulary and grammar, students write about reading in general, as it is mentioned 48 times in the whole corpus. Thus, we can say that literary texts are mostly seen by students as a tool for developing reading skills. It is interesting that secondary school students have not forgotten about the role of their parents in their reading skill development (Comment 6). They are also aware of the differences of language use in different modes of communication, see Comment 7 on the adaptation of a literary text into a video game. Another reference to visual texts and multimodality can be found in Comment 8, where the student compares reading a linear text to visual and animated text processing, thus demonstrating their familiarity with different types of texts and different ways of processing. The overall comparison between the teacher and the student views of language learning suggests that the teachers see language learning as acquisition of lexical and syntactic structures, while the students see it as acquiring skills and strategies while interacting with different kinds and modes of texts. Multimodality was not mentioned in either Ghosn's (2002: 173) or Khatib et al.'s (2011: 204) frameworks but was part of language learning framework in the *CEFR Companion volume* (2020: 51) where language use includes also

'multimodal activity typical of web use, including just checking or exchanging responses, spoken interaction and longer production in live link-ups, using at (written spoken language), longer blogging or written contributions to discussion, and embedding other media'.

These days multimodal texts are not only part of entertainment, but also professional and academic discourse and all the skills students have obtained while playing games can come in handy also in their academic studies, therefore they have to be kept in mind not only when discussing language competence in general, but also academic skills development, discussed in the next section.

3 ACADEMIC INTERESTS IN LITERARY TEXTS

Use of literary texts and fiction as a language learning medium for academic and thinking skill development was raised in Ghosn's (2002: 173) research and is also remarked upon by both teachers and students. Teachers mention different types of knowledge and skills that can be acquired while studying literary texts: art, drama, critical thinking, understanding human nature in general and satisfying one's own academic and future career interests in particular, see Table 4 below.

Table 4 Teacher and student comments on the use of literary texts in learning academic skills

Teacher comments on academic skills	Student comments on academic skills development
<p>1) The students who enjoy reading, mostly are interested in contemporary literature, young adult fiction and <i>self-help books</i>. Plainly speaking, they only read something, if it is connected with their interests or needs.</p> <p>2) I believe that literature should be taught. Literary taste, perception of different <i>art forms</i>, deeper understanding of <i>human nature and life in general</i> can only be supported by early reading sessions encouraged by parents and teacher.</p> <p>3) A couple of years ago I had an eTwinning project on <i>drama</i>, which appeared to be interesting for my Grade 8 students. Inability to take criticism, often drawn in response to expressions critical of something themselves, also demonstrates that the person could be lacking individual growth, as the statement is both hypocritical and immature. Factoring in power dynamics however, it is in most situations irrelevant what response the criticism provokes, as setting the score intends to prove a point and cause the person suffering,</p>	<p>4) I have experienced that a book is like a <i>psychologist</i>. Every time I read a book, I start thinking about the meaning of life or just the meaning of the book. Books have this habit of diving in places that are a taboo place in an everyday life. They make you think.</p> <p>5) Reading books opens up my outlook on <i>the world and its vision</i>. The books I read greatly influence my thinking and they reveal me as a person, as an educated person. Books make me who I want to be, because my consciousness opens up and I see the world brighter, in all its colours. I see the benefits of reading for myself because it is not so much a pastime, but also self-development.</p> <p>6) When I start to read a book, I always move to different world, I imagine that I am in the story and see the story from different perspective. It opens me up because I read each character's thoughts and understand their <i>way of thinking</i>. Also, it helps me to deal with the real life situations</p>

Teacher comments on academic skills	Student comments on academic skills development
<p>their voice not important enough to be heard. I think Salman Rushdie ought to be grateful both for being a person of consequence whose voice is very audible and the work attracting criticism (some of which is, no doubt, tragically exaggerated). It seems to create a space of openness, where individuals and their ideas matter.</p> <p>I think this quote is very thought-provoking for our own students, both in the context of literary studies and the proper <i>critical thinking</i> we are supposed to instil as we implement the new school programme. I will see to it that my students are exposed to this idea and have a chance to evaluate it critically.</p>	<p>later. In conclusion, book is not just like some way of entertainment it is so much more. Reading opens up a mindset to new possibilities and that is the best thing about it.</p> <p>7) When you are reading a book, it is just you and the book, so it is easier to concentrate only on the story of the book. Not only do you ignore your life, but you also build your experience, <i>develop thinking skills</i> and it also shows us the art of living, but most importantly, it inspires, motivates, and energizes us to work and achieve our dreams.</p>

