

UNIVERSIDAD DE MURCIA

ESCUELA INTERNACIONAL DE DOCTORADO

**LITERATURE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING:
STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' VIEWS**

**LITERATURA PARA EL APRENDIZAJE DE IDIOMAS:
PERSPECTIVAS DE ESTUDIANTES Y PROFESORES**

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2020

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank God for His benevolence and mercy.

This thesis would have never been written without the support and encouragement of several people to whom I am deeply indebted. First of all, I wish to thank my director and tutor, Prof. Pedro Férrez Mora, for tirelessly advising and rigorously critiquing me on my drafts, and Prof. Marina Bianchi, my other director, for having believed in my research and for her personal support which helped me overcome the many moments of frustration that the writing of a dissertation inevitably entails.

I wish to thank Prof. Valeria Caviezel, professor of statistics at the University of Bergamo, for her kindness and willingness to hold endless discussions in search of appropriate statistical solutions for my research. I wish to thank Prof. Francesca Costa, for giving me the opportunity to carry out my international Ph.D. as a visiting researcher at the University of Bergamo.

Thanks are also due to my students, both past and present, whose interest and participation in my work has been a source of encouragement and stimulation.

Finally, a special gratitude to my family. Thanks to my wonderful son for tolerating the endless hours I spent in front of a PC reading and writing, while he was asking for my attention.

Resumen en castellano

Los profesores de idiomas se enfrentan a la necesidad de involucrar y motivar a los estudiantes y enseñar de manera significativa. Una forma de lograr estos dos objetivos podría ser mediante la enseñanza de idiomas a través de la literatura. La investigación académica ya ha averiguado a nivel teórico las ventajas de esta interacción mutuamente beneficiosa y productiva, enfatizando cómo el uso de textos literarios puede ofrecer una rica aportación para la adquisición del idioma, además de motivar y desarrollar la competencia sociocultural.

Aunque en muchos contextos didácticos la separación de la lengua y de la literatura sigue siendo rígida (Bloemert et al., 2019), se han desarrollado muchos estudios para promover su integración en el contexto global de la educación en FL y L1 (Carter, 2015). Desde un punto de vista diacrónico, hasta la década de los cuarenta del siglo pasado, la literatura se adoptó ampliamente en la escuela en el ámbito del enfoque de gramática- traducción, que se usó para enseñar idiomas modernos de la misma manera que se enseñaban el griego y el latín. Sin embargo, el uso de la literatura en la enseñanza de idiomas comenzó a disminuir con el desarrollo de los métodos directo (1940-50), situacional (1950-60) y audio-lingual (1960-80). La disminución continuó durante los primeros años de aplicación del enfoque comunicativo (Carroli, 2002). Como consecuencia, el uso de la literatura como herramienta para aprender un idioma extranjero se volvió ajeno a las necesidades comunicativas cotidianas y fue considerado más bien como una práctica elitista (Carter, 2015).

Un nuevo paradigma que involucraba la integración del idioma y de la literatura surgió a finales de la década de 1980 como resultado de la necesidad comunicativa de usar materiales auténticos. Desde entonces, la posibilidad de mejorar la adquisición de la lengua a través de la literatura ha sido postulada por varios autores (Lazar, 2009).

Sin embargo, los estudios que investigaron empíricamente las supuestas ventajas son extremadamente raros. La ausencia general de investigación empírica fue mencionada por

Hanauer (2001, p. 317), quien confirmó que los argumentos a favor o en contra del uso de la literatura en ELT eran principalmente teóricos. Carter (2007) y Hall (2007) destacaron la necesidad de demostrar empíricamente los beneficios de la literatura, alegando que los teóricos habían tratado la presencia de la literatura en el aula de FL como natural e intuitivamente valiosa, pero nunca habían demostrado empíricamente su valor.

También es importante señalar que la mayoría de los estudios empíricos publicados hasta ahora se han llevado a cabo exclusivamente en entornos universitarios, como afirman Paran (2008) y Paesani (2011). Además, los investigadores han estudiado un solo género literario, generalmente la prosa o la poesía, mientras que ningún estudio ha comparado dos o más géneros. Una orientación basada en distintos géneros podría permitir la organización de un plan de estudio holístico y coherente arraigado en los textos, con el objetivo de desarrollar conocimiento lingüístico (Paesani, 2011). Además, comparar las dimensiones lingüísticas, socioculturales y motivacionales podría ser una herramienta útil para investigar a fondo las perspectivas y los beneficios (Férez et al., 2020).

Como Fogal (2015) y Férez et al., (2020) han subrayado, pocos estudios han llevado a cabo investigaciones basadas en una metodología exhaustiva que analice pre- y post-tests. Otras lagunas de investigación están relacionadas con la falta de trabajos científicos sobre las actitudes de los estudiantes hacia la literatura en contextos de aprendizaje de la L1 y de estudios que comparen las opiniones de los profesores con las de los estudiantes sobre el uso de la literatura para aprender la FL.

En los primeros capítulos de nuestra tesis presentamos un análisis diacrónico de las teorías que han planteado la enseñanza de la FL a través de la literatura y ofrecemos un examen de los puntos de vista de los teóricos sobre el tema, enumerando las ventajas sugeridas en lo que se refiere a la FL y a la L1, dividiéndolas en tres ámbitos diferentes: competencia lingüística, motivación y competencia sociocultural.

En relación con las ventajas relacionadas con la dimensión lingüística, una gran cantidad de autores han enfatizado la utilidad de la literatura para desarrollar las habilidades lingüísticas de los estudiantes. Duff & Maley (2007) declararon que la literatura ofrece una variedad de textos auténticos en una pluralidad de registros y estilos, y puede ampliar el vocabulario, la sintaxis y desarrollar la coherencia y la cohesión textual.

Acercas de la motivación, se ha resaltado que los textos literarios tienen el poder de incrementarla evocando y provocando emociones en los lectores. Otras fuentes de motivación residen en el uso de los materiales auténticos (Collie & Slater, 2009), en el hecho de que la literatura estimula la competencia creativa (Hişmanoğlu, 2005) y en su capacidad de desarrollar la originalidad, la sensibilidad y el pensamiento crítico de los estudiantes (Hirvela & Boyle, 1988; Bobkina & Domínguez, 2014).

Con referencia a las ventajas relativas a la competencia sociocultural, acercar a los estudiantes a la literatura es una forma enriquecedora que aumenta su conciencia de los diferentes valores, creencias y estructuras sociales, y estimula altos niveles de participación personal y conciencia cultural (Ur, 1991; Lazar, 2009). La literatura fomenta el desarrollo personal, porque ayuda a los alumnos a crecer como individuos en sus relaciones con otras personas y con las instituciones que los rodean (Floris, 2014; Das, 2014).

En nuestro trabajo, proporcionamos también una revisión de estudios empíricos que quisieron demostrar las ventajas del uso de la literatura en la enseñanza de la lengua extranjera y de la L1. A continuación, teniendo en cuenta las lagunas de investigación destacadas en la literatura empírica, identificamos tres objetivos principales que dividimos en objetivos específicos de investigación:

- Objetivo 1. Analizar las opiniones de los estudiantes del primer curso de educación secundaria (14/15 años) con respecto al uso de la poesía, de las novelas y de las obras teatrales en las clases de ELT, antes y después de experimentar unidades de aprendizaje basadas en los

tres géneros literarios, analizando qué género y qué ventajas –lingüísticas, socioculturales o motivacionales– los estudiantes perciben como más beneficiosas para su aprendizaje.

- Objetivo 2. Examinar las opiniones de los profesores sobre el uso de la poesía, de la prosa y del teatro como herramientas en la enseñanza de la lengua extranjera, antes y después de observar unidades de aprendizaje basadas en los tres géneros literarios, analizando qué género y qué ventajas –lingüísticas, socioculturales o motivacionales– los profesores perciben como más beneficiosas para el aprendizaje de sus estudiantes, comparando las opiniones de los estudiantes con las de los profesores.

- Objetivo 3. Investigar las opiniones de los estudiantes del último curso de secundaria (18/19 años) con respecto al uso de la poesía, de la prosa y de las obras teatrales en sus clases de inglés como lengua extranjera y L1, analizando qué género y qué ventajas –lingüísticas, socioculturales o motivacionales– los estudiantes perciben como más beneficiosas para su aprendizaje.

El valor de nuestro estudio estriba en que adopta un enfoque de método mixto para obtener una mejor comprensión de los fenómenos complejos, mediante la combinación de tendencias numéricas de datos cuantitativos y detalles específicos cualitativos. Para la recopilación de datos cuantitativos, utilizamos cuestionarios basados en una escala Likert de 5 puntos. Estas herramientas confieren estabilidad a nuestra investigación a través de muestras y análisis, y permiten evaluar la relevancia práctica de los resultados (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Para recopilar datos cualitativos, recurrimos a entrevistas, comentarios y observaciones escritas de los participantes.

Las herramientas de investigación metodológicas utilizadas han permitido proporcionar resultados estadísticos y explicaciones cualitativas detalladas. El comentario verbal ha agregado significado a los números y los números han agregado precisión a las palabras.

Con respecto a los estudiantes de primer curso de educación secundaria, demostramos estadísticamente que los valores medios de los post-tests son más altos que los de los pre-tests.

Por ende, nuestra intervención ha cambiado de manera efectiva y favorable las opiniones de los estudiantes sobre el uso de la literatura y los alumnos han empezado a considerar los textos literarios como una herramienta válida para aprender la lengua extranjera, para mejorar la motivación y desarrollar la conciencia cultural. Mediante los datos, observamos que la literatura puede tener un impacto positivo en la competencia lingüística de los estudiantes, especialmente a partir del uso de novelas y obras teatrales, pero también en su motivación para aprender la lengua extranjera y en el desarrollo de su competencia cultural. Entre las razones del cambio favorable de actitud de los estudiantes hacia la literatura, destacamos su entusiasmo vinculado con la novedad de un enfoque para el aprendizaje de idiomas basado en textos literarios. Después de la experiencia de exploración de textos literarios para la lengua extranjera, es probable que los estudiantes estén dispuestos a leer más textos; en este sentido, deseamos que su compromiso multisensorial con la literatura facilite un mayor y más constante acercamiento a la lectura.

Con referencia a las opiniones de los docentes sobre el uso de la literatura como herramienta para aprender inglés como lengua extranjera, al comparar los pre-tests y post-tests, demostramos estadísticamente que los profesores han cambiado favorablemente su opinión, empezando a considerar que las novelas, sobre todo, pueden ampliar el vocabulario de los estudiantes y mejorar sus habilidades de lectura. Además, tenemos que mencionar la considerable diferencia entre los pre-tests and post-tests con respecto al uso de obras teatrales para desarrollar las habilidades lingüísticas de los estudiantes. Probablemente, el cambio en las opiniones de los docentes se deba a la superación de la resistencia que a veces tienen acerca de la posibilidad de aprender la lengua extranjera a través de textos literarios, porque los consideran demasiado difíciles para los estudiantes. A menudo los profesores creen que la literatura no es adecuada para el aula de idiomas, por sus desviaciones de las convenciones y reglas gramaticales comunes del lenguaje estándar. Especialmente a través de los pre-tests, descubrimos que los profesores están estrechamente vinculados a la tradición y su visión de la literatura se limita al canon de las

grandes obras del pasado. La literatura que utilizamos en nuestro proyecto, en cambio, se extiende más allá del canon tradicional (Hanauer 2001) y se presenta como un recurso que requiere ser explotado, más que como un texto dogmático. Después de considerar la potencialidad de la literatura, la mayoría de los profesores se han dado cuenta de que los textos literarios representan modelos que los estudiantes pueden seguir para futuros usos del idioma y pueden fomentar la motivación por medio de actividades interactivas.

Al comparar las opiniones de los estudiantes y de los profesores, observamos que ambos consideran las novelas como el mejor género, tanto para el desarrollo de habilidades lingüísticas como para motivarlos. Las novelas se perciben como más útiles por su accesibilidad lingüística –normalmente, su sintaxis y su vocabulario no obstaculizan la comprensión inmediata– y literaria, vinculada a sus características narrativas y descriptivas.

En cambio, una diferencia significativa procede del hecho de que los estudiantes han apreciado especialmente el uso del teatro para desarrollar su competencia comunicativa, mientras que los profesores no han reconocido este género como muy útil para este propósito.

A través del último grupo de cuestionarios, analizamos las opiniones de los estudiantes de último curso de secundaria, quienes han afirmado que en clase no están acostumbrados a utilizar la literatura como medio para aprender la lengua extranjera y la L1. En sus comentarios en el pre-test, han hecho hincapié en que les hubiera gustado asistir a clases de esto tipo para mejorar su competencia lingüística, especialmente con respecto a las actividades finalizadas a la comprensión de sus emociones personales y de otras personas. Además, han afirmado que juzgan positivamente un nuevo tipo de didáctica que le animaría a profundizar en la literatura. Además, a pesar de que reconocen el valor cultural de los textos literarios, los perciben como lejanos a su realidad, por ser textos escritos en un pasado que les resulta ajeno. Finalmente, de los comentarios de los estudiantes del último curso, también descubrimos que el drama es el género menos valorado, tanto para la L1 como para la lengua extranjera.

La posibilidad de incluir el punto de vista de los estudiantes en la programación educativa puede tener un impacto positivo en la didáctica, porque la percepción de los estudiantes influye en la forma en que estos abordan el aprendizaje y, por lo tanto, en la calidad de los resultados efectivos.

Chapter 1. Introduction

The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.
Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*

Language teachers struggle every day with the need to engage and motivate students and to teach language meaningfully. A way of achieving these two goals could be by teaching language through literature. Scholarly research has sustained the advantages of this mutually beneficial and productive interaction, emphasising how using literary texts can offer rich input for language acquisition, can be a source of motivation, stimulate learning and develop cultural knowledge and understanding.

Even though in many contexts, the division between language and literature is still rigid (Bloemert et al., 2019, p. 8), several studies have been developed to promote this integration within the global context of foreign language education (Carter, 2015, p. 352). From a diachronic point of view, up until the 1940s, literature was extensively adopted in schooling by means of the Grammar-Translation approach, which was used to teach modern languages in the same way as ancient Greek and Latin were taught. However, the use of literature in language teaching started to decline with the advent of the Direct method (1940s-50s), the Situational method (1950s-60s), and the Audio-Lingual method (1960s-80s), as pointed out by Aydinoglu (2013, p. 35). This decline continued through the first years of the rise of the Communicative Approach (Carroli, 2002, p. 114). In these years (1980s), the use of literature as a tool for learning a foreign language was seen as “extraneous to language teaching and to everyday communicative needs and as something of an elitist pursuit and was replaced by more functional concerns” (Carter, 2015, p. 316). However, a new paradigm involving the integration of language and culture, with

culture including literature, emerged in the late 1980s and developed throughout the 1990s arising from the communicative need to use authentic materials in class. Since then, the possibility of improving language acquisition through literature has been posited by various authors (Collie & Slater, 2009; Lazar, 2009; Duff & Maley, 2007; Paran, 2008). However, studies that empirically investigate these alleged advantages are extremely rare.

The general absence of empirical classroom-based research was mentioned by Hanauer (2001, p. 317), who confirmed that arguments in favour or against the use of literature in ELT were mostly theoretical, and by Carter (2007, p. 11), who claimed the necessity to prioritize empirical investigation. The need to empirically demonstrate the benefits of using literature to teach English was also stressed by Hall (2007, p. 11), who argued that theorists had dealt with literature in the FL classroom as logically and intuitively valuable but had never empirically demonstrated its value. It is also important to point out that most of the empirical studies published so far have been conducted entirely in university settings, as stated by Paran (2008) and Paesani (2011), who complained about the lack of research in secondary school settings.

Moreover, it is significant to underline that researchers have usually studied a single literary genre in their inquiries, usually prose or, less frequently, poetry, while no study has ever compared two or more genres. A genre-based orientation could enable the organisation of a holistic, coherent curriculum entrenched in texts, with the goal of developing literacy (Paesani, 2011, p. 174). Moreover, comparing the linguistic, cultural and motivational dimensions could be a useful tool to thoroughly investigate perspectives and perceived benefits (Férez et al., 2020, p. 59).

In addition, as Fogal (2015, p. 66) and Férez et al., (2020, p. 61) have stressed, so far, not many studies have carried out research based on a thorough methodology built on a pre-test/post-test design. Other research gaps that we have identified are linked to the lack of studies

about students' attitudes toward literature in L1 contexts, and the absence of studies that compare teachers' views with students' views about the use of literature to learn a foreign language.

In light of the research gaps identified above, the present thesis has two main objectives. Firstly, it aims to examine the linguistic, sociocultural and motivational benefits of conducting ELT from three different genres of literary texts (poetry, drama and novels), as perceived by high school students and teachers. Participants' views are examined before, and after they experienced three lessons plans designed to explore the advantages of using poems, novels and theatre plays for ELT. Secondly, this thesis taps into high school students' views regarding how poetry, drama and novels have been used in L2 and L1 contexts when it comes to enhancing their linguistic and sociocultural competence and their motivation.

This thesis adopts a mixed-method approach with a view to gaining a better understanding of complex phenomena by combining numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data. More specifically, a mixed-method approach in applied linguistics provides, at the same time, the detailed nature (through a qualitative method) and the distribution of a phenomenon (through a quantitative method). As Dörnyei (2007) puts it: "Words can be used to add meaning to numbers and numbers can be used to add precision to words" (p. 45).

For the quantitative data collection, we used questionnaires based on a 5-point Likert scale. We carried out an in-depth statistical analysis with ordinal categorical data calculating and providing measures of central tendency, reporting the average effect size and any measure that could indicate the strength of our findings. These tools allowed us to endow stability to our research across samples, generalisations and analyses, allowing evaluation of the practical relevance of the research outcomes, as claimed by Mackey & Gass (2005, p. 283). The statistical analysis of ordinal categorical data is common in applied linguistics and has been carried out by Bloemert et al. (2016), Bloemert et al. (2019), Duncan & Paran (2017), Hanauer (2015),

Masbuhin & Liao (2017), Férez et al. (2020), Yang & Sun (2011), Vural (2013), Thenmozhi & Gupta (2016).

In order to gather qualitative data, we interviewed teachers and students, asked participants to write some comments to specific questions related to the lesson plans we designed and to provide observations about their experience using literature in their L1 and FL classes to elicit additional information.

The present thesis is comprised of 10 chapters. After the present introduction, the second chapter, “FL learning through literature. A historical perspective”, presents a diachronic analysis of the theories that have purported the teaching of the foreign language through literature. Starting from Durant’s (1995, p. 8) division among the different teaching strategies employed in teaching literature, we classified the different approaches of the teaching of the FL into three “conceptual phases”: “traditional approaches”, “functional approaches” and “discourse stylistics approaches”.

As for the “traditional approaches”, from the 1840s to the 1940s, the study of literature was seen as the primary goal of language teaching and considered more crucial than studying a language. Durant’s first phase could be related to the traditional Grammar-Translation approach, a literature-dominated approach.

The “functional phase”, spanning from the 1940s to the 1980s, witnessed a considerable paradigm shift, as literature was almost excluded from language courses since it was deemed to possess relatively little functional application. The approaches inspired by this phase mainly emphasised the semantic dimension of a message or text. Learning a language was mainly useful to understand and translate literature written in that language; this way, the language was seen as a static form, a closed system. Emblematic approaches of this kind were the Direct Method, the Situational Approach and Audio-Lingualism.

The “discourse stylistics approaches”, which belong to Durant’s third phase, emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s and were a reaction against the functionalism of the previous phase. During these years, linguists started to be alarmed by the lack of basic knowledge and skills detected among FL students (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014, p. 249). This issue gave place to an immediate need to introduce students to basic literary texts. The reconsideration of the role of literature in ELT was in line with the new requirements of the communicative approach. This new approach started to consider literary texts as the perfect realisation of its principles, namely developing communicative competence, which meant teaching students to communicate in the second language and taking responsibility for real, authentic, communicative situations. This entailed the need to study a wide range of texts, including selected literary works. This phase comprised the approaches which implied the chance of integrating language and literature.

In the following chapter, “Literature as a tool for EFL. A review of theoretical stances”, we provide an examination of theorists’ standpoints about literature, listing all the advantages suggested to date and dividing them into three different dimensions: linguistic competence, motivation, and sociocultural competence. This tripartite classification was first used by Duff & Maley (2007, p. 5) and then adopted by Férez et al. (2020, p. 58), who applied these dimensions to their empirical study and demonstrated its validity through a principal component analysis (PCA).

Advantages related to linguistic dimension

A plethora of authors have emphasised the usefulness of literature in helping students develop their linguistic skills. Duff & Maley (2007, p. 5), for instance, stated that literature offers a range of authentic texts in a variety of registers and styles, which can give learners an unequalled richness of inputs to expand vocabulary, syntax, and develop textual cohesion and coherence along with linguistic appropriacy. Another essential point was proposed by Hişmanoğlu (2005,

p. 63), who considered the richness and diversity of literary language useful in improving learners' communicative competence regarding both receptive and productive skills.

Advantages related to motivation

It has been highlighted that one of the main reasons to rely on literature is the motivation it instils in learners. Motivation can be increased through the power literary texts have to evoke and provoke emotions in readers. Literature entails considerable personal involvement and can leave permanent traces in students' memories through the sensations it awakens (Duff & Maley, 2007, p. 6).

Another source for motivation lies in the importance of authentic materials; in fact, through literature, learners are exposed to valuable materials that can represent standard models of language use (Collie & Slater, 2009, p. 6). This statement has its roots in the communicative approach to language teaching, which considered authentic material as a resource through which the goal of communicative competence can be achieved.

The creative power of literature has been valued by manifold theorists as a source of motivation, too (Hişmanoğlu, 2005, 58; Aghagolzadeh & Tajabadi, 2012, p. 208). Literature can increase students' originality and sensitivity, stimulate them to think imaginatively and improve their problem-solving abilities. Literature can also be a source of motivation for learners because it can enhance critical thinking skills, thus providing students with opportunities to understand themselves and other people better, as maintained by Hirvela & Boyle (1988, p. 181), Paran (2008, p. 56) and Bobkina & Dominguez (2014, p. 251).

Literary texts are also likely to be a source of motivation for the discussion and conversation that they can inspire, while, at the same time, developing learners' listening and speaking skills. Moreover, students might share their experiences and be stimulated by divergent individual realities since literary texts can be highly suggestive, with manifold meanings and associations

of ideas that could guarantee class debates (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014, p. 251; Das, 2014, p. 14).

Some texts can also have the potential to change attitudes and perceptions. Literature, when it deals with themes that are intrinsically endearing and intriguing, tends to lead students to increase their awareness of other people's needs, improve social skills and encourage personal involvement (Lazar, 2009, p. 118; Van, 2009, p. 8). Literature can, therefore, attract students' interest and trigger their enthusiasm for reading and debating because topics and themes treated in literary works are often part of the global human experience (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014, p. 251).

Advantages related to sociocultural competence

Exposing students to literature from other cultures could be an enriching and exciting way of increasing their awareness of different values, beliefs, and social structures; it could stimulate high levels of personal involvement and cultural awareness (Ur, 1991, p. 208; Lazar, 2009, p. 250). Literature could foster personal development in readers because it helps learners to grow as individuals in their relationships with other people and with the institutions around them (Floris, 2004, p. 3; Das, 2014, p. 16). This is a crucial educational aspect that tends to be missing from textbooks.

As previously mentioned, apart from tapping into the use of literature for EFL, the present thesis also aims to compare the use of literary texts when it comes to teaching the L1 and the L2, an aspect which has received very little critical attention when, in fact, it could help map out both scenarios and highlight the strengths which are worth transferring from one into the other language. To undertake such a comparison, we need to contrast how literature has been used for the L2 with how literature has been used for learning the mother tongue. This is precisely the main aim of Chapter 4, "Literature as a tool for the L1", in which we analyse the main didactic

methods used in the teaching of the mother tongue, and we recount the salient features that some theorists have pointed out as benefits of using literature in the teaching of the L1. Subsequently, in order to outline the advantages that critics have suggested about the use of literary texts for learning the L1, we try to be consistent with the division employed for the FL and divide them according to their linguistic, motivational, and sociocultural dimensions.

In chapter 5, we provide a review of empirical studies that aimed to demonstrate the advantages of using literature in teaching both foreign languages and the L1. After taking into account the research gaps that the review of the empirical literature led us to highlight, this study identifies three main objectives which, in turn, were broken down into specific research questions:

- Objective 1. Analyse the opinions of students attending the first year of high school (aged 14/15) regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama for EFL:
 - 1.1. What are students' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in ELT classes before experiencing lesson plans based on these three literary genres?
 - 1.2. What are students' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in ELT classes after experiencing lesson plans based on these three literary genres? Are there any changes in comparison to the views expressed at the pre-test stage?
 - 1.3. Taking into account both the pre-test and the post-test stages, which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, do students perceive to contribute most to their learning?

- Objective 2. Analyse teachers' views about the use of poetry, novels and drama as a tool for learning the FL before and after observing lesson plans based on three literary genres:

2.1. What are teachers' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in FL classes before observing lesson plans based on these three literary genres?

2.2. What are teachers' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in FL classes after observing lesson plans based on these three literary genres?

2.3. Taking into account both the pre-test and the post-test stages, which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, do teachers perceive to contribute most to their students' learning? Are there any changes in comparison to the views expressed at the pre-test stage?

2.4. Are there any differences between teachers and students, both at the pre-test and post-test stages, regarding their perceived usefulness of poetry, novels and drama for FL classes?

- Objective 3. Compare the opinions of the students attending senior classes in the same school (aged 18/19) regarding the use of literature in the Italian language subject (mother tongue) and in the English as a foreign language subject:

3.1. What are students' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in their foreign language classes and in their native language classes? Which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, do students perceive to contribute most to their learning, in their mother tongue and in their EFL classes? Are there any differences?

Chapter 6 is devoted to presenting the lessons plans that we used for obtaining our empirical data. Instead of including them in appendices, we give them this privileged position, since

designing lesson plans that could put the advantages theoretically proposed into practice is essential to infer and explore students' and teachers' points of view about the object of inquiry.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 constitute the empirical part of this thesis. More specifically, chapter 7, "First-year students' views on the use of literature as a tool for learning EFL", taps into students' opinions regarding the use of poetry, novels, and drama in ELT classes before and after experiencing lesson plans based on three literary genres. Taking into account both the pre-test and the post-test stages, we try to understand quantitatively and qualitatively which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural, or motivational, students perceive to contribute most to their learning.

Chapter 8, "Teachers' views on the use of literature as a tool for learning the FL" delves into teachers' opinions regarding the use of poetry, novels, and drama in ELT classes before and after observing three lesson plans based on three literary genres. We also try to understand, both quantitatively and qualitatively, which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural, or motivational, teachers perceive to contribute most to students' learning. Moreover, we try to detect any changes in comparison to the views expressed at the pre-test stage and to infer any differences between teachers' and students' views regarding the perceived usefulness of poetry, novels, and drama in ELT classes.

The chapter "Senior students' views on the use of literature as a tool for learning the mother tongue and EFL" (chapter 9) explores how 18-19 years old high school students perceive the use of poetry, novels, and drama in their foreign language classes and in their native language classes and on the differences between that use in teaching the two languages. In this chapter, we quantitatively explore results for the three genres under analysis; after that, data are analysed qualitatively for students' views about English and Italian literature as a tool for language teaching. Finally, a discussion that considers the different dimensions related to our investigation ensues.

The final chapter contains the conclusions of our research, some pedagogical implications, the limitations of the study, suggestions for further research which stem from this study and some closing remarks. The intent of this research and its application methodology comes from the desire to bring the actors of the educational activity to question the quality of the educational offer, in relation not only to the educational content but above all to different horizons of meaning which permeate human experience and which should inspire their educational action.

PART I

LITERATURE REVIEW AND LESSON PLANS

Chapter 2.

FL learning through literature. A historical perspective

Your deeds are like your monuments.
Built with memories instead of stone.
R.J. Palacio, *Wonder*

To refer to theories that have purported the teaching of the foreign language through literature, Durant (1995, p. 8) divided them into three “conceptual phases”: “traditional approaches”, “functional approaches” and “discourse stylistics approaches”. As for the “traditional approaches” (from the 1840s to the 1940s), the study of literature was seen as the primary goal of language teaching and considered more crucial than studying a language. Durant’s first phase could be related to the traditional Grammar-Translation approach, a literature-dominated approach.

The “functional phase”, spanning from the 1940s to the 1980s, witnessed a considerable paradigm shift, as literature was almost excluded from language courses since it was deemed to possess relatively little functional application. Emblematic approaches of this kind were the Direct Method, the Situational Approach and Audio-Lingualism. This second phase can be connected with a change towards more practical and “natural” trends in teaching English, based on the attempts to make the learning of the FL like the acquisition of the first language.

The “discourse stylistics approaches”, which belong to Durant’s third phase, emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s and were a reaction against the functionalism of the previous phase. They derived from the communicative language trends and emphasised the importance of studying a wide range of texts, including selected literary works. This phase is comprised of approaches which seek to integrate language and literature.

2.1. First phase: The translation of literary texts

Starting from the prescriptions of classical Roman scholars, in order to learn a language, students had to read Greek and Latin literary masters, like Homer and Virgil, and adopt them as models, studying and examining the syntax and the style contained in the works of these eminent, renowned authors. Since the Middle Ages, grammar has always been seen as the basis for learning the correct combination of the linguistic elements, for the teaching of both the first and the foreign language. The core of the classical standpoint was accuracy (Howatt, 1984, p. 134), a prominence still found in many foreign language classrooms today, and Latin was the language used to teach in schools (Fotos, 2005, p. 656). Throughout Europe, education was conducted in Latin, and grammar was deemed as the way to read classical texts, which were regarded as essential vehicles of moral education. The study of literature was appreciated not only for the acquisition of literacy and rhetorical skills but was also considered necessary for the development of public morality (Pope, 2002, p. 30).

During the eighteenth century, modern languages entered the curriculum of European schools and started to be taught using the same dominant procedures that were used for teaching Latin and Greek. Textbooks presented abstract grammar rules, lists of vocabulary, and sentences for translation, usually taken from the classics. The speaking skills of the foreign language were not the principal goal as oral practice was limited to students reading aloud the translated sentences, which were structured to exemplify the grammatical system of the language and therefore bore no relation to the language of real communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 6).

During the nineteenth century, this trend became the standard way of learning foreign languages in schools. A typical textbook dating back to the mid-nineteenth consisted of lessons organised around grammar points listed through rules on their use, which were explained and illustrated through sentences taken from literature. Textbook authors were mainly determined to

codify the foreign language into frozen rules of morphology and syntax to be explained and ultimately memorised. Speaking activities were reduced to an absolute minimum, whereas few written exercises were derived as a sort of appendix to the rules (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 6).

The Grammar-Translation approach, first known as the Prussian Method (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 5), emerged during the middle of the nineteenth century and followed the features of the classical approaches to the teaching of languages. As stated by Hall (2005), the final humanistic aim of this method was to “enable the student to read successfully the classic literature of the language” (p. 48), and teachers were supposed to present grammar rules while students were supposed to acquire the target linguistic patterns of the FL by practising grammar through translation exercises based on the reading of the classics. Since grammar-translation teaching was developed to teach Greek and Latin by means of the first language, it focused heavily on learning vocabulary and rote memorisation of syntax, morphology, and grammar rules. It hence viewed foreign language learning as consisting of little more than details to understand, morphologic and syntactic rules to memorise and assimilate. The student was considered a blank slate to chisel, a personality to “shape”, while the teacher was considered a source of information, a model to follow, an unquestionable judge. Language was seen as a set of rules that allowed students to transfer sentences from the maternal language to the foreign language, regardless of whether they were also conveying meanings. The first language was maintained as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language. Reading and writing were the primary foci, while little or no systematic attention was paid to speaking or listening. Vocabulary selection was based solely on reading literary texts, and words were taught through bilingual word lists, dictionary study, and memorisation (Kelly, 1969, p. 48). The student’s native language was used to explain new items and to establish comparisons between the foreign language and the student’s native language. The Grammar-Translation method

dominated European and foreign language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s, and it is still used in situations where there is little need for the development of learners' speaking skills. Teachers also assumed that, through the study of the grammar of the foreign language, students would become more acquainted with the grammar of their native language and that this acquaintance would help them learn their native language better.

2.2. Second phase: The exile of literature, from Formalism to Functionalism

As stated above, the Grammar-Translation method emphasised an idea of language as a system of forms which was focused on reading and writing skills. Learning a language was mainly useful to understand and translate literature written in that language; this way, the language was seen as a static form, a closed system.

The exile of literature from glottodidactics began with Functionalism, also known as the Prague School, which started as a formalist movement during the 1940s. Formalism emphasised the semantic dimension of a message or text and started from the assumption that language was an autonomous system (Zyngier, 2001, p. 371) and from the desire to see literature studied in a much more scientific way (Burke & Evers, 2014, p. 32). Formalists wished to conform literary studies with linguistics, focusing on formal observations carried out to analyse the different parts that comprised a text, like phonology, morphology, lexis, semantics and syntax. In doing so, they could pin down interpretative statements in well-founded textual descriptions. The formalists' strict attention to literature led them to treat it as a particular use of language which could achieve its peculiarity by deviating from and misrepresenting "practical language", that was, common, colloquial, everyday language. Case in point, Jakobson described poetry as "organised violence committed on ordinary speech" (Hall, 2005, p. 12). As a matter of fact, "practical language was used for acts of communication, while literary language had no practical function at all" (Lazar, 2009, p. 2).

Like Formalism, Functionalism was concerned with the text, but it was also interested in the role that context played in the process of meaning-making. With the advent of Functionalism in the Prague School, there was a gradual move from text to context, from form to function, from semantics to pragmatics and from logic to rhetoric (Canning, 2014, p. 45).

While formalists perceived language as an autonomous, static, closed structure, functionalists saw it as a means of exchanging information, a dynamic and open system (Ogbonna et al., 2014, p. 67). In functionalists' view, language was related to its social function, and its acquisition resulted from the development of social skills stimulated by communicative needs (Zyngier, 2001, p. 371). As literary texts worked by making a reader reflect over an unusual use of language and on the deviations from everyday contexts, which formalists defined as “practical language”, the approaches based on Functionalism removed the use of literature from their syllabuses:

Traditional views of literature as providing the language learner with access to the best language, to high culture, and to profound and accurate observations of life have been challenged in a number of ways this century. New emphases on spoken language and functional communication, together with a broader view of culture, have combined to detract from literature its unquestioned centrality. (Cook, 1999, p. 205).

Functionalist methods: The Direct Method (1940s-50s)

The tendency to eliminate literary texts from language classes to focus on teaching language skills started during the 1940s. Critics thought that literature lacked a communicative function and that it did not represent an authentic example of language use (Rahimi, 2014, p. 2). Thenceforth, it mainly disappeared from the language learning curriculum (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014, p. 249) because of the emphasis on the spoken language and on the functional needs linked to communicative demands (Di Martino & Di Sabato, 2014, p. 6).

The Direct Method was the first method inspired by the functional need to use language communicatively. Gouin was one of the first reformers to build a methodology based on the acquisition of the first language (Kelly, 1969, p. 114). Throughout the history of glottodidactics, attempts have been made to make the second language learning more similar to the learning of the first language. Starting from the work of Montaigne in the 16th century (Fotos, 2005, p. 662), some theorists tried to apply innate and natural principles to language classes, linked to contextual induction. During the nineteenth century, Sauveur used intensive oral interaction in the target language and his method soon became referred to as the “Natural Method” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 11). Sauveur and the supporters of the Natural Method asserted that a foreign language could be learnt without recurring to the first language if the meaning was conveyed through illustration and interaction. These natural language learning bases provided the foundation for what was known as the Direct Method.

Literally, the Direct Method received its name from the fact that meaning was to be conveyed directly in the target language through demonstration and visual aids, with no recourse to the students’ native language. This method became widely popular in the United States through its use by Sauveur and Maximilian Berlitz in successful commercial language schools, even though Berlitz never used the term, he referred to the method adopted in his schools as the Berlitz Method. The principles of the Direct Method were:

- instructions in the class were given exclusively in the target language;
- the focus was on teaching only everyday vocabulary and sentences;
- oral communicative skills were developed gradually around question-and-answer exchanges in small, intensive classes;
- grammar was taught inductively;
- new terms were taught through visual aids or association of ideas;
- correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasised (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 12).

The Direct Method was rather successful in private language schools, but despite pressure from its proponents, it was difficult to apply it in public secondary school education because it “overemphasized and distorted the similarities between naturalistic first language learning and classroom foreign language learning and failed to consider the practical realities of the classroom” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 12). It also lacked fundamental principles in applied linguistic theory (Fotos, 2005, p. 897). Among the adduced drawbacks, critics pointed out that strict adherence to Direct Method principles was often ineffective because the goal of trying to teach active and communicative skills was considered impractical in a social context in which the second language was mainly used for written communication and not for oral interchanges. Other issues stemmed from the limited time available for the second language teaching in schools, teachers’ insufficient skills, and the “perceived irrelevance of conversation skills in a foreign language for the average college student” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 13).

Functionalist methods: The Situational Approach (1950s-60s)

Literature had been banned from the Direct Method and, likewise, in the Situational approach it continued its exile from English teaching contexts. For the followers of this approach, oral skills with their peculiar structures were at the basis of language.

Situational Language Teaching was based on a behaviourist theory of learning (Richards, 2013, p. 11). According to proponents of this approach, structures were supposed to be linked to situations in which they could be used. Many linguists had emphasised the close relationship between the structure of language and the context and situations in which language was used. Firth and Halliday developed compelling views of language in which meaning, context, and situation were given a prominent place (Brown, 2000, p. 250).

Like the Direct Method, Situational Language Teaching adopted an inductive approach to the teaching of grammar. New vocabulary was to be given through explanation in neither the native

tongue nor the second language but was to be induced through its use in specific situations. In Situational Language Teaching, accuracy in both pronunciation and grammar was regarded as crucial, and errors were to be avoided. Spontaneous control of basic structures and sentence patterns were essential to reading and writing skills, and these were achieved focusing on speaking skills.

Functionalist methods: The Audio-Lingual Method (1960s-80s)

Starting from their work on teaching English as a second language and their involvement in language training for the United States Army, which led to the establishment of the U.S. Specialized Training Program, Bloomfield's and Fries' theories influenced the outset of Audiolingualism, a teaching method based on a structured oral practice approach (Howatt, 1984, p. 276).

The Audio-Lingual Method, like the Direct Method, was an oral-based approach. Nevertheless, it was very different from it, in that, rather than emphasising vocabulary acquisition by revealing words' meaning in contexts and situations, the Audio-Lingual Method trained students through the use of grammatical sentence patterns. The theories of reference for Audiolingualism were Bloomfield's taxonomic linguistics and Skinner's neo-behavioural psychology (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 71). The path to learning was characterised by deductive and behavioural teaching, based on a stimuli sequence followed by a response which could entail either confirmation or correction, aimed at the creation of automatic processes and mental habits. The student was considered a blank slate in the hands of both the teacher and the used devices (the tape recorder), while the teacher managed the language laboratory and corrected the written exercises. Language was considered a set of rules that should turn into living and authentic communication through the use of drills in the language laboratory. There was no stress on culture, which was treated as irrelevant. Teaching techniques consisted mainly

of structural exercises (pattern drills) based on a stimulus-response sequence and positive or negative reinforcement. The materials used were sequences of basic exercises, both written and recorded on tape.

The language teaching theorists who developed Audiolingualism were working in a period when the prominent psychological theories were represented by Behaviourism, whose proponents claimed to have found out the secrets of all human learning:

Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select—doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief and, yes, even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors (Watson, 2009, p. 82).

According to its psychological foundations, foreign language learning was basically a process of mechanical habit formation. Good habits were formed by giving correct responses rather than by making mistakes. By memorising dialogues and performing pattern drills, the chances of making mistakes were minimised.

Analogy provided a foundation for language learning, rather than analysis, which involved the processes of generalisation and discrimination. Explanations of rules were therefore not given until students had practised a pattern in a variety of contexts and acquired perception of the analogies involved. Therefore, the approach to the teaching of grammar was primarily inductive rather than deductive (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 57).

As the Audio-lingual method was based on Structuralism, it did not consider and interpret literary texts as useful in learning a foreign language. Literary texts were considered as individual entities hinging on the system of frameworks and social and historical background from which the works originated. Like Formalism, Structuralism asserted absolute objectivity in examining literary texts and refused the role of readers' personal responses in analysing literature.

Functionalist methods: The early years of the Communicative Approach (the 1980s - 1990s)

Some theorists observed that being able to communicate required more than becoming proficient in linguistic structures since language was fundamentally social (Halliday, 2007, p. 28). Therefore, students could know the rules of linguistic usage and at the same time be unable to use the language (Widdowson, 1984, p. 231). As stated by Hymes, in order to communicate, learners of foreign languages needed more than linguistic competence, they needed communicative competence (quoted in Cazden, 2011, p. 364). Between the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, such considerations contributed to shifting the trend from a linguistic structure-centred approach to a Communicative Approach (Savignon, 2007, p. 209). By applying the theoretical principles of the Communicative Approach, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) aimed mostly to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching. Klapper (2003, p. 33) underlined how, differently from other methods, the Communicative Language Teaching did not suggest specific classroom techniques, and so he suggested that teachers may perceive it as “fuzzy”. This vagueness has given CLT such flexibility that has allowed it to prevail for thirty years among language acquisition approaches.

The communicative approach in language teaching started from the basic tenet of language as communication, which was influenced by Hymes’ theory of communicative competence. According to Hymes, a speaker needs to be communicatively competent in a speech community (Hornberger, 2011, p. 314). This approach was also favoured by Halliday’s functional concept of language use. In several influential books, Halliday elaborated a valid theory of the functions of language, which consolidated Hymes’ views of communicative competence (Halliday, 2000, p. 109).

The profound headway introduced by the Communicative Approach was to select the necessary communication functions according to the requirements of the learners and not, as in the past, on the basis of a progression of increasing difficulties. In fact, it was a common practice

to present the arguments of lesson planning with a regular succession of rules and accumulation of data.

On the other hand, in the late 1980s, the humanistic-affective philosophy, a label that included a series of methods sometimes extremely different from one another, came in the form of a unique glottodidactic approach which shifted its attention entirely to the student and placed teaching-learning relationships at the centre of interest, contrasting with Chomsky's innatism and cognitivism. In fact, for Chomsky, the focus of linguistic theory was characterised by the abilities that speakers possess to produce correct sentences in a language. Such a view of the linguistic theory was considered as unproductive, because the linguistic theory was seen as part of a more general theory incorporating communication and culture (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 91). Therefore, language became a pragmatic instrument of communication and relegated formal correctness to a secondary role (Brown, 2000, p. 217), while emphasising the value of culture (Hymes, 1972, p. 285). The ultimate aim coincided with the development of verbal and non-verbal communication, with attention to increasing the autonomy of the learner during the learning phase (Tudor, 1992, p. 42). In this kind of affective humanistic approach, the real focus of the educational action was consequently the learner in his/her wholeness and with his/her interests and psychological, emotional and cognitive characteristics which allowed him/her to act and interact in a setting which was similar to the real environment (Brown, 2000, p. 89). He/she was the protagonist of the learning route and should be adequately motivated and stimulated (Tudor, 1992, p. 34).

Therefore, according to the Communicative Approach, at the starting point of the educational actions, there were the communication needs of the learner and the consequent primary role played by affectivity, the need for relationships, the factors that influenced the learning ability and the desire for self-realisation. This way, the student was no more a mere passive object of the pedagogic action, trained and "tamed" through a continuous series of pattern drills and a set

of grammatical rules. The mechanism of structural methods was mostly overcome by a global, authentic vision aimed, above all, at exploring the relationship between teacher and learner, which in many ways recalled the relationship between patient and psychotherapist (Nezhad & Vahedi, 2011, p. 330).

As far as he/she was concerned, the language teacher was responsible for:

- linking the development of the interlanguage to contexts close to the learner's direct experience;
- selecting activities and materials based on language and training needs;
- supporting the co-construction of knowledge by creating a facilitating and meaningful learning microcosm;
- triggering circular communicative events;
- leading students to reflection on how to learn;
- promoting accountability functions;
- considering errors as an opportunity for reflection, learning and promotion of knowledge;
- reducing or eliminating the affective filter;
- engaging the learner at every stage of the learning process through continuous negotiation.

Finally, the teacher should make the learner the real, undisputed protagonist of the teaching-learning process through suitable stimuli, turning language into a pragmatic tool, providing appropriate motivation. He/she should also be able to develop didactics of errors where deviation from the norms could become a resource and investigative tool for both the teacher (as a factor of dynamism) and the learner (allowing him/her to compare his/her own evolution of language acquisition).

Nevertheless, following the leading functionalist trend that emphasized functions rather than forms of language, at the beginning literature continued to be excluded from foreign language teaching syllabuses based on the Communicative Approach. In the syllabi based on this approach

“there was often no room for literature, which was regarded as elitist, remote, deviant and not authentic” (Hall, 2005, p. 59).

2.3. Third phase: The return of literature

During the end of the 1980s, linguists started to be alarmed by the lack of basic knowledge and skills detected among the students of languages (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014, p. 249). This issue gave place to an immediate need to introduce students to basic literary texts. The reconsideration of the role of literature in ELT was in line with the new requirements of the communicative approach that started to consider reading literature as the perfect realization of its objectives, namely developing communicative competence, which meant teaching students to communicate in the second language and taking responsibility for real, authentic, communicative situations. As pointed out by Gajdusek (1988), literature could provide the basis for intensely interactive, content-based EFL classes, while it had not “enjoyed the general resurgence of attention that our commitment to communicative teaching might have predicted” (Gajdusek, 1988, p. 227).

Therefore, literary texts started to be considered as authentic examples of language use and, after an extended period, from the 1990s, quite a few authors began to deem literature as a valid tool to be introduced in communicative language teaching syllabuses (Collie & Slater, 2009; Carter & Long, 1991; Lazar, 2009; Duff & Maley, 2007 [1990]). The expansion of communicative language teaching methods led to a reappraisal of the place of literature in the language classes with the acknowledgement of the core authenticity of literary texts and of the idea that more imaginative and representational use of language could be “embedded alongside more referentially utilitarian concerns” (Carter, 2015, p. 316). Moreover, some literary critics and linguists started to realize that reading was crucial to learning, which could not be considered

as an uncritical reception of an exterior erudition but rather as an exploratory construction of new knowledge (Nguyen, 2014, p. 174).

In 1975, a significant early contribution to the use of literature in glottodidactics stemmed from Widdowson, who, in his book, *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature*, distinguished between literature as a discipline and literature as the subject of study at school. He argued that the study of literature in schools should neither be literary criticism nor even be knowledge of all the history of literature. The study of literature should be a subject to be defined in terms of educational objectives to be considered as a temporary stage in view of further development, and literature should be part of a more general educational objective (p. 78). Widdowson's proposal was represented by the approach to literature through stylistics, which was a mediation between two subjects: English language and Literature (p. 81).

For Widdowson, linguists had directed their attention to how a text was the product of a linguistic system, and they had dealt with literary texts simply as texts. While literary critics researched deep meanings, trying to define the aesthetic vision at the heart of a work, they dealt with literary works as messages. According to Widdowson, stylistics, placing itself between the two disciplines, tried to explain how the linguistic elements of a text were combined to create messages and how the literary texts were a form of communication (p. 47). The stylistic approach coped with literature as a discourse, that is, how linguistic elements contributed to a communicative effect and used linguistic analysis to understand how the message was transmitted.

In the wake of Widdowson's statements, some authors began to proclaim the benefits that could arise from the use of literature in the teaching of EFL, advantages that non-literary texts could not provide (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014, p. 249). Further research was then conducted to develop language methods, strategies and techniques based on literature to support this new theoretical glottodidactic stance.

A first attempt to build an approach to literature in ELT was outlined by Louise Rosenblatt (1982), who defined two ways of reading literature: efferent reading and aesthetic reading (p. 271). By efferent reading, Rosenblatt meant an approach which focused on the public knowledge that a reader could take away from a text. This process included the plot of a novel, the characters in a play, and the literary devices, such as the use of rhyme, metre and stanzas in poetry. Through efferent reading, the learner was supposed to focus on the linguistic components of the texts and could develop his/her socio-linguistic skills and could better acquire the “environing language system” (p. 274), reinforcing linguistic processes. By aesthetic reading, Rosenblatt meant the personal, private engagement of the reader with literature: the immersion in a novel which we could find by personally engaging with it; the feeling that the world outside disappeared while we were watching a play, the sense of sympathy or empathy which we experienced when reading a particularly touching poem. Through aesthetic reading, the learners, in a receptive, relaxed, laid-back attitude, could be unfettered and enjoy a pleasant apprehension of literature, without worrying about future demands. The learner could also feel free to use spontaneous nonverbal and verbal expressions during the lesson. These expressions were considered by the author as blended signs of participation and reactions to the analysed texts, which could “detach a sense of the public meaning of a verbal symbol from its personal organismic matrix” (p. 274). The difference formulated by Rosenblatt between efferent reading and aesthetic reading could direct the reader toward his/her personal reactions to the text during the reading phase and reveal the dialogic nature of reading and meaning-making (Kramsch & Nolden, 1994, p. 29).

Rosenblatt has been referred to as the earliest representative of what was termed Reader-Response theory. The influence of Reader Response Theory as a critical movement became pronounced in the 1980s, as more writers reacted to the dominant formalist paradigm by placing a new emphasis on the role of the reader. Instead of ignoring the reader, or considering his/her responses cluttered and idiosyncratic, reader-response theorists put readers squarely in the centre

of discussions of textual meaning by focusing on readers' acts of interpretation (Riddle Harding, 2014, p. 68). As literature provided exemplary models which were valuable to understand texts as paradigmatic catalogues, the reader-response theory could represent the "synthesis of the elements of a narrative text as a syntagmatic progression" (MacDonald et al., 2009, p. 117). The foreign language reader, through the reader-response approach, could consistently combine the different perspectives of a text, perceiving the linguistic norms and developing a new understanding of the cultural meanings.

Another useful approach based on literature is "schema theory". The idea that humans use a schematized representation of detailed experiences as a tool for negotiating similar experiences has an ancient tradition. However, modern schema-theory found its origin in the experiments of the 1960s, to create artificial intelligence which could possess a sort of linguistic competence, a linguistic frame coming from a "script", a predictable sequence of linguistic procedures (Stockwell, 2006, p. 9). According to schema-theory, meanings, inferred from individual sentences, are integrated into larger semantic wholes, and sentences that are consistent with an integrated representation are deemed to be part of an original design (Alba & Hasher, 1983, p. 211). In line with schema-theory, some expressions, used in literary texts, could differ from the stylistic habits of speakers, from aspects of language to which listeners were likely to be used and perceptive (Alba & Hasher, 1983, p. 215). However, while schema theory stressed the common traits in language use, high-quality literature was supposed to be based on uniqueness, on the power to "defamiliarize the world and show it refreshed" (Stockwell, 2006, p. 11), a peculiarity that was regarded as the distinguishing feature of good literature. According to Cook (1990, p. 235), Semino (1995, p. 8), and Stockwell (2006, p. 11-12), in discussing literariness, schema theory could be divided into three types of schema occurrence: world schemas, text schemas, language schemas. World schemas were representations of the knowledge of the world, concerned with conceptual content, different from the knowledge of the text or language. Text

schemas represented knowledge of typical text structures, while language schemas provided us with expectations of the appropriate linguistic and pragmatic features in which the world was articulated. A reader's feeling that the text structure with its linguistic choices was normal or deviant derived from a comparison of the text structure and its language with the reader's pre-existing text and language schemata (Cook, 1990, p. 235). This way, schema theory could connect the theoretical contents with the linguistic structures (Stockwell, 2006, p. 12).

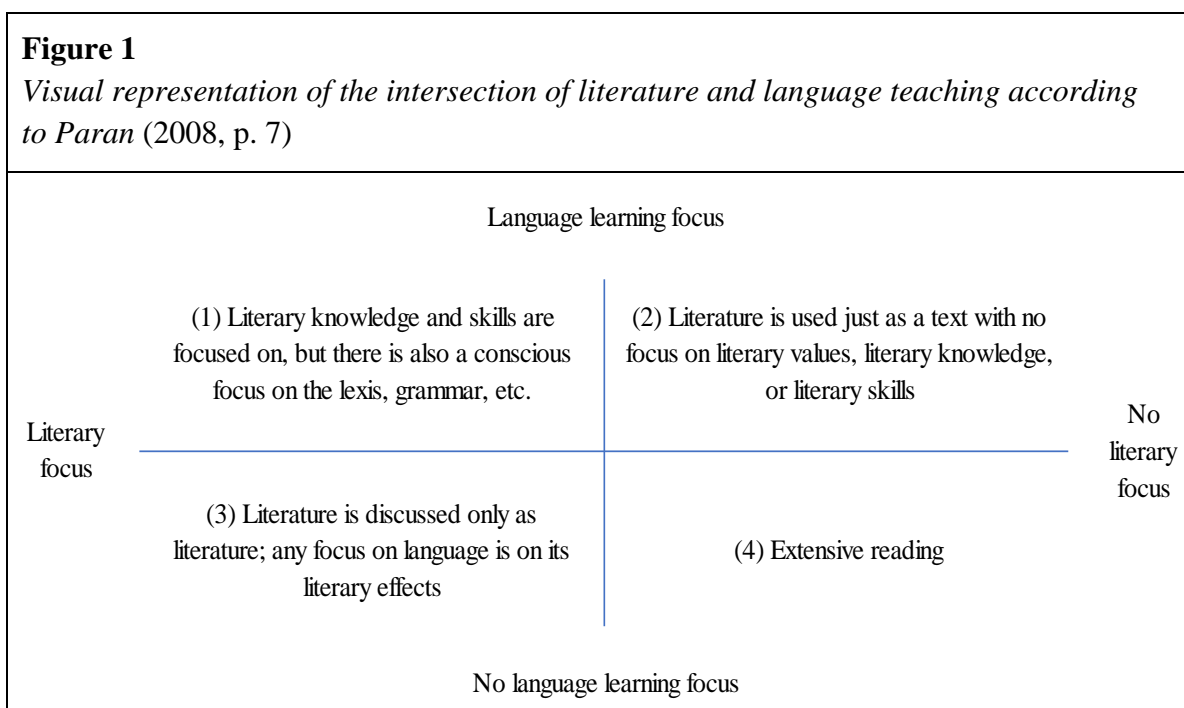
Diverse ways of using literature in class have been suggested by other critics. Maley (1989), in Bobkina & Dominguez (2014), put forward a distinction between the study of literature as a cultural artefact and the use of literature as a resource for language learning (p. 253). Maley divided these approaches into the "Critical literary approach" and the "Stylistic approach". The critical literary approach was focused on the literariness of the texts, while the stylistic approach was focused on literature so that students could describe and analyse the literary language. The latter stressed the importance of the linguistic features in studying literature.

Among other authors who pointed out some techniques to teach literature in class, we can mention Carter & Long (1991), in Baba (2008, p. 43), who purported three main models for literature teaching: the "Cultural model", the "Language model" and the "Personal growth model". The "Cultural model" considered literature as a vehicle for conveying cultural notions. The "Language model" considered literature to be aimed at language awareness and development. The "Personal growth model" gave priority to personal experience as a means to engage students in the reading process. For the author, learners' interaction with literary texts was mainly intended to enhance their personal development and linguistic insight.

Accordingly, Brumfit & Carter (1986) and Lazar (2009), among many linguists, discarded the idea that literature possessed a specific literary language and claimed that the language used in literary texts was a common language with a high concentration of linguistic features, like metaphors, similes, poetic lexis, unusual syntactic patterns (Lazar, 2009, p. 7). In her paramount

work, Lazar (2009) proposed some approaches to the teaching of English as a foreign language offering the teachers texts and activities for direct classroom application.

Paran (2008) regarded literature as a valuable component of the FL curriculum and saw the relationship between literature and language learning as the intersection of two axes (Figure 1). The horizontal axis was referred to as the extent to which any programme or lesson focused on literary competence and its development.



On the left-hand side of this axis, where the learners were learning a foreign language, there was a sort of minor aspiration on the part of teachers to teach language *per se*. Even where there was an engagement with language, this engagement served a literary aim. The vertical axis represented the extent of engagement with language learning: at one end we could find a focus on language learning, where the teacher focused explicitly on language learning and activities were exclusively designed to foster this purpose. At the other end of the axis, we could find

classes or courses where there was no definite aim in language learning at all. Paran added that this could be the situation in many university courses around the world.

A more comprehensive classification of approaches to literary analysis was offered by Van (2009), who mentioned six *modi operandi* to teach literature in the EFL classroom: New Criticism, Structuralism, Stylistics, Reader-Response, Language-Based, Critical Literacy. He dispraised the formalist approach of New Criticism, claiming that, according to this method, there was no reason to select texts that were suitable to the learners' needs or their language proficiency. Van pointed out that this kind of method overused the traditional canon of texts, with the resulting cultural unfamiliarity experienced by students, which could make them dependent on the teacher's interpretation and, hence, lead them to a lack of motivation. As for Structuralism, Van claimed that materials could be likely to expose the learners to nonauthentic samples of the target language. Structuralism, therefore, was less relevant for the teaching of literature because, in his opinion, foreign language teachers and learners possessed defective skills and knowledge to approach the text scientifically, which made the study of the process fruitless and resulted in a lack of motivation for pupils. In the Stylistic approach, students were supposed to use their linguistic knowledge to make aesthetic judgments and interpretations of the texts, while the role of the teacher was to encourage them. With the Reader-Response approach, students had to draw on their personal experiences, opinions, and feelings to read and understand texts, because different readers could react to literary texts in different ways, depending on their own interests and experiences. As the name suggests, the Language-Based approach emphasised awareness of the language of literature. It consisted of various linguistic activities, like rewriting or summarising, cloze procedures, jigsaw readings, and debates. Critical Literacy was based on the relationship between the use of language and its social power. This approach could teach students how to be aware of how texts could relate to issues like identity, culture, political power, gender, ethnicity, class, and religion.

A way of unifying Stylistics with the Reader-Response approach was proposed by Kellem (2009) through the *Formeaning approach*. This approach placed equal importance on the study of linguistic elements and on the need to respond personally to literary texts.

Paran & Robinson (2016) mentioned three approaches to literary texts and posed that each of them had different implications for the way teachers' aims could be directed to, according to the prescribed syllabi. The first approach saw literature both as a body of knowledge and content to be studied through the analysis of literary styles, and through the history of English literature, and authors' biographical details. In this approach, literary texts were mostly taken from the literary canon, generally written before the middle of the 20th century, and were often excessive in length. The second approach saw literature purely as language practice material, where the focus was primarily (or even exclusively) on the language used in the literary text and on the incorporation of practice tasks which could activate language skills. In such cases, the texts were probably modern and often short, and there was little or no discussion of the text as literature. A third approach saw literature as a stimulus for personal development and used activities which were related to students' personal experiences, thereby developing their imagination and emotions.

Chapter 3.

Literature as a tool for EFL. A review of theoretical stances.

Thoughts are but dreams till their effects be tried.
Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece*

Notwithstanding the revival of the interest in literature in ELT, a small number of authors sided against it, stating that the use of foreign literature in language teaching could have disadvantages. Among these, we can mention Edmondson (1997, p. 44), who claimed that literature had nothing special to offer the language learner. The detractors of the use of literature in ELT claimed that literature could be daunting because, in it, there is a use of language which is deviating from the usual norms. As a matter of fact, Widdowson (1984) defined this use of language as a “topsy-turvy activity” (p. 146), while Savvidou (2004, p. 2) defined it as inappropriate.

Despite the disadvantages mentioned above, a throng of scholars has hectically suggested a considerable amount of advantages to using literary texts as a powerful pedagogic tool in foreign languages teaching.

To provide an overview of theorists’ positions about literature, we listed all the advantages suggested to date, dividing them into three different components: the linguistic, the motivational and the sociocultural components. This tripartite classification was first used by Duff & Maley (2007, p. 5) and then adopted by Férez et al. (2020, p. 58), who applied these components to their empirical study and demonstrated its validity through a principal component analysis (PCA).

3.1. Linguistic advantages

A plethora of authors have emphasised the usefulness of literature in helping students develop their linguistic skills. Duff & Maley (2007, p. 5), for instance, stated that literature offers a range of authentic texts in a variety of registers and styles, which could give learners an unequalled richness of inputs to expand vocabulary, syntax and develop textual cohesion and coherence along with linguistic appropriacy.

Collie & Slater (2009, p. 6) underlined language enrichment as a direct consequence of approaching a literary text. They highlighted its usefulness in developing all the necessary skills of language learning, as much as syntactical competence and the ability to connect ideas. A literary text might thus boost language acquisition by highlighting some linguistic features that a learner should be aware of.

As for the linguistic advantages which could come from the use of literature in EFL classes, Lazar (2009) proposed a “Language-based approach”. According to her, the main aim of this approach was to improve students’ knowledge and proficiency using activities and tasks which could be used to promote stimulating and motivating language practices (p. 27). The Language-based approach was linked to stylistics, which could lead students towards a more insightful understanding and appreciation of literary texts. Stylistics’ main objectives were to enable students to make meaningful interpretations of texts and to expand their knowledge and awareness of the language in general (p. 31).

Arguments in favour of linguistic stylistics have also been put forward by Hanauer (1997), who suggested that literature combined attention to meaning and form because reading literary texts could involve the “conscious negotiation of the formal structures for comprehension purposes” (p. 14). This way, learners had to pay attention to the formal features of the texts to

understand it and could be aware of how particular formal features were used by authors to generate meaning.

A distinctive trait of literature when used in FL classes was underlined by Floris (2004, p. 2), who assumed that, while analysing the literary language of a text, students were fostered to become acquainted with different language uses, styles, registers, functions, forms and conventions of the target language. Another essential point was proposed by Hişmanoğlu (2005, p. 63), who considered the richness and diversity of literary language useful in improving learners' communicative competence regarding both receptive and productive skills. Halliday (2007) also highlighted the advantages offered by literature in the language class, underlying the possibility to improve students' linguistic skills, "extralinguistic skills (knowledge of content), and metalinguistic skills (knowledge of language as content)" (p. 288). Other theorists have underlined the benefits of using literary texts in relation to the development of particular skills, such as extensive and intensive reading (Khatib, 2011, p. 202), along with reading subskills, including skimming and scanning, and finding the main ideas, as long as other essential skills, such as writing, speaking and listening (p. 203).

Linked to the development of writing competence, some authors have highlighted the potential literature has to enhance linguistic creativity, especially in writing, as claimed by Zyngier & Fialho (2010, p. 25) and Disney (2014, p. 2). Hanauer (2010), in particular, suggested that creative writing leads to insights, critical self-reflection and linguistic metacognitive awareness, and emphasised how language works in creating its meanings (p. 16).

The importance of literature in acquiring and practising grammatical structures has been advocated by many authors, like Lazar (2009, p. 25), Amer (2003, p. 63), Khatib (2011, p. 202), Bobkina & Dominguez (2014, p. 4) who maintained that literature provides students with meaningful and context-based practice of grammar structures. Whether to a lesser extent, the role of literature in developing learners' listening skills (Hişmanoğlu, 2005, p. 54; Babae &

Yahya, 2014, p. 82; Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014, p. 3) and pronunciation (Hişmanoğlu, 2005, p. 59) has also been highlighted.

3.2. Motivational advantages

A paramount reason to rely on literature to teach language has been pinpointed in the motivation it instils in learners. Motivation can be increased through the power literary texts have to evoke and provoke emotions in readers. The topics covered in literary texts may elicit personal responses and leave permanent traces in students' memories through the sensations they arouse (Duff & Maley, 2007, p. 6).

As for the way literature could encourage students to draw on their own personal experiences, feelings and opinions, Lazar (2009) proposed two approaches: "Literature as content" and "Literature for personal enrichment". The former was a kind of traditional approach, which was focused on:

- the historical features of literary movements;
- the socio-political background of a text;
- literary genres;
- figures of speech.

Students could learn the second language by focussing on the course content, mainly through reading a literary text and the literary criticism related to it. Students' first language could be used to discuss the texts, or pupils might be asked to translate texts from one language into another. Texts could be selected according to their importance in the literary canon or tradition.

As for "Literature for personal enrichment", Lazar posed that literature is a useful tool for fostering students to have recourse to their own personal experiences, feelings and views. It could also help students to become more actively involved both intellectually and emotionally

in learning English, and consequently boost the acquisition of the foreign language. This approach could be an excellent incentive for group work. Moreover, the materials should be chosen according to students' interests and in order to stimulate a high level of personal involvement. Texts could be organised thematically and could be placed alongside non-literary resources dealing with similar themes.

The creative power of literature has also been valued by manifold theorists (Hişmanoğlu, 2005, p. 58; Aghagolzadeh & Tajabadi, 2012, p. 208) as a source of motivation. Literature might increase students' originality and sensitivity, stimulate them to think imaginatively and improve their problem-solving abilities. Literature could also be a source of motivation for learners because it could enhance critical thinking skills. It could help students to reflect on their lives, expanding their horizon of possibilities and allowing them to question, interpret, connect, and explore the complex world they have been called to live in. Critical thinking skills might provide students with opportunities to understand themselves and other people better, as claimed by some authors, like Hirvela & Boyle (1988, p. 181), Paran (2008, p. 56) or Bobkina & Dominguez (2014, p. 251).

According to the above-quoted authors, literary texts are also likely to be a source of motivation for the discussion and conversation that they could inspire, while, at the same time, developing learners' listening and speaking skills. Moreover, students might share their experiences and be stimulated by divergent individual realities since literary texts can be highly suggestive, with manifold meanings and association of ideas that could guarantee class debates (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014, p. 251; Das, 2014, p. 14).

Some texts could also have the potential to change attitudes and perceptions, and to diminish prejudice and negative behaviours while boosting catharsis, empathy, sympathy, forgiveness and tolerance, pivotal qualities in an increasingly more selfish world (Ghosn, 2002, p. 176; Bagherkazemi & Alemi, 2010, p. 3; Khatib et al., 2011, p. 215). This way, literature, when it

deals with themes which are intrinsically endearing and intriguing, tends to lead students to increase their awareness of other people's needs, improve social skills and encourage personal involvement (Lazar, 2009, p. 118; Van, 2009, p. 8). Literature could, therefore, attract students' interest and trigger their enthusiasm for reading and debating because topics and themes treated in literary works are often part of the global human experience (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014, p. 251).

Furthermore, literature might reveal complex themes, and new, unexpected language uses (Lazar, 2009, p. 15) and might generate "unexpected density of meaning" (Collie & Slater, 2009, p. 7). Besides, figurative language could heighten learners' experience, casting light on familiar sensations and perceptions in an original and even unsettling way (Collie & Slater, 2009, p. 7; Gilroy, 1995, p. 19).

Finally, taking into account the ultimate goal of functionalist language approaches, that was the need to enable students to deal with the authentic language of the real world, literary texts can be considered authentic materials *par excellence* because they are not usually adapted or modified for didactical purposes. Moreover, using authentic materials, apart from developing students' linguistic skills, could foster a sort of self-confidence in learners because they could face the challenge of reading books that could have immediate relevance to what they need to cope with outside the classroom, something connected to the real-life (Nunan, 1989, p. 59). In fact, through literature, learners are exposed to valuable material that could represent real contextualised models of linguistic patterns and grammatical rules (Collie & Slater, 2009, p. 6; Lazar, 2009, p. 25; Gilroy, 1995, p. 6; Vural, 2013, p. 15).

3.3. Sociocultural advantages

Exposing students to literature from other cultures could be an enriching and exciting way of increasing their awareness of different values, beliefs and social structures; it could stimulate a

high level of personal involvement and understanding of their cultural awareness (Ur, 1991, p. 208; Lazar, 2009, p. 250). Literature could foster personal development in learners because it might help readers to grow as individuals in their relationships with other people and with the institutions around them (Floris, 2014, p. 3; Das, 2014, p. 16). This is a crucial educational aspect which tends to be missing from textbooks.

The notion of culture is a *vexata quaestio*, because, as some authors have pointed out, it seems increasingly dynamic and co-constructed interactively, as an emergent and specifically linguistic process rather than as a completed product (Carter, 2007, p. 8). Moreover, students and teachers often do not share the same connotation of the term and may have a very biased perception of culture, linking it to conventional stereotypes or deeming some aspects of it as belonging to a second-class category, a culture with a small ‘c’ (Duncan & Paran, 2017, p. 31).

On the other hand, other authors have affirmed that through literary texts, readers could become acquainted with other people’s lives and environments, and it could be asserted that literature allows students to become intercultural travellers (Vural, 2013, p. 18). In fact, the study of a foreign language has persistently been perceived as a way of improving understanding of another culture and its people. As a goal of language teaching, understanding others has been prominent in educational rationales. As underlined by Liddicoat & Scarino (2013, p. 1), since the processes of “globalization, increased mobility, and technological development started to shape our way of living and communicating”, there has been increasing acknowledgement of the fundamental importance of integrating sociocultural competences into language teaching and learning. Valued artistic creations, such as art, literature and music, have been traditionally considered a privileged means for understanding the culture of a country. In this perspective, the text produced has been seen as an exemplification of the culture of the nation in which it was produced, often separately from other circumstances of its production or from the author’s identity (p. 18).

It has also been emphasised how the intercultural reader is incited, through the close encounter with literary texts, not only to appreciate the attitudes, values and beliefs of the target culture with understanding and tolerance, but also to question the system of codes and behaviours of the target culture, and then, in turn, ponder the codes and behaviours of his/her own culture (MacDonald et al., 2009, p. 121).

Chapter 4.

Literature as a tool for the L1

O, let my looks be then the eloquence,
And dumb presages of my speaking breast.
Shakespeare, *Sonnet XXIII*

It is evident from the previous chapters that the contribution which literary texts might offer, when it comes to learning a FL, has received quite a lot of critical attention, even if there are further gaps to explore, as highlighted before. This interest in literature as a tool for conducting FL lessons led us to wonder what the role of literature in L1 contexts (literacy in the mother tongue) might be and whether critical attention to this end was comparable. This is precisely the assumption this chapter aims to explore. This way, we could better understand students' perceptions regarding how literature has been used for learning the L1 and the L2. Undertaking this comparison might be relevant in critical terms since:

- it might help outline similarities in the process of acquisition of the first language and the learning of the second language;
- it might help map out both scenarios highlighting those strengths which are worth transferring from one into the other language.

For this reason, in this chapter, we will first explore the main didactic approaches which have been used to teach the mother tongue (4.1). Then, in section 4.2, we will recount the benefits of using literature in the teaching of the L1. To this end, we will be consistent with the categories employed for the L2, dividing such benefits as linguistic, motivational and sociocultural.

4.1. Approaches to the teaching of the mother tongue

The teaching of literature in the mother tongue (L1) seems to follow the same traits of the teaching of literature in the foreign language (FL) and sometimes the same approaches. The only difference lies in the code, in the language with which the literary message is conveyed (Fecteau, 1999, p. 475).

Among the most used approaches, we can find the historical-chronological approach (McKeon, 2000, p. 1) and the stylistic-linguistic approach (Hall, 2014, p. 239). According to the historical-chronological approach, the teacher is recognised as the authority and custodian of literary knowledge. The teacher introduces first the historical and cultural context, then the literary movement and, finally, the author. Afterwards, the lesson moves on to reading some texts with links to the themes already anticipated during the historical presentation. This approach allows a general and unitary representation of literature throughout the time. The excessive number of authors on the schedule takes a total of hours which today's school cannot cope with. In addition, the selected authors often belong to remote times and, for this reason, are difficult for the learner to understand. This approach does not make the student autonomous in interpreting the texts.

On the other hand, the stylistic-linguistic approach combines language education with literary education. It focuses on the formal aspect of the text, such as the style and form used by the author, and how they contribute to the communicative effectiveness of the message, enhancing phonological, morpho-syntactic and lexical analysis. This approach partly echoes the theories of Widdowson, who distinguished between literature as a discipline and literature as the subject of study at school. Literature as a discipline relates to literary criticism and linguistics, while as a subject of teaching relates to language and literature itself (Widdowson, 1975, p. 81). This

division converges in the stylistic approach to the teaching of literature and allows us to understand that the study of literature in high schools should not be based only on literary criticism, nor it could be the mere study of the history of literature (Stagi Scarpa, 2014).

As we can see, for the L1, the attention is more focused on the stylistic aspect of the literature, with its rhetoric figures. In fact, the study of the language of literary texts and the appropriate resource to interpret and analyse them has always been seen as belonging to the field of Stylistics (Halliday, 2007, p. 332; Carter, 2007, p. 8). This is widely taught to increase linguistic competence because it can allow students to make meaningful interpretations of the texts and increase their “knowledge and awareness of the language in general” (Lazar 2009, p. 31).

Stylistics is a product of the 20th-century formalists’ interest in the rationalization of literary interpretation. However, since the end of the 19th century, literary specialists have been prone to keep very well-defined borders between language and literature (Fialho & Zyngier, 2014, p. 329). Stylistics can give support to the study of texts in contexts and discourse, in terms of establishing “genre, register, sociolinguistics and variation, as well as the grammar of standard spoken and written language through its fundamentally comparative method” (Hall, 2014, p. 240). Despite its many constituent elements, the teaching of literature both in L2 and in L1 can be broadly categorized into a tendency to follow the textual interpretation and a more linguistic and textual-oriented approach (Fialho et al., 2012, p. 59). This division, theorised by Widdowson, was retrieved by Paran (2008, p. 7) too, who divided the study of literature into four approaches according to the stress on the engagement with language learning and on literature as a subject separated and independent from linguistics.

4.2. Literature as a tool for teaching the mother tongue. A review of theoretical stances

4.2.1. Linguistic advantages

Listening and reading

In order to acquire the first language, some authors have stressed that it is cogent to have students read and listen to literary texts. According to Sloan (1984, p. 96), poems seem to be closer to children's natural mode of expression than more utilitarian forms of language. Moreover, poetry, along with other literary genres, is "essential to the development of genuine literacy" (p. 98).

Other authors, such as Galda (1998), have pointed out that the use of literature can foster the development of the reading skills in the L1 because reading represents a "journey" that fosters motivation in reading. This dimension can be clearly seen in the reader's drive to read all the way through the stories they come across, in the way readers picture characters and events, anticipate actions, look back over what they have already read, identify with characters, and make the virtual experience they are reading as a part of their lives (Galda, 1998, p. 2; Walmsley, 1998, p. 336).

Speaking and writing

Some authors (Sloan, 1984, p. 133; Di Martino & Di Sabato, 2014, p. 3; Watts Pailliotet, 2001, p. 29), studying the importance of using literature to teach the L1, have emphasised the relevance of adopting literary texts in first language classes. This involves the exploration of ideas, the sharing of opinions and impressions, and students' growth through reflection. Through focused group discussions, the characteristics of the literary studies are better realised and developed. The most important aspect of using literature in first language classes involves the expression of personal ideas, orally and in writing, about stories and other literary works.

According to Walmsley (1998), literature is something teachers of L1 carry out as part of a syllabus whose aim is the development of students' writing skills. This author also stated the importance of considering learning as a form of inquiry. Therefore, considering reading literary texts as a kind of investigation, students tend to read to search for information about their world and their lives (p. 336).

Another primary curricular potential linked to the use of literature is represented by the development of the communicative competence related to the discussions that literary texts can generate in helping students learn this dimension both in speaking and in writing (Denyer & Florio-Ruane, 1998). Literature can offer readers access to a variety of experiences fundamental to learning writing skills and the reasons triggering these communicative skills. On those occasions, when literature is connected to students' writing, the predominant metaphor for this connection is the "springboard" to describe literature's power to motivate writing (Denyer & Florio-Ruane, 1998, p. 150).

Moreover, through literary texts, students can observe that there are many ways of responding, in writing, to the literature they read and hear. Poems, role-plays, play scripts, essays, short stories and interviews represent some of the possibilities they can choose. Literature can provide a more meaningful and coherent vehicle for including and learning literacy in first language classes (Walmsley, 1998, p. 350).

4.2.2. Motivational advantages

Topics

Some authors have proposed a thematic approach to the teaching of literature (Long & Crookes, 1992, p. 28). The thematic approach introduces texts linked to each other by the themes of the anthropological imagery, represented by the set of symbols and concepts that are part of the memory and of the imagination of a multiplicity of individuals belonging to a community. This set gives form to the collective memory and traces the history of the people by linking them to the evolution of the genres and the specific characteristics of the society of the examined periods (Stagi Scarpa, 2014, p. 27).

According to Valencia & Upson (1998, p. 98), in literary texts, topics are organized around whole relevant sections of learning. They are thought to be more engaging, more “fascinating” for students. In addition, students may have more choice and a wider range of options during thematic instruction, engaging them in learning what is personally interesting to them. Anderson et al. (1987, p. 16) identified several factors that contribute to students’ interest in texts, in particular the reader’s identification with the characters and the presence of universal or realistic themes.

Values and emotions

Traditional materials in textbooks often emphasise a passive learner role and do not help learners offer active meaning-making processes of interpretation, highlighted in constructivist approaches. According to constructivism, each person builds his/her own version of reality when encounters and interacts with a text and can react differently to a specific text, both emotionally and sympathetically. Immersing students in literature allows them to experience, contemplate, and evaluate the attitudes, values, and emotions present in the stories, building not only their own storehouse of experiences but their own value systems (Galda, 1998, p. 3). Books have the

potentiality to emotionally educate our students about people, places and values that reflect the diversity of the world (McKeown, 1998, p. 367).

Theorists, such as Laier et al. (2001, p. 75), have emphasised how each classroom environment should reflect the ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and values of the students and teacher in the classroom. More broadly, it should also reflect the values of the wider society. Students need to understand the similarities and differences between themselves and others, and they must be taught to value the home cultures of all people. Multicultural literature is an important vehicle for accomplishing this goal (Benton DeCorse, 2001, p. 75). Using fiction books in the classroom, moreover, can enable students to increase their awareness of what values people held in the past and how these have changed nowadays. This way, teachers have the opportunity to help students develop a more mature awareness of their own personal and community values (Hopkinson, 2001, p. 108).

Creativity

Sloan (1984) stated that “literature grows out of other literature” (p. 160), thus stressing the basic and important rule that, experiencing literary texts, is the best way to foster creativity. It is through the stories that we read or hear that we order our experiences and orient ourselves in the world (Katz & Zalk, 1978, p. 458). In the process of studying the stories referred to others, we learn that literary structures involve aesthetic ordering of experience through language and form. According to Sloan (1984, p. 168), providing students with patterns that give shape to their thoughts saves them from frustration. This way, creativity is therefore aided, not inhibited. Too often, in fact, students are required to write stories without sufficient preparation, such as pre-writing activities, which include an examination of models and brainstorming of ideas.

Authentic material

As stressed by some authors, such as Bisesi et al. (1998, p. 244), to build assessments grounded in real-world literacy activities and tasks, rather than invented out of psychometric convenience, students should read real texts, like the trade books, not short or phony passages adjusted by writers to administer lots of tricky distracters or opaque items. Instead of selecting the line or words in extracts that illustrate correct grammar, diction, vocabulary, punctuation, or spelling to demonstrate their knowledge of composition, students would demonstrate both their writing prowess and control over conventions by writing real essays, stories, and reflections, with plenty of time to complete the steps in the writing process.

4.2.3. Sociocultural advantages

According to Sloan (1984, p. 13), it is in literary works in L1 that the attention to social and cultural heritage and the traditional and classical stories of a culture provide the key to the history of a community. In these works, the social and cultural legacy is expressed more clearly.

As Ladislaus (2001) emphasised, teachers can do much to achieve the goal of providing a school environment that inquires and nurtures students' own culture by recognizing and appreciating other cultures (p. 214). One way to accomplish this goal is by utilizing literature in the classroom, especially multicultural literature, to identify and discuss cultural awareness. Multicultural literature is a powerful vehicle for teaching students about principles and beliefs linked to other communities and realities (Laier et al., 2001, p. 64).

Culture is a social system that represents a collection of opinions, attitudes, customs, values, and traditions that serve as a sieve through which a group of people understand and interact with the world in which they are called to live in. Values are an integral part of culture because they represent the shared ways of thinking, believing, and acting that members respect and legitimise (Laier et al., 2001, p. 66). Moreover, it has been underlined how teachers have the responsibility

of using literature in the classroom to develop students' self-understanding and social responsibility (Galda, 1998, p. 5).

Chapter 5.

Literature as a tool for EFL and L1.

A review of empirical studies and research questions

It is better to know some of the questions
than all of the answers.
R.J. Palacio, *Wonder*

In this chapter, we will, firstly, review the empirical studies carried out in EFL contexts (5.1). Then, in section 5.2, we will recount the main empirical findings when it comes to conducting the teaching of the L1 through literary texts. After that, we will focus on the local situation about the way literature is taught in Italian schools. Finally, the research gaps that we are going to identify (5.3) will lead us to formulate the list of the research questions this study aims to investigate (5.4).

5.1. Literature as a tool for learning the FL. A review of empirical studies

Even the supporters of the use of literature in language education acknowledge that more empirical research is necessary in order to validate the theoretical positions and to support the use of literature in the language classroom. Edmondson (1997) called for “conceptual clarity regarding which role or roles foreign language literature can or should play in language teaching” and affirmed that the issue had not been “seriously investigated empirically” (p. 44).

The general absence of empirical classroom-based research was mentioned by Carter (2007, p. 11), who claimed the necessity to prioritize empirical investigation. The same objection was raised, some years before, by Hanauer (2001, p. 317), who confirmed that arguments in favour

or against the use of literature in ELT were mostly theoretical. The need to empirically demonstrate the benefits of using literature to teach English was also stressed by Hall (2007, p. 11), who argued that its upsides were suggested by theorists as logically and intuitively valuable but never empirically demonstrated.

It is also important to point out that most of the empirical studies published have been conducted entirely in university settings, as stated by Paran (2008) and Paesani (2011), who complained about the lack of research in secondary school settings. Surveys performed in high school contexts could be crucial for the “creation of well-articulated, coherent secondary and post-secondary foreign language programs and for the advancement of students within those programs” (Paesani, 2011, p. 175). Moreover, empirical research regarding secondary students could lead to a curricular and pedagogical change and an improvement of the teaching methodologies.

A first attempt to empirically prove the benefits of literature in language classes in a high school context was realised by Akyel & Yalcin (1990). Their declared aim was to investigate teachers’ goals in using literature in class and students’ reactions to the specific contributions that literary texts could generate in developing linguistic and communicative competence. Nevertheless, in this study, theoretical assumptions about the benefits of using literature were not supported by data. The authors asserted the results of their survey without providing the reader with numerical or statistical evidence. In fact, they presented only one figure describing the number of teachers who performed general activities related to literature in class. The authors, besides, made no reference to the questions asked or to the type of activities carried out in class.

In 2001, Timucin analysed students’ attitudes towards literature after using in EFL classes an integrated approach comprising a language-based approach and pedagogical stylistics. Students were asked about their motivation and whether the proposed teaching approach helped them to

understand literary texts better. In his study, the author resorted to a control group and an experimental group, composed of 30 university students. The methodology he used was based on a quantitative (with pre-tests and post-tests) and qualitative analysis (interviews). The results showed that the predominant methods used by teachers in teaching literature were teacher-centred and that students enjoyed the experience of using short stories in their language course and considered this method engaging and effective (p. 287). The author, however, focused his attention mainly on teaching methods and reported conclusions linked to the general motivation and appreciation of the programme elicited.

Hanauer (2001) studied the role of the poetry-reading task for second language learning. The qualitative method he used was based on a discussion framework composed of 20 students; specifically, the participants were asked to read and discuss a poem together in order to understand it (p. 300). Then, through a coding system that defined the types of responses elicited during poetry reading, Hanauer carried out a quantitative analysis based on the frequency distribution of the number of utterances used for each category by students during the discussions. The results showed that the task of poetry-reading was mostly a close reading, a process of meaning construction. The author underlined that the world knowledge, the questioning and proposing of interpretive hypotheses were the main functions described in the process of text reading and interpreting performed by students during the survey. This study highlighted that, while reading a poem, the participants went beyond the analysis of single lines or sections. They developed a “local interpretation”, which is not related to a large section of text, but only to specific sections or aspects and that can help construct a “global interpretation”. According to the author, the global interpretation is based on the discussion of previously stated local interpretations and world knowledge that the participants tried to develop and integrate from the poem in order to create a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the poem (p. 317).

Nevertheless, we must admit that participants' comments should not be considered objective empirical evidence because the procedure did not guarantee the praised results if we consider that the author directly asked the participants to read and discuss the poem in order to understand it. This way, the researcher, giving the participants the hint that their aim was to understand the poem, directed their answers, as Mattix (2002) highlighted:

If Hanauer had not, in fact, instructed the participants that 'the aim' of their reading was 'to understand the poem', I do not believe that the results would be radically different from what he presented in his essay; however, they may not be so categorical and they may contain other types of comments surprisingly absent in his study (p. 517).

Another research focused on students' views was carried out in an Australian university by Carroli (2002), using short stories and a poem. The researcher devoted her attention to the beliefs related to the conception of literature, affirming that in Australia, every written text was regarded as literature by students. The author stated that literature should not be separated from language since it is an intercultural product of the linguistic community. In her study, the scholar used a questionnaire with the aim of eliciting students' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of literature in Italian language classes. She centred her analysis on a specific question asking students to provide their own definition of "enjoyable literature" (p. 117). Notwithstanding, the author did not provide any statistical analysis of the results; in fact, the discussion phase was mainly focused on comments made by the students. Moreover, there were no references to students' perceptions about the improvement of their linguistic skills after the project, which was not considered at all.

In 2008, Paran gave a thorough epitome of the findings obtained so far by scholars. He affirmed that theorists had shifted away from a limited and isolating perspective "in which the different areas of language learning were compartmentalised" (p. 15), and teaching had a utilitarian, "market-economy driven purpose" (p. 15), to more holistic perspectives which took

different aspects of the learner and the context of learning into account. He quoted studies which analysed students' perspectives about literature and teachers' methods using literature in class.

As for studies dealing with the use of literary texts in class, Paran quoted examples in which practitioners provided instances of language lessons employing poetry (Cranston, 2003) and novels (Völz, 2001; Diaz- Santos, 2000). He, then, listed some studies showing language improvement in classes, like Yang (2001), who carried out investigations using experimental groups that outperformed the control groups. Then, Paran quoted another study carried out by Yang (2002) in which the author used a pre-test/post-test design to investigate the improvement of two classes that studied EFL through literature. The two classes read the same novels, but the first class was characterized by a traditional teacher-centred teaching method. As a consequence, the author pointed out a sharp drop in participation. As for the second class, the researcher opted for a student-centred approach, using group work, whole-class discussion and writing tasks, as well as filmed versions of the novel. In the end, the author observed a statistically significant improvement in the results of the experimental group (p. 23).

As for the approaches to the teaching of the foreign language through literature, Paran indicated that, in language classes, teachers still tended to monopolize their lessons, talking for 80% of the whole time, as Donato & Brooks (2004) showed, or, even more, speaking 90% of the time (Weist, 2004). This trend could lead to the inhibition of discussion in the classroom and prevent learners from developing their linguistic skills (p. 26). Moreover, Paran observed that in other studies, such as Mantero (2002) and Donato & Brooks (2004), because of the lack of training, teachers did not have the methodological competence to teach literature effectively and fell back on teaching the way they were taught, perpetuating teacher-centred approaches (p. 43).

In his paper, Paran demonstrated that principled evidence was emerging, showing the benefits of using literature. Nevertheless, the author complained about the lack of more systematic enquiries which could investigate the role of literature in foreign language classes in supporting

inter-cultural competence and analyse the way literature is taught, in terms of how it is perceived by teachers, received by students and how successful it is in promoting language proficiency (p. 69).

Among the studies carried in university settings, we have to mention the doctoral thesis written by Butler at the University of South Africa in 2006. The researcher undertook his study with 81 students attending the “English 100 course” at the University of the North West, with the aim to investigate the effect of the integration of language and literature on the first year of the undergraduate programme. The case study was placed in context through a consideration of the educational change in South Africa. This included changes taking place in the study of English as a second language at tertiary level, as well as the innovations to South African education brought about by government legislation. In his thesis, Butler tried to demonstrate fourteen statements:

1. Literature provides a resource or authentic context for the teaching of grammar and vocabulary.
2. Literature motivates students because of its appeal to the learners’ imagination and emotions.
3. The themes and plots of literary works provide stimuli for meaningful debates, discussions and other language tasks which develop the learners’ linguistic and communicative competence.
4. Literature provides learners with authentic models for the norms of language use.
5. Literature assists learners in developing their overall language awareness and knowledge about language.
6. The study of literature helps develop learners’ interpretive and analytical skills.
7. Literature provides an ideal model for language learning.

8. Literature provides learners with insights into the norms and cultural values embodied in the language.
9. The study of literature educates the ‘whole person’ in a way that more functional approaches to language teaching cannot.
10. Comparing literary and ‘non-literary’ texts allows learners to move from the known to the unknown: in this way, literature is made more accessible to them.
11. Linking the study of literary texts to creative language activities (such as rewriting endings to stories, role-playing, rewriting a narrative from a different point of view or in a different genre) makes the text more accessible to learners and removes some of the intimidating mystique often surrounding literature.
12. Applying basic ESL/EFL techniques (such as cloze, multiple-choice and jigsaw reading) to the study of literature develops language skills and promotes engagement.
13. Learners do not develop literary competence without adequate competence in a language. Integration of language and literature helps compensate for any inadequacies in the learners’ linguistic competence.
14. Developing learners’ sensitivity to how language is used in a literary text provides them with a ‘way in’ to the text, a starting point for the process of comprehension and appreciation.

In trying to prove these statements, the researcher mostly collected students’ views in a qualitative action research study, putting forward pupils’ positive feedback in using literary texts to learn English as a foreign language. The questionnaires used, in fact, asked too generic questions about the project and focused mainly on the appreciation of the course and on the first eight statements that referred to linguistic awareness. Anyway, according to the author himself, at the end of the course, it was “not possible to claim that the integrated approach improved the students’ literacy and linguistic competence” (p. 280) because students’ results were not

drastically different from the ones they got in earlier years. Moreover, the author provided neither statistical evidence of students' answers in the questionnaires nor evidence or elucidations on what specifically aroused students' interest in literature-based English lessons.

Another doctoral thesis that attempted, through empirical research, to detect teachers' and students' opinions towards literature and its use in language education in a specific ESL (English as a Second Language) context, was conducted by Baba in 2008 at a Matriculation Centre in Malaysia. In her doctoral thesis, she tried to show some reasons in favour of using literature in ESL classes analysing teachers and students' attitudes towards literature. In order to carry out her analysis, she used pre-questionnaires (answered by 75 students), post-questionnaires (answered by 72 students) and interviews (27 students interviewed) to get both quantitative and qualitative results. The author, then, administered pre- and post-questionnaires to 3 teachers voluntarily involved in the research. In the pre-questionnaires, teachers' attitudes towards literature in language instruction showed encouraging and important features, like their interest and previous experience in using literary texts. In the post-questionnaires, teachers' attitudes, however, displayed mixed feelings towards literature and these were significantly influenced by their impossibility to manage the lessons as they pleased, because they had to abide by the worksheets prepared by the researcher. The author also underlined how teachers were unaware of how to combine literary texts with their English classes, which came from their lack of training in teaching literature (p.213). In their pre-tests, students' attitudes towards literature showed a perception of literature as valuable, mainly in terms of language development, grammatical acquisition and vocabulary growth, but at the end of the project, in the post-tests, they revealed reluctance about the possible addition of literature to their syllabus at the Centre. In fact, Baba found out that, despite their positive views linked to language acquisition, only 17% of respondents were favourable to include literature in their language classes (p. 200).

Both Baba's and Butler's studies claimed to analyse their data qualitatively and quantitatively. However, in the end, they provided neither in-depth statistical evidence nor any data referred to central tendency. In fact, they did not report either the average effect size or any measure that could indicate the strength of their findings. These tools could have enabled readers to estimate the stability of their research across samples, generalisations and analyses, allowing evaluation of the practical relevance of the research outcomes, as claimed by Mackey & Gass (2005, p. 283). Other downsides of these works have been pointed out by Férez et al. (2020), who claimed that these authors failed to design a sturdy theoretically-defined array of the linguistic advantages of literature, in fact,

their treatment of the variables within each dimension might be considered overly general, since too many ideas are summarised in just one statement (Baba, 2008) or the whole spectrum of advantages within a specific dimension are not fully examined (Butler, 2006). These shortcomings prevent us from obtaining a more finely grained picture of students' attitudes towards the use of literature (and poetry) in the English language classroom (Férez et al., 2020, p. 60).

Another scholar who carried out empirical research in a university context was Fogal (2010). He observed 35 Japanese students who attended a course aimed to prepare them for education at English speaking, tertiary level institutions outside Japan. The students worked with three short fictional texts under different teaching methodologies:

- exploring a text with no support from the instructor;
- a stylistic approach;
- an approach that combined stylistics with reader-response theory.

Through a qualitative method (interviews), he tried to investigate how students reacted to these various forms of literature instructions. From questionnaires and interviews, the author concluded that the participants felt comfortable with a teacher-centred methodology, and even more when the teacher provided enough scaffolding so that they could get to meta-cognitive awareness. We must add that, by the admission of the very same author, this study lacked an in-

depth statistical analysis (p. 10). Findings suggested that EFL students, at more advanced levels, were more comfortable analysing literature when they were presented with materials in a teacher-centred manner, the materials they were presented with improved meta-cognitive awareness, and when they had sufficient scaffolding.

Vural (2013) investigated whether the use of short stories could have positive learning and motivational effects in English language teaching classes in a Turkish university context. He performed a quantitative analysis using a control group of 17 students and an experimental group made up of the same number of participants. The author compared students' attitudes after the project, affirming that the use of literature increased students' motivation. Examining the comparison of the students' attitudes that the author provided, we must admit that the number of students who really enjoyed the activity was not radically higher after the project (p. 21). Moreover, the experimental group consisted of a too-small sample to get generalizable and reliable results. The author, comparing students' attitudes before and after the project, concluded that the use of literature increased students' motivation and improved their language acquisition. Nevertheless, he did not provide enough evidence to support this argument, as also recognized by Férez et al. (2020), who underlined that the author did not "provide information on what specifically it is that students find 'fun' or 'personally-enriching' about literature-based English lessons" (p. 74).

In 2015, Fogal tried to prove the efficacy of pedagogical stylistics as a learning tool for developing foreign language proficiency comparing different published studies. He reviewed 13 investigations dividing them into two main categories:

- key themes;
- major drawbacks.

He further developed these units dividing these studies according to:

- alleged improved linguistic performance;

- increased linguistic awareness;
- benefits detected beyond language acquisition.

As for the improved linguistic performance, the authors of the examined studies reported general, varying degrees of linguistic improvement in learners, in particular improvements in the listening, reading and writing skills (p. 58). As for the increased language awareness, the author found in these studies that stylistics could call on learners' experiences with the foreign language allowing them to interpret a text gradually. This could also help learners who employ stylistics as a teaching aid to improve their foreign language awareness competency (p. 62). As regards the benefits detected beyond language acquisition, the analysed studies reported that pedagogical stylistics could help learners understand and translate advertisements, enrich classical rhetoric analysis, develop their sense of artistic accomplishment, engender critical, creative and interpretive choices, and improve their analytic skills (p. 62).

The problems the researcher unveiled were grouped by the flaws he found.

- Underreporting as a source for intuitive-based claims:
 - in this section the author referred to the lack of evidence and data to support critics' claims, stating that, without sufficient data, readers were "left to trust the interpretation of the authors" (p. 64).
- Underreporting in quantitatively oriented studies:
 - this second aspect concerned the lack of statistical strength. Fogal claimed that the analysed studies reported neither measures of central tendency nor the effect size, which could "allow subsequent research to conduct a more rigorous assessment of the value of stylistics-based instruction for improving L2 performance, including meta-analyses" (p. 66).
- Underreporting relevant data:

- in this section, the author highlighted the failure to report some relevant data useful to interpret and replicate the research, such as the country where the analyses took place, the number of participants, and the foreign language proficiency levels.
- Underreporting on a broader range of L2 contexts:
 - the last aspect included the limited focus of the research, almost exclusively focused on foreign language contexts and on university-aged learners.

Moreover, the author claimed for expanding the research tools that are usually employed in this context, and that can provide in-depth results and detailed explanations regarding learner perceptions, such as questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. He also complained about the paucity of studies that analysed the development of writing and speaking skills (which remains unexplored) and about the shortage of studies in non-university contexts and, consequently, on learners with lower L2 proficiency levels (p. 67). The author concluded his study stating that “the potential for pedagogical stylistics to advance L2 learning remains underdeveloped” (p. 67).

Among the studies that delved into the effectiveness of stylistics for foreign language learning in high schools, the study of Bloemert et al. (2019) stands out for the number of participants. In their analysis, the authors examined what kind of approach teachers in Dutch secondary schools tended to use more and which one was considered more beneficial by pupils, by asking them an open question: “What do you think are the benefits of EFL literature lessons?” (p. 5). Pupils’ answers were subsequently coded, and the researchers decided whether the answers were “positively or negatively worded” (p. 5). The questionnaire was administered to 635 secondary school students attending year 5 (pre-university classes). The approaches analysed by the authors were:

1. The Text approach, which is concerned with literary terminology, storyline, character development, text types.

2. The Context approach, which focuses on the historical or cultural contexts of literary texts.
3. The Reader approach, which emphasises the connection between the reader and the text.
4. The Language approach, which focuses on using literary texts to advance students' linguistic skills (reading, speaking, grammar, vocabulary).
5. The Comprehensive approach, which is an integrated approach concerning all the aspects mentioned in the previous approaches, connecting a focus on the text and information about the context, and encourages learners to make connections with the text, taking into account language learning.

Among these different approaches to foreign language literature, authors found out that pupils mainly appreciated the language approach, featured as the dominant one. Students saw literature as a means of improving their language skills, and they also indicated advantages related to the context, reader and text approach, mentioning, in this respect, the historical, cultural, and social elements, the critical thinking skills and the personal development (p. 8).

A drawback in this study can be found in the too general questions the researchers asked, which could lead to the risk of unobjective, hermeneutic ways of translating students' answers through a coding procedure. Moreover, the authors did not present a detailed analysis of the specific skills or competences, which could have been developed by the use of literary texts (Férez et al., 2020, p. 72).

In order to respond to the severe paucity of research in secondary school contexts, where very little is known about the various aspects of the use of literature in language classrooms, language teachers' engagement about it, and very little is known about the ways in which learners react to the use of literature, Duncan & Paran (2017) tried to explore the use of literature to support language acquisition in International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) language courses. The study involved case studies concerning three different schools in Europe and an

online survey distributed to nearly 500 schools offering the above-mentioned programme. The authors intended to investigate:

- how literary texts were selected;
- the factors that teachers took into account when choosing literary texts;
- how literary texts were used in language acquisition courses;
- the impact of the use of literary texts on students' language learning.

In their study, these authors employed a variety of data collection methods, including teacher interviews, student discussions in focus groups, questionnaires and lesson observations. This way, they used both a qualitative and a quantitative approach (the latter based on statistics), elicited teachers' opinions using a Likert scale and then ran *t*-tests on the data. The institutions taking part in the project were three different European high schools: a German-speaking, an English-speaking and a French-speaking.

In light of the results obtained, teachers were firmly in favour of using literature in language teaching, stressing the general contribution of literature in education as well as the linguistic benefits. We must report, however, that, by the authors' admission, in this study, respondents represented a self-selected group of teachers who were particularly interested in teaching and using literature (p. 60). Therefore, they could not be a particularly reliable sample of the entire population of teachers. The teachers involved, nonetheless, attributed the success of their literature lessons to their own passion for literature (p. 82). On the basis of the findings of the investigation, teachers showed that the contribution of literary texts to developing diverse language skills was high, but the extent to which they targeted specific language aspects when using literary texts was considerably lower, revealing that teachers considered the contribution of literary texts as incidental rather than a targeted objective (p. 83). The significant benefits of using literary texts in language learning, in students' opinions, were represented by the opportunity of improving their vocabulary and developing their reading skills. As for the various

genres, teachers reported using mainly novels and short stories, while poems, plays and literary essays were rarely used. Students reported, as well, that they found poetry “difficult and obscure” (p. 84).

A recent empirical study carried out in a high school context was carried out by Viana & Zyngier (2019a), who analysed the integration of literature in EFL education in a Brazilian high-school. They examined the perceived learning gains of some students after a language-literature integrated workshop on iconicity. In this study, students were required to work with iconic words and short concrete poems. As the authors explained in a following related article (Viana & Zyngier, 2019b), the visual analysis consisted of examining how the sentences in the poems were spatially displayed on the page and what shape was created without focusing on the content of the words (p. 41). At the end of the workshop, students were asked to write a similar text on their own.

To prove that students showed a positive attitude toward the exploitation of literature in EFL, the authors made use of qualitative analysis through *NVivo* software to code students’ reflective accounts about the project. This research was a well-conceived study realised in a high-school context aiming to elicit students’ perceptions about literature in ELT classes. It also showed how poems could motivate students through engaging and creative activities and develop their educational needs. In fact, in their comments, pupils mentioned an improvement as regards vocabulary and pronunciation (Viana & Zyngier, 2019a, p. 10). Although the authors claimed that students found the workshop emotionally and cognitively engaging, it must be acknowledged that students worked only with very simple texts, consisting of only a short sentence that, as the authors admitted, “did not overly challenge their linguistic proficiency level” (p. 4), and were not linguistically demanding (Viana & Zyngier, 2019b, p. 48), which could be a critical point, if we consider both Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development and Krashen’s “ $i + 1$ ” (1982). In fact, even though we need to expose learners to comprehensible

input, this should be just above the linguistic level of a learner. As demonstrated by Csikszentmihalyi (1997), people could feel negative emotional states when there is an unbalanced relationship between their skills and a challenge they are supposed to face (p. 30). Moreover, using too simple inputs, we could prevent students from experiencing the opportunity offered by other literary genres, like drama and novels, which cannot consist of only a simple short line.

A thorough empirical study about the perceptions of learners concerning the use of poetry as an instrument to enhance language acquisition was carried out by Férrez et al. (2020). The authors administered a questionnaire to primary school teacher trainees from a University in southeast Spain and provided the possibility to add a comment to justify their valuations about the course they had attended. The questionnaires were designed following a three-dimensional model to analyse the linguistic, sociocultural and motivational benefits of using literature in EFL classes; this way, the researchers could get quantitative and qualitative data. The results showed positive attitudes towards the use of literature as for the development of linguistic skills. In particular, students appreciated the possibility to improve their pronunciation through the reading aloud activities (p. 67). Students acknowledged the importance of literature as a means to enhance their motivation, mainly because of the use of authentic material and the relevance of the topics dealt with (p. 69).

As for teachers' views about using literature as a tool to teach English as a foreign language, Gilroy (1995) explored EFL university mother-tongue lecturers' attitudes and practices toward using literature as a resource in their language classes. In this study, teachers claimed that they regarded literature as a resource no different from any other EFL resource, in fact, none of the lecturers, interviewed by the author, declared to use literature regularly or as an integral part of their lesson planning. Although many confessed that they would have liked to, syllabus restrictions made this problematic. The author complained about the fact that most of the texts

used in class by teachers were short poems or extracts, often studied out of their context, and none of the teachers mentioned using longer texts, such as plays or novels with their class. Another main objection adduced by the native speakers was linked to their lack of specialised training in using literature in the language classroom. As admitted by the author, this somewhat limited adoption of literature helped teachers feel relatively confident in class, since, dealing only with short texts, like poems or extracts, “often studied out of context” (p. 8), there would be less likelihood of lecturers being asked questions related to a more in-depth study of the literary texts (p. 8).

Another survey carried out in a university context was performed by Jones & Carter (2012). For them, literature remained a marginalised resource, “featuring in only a limited way in general English textbooks” (p. 69), and it was often restricted to more educated learners and commonly employed for “unimaginative reading comprehension”. Through their research, the authors found out that the teachers surveyed believed that literature could have been a useful resource for developing language and cultural awareness but had some doubts about how useful students would perceive it to be. Teachers were also concerned about the preparation needed and the classroom time available (p. 69).

As for the studies that investigated teachers’ attitudes about the use of literature in secondary schools, we have to mention Bloemert et al. (2016), who examined how EFL teachers approached literature in a Dutch secondary school, and what kind of approach they tended to use more. The authors administered a questionnaire asking about teachers’ preferred methods. The options were among the:

- Text approach;
- Context approach;
- Reader approach;
- Language approach;

- Comprehensive Approach.

The authors found out that teachers' choices regarding the way literature was approached in EFL lessons, more than to demographic aspects, were linked to curricular factors, to a "curricular heritage" (p. 16). That means that, as a result of unsaid dynamics, such as tradition, respect towards colleagues, lack of financial means or lack of experience, teachers who started working at a new school tended to adopt, or rather to "inherit" the existing curriculum and to teach accordingly. The study employed self-report questionnaires, so the sample was based on self-selected participants, a feature which could lead to limited representativeness and consequently to biased results.

Below is a summary of the empirical studies reviewed thus far, presented to enhance visual understanding of the listed information.

Table 1 <i>Epitome of empirical studies about the advantages of using literature in ELF classes</i>				
Study	Educational context and Literary genre	Main objectives and methodology	Main results	Strengths and Weaknesses
Akyel & Yalcin, 1990	Educational context: High school (Students' views/ Teachers' views).	Main objectives: Investigate teachers' goals in using literature in class and students' reactions.	Main results: The authors report that students' oral abilities (pronunciation and fluency) and self-confidence in the use of English seem to improve.	Strengths: The first study to try and analyse the benefits of literature in a pre-university context empirically.
	Literary genre: Poetry, prose, drama.	Methodology: Questionnaires.		Weaknesses: Theoretical assumptions about the benefits of using literature not supported by data.
Timucin, 2001	Educational context: University	Main objectives: The author analyses students' attitudes towards literature.	Main results: In the pre-tests, the author underlines	Strengths: The author uses an experimental and a control group.

	(Students' views).	Students are asked about their motivation and whether the proposed teaching approach helps them understand literary texts better.	teacher-centredness, low student motivation and lack of reading ability. Students affirm that they enjoyed the experience and stated that the method was engaging and effective. They report that it also improved their understanding of literary texts.	
		Methodology: Quantitative, with pre-tests and post-tests. Qualitative: interviews about the methods used in teaching literature.		Weaknesses: Attention focused only on teaching methods. General conclusions: the author does not mention which dimensions students liked.
Hanauer, 2001	Educational context: University (Students' views).	Main objectives: The role of the poetry-reading task for second language learning.	Main results: The author claims that the task of poetry reading is primarily a close reading, enacting a meaning construction process. World knowledge, questioning and proposing interpretive hypotheses are the main functions described in the process of closely reading and interpreting the text.	Strengths: A thorough qualitative analysis.
	Literary genre: Short stories.	Methodology: Qualitative: discussion framework (20 students). Quantitative: analysis of the frequency distribution of the number of utterances used for each category.		Weaknesses: The procedure does not guarantee the praised results.
Carroli, 2002	Educational context: University (Students' views).	Main objectives: Analysis of students' beliefs related to the conception of literature.	Main results: The author states that literature could not be separated from language since it is an intercultural product of a linguistic community.	Strengths: A mix-method is used, which helps look at data from different perspectives.

	Literary genre: poetry writing.	Methodology: Qualitative and quantitative		Weaknesses: The author does not provide a statistical analysis of the results. The discussion phase is mainly focused on comments made by the students. No references to students' perceptions about the improvement of their linguistic skills after the project.
Fogal, 2010	Educational context: University (Students' views).	Main objectives: The author tries to elicit students' motivations about the appreciation of literature. How students react to various forms of literature instructions.	Main results: The author concludes that the participants felt comfortable with a teacher-centred methodology.	Strengths: Comparison among different methodologies.
	Literary genre: Short stories. A poem.	Methodology: Students' views Qualitative: Interviews.		Weaknesses: No statistical analysis. The only reason the author provides about motivation is students' personal involvement in personal experiences.
Vural, 2013	Educational context: University (Students' views).	Main objectives: The author investigates whether the use of short stories, in foreign language classrooms, can have positive learning and motivational effects.	Main results: Students in the experimental group obtain better results for language acquisition. The author	Strengths: The author uses an experimental and a control group.

	Literary genre: Short stories.	Methodology: Quantitative analysis with a control group (17 students) and experimental group (17 students).	compares students' attitudes after the project, affirming that the use of literature increases students' motivation.	Weaknesses: The experimental group consists of 17 participants, a too-small sample to get generalizable and reliable results. The author does not provide enough evidence to support his thesis.
Bloemert et al., 2019	Educational context: Secondary school: year 5/ pre-university classes. (Students' views).	Main objectives: The authors examine what kind of approach teachers in Dutch secondary schools tend to use more and which one is considered more beneficial by pupils.	Main results: Authors find out that pupils mainly appreciate the language approach.	Strengths: A considerable number of participants (635). A complete statistical analysis.
	Literary genre: None in particular.	Methodology: quantitative and qualitative: Pupils' answers are coded.		Weaknesses: No reference to which linguistic aspects have improved after the intervention.
Viana & Zyngier, 2019	Educational context: Secondary school (Students' views).	Main objectives: The authors analyse the integration of literature in EFL education in a Brazilian high-school. They examine the perceived learning gains of a few students after a language-literature integrated workshop on iconicity.	Main results: The authors claim that: students found the workshop emotionally and cognitively engaging; poems motivated students through creative activities and developed their educational needs.	Strengths: Well-conceived study of high-school students' perceptions about literature in ELT classes.
	Literary genre: short concrete poems.	Methodology: qualitative analysis through <i>NVivo</i> .		Weaknesses: Students only worked with elementary texts, consisting of only a short sentence that did not challenge their language proficiency level and was not linguistically demanding.

Férez et al., 2020	Educational context: University (Students' views).	Main objectives: Analyse learners' perceptions concerning the use of poetry as an instrument to enhance language acquisition, motivation and cultural awareness.	Main results: The results show positive attitudes towards the use of literature as for the development of linguistic skills, (pronunciation, reading) and motivation.	Strengths: The first study to analyse the benefits of poems from three different dimensions.
	Literary genre: Poetry	Methodology: Qualitative and quantitative.		
Butler, 2006	Educational context: University (Students' views/ Teachers' views).	Main objectives: Investigate the effect of the integration of language and literature on the first year of a university programme.	Main results: The researcher collects students' views in a qualitative action research study, putting forward pupils' positive feedback in using literary texts to learn English as a foreign language.	Strengths: Very detailed research and all-encompassing method.
	Literary genre: Literature in general.	Methodology Qualitative and quantitative.		Weaknesses: Questionnaires ask too generic questions. It is not possible to claim that the proposed approach improved students' linguistic competence. The author provides neither statistical evidence nor elucidations on what specifically aroused students' interest.
Baba, 2008	Educational context: University (Students' views/ Teachers' views).	Main objectives: The author tries to show some reasons in favour of using literature in EFL classes analysing teachers and students' attitudes towards literature.	Main results: Teachers are in favour of using literature in language teaching. The more significant benefits of using literary texts in language learning, in students' opinions, are the opportunity of improving their vocabulary and	Strengths: Varied data collection methods, including teacher interviews, student discussions in focus groups, questionnaires and lesson observations.
	Literary genre: Literature in general.	Methodology: Qualitative and quantitative.		Weaknesses: The sample is not particularly reliable, because it is a self-selected group of teachers.

			their reading skills.	Neither in-depth statistical evidence nor data referred to central tendency are provided.
Duncan & Paran, 2017	Educational context: High school (Students' views/ Teachers' views).	Main objectives: The authors try to explore the use of literature to support language acquisition in language courses.	Main results: Teachers are firmly in favour of using literature. Students see in literature-based lessons an opportunity to improve their vocabulary and reading skills.	Strengths: Authors use a variety of data collection methods (interviews, discussions, questionnaires).
	Literary genre: Literature in general.	Methodology: Qualitative and quantitative.		Weaknesses: The sample is not particularly reliable, because it is a self-selected group.
Gilroy, 1995	Educational context: University (Teachers' views).	Main objectives: The author explores EFL university mother-tongue lecturers' attitudes and practices toward using literature as a resource in their language classes.	Main results: For teachers, literature is a resource no different from any other EFL resource. None of the professors interviewed declared to use literature because they were not supposed to.	Strengths: One of the first studies to explore EFL teachers' attitudes to using literature as a resource.
	Literary genre: Literature in general.	Methodology: Qualitative method: questionnaires.		Weaknesses: No statistical analysis. Teachers are not in favour of using literature in EFL classes.
Jones & Carter, 2012	Educational context: University (Teachers' views).	Main objectives: Find out why literature is often a marginalised resource in EFL classrooms.	Main results: Teachers are in favour of literature (for linguistic and cultural awareness) but have doubts about how useful students will perceive it. Teachers are also concerned about the preparation needed and the classroom time available.	Strengths: Interesting reference to the skills, linked to the CEFR outcomes, which can be developed through literature.
	Literary genre: Literature in general.	Methodology: Qualitative: questionnaire and written comments.		Weaknesses: Apart from claiming for more space for literature in textbooks, the authors do not seem to suggest other solutions.

Bloemert et al., 2016	<p>Educational context: Secondary school: year 5/ pre-university classes. (Teachers' views).</p>	<p>Main objectives: The authors examine how EFL teachers approach literature in a Dutch secondary school, and what kind of approach they tend to use more.</p>	<p>Main results: The authors find out that teachers' choices towards the way literature is approached are linked to curricular factors and to a "curricular heritage".</p>	<p>Strengths: An appropriate statistical analysis of data.</p>
	<p>Literary genre: None in particular.</p>	<p>Methodology: Questionnaire about Approaches to teach literature.</p>		<p>Weaknesses: The study recurs to a self-selected sample. A feature which can lead to limited representativeness and consequently to biased results.</p>

5.2. *Literature as a tool for learning the mother tongue. A review of empirical studies*

The benefits we have previously listed concerning the use of literature in EFL classes have also been sustained by authors who have dealt with the didactics of literature in L1 (Fialho et al., 2012; Hall, 2005, p. 240). In fact, since the 1980s, publications showing how stylistics methods and approaches could be applied in an L1 context also began to appear in ways which were similar to those applied to L2 contexts (Clark & Zyngier, 2003, p. 340).

Among the authors who have focused their attention on how literature is taught in L1 contexts, we can mention Gabrielsen et al. (2019), who by analysing how literature is presented in the LA (Language Arts) subject in Norway, stated that in the class they observed, literary texts were presented and read as examples and models useful to learn the distinctive features of the different literary genres (p. 16). Another study that delved into the stylistic aspect of literature, with its capability of developing students' writing skills and metalinguistic understanding about writing, was carried out by Myhill et al. (2018) in an English high school. The authors provided different literary texts, mainly short stories, containing certain grammatical structures they wanted pupils to analyse and master. The outcomes were based upon a comparison between pupils' writings before and after the project and on written interviews. According to the authors, when teachers blended together linguistic and rhetorical aims, writing skills could better come into focus with learners, and they were "enabled to engage in their own purposeful authorial decision-making" (p. 22).

Sønneland (2019) carried on a qualitative study trying to elicit students' opinions about the potentiality that literary texts, written in their first language, had to encourage conversations in class. He presented three short stories to high school students who had to read them alone and then discuss the texts with the other schoolmates. Students' conversations were recorded and then analysed and coded through the *NVivo* software. The author tried to infer what caught pupils' attention the most and recognized that literature could offer cases of "disturbance",

providing meaningful problems to discuss. Moreover, he stated that L1 lessons, inspired by literary texts, can be a positive source of engagement because they can benefit from being oriented towards students' interaction with subject-specific problems (p. 25).

5.2.1. Literature as a tool for learning the mother tongue: Italian schools

Examining, in its general outlines, the situation of teaching literature in Italian schools, there are two extreme trends in comparison, which influence the syllabuses and the practices of the teachers (Ceserani, 1998, p. 11). The first trend is that of literature used for language education. The second trend is that expressed by those nostalgic of literature as a universal aesthetic fact, as a form of communication of sublime experiences and pure, very high feelings and impulses of imagination. In its own way, it operates a systematic reduction and takes the imaginary out of its historical context. The texts of the great epic poems, the great novels, classical and modern poems are elevated to exemplary and universal works, which serve to come into contact with some eternal and profound values of humanity and with some complex structures and refined figures of speech. Often, in this type of operation, literary texts, which have become precious aesthetic objects, are nevertheless subservient to a goal that is not of aesthetic education but of ethical and moral formation.

At primary schools, teachers use with children simple literary texts, such as nursery rhymes, fairy tales and short stories. The importance of storytelling has been highlighted by manifold studies (Barton & Barton, 2014, p. 251), and its use is now widespread in many primary schools. The benefits of storytelling are related to improvements in literacy skills, like cognitive engagement, critical thinking, and story sequencing. Even though, storytelling is recognized as beneficial for literacy development, more empirical studies, with repeated storytelling sessions, different delivery methods and varied types of stories, are needed to determine the full range of

literacy benefits of storytelling and the strength of its impact on literacy development (Agosto, 2016, p. 24).

In the Italian educational system, however, the right to teach literature seems to be under the responsibility of the secondary schools. In this school grade, students acquire conscious literary knowledge, thanks to the tools of analysis related to their reading skills, which the teachers should duly provide (Balboni, 2006). However, literature does not seem appreciated by students as it should, due to the use of a selection of non-recent authors of literary history. Students are introduced to a literary canon, which imposes on them precise ancient authors who lived in a distant remote past and seem too distant from them (Stagi Scarpa, 2014, p. 4).

As suggested by some authors, students' beliefs about using literary texts to learn the L1 better, remain an uncharted area (Gabrielsen et al., 2019, p. 3). Although L1 teaching represents the largest school subject across the globe, research on L1 learning through literature has not aroused enough interest in scholars, and our knowledge of what currently constitutes the field is limited (Holmberg et al., 2019, p. 2).

Therefore, according to theorists, it seems that literary texts are used in the same way in EFL and L1 contexts. However, to the best of our knowledge, this has been only theorised, without undertaking an empirical comparison of how literature is used in L1 and FL contexts.

5.3. Research gaps and research questions

Following the examination of the theoretical and empirical studies which thus far have aimed to demonstrate the advantages of using literature in teaching the foreign language and the mother tongue, the following research gaps have emerged:

- A paucity of empirical research about the topic in general.
- A lack of research in Secondary School contexts.
- The absence of empirical studies dealing with plays.
- The absence of empirical studies comparing two or more literary genres.
- A drought of empirical studies applying a sound methodology.
- The absence of studies that compare teachers' views with students' views about the use of literature to learn a foreign language.
- A lack of research about students' attitudes toward the learning of the L1 through literature.
- A comparison of how literature is used in L1 and FL contexts, specifically regarding students' opinions.

We have extensively illustrated the first two points listed above, i.e., the dearth of empirical research, in general, and in secondary school contexts, in particular. It is remarkably disheartening, besides, to notice that, notwithstanding the insistence of theorists about the importance of plays in developing oral skills and personal growth (Lazar, 2009, p. 138), empirical studies about plays are essentially non-existent.

We have also to underline that researchers have been solicitous about investigating a single genre in their studies, usually prose or, less frequently, poetry, while no study has ever compared two or more genres. A genre-based orientation could have enabled the organisation of a holistic, coherent curriculum entrenched in texts, with the goal of developing literacy (Paesani, 2011, p. 174). Moreover, comparing different dimensions, such as the linguistic, motivational and

cultural components, could have been a useful tool to thoroughly investigate perspectives and perceived benefits (Férez et al., 2020, p. 59). In fact, so far, empirical studies have usually delved into a single dimension, whether linguistic, motivational or inter/cultural. Apart from Férez et al. (2020), scholars have only analysed a single dimension asking students general questions (Vural, 2013; Bloemert et al., 2019). Without comparing different aspects, we could not get sufficient evidence about how students could interact with literary texts to make sense of their distinctive stylistic traits, how literacy and literary thinking could manifest themselves in language production tasks, how students' motivation, linguistic and sociocultural competences might be effectively developed.

Taking into account that authors have theoretically insisted on the benefits of using literature in class to develop linguistic, motivational and cultural competences, asking students about the benefits they have experienced studying literature in their native language could help us compare the different approaches and provide stimuli for more effective teaching. Moreover, as Fogal (2015, p. 66) and Férez et al., (2020, p. 61) have stressed, so far, not many studies have carried out research based on a thorough methodology. Studies which have made use of both a quantitative and a qualitative investigation approach have been scarce. Processing quantitative data, statistically testing the differences in performance, between pre-tests and post-tests, to determine if the differences found were due to chance or to the treatment, could give us the possibility to obtain internal and external validity and representativeness of measurement regarding the studied phenomenon (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 107). This way, we can go beyond the hedge of contingency represented by studies which make only use of a qualitative investigation method.

However, to grasp similarities and differences, closeness and distances useful to delineate and understand the formative realities and to extrapolate and find pedagogical models that could transcend partiality and narrowness of perspective, data collection should not be separated from

meanings, qualitative evaluation and historical development of events. Moreover, it should also be emphasised that people are present in different research situations as active elements, with expectations, ideas, emotions related to various issues. These are aspects that are difficult to describe and control only with procedures which are generally provided by the quantitative, experimental method. Mixed research methods could increase the strengths of a study, gaining a better understanding of complex phenomena by combining numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data. A mixed-method, in applied linguistics, could provide, at the same time, the exact nature (through a qualitative method) and the distribution of a phenomenon (through a quantitative method). A thorough methodology should use research tools that can provide in-depth statistical results and detailed qualitative explanations: “Words can be used to add meaning to numbers and numbers can be used to add precision to words” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 45).

5.3.1. Research questions

Taking into account the research gaps identified above, the present study has three main objectives which, in turn, may be broken down into specific research questions:

1. Analyse the opinions of students attending the first year of high school¹ (aged 14/15) regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama for EFL:

1.1. What are students' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in ELT classes before experiencing lesson plans based on three literary genres?

1.2. What are students' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in ELT classes after experiencing lesson plans based on these three literary genres? Are there any changes in comparison to the views expressed at the pre-test stage?

1.3. Taking into account both the pre-test and the post-test stages, which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, do students perceive to contribute most to their learning?

2. Analyse teachers' views about the use of poetry, novels and drama as a tool for learning the FL before and after observing lesson plans based on three literary genres:

2.1. What are teachers' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in FL classes before observing lesson plans based on these three literary genres?

2.2. What are teachers' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in FL classes after observing lesson plans based on three literary genres?

¹ Corresponding to the ISCED 2011 Level 3. In Italy the first three years of upper secondary education are compulsory.

2.3. Taking into account both the pre-test and the post-test stages, which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, do teachers perceive to contribute most to their students' learning? Are there any changes in comparison to the views expressed at the pre-test stage?

2.4. Are there any differences between teachers and students, both at the pre-test and post-test stages, regarding the perceived usefulness of poetry, novels and drama for FL classes?

3. Compare the opinions of the students attending senior classes in the same school (aged 18/19) regarding the use of literature in the Italian language subject (mother tongue) and in the English as a foreign language subject:

3.1. What are students' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in their foreign language classes and in their native language classes? Which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, do students perceive to contribute most to their learning, in their mother tongue and in their EFL classes? Are there any differences?

Chapter 6.

Lesson plans

When given the choice between
being right or being kind, choose kind.
R.J. Palacio, *Wonder*

6.1. Methodological notes

We devoted to lesson plans a chapter at this point of our dissertation to give them a privileged position. The reasons for this choice reside in the educational field and intent of our thesis and on the didactic focus of application of our research which is based on glottodidactics. Therefore, designing lesson plans that could put the advantages theoretically explored into practice was essential and indispensable.

We have previously dealt with the different approaches to language learning (chapter 2). The traced path has highlighted a methodological evolution that has seen progressively shifting the focus from the teaching process, from the idea of language as a product, that is, a number of rules and contents to be learned, to the idea of language as a process, with an emphasis on the quality and relevance of the content learned, and finally to an increasingly explicit centrality of the learner as a subject of the learning process compared to other educational factors (Chini & Bosisio, 2014, p. 217). Modern teaching tends to be based no longer on the knowledge of the structures that make up a language, but on the communication needs which are different according to the age and needs of learners, of learning contexts, of educational objectives, of the

characteristics of the communicative competence that is to be developed. This breakthrough has allowed us to overcome a series of illusions provoked by the approaches and methods that have been used from the beginning of the 20th century to the present: from the grammatical approach to the behaviourist and structuralist illusions, with their total estrangement from any dialectical suggestions and from any effective constituting roles processed by active subjects (Giddens, 1993, p. 128). Moreover, this evolution has allowed us to reach the awareness that recognizing the pedagogical, psychological and linguistic coordinates that constitute the deep structure of the glottodidactics means not so much to follow a method but rather to be sensitive to the methodological discourse.

In the light of this methodological evolution, some authors have recently proposed to take into account an integrated approach, which is not a new methodological proposal but a way of integrating various models and acquisition factors. Gass (2013) proposed an integrated model which considers the various innate and non-innate, external and internal factors that affect learning, proposing four stages of L2 processing:

- a first stage of input utilization, that is called apperceived input, and is affected by personal, psychological and environmental factors, such as personality, previous knowledge, degree of attention, input frequency;
- a comprehended input phase, aided by input changes (reformulations) and negotiation strategies, in which universal language skills or specific knowledge related to L1 or other known languages, as well as L2, would be used to understand the input;
- a process of assimilation and acceptance of the input (transition to intake), with hypothesis formation, hypothesis testing, hypothesis rejection, hypothesis modification, and hypothesis confirmation, through various mechanisms of linguistic, cognitive type;

- a phase of integration of the intake into the interlingual system, thanks to specific linguistic principles (naturalness) and specific cognitive mechanisms. Based on the expertise built in the FL, the learner would then produce his/her output in the FL, which would allow him/her to proceed in learning, testing his/her assumptions and comparing his/her productions with those of the native speakers.

The lesson plans we designed were based on an integrated approach which took mainly into account the teachings of the Communicative approach and the 3Ps procedure, in particular, but was also based on an affective-humanistic approach.

Our intent was aimed at applying the advantages of the different literary genres, as specified in theoretical studies and illustrated in chapter 3, into learning units based on literature. Therefore, three lesson plans, according to three literary genres, were designed. Having based our lessons on literary texts has also allowed us to meet the recommendations related to European Guidelines. In fact, apart from being inspired by and founded on literary texts, our lessons were also aligned with the Recommendation of the European Council of 2006 and 2018,² and the suggestions of the Global Digital Citizen Foundation.³ Therefore, taking into consideration these competences and the need to investigate the benefits of literature in ELT, which is the goal of our study, the stated teaching aims were divided into linguistic competence, personal and social motivation, and sociocultural competence.

² In order to tackle the changes in society and economy, to prepare to face the future of work, and to follow the public consultation on the review of the 2006 Recommendation of the European Council on “key competences”, in 2018 the European Council revised and updated the Recommendation about the “key competences for lifelong learning”. In general, the competences were the same (Literacy competence, Multilingual competence, Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering, Digital competence, Personal, social and learning to learn competence, Citizenship competence, Entrepreneurship competence, Cultural awareness and expression competence), but specific attention was paid to skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, ability to cooperate, creativity.

³ The Global Digital Citizen Foundation (GDCF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to cultivating responsible, ethical, global citizens for a digital world. The GDCF works with educators in many countries helping them develop modern learning environments in their schools and classrooms and guides students towards taking ownership for their learning. GDCF’s focus is on developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, vital to students’ growth and independence (<https://globaldigitalcitizen.org/vision>).

- Linguistic competences and skills.

Students can:

- develop the basic four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing);
- interpret the unsaid of the text;
- read, enjoy and analyse a contemporary piece of literature;
- explore the way that literature can work at different levels;
- develop an aesthetic sense;
- develop linguistic metacognitive awareness;
- recognize essential structures of narrative, poetic and dramatic texts.

- Competences related to intrinsic motivation.

Students can:

- recognise their own feelings and reactions in different situations and compare them with those of a character they have portrayed;
- develop their empathetic and creative thinking;
- develop their critical thinking and problem-solving attitudes;
- take different points of view;
- practice role-playing in order to better understand the thoughts, feelings, and motivations of others.
- negotiate and cooperate with others in the creation of oral and written texts;
- sustain a role with increasing confidence;
- interact by listening to others' opinions, being willing to change their own;
- learn by doing.

- Intercultural and social competences:

Students can:

- see their own culture, stereotypes and prejudices from an external point of view;
- identify the founding elements of civil partnership;
- understand the motivations behind bullying behaviour;
- prepare those who are being victimized by bullies to better deal with their situations.

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

1. prejudice vs hospitality policies (lesson plan 1: poetry);
2. disability vs “ordinariness” (lesson plan 2: prose);
3. bullying and cyber-bullying (lesson plan 3: drama).

Lesson Plans

In this section, we are reporting the activities prepared and presented to the students attending the first class of a high school, and we are attaching the theoretical reasons inspiring each exercise.

6.2. Lesson plan based on poetry: “Mort aux chats”, by P. Porter

Presentation

In the warm-up phase, in order to create the kind of mental landscape that will ease the students into the poem and give them enough anticipatory pleasure to afford a natural launchpad into context, the teacher uses, as a trigger, something that can readily touch the lives of students and be linked into the poem. So, the teacher asks students how many of them have cats, how many dogs, how many both. He/she then asks how dogs and cats get on with each other, and why.

Ex. 1 - Which do you prefer, cats or dogs? Say what you like and dislike about each animal. Share your ideas with a partner.

Cats		Dogs	
Likes	Dislikes	Likes	Dislikes

Hints: savage, solitary, loyal, dumb, independent, aggressive, affectionate, agile, panderer, tame, dirty, cunning, stray, cheerful, with fleas, playful, distant, stray, clean, inscrutable, friendly, instinctive, sensitive.

The teacher calls back some ideas from the whole class starting a table on the board with four columns (Cats: Likes / Dislikes. Dogs: Likes / Dislikes) to collect their feelings in.

Bridge-activity⁴:

Ex. 2 - We have talked a lot about our ideas of cats and dogs, about our feelings and impressions related to these pets. We are going to listen to and read a poem in which somebody tells us what he/she thinks of cats.

The teacher plays a record of the poem *Mort aux chats* by Peter Porter, without playing the final two lines.

Mort aux chats (Porter, 1989)

1 There will be no more cats.
2 Cats spread infection,
3 cats pollute the air,
4 cats consume seven times
5 their own weight in food a week,
6 cats were worshipped in
7 decadent societies (Egypt
8 and Ancient Rome), the Greeks
9 had no use for cats. Cats
10 sit down to pee (our scientists
11 have proved it). The copulation
12 of cats is harrowing; they
13 are unbearably fond of the moon.
14 Perhaps they are all right in
15 their own country but their
16 traditions are alien to ours.
17 Cats smell, they can't help it,
18 you notice it going upstairs.
19 Cats watch too much television,
20 they can sleep through storms,
21 they stabbed us in the back
22 last time. There have never been
23 any great artists who were cats.
24 They don't deserve a capital C
25 except at the beginning of a sentence.
26 I blame my headache and my
27 plants dying on to cats.
28 Our district is full of them,
29 property values are falling.

⁴ The bridge is a sentence that can connect the trigger of the warm-up phase to the text to be read.

30 When I dream of God I see
31 a Massacre of Cats. Why
32 should they insist on their own
33 language and religion, who
34 needs to purr to make a point?
35 ...
36 ...

After that, the teacher hands out a copy of the poem without the final two lines and asks students to read it. Then, he/she asks students to provide answers to the questions in the worksheet individually. Then he/she asks them to check their answers with a partner.

Ex. 3 - Read "Mort aux chats" by Peter Porter. You have all the poem except the last two lines. Think about the next three questions:

- a) What is its object?
- b) What do you think about the things that are said about cats?
- c) Who do you think the **I** of the poem is?

Ex. 4 - What do you imagine the missing last two lines might be?

The teacher, then, provides the last two lines and asks students to compare their assumptions with the text.

35 Death to all cats! The Rule
36 of Dogs shall last a thousand years!

Ex. 5 - Now compare your assumptions with the text.

After that, the teacher provides a matching exercise to better understand the vocabulary in the poem.

Ex. 6 - Match the words on the left with the definitions on the right

1. Spread	A. An act of betrayal
2. Pollute	B. Cannot control it or stop it happening
3. Worship	C. Domination
4. To pee	D. To make a low vibrating sound with the throat for contentment
5. To be fond of	E. Gradually reaching or affecting a larger area or more and more people
6. They can't help it	F. Intolerable
7. To notice	G. Say firmly that it must be done or provided
8. To sleep through	H. Sexual intercourse
9. To stab somebody in the back	I. Show your respect to the god, love or admire
10. To blame on	J. To become aware of somebody's presence
11. Insist on	K. To have a liking, a passion for
12. To have no use for	L. To have no need for
13. Copulation	M. Extremely upsetting or disturbing
14. Harrowing	N. To make it dirty and dangerous to live in or to use, especially with poisonous chemicals or sewage
15. Unbearably	O. To place the guilt for something on someone
16. To purr	P. To say something significant
17. To make a point	Q. To urinate
18. Rule	R. Without waking up

Then a true/false exercise about reading comprehension is handed out.

Ex. 7 - True/ False activity. Check in pairs.

	T	F
a) The poet foresees a future world without cats.		
b) The poet is sorry about the extinction of cats.		
c) The poet provides both objective and personal reasons for being in favour of the extermination of cats.		
d) The poem is about the poet's hatred for cats and love of dogs.		

An analysis of the vocabulary and the symbolic value of the poem can be carried out through the following chart.

Ex. 8 - In pairs, fill in the chart.

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST CATS	
Physical	
Hygienic	
Behavioural	
Historical	
Moral	
Racial	
Artistic	
Linguistic	
Personal	
Economic	
Religious	

The purpose of this exercise is both to analyse and classify the single accusations, in order to understand how absurd, illogical, senseless and without proof they are, and to compare them with similar allegations brought against other people (immigrants, Jewish people, homosexuals, etc.).

Practice

The following exercises aim at developing deeper insight into the poem. Moreover, students can understand how this poem was built from a formal and rhetorical point of view and how its eloquence is developed.

Ex. 9 - Read the poem once again and tick the correct options:

- The poem begins with a *formal promise/ desperate appeal* and ends with a *slogan of incitement/ matter-of-fact statement*.
- Throughout the poem, the poet piles up a number of reasons to *persuade/ warn* readers that cats *may/ must be* eliminated.
- From line 1 to 25, the poet builds up his argument by means of seemingly *objective and concrete/subjective and personal* statements, to support his claims.
- From line 26 onwards, the poet also adds a more *personal/ universal* note, enhanced by his dream of a *campaign/ crusade* against cats.

- e) Structurally, the poem is a long sequence of *questions/statement* with most verbs in the *present tense/past tense*.
- f) This structure gives the poem a/an *concrete and argumentative/introspective and descriptive* quality and a very *lyrical/ assertive* tone.
- g) The rhetorical question and the exclamation at the end conclude the poem in a *controlled/declamatory* manner.
- h) This, together with the 14 repetitions of the word “cats” and the other features so far analysed, contributes to make the poem sound like *a political manifesto or speech at a rally/ an ode*.

Through the following exercise, the teacher can make clear the provocative intent of the author, otherwise, if a reader doesn't catch its hidden meaning, he/she could consider it as a racist invocation.

Ex. 10 - The poem is

Literary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Serious	<input type="checkbox"/>	Obscure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Humorous	<input type="checkbox"/>	Straightforward	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provocative	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Ex. 11 - Analyse the structure of the poem.

Through this exercise, students can become aware of some rhetorical devices used to convince people, like *short sentences* and *rhetorical questions*.

Short sentences are powerful tools of communication because the listener understands the message in one go and they are easy to remember. They grab the audience's attention and immediately make a point.

Rhetorical questions are a device used to persuade or subtly influence the audience, they are questions asked not for the answer, but for the effect.

1. *Does the author use sharp, short sentences or bland, long sentences? Why?*
2. *What is the effect of using rhetorical questions?*

Ex. 12 - Analyse the following expressions:

- *Mort aux Chats*: why did the author use a French title?
- Stab-in-the-back.
- They don't deserve a capital C.
- Massacre of Cats.

Before starting the exercise, the teacher recalls the definitions of denotation and connotation, explaining that the former refers to the literal meaning of a word/expression, and the latter refers to associations that are connected to certain words, expressions or emotional suggestions related to them.

Students are invited to consider how the truly aggressive, sharp and violent title gains a sense of sophistication and scholarliness through its translation into French. It is euphemistic since it makes a brutal slogan, an incitement to kill, sound less immoral and cruel. Moreover, it is surrounded by a revolutionary flair, a sense of a great change, an improvement of conditions.

The quote of the stab-in-the-back is a clear reference to the German stab-in-the-back myth according to which Germany lost the First World War not for military and economic reasons, but because of defeatism and treason to the Fatherland by republicans, communists and Jews.

The teacher can recall the grammar rules related to capitalization. However, in this poem, the author uses the figure of speech of personification in which a thing, an idea or an animal, is given human attributes. So, asserting that personified "Cats" do not deserve a capital letter means denying their "human rights".

The massacre of Cats can remind both the Massacre of Innocents (infanticide) and the holocaust. The act of killing cats or Jews also has a religious significance to the narrator. Moreover, it is almost a sacred calling to him: "When I dream of God, I see a Massacre of Cats."

Grammar corner

The teacher introduces some verbs, contained in the poem, which are usually followed by specific prepositions. He/she underlines that after the prepositions, we can find a noun or a gerund (*ing*-form).

Verbs + Preposition

Dream of

Ex.: When I dream **of** God.

I dreamt **of** living with you

To be fond of

Ex.: Cats are fond **of** the Moon.

He is fond **of** hanging out with friends.

To blame on

Ex.: He blamed his headache **on** cats.

He blamed his lack of concentration **on** having slept badly that night.

To blame for

Ex.: I do not blame them **for** trying to make some money.

Insist on

Ex.: Why should they insist **on** their own language and religion?

He insisted **on** annoying me.

Other similar Verbs + Preposition forms are:

I don't approve **of** shouting to other people.

I'm thinking **of** marrying him.

He accused cats **of** polluting the air.

Cats were found guilty **of** peeing sitting down.

I'm tired **of** listening to politicians' promises.

They were punished **for** fighting back.

Thank you **for** being so helpful.

I believe **in** expressing things openly.

I am interested **in** getting your point of view.

I don't feel **like** going out.

You have to rely **on** you.

The presence of cats will discourage customers **from** buying.

I'm fed up **with** being indoors.

Then students are asked to practice the grammar through an exercise on this issue.

Ex. 13 - Fill in the blanks with the right preposition

1. I don't approve _____ smoking. I think it's a disgusting habit.
2. I believe _____ discussing things openly.
3. I don't feel _____ cooking tonight.
4. Unfortunately Ian insisted _____ telling us all about his medical problems.
5. You ought to book in advance. You can't rely _____ finding a hotel room.
6. I'm thinking _____ going to France in the summer.
7. He accused his political enemies _____ inventing stories about him.
8. I don't blame you _____ thinking about your own safety.
9. Higher prices will discourage customers _____ buying.
10. The club has punished its players _____ fighting during a match.
11. Thank you _____ being so helpful the other day.
12. I'm fed up _____ living in this awful place.
13. Ted is fond _____ fishing.
14. The man was found guilty _____ stealing from his employer.
15. Some of us are interested _____ starting a discussion group.
16. I'm tired _____ studying. I need a rest.

Ex. 14 - In groups discuss these questions, then share answers in an open class debate.

Through this exercise, students can practice verb + preposition forms, past tenses and modals.

- a) When and why did you start suspecting that the poem was not about cats, after all?
- b) Who could cats and dogs be?

Ex. 15 - What's the theme of the poem? Discuss it in pairs.

Instead of asking students to provide a central meaning to a poem, which can bring about rather flat results, a list of meanings, from which students can choose their favourite and add on their own contributions, is suggested. Students are also required to justify their choices.

- a) It's obviously a poem written by someone who has had a bad experience with cats.
- b) Envy is the curse of human existence.
- c) We always need someone to put the blame on for our problems.

- d) We cannot afford to be welcoming and integrate foreigners.
- e) It is not our fault if they are not like us.
- f) There is always a reason to justify our racism.
- g) The poem is a clear example of racial propaganda.

Ex. 16 - Figures of sound and speech

The following activity - Figures of sound and speech – aims at introducing some poetical devices, which are the main ingredients of literary texts. Students are asked to find examples in the text.

	Definition	Examples from the texts
Metaphor	A figure of speech describing something by referring to something else which is the same in a particular way. <i>He is a lion in battle</i>	
Simile	A figure of speech that expresses the resemblance of one thing to another of a different category, usually introduced by “as” or “like”. <i>He is as brave as a lion</i>	
Assonance	Repetition of the same vowel sound in the same line. <i>An old, mad, blind, despised⁵ and dying king</i>	
Alliteration	Use of several words close together which all begin with the same letter or sound. <i>Tyger, Tyger, burning bright</i>	
Repetition	Repetition of words and expressions can create a musical pattern or can be used to emphasise particular concepts. <i>O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells; Rise up - for you the flag is flung - for you the bugle trills⁶</i>	

⁵ Hated

⁶ A horn making a vibrating sound

Anaphora	<p>Repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive clauses, sentences, or lines.</p> <p><i>What the hammer? What the chain? In what furnace was thy brain? What the anvil? what dread grasp Dare its deadly terrors clasp?</i></p>	
Onomatopoeia	<p>Use of words which sound like the noise they refer to.</p> <p><i>Hiss, bang.</i></p>	
Personification	<p>The attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something non-human.</p> <p><i>The Stars danced playfully in the moonlit sky</i></p>	
Hyperbole	<p>A deliberate exaggeration used for effect.</p> <p><i>I haven't seen you for ages</i></p>	

Production

Ex. 17 - Develop the following written tasks related to the poem "Mort aux chats".

- Write a defence of "cats" trying to refute the allegations contained in the poem.
- Write your own poem in favour or against any category of people you like or dislike using the rhetorical elements (short sentences and rhetorical questions) and the figures of speech you have learnt.
- Using some of the poetic devices you studied, write a short poem celebrating a celebrity or a friend of yours you particularly like or about an aspect of your life that you feel especially happy with.

Ex. 18 - Write 10 sentences about your ideal society using the following future forms:

will - going to - present continuous.

Ex.: In an ideal society, there will be no more racism.
In an ideal society, people are going to be respected for who they are and not for their physical appearance.

Ex. 19 - Develop the following written tasks related to the poem Mort aux chats.

- a) Write a defence of “cats” trying to refute the allegations contained in the poem.
- b) Write your own poem in favour or against any category of people you like or dislike using the rhetorical elements (short sentences and rhetorical questions) and the figures of speech you have learnt.
- c) Using some of the poetic devices you studied, write a short poem celebrating a celebrity or a friend of yours you particularly like or about an aspect of your life that you feel especially happy with.

Ex. 20 - Exercise: Emotional words through Group poetry

The aim of this activity is to become aware of the connotative differences in the words related to the expression of emotions, using words belonging to the same semantic field.

A psychologically relevant theme (bullying, racism, love, night, feast, etc.) is chosen together with the students. In pairs, students have to find two adjectives and three verbs that describe the theme, plus a phrase that will constitute a verse. Then, every couple blends with another couple in a group of four. They have to choose, starting from their proposals, two adjectives and three verbs and a concluding sentence, so half of the starting material must be eliminated, and during this procedure, they have to discuss meta-linguistically.

The blending of the groups is repeated until there are four groups (four poems). At last, the teacher, together with the whole class, decides which one will be the poem of the class. This can be done on the board, where the ballot of the adjectives chosen could be performed. It can be useful to decide to write, on one side of the board, positively connoted adjectives and verbs and, next to them, negative ones in order to make a double choice: two positive and two negative adjectives, three positive and three negative verbs. In this way, a poem chosen consequently among all those proposed by the students is born.

If there were positively and negatively connoted adjectives and verbs, two parallel poems can be created but of opposite connotation.

Eventually, students can choose to post the final poem/s, as their class poem/s, on the school website or just copy it/them on a poster and hang it/them on the class wall.

6.3. Lesson plan based on a novel: “Wonder”, by R. J. Palacio

Introducing the theme: What’s ordinary?

The teacher plays the book trailer of *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio. The book trailer shows the main character, Auggie, walking through a corridor of his new school while other students stare him down.

Presentation

Ex. 1 - You are about to see a book trailer of “Wonder” by R.J. Palacio. It shows the main character, Auggie, wondering about what “ordinary” means.

- a) *Where does the action take place?*
- b) *Why is Auggie always seen from behind?*
- c) *What happens when the protagonist walks down the corridor or the streets? Why?*
- d) *What would he like to find?*
- e) *How is the protagonist feeling?*
- f) *Can you rephrase the final sentence?*

Bridge: We have just watched a book trailer from *Wonder*, a novel which sold five million copies worldwide. In the opening chapter of this book, the protagonist wonders about what is ordinary. Now we are about to read his story.

Students are provided with the plot of the novel and then with its opening excerpt⁷, which appears under the heading “Ordinary”, provided in Appendix 1.

Synopsis: Due to extreme facial abnormalities, August (Auggie) Pullman has been home-schooled. He is about to enter fifth grade at a private middle school, and being the new kid in the school, a common challenge for many young people, is especially worrisome for Auggie. Auggie won’t describe what he looks like because “whatever you’re thinking, it’s probably worse.”

⁷ To improve students’ listening skills, we can make use of an audiobook, therefore students can listen to a recorded version of the excerpts.

Auggie gets stared at wherever he goes and must learn to endure the taunts and fears of his classmates as he struggles to be “ordinary”.

Practice

As a class, the students discuss these questions:

- a) *What does ordinary mean?*
- b) *Did this excerpt remind you of a person you know or an event that happened to you? If so, what can you say about it?*
- c) *Why might some people do the “look-away thing” when they see someone with a disfigurement or disability?*
- d) *How do you think August Pullman would fit into this classroom? How do you think he would fit into your school?*

Other excerpts are provided (see Appendix 1).

After each passage, the teacher asks students to answer some reading comprehension questions and some other questions that could prompt a discussion in the class.

Grammar corner

The teacher underlines how, when we talk about past events, we usually use the simple past tense. So, he/she starts reviewing the simple past forms of regular and irregular verbs starting from the pronunciation.

Pronunciation corner

The teacher asks students to pronounce some verbs mentioned in the text. This way, students can infer the rule of pronunciation for simple past regular verbs. Then, the teacher gives them a list of other regular past verbs which students are supposed to group into columns according to their pronunciation (/t/, /d/, /id/).

Verbs from the passages.

/t/	/d/	/id/
asked	answered	created
bumped	burned	ended
dropped	called	handed
looked	continued	hesitated
noticed	dragged	interrupted
peeked ⁸	googled	nodded
picked	mumbled ¹²	pointed
scrunched ⁹	offered	resisted
touched	raised	started
walked	shrivelled ¹³	wanted
wished	smiled