The students, however, do not associate literary texts with their academic interests, but rather see the role of literary texts in the development of their thinking skills (Table 4, Comments 7 and 8), as well as a means of expanding their understanding of the world in general (Comment 6). Comment 5 proposes to look at reading books as a therapeutic experience that uncover unknown thoughts and even taboo topics, avoided by other means of communication. Thus, we can see that although students do not see the potential of literary texts in promoting their academic interests, they do see them as a tool of personal development, which could indirectly help in choosing their future academic studies and expand their personalities in general.

4 LITERARY TEXTS AND CULTURE

The last category of analysis here is the use of literary texts in acquiring cultural and intercultural knowledge and skills. If we examine the teacher comments, we can see the appreciation of the value of literary texts in learning about different countries, different cultures and traditions, see Table 5 below. The teachers also remark that fiction provides an opportunity not only to learn languages, but also promotes cooperation across subjects, as teachers of history and art can also be involved to develop a better understanding of the cultural context of the texts read (Comment 2). Comment 3 suggests the cultural possibilities provided by literary texts, but also comments on challenges, thus sharing the point of view that Khatib et al. (2011: 204) proposed, saying that unknown cultural contexts will add to the difficulty of understanding the texts read.

Table 5. Teacher and student comments on the value of literary texts in learning about cultures and traditions

Teacher comments on learning about culture	Student comments on learning about different cultures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I think learning English through literature is great! Thus, students not only improve their language, but also learn human values and gain knowledge about <i>different countries, their history and culture</i>. 2. I love using literary excerpts to teach the English language as well as critical thinking, development of thoughts and <i>ideas, and culture</i>. In the textbooks used in our school, there are always pieces of what is considered good literature and I make sure to explore with my students at least some of them. This has led to good cooperation with teachers of literature, cultural studies and history. 3. Even acknowledging the fact that literature, by focusing on human experience and encouraging self-expression, develops students' communication skills, also providing a better understanding of <i>English and American culture</i>, mostly teachers, me in particular, find it difficult to develop classroom techniques for its use 4. I am convinced that in every book it's possible to find different aspects and patterns of the countries, the people, their <i>culture and traditions</i> you are reading about. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. I really think that the people that read books have an advantage on those who doesn't because they can see things better from different standpoint and they can understand people in all kinds of situations. I believe that from reading books you can discover about <i>new cultures different types of people</i> and overall know more than those who don't read books. 6. A good book may <i>open parts of your brain</i> that you never even knew existed and unlock <i>emotions</i> you thought you never had. 7. I truly believe if people read a lot of books, they can <i>communication with more minds and souls</i>. Books are truly the entrance to another world, as well as a great way to increase your own personal development and re-lived many lives. 8. Books help us break out, let us think about things and actions that we don't think about or don't want to think about at all on a daily basis. They teach us about other <i>cultures, people</i> and many different things. I think books are important and I would recommend someone to read them from time to time.

Just like their teachers, students see the opportunities provided by literary texts in studying unknown cultures (Comment 8), but they talk more about their emotional response, see Comments 6 and 7, as well as seeing fiction as a means of creating new cultures in Comment 5.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the analysis of the teacher and student comments in Latvian education reform setting suggests that both the teachers and the students see the opportunities provided by the literary texts in studying language in literary context created by the plot and its characters, its specific stylistic means in mystery

and fantasy novels as well as romance. Both the students and the teachers see the specific literary context as a positive feature which creates interest and motivation for further reading and language study. The most interesting finding is the difference of language competence perception in the student and the teacher comments: if the teachers see the literary text as a means for expanding student vocabulary and syntax, the students see literary texts as a link to films and video games. Both these views are cumulative as language use depends on our lexical, syntactical as well as multimodal discourse competence, as suggested by the *CEFR Companion volume* (2020), but for a successful language acquisition process one would suppose that students and teachers should share the same language learning vision.

We can see that the opportunities proposed by Ghosn (2002: 174) in his research on the use of literary texts in language learning and teaching have been supported by the teachers and the students in Latvia, while the concerns expressed by Khatib et al. (2011: 204) were present less often than the opportunities provided by studying different literary texts, different cultures as well as exploring their particular academic interests.

We also found out that many teachers were avid readers themselves and therefore could share their passion with their students, although they were aware of the difficulties students might face because of the unfamiliarity of historical and cultural contexts, new vocabulary, and complex syntax. The role of parents was also stressed by both the teachers and the students: the comments in our research suggest that children appreciate their parent involvement in their literary exploits, but that could be a topic for another research.

REFERENCES

Bohm, A. and Magedera-Hofhansl, H. (2020) When the reader becomes the writer; creative writing approaches in the foreign language classroom. In A. B. Almeida, U. Bavendiek and R. Biasini (eds.) *Literature in Language Teaching, New Approaches* (pp. 69-76). Research-publishing.net. Available from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED608008.pdf>. [Accessed on 11 October 2022].

[CEFR] Council of Europe. (2020) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Available from <https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4> [Accessed on 10 October 2022].

Crahay, G. (2020) French creative theatre in a course for beginners: the case of 'Finissez vos phrases!' by Jean Tardieu. In A. B. Almeida, U. Bavendiek and R. Biasini (eds.) *Literature in Language Teaching, New Approaches* (pp. 77-85). Research-publishing.net. Available from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED608008.pdf> [Accessed on 11 October 2022].

Ghazali, S. N., Setia, R., Muthusamy, C. and Jusoff, K. (2009) ESL students' attitude towards texts and teaching methods used in literature classes. *English Language Teaching*, 2 (4): 51-56.

Ghosn, I. (2002) Four good reasons to use literature in primary school ELT. *ELT Journal*, 2 (56); 172-179.

Gray, J. (2010) The construction of English. *Culture, Consumerism, and Promotion in the ELT Global Coursebook*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Hall, G. (2020) Literature, challenge, and mediation in 21st century language learning. In A. B. Almeida, U. Bavendiek and R. Biasini (eds.) *Literature in Language Teaching, New Approaches* (pp. 7-15). Research-publishing.net. Available from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED608008.pdf> [Accessed on 9 October 2022]

Khatib, M., Rezaei, R. and Derakhshan, A. (2011) Literature in the EFL/ESL classroom. *English Language Teaching*, 4 (1): 201-208.

Puig, I. (2020) Literature in language learning in the UK context: from current A-levels to university In A. B. Almeida, U. Bavendiek and R. Biasini (eds.) *Literature in Language Teaching, New Approaches* (pp. 15-23). Research-publishing.net. Available from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED608008.pdf> [Accessed on 9 October 2022]

Piantanida, C. (2020) Transnational perspectives in the Italian language class: the uses of non-native literature to develop intercultural competence. In A. B. Almeida, U. Bavendiek and R. Biasini (eds.) *Literature in Language Teaching, New Approaches* (pp. 23-33). Available from. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED608008.pdf> [Accessed on 5 October 2022]

Stemler, S. (2001) An overview of content analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation* 7 (17): 1-6.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978) *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

LITERARY SOURCES USED


Pessoa, F. (1991) *The Book of Disquietude*, tr. Richard Zenith. Carcanet Press (p. xi).

Rushdie, S. (1990) *The Independent on Sunday*, <https://www.independent.co.uk> [Accessed on 10 October 2022].

Thoreau, H. D. (1884) *Walden, Life in the Woods*, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/205/205-h/205-h.htm> [Accessed on 10 October 2022].


Chinese proverb from Sealed book project <http://www.sealedbook.com/> [Accessed on 10 October 2022].

Vita Kalnberzina (Dr. Phil., Assoc. Prof. in Applied Linguistics) is working at the University of Latvia and the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia as an expert in the school reform project in curriculum development for the advanced foreign language level. Her research interests include intercultural communication, language acquisition and language testing.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4755-6973>

Email: vita.kalnberzina@lu.lv

Dina Savlovskā (Dr. Philol., Doc. in Applied Linguistics) is currently working at the University of Latvia and the Ministry of Education and Science as an expert in the school reform project in curriculum development for the advanced foreign language level. Her research interests include language acquisition, foreign language teaching methodology, telecollaborative projects and online learning.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0633-2965>

Email: Dina.Savlovskā@gmail.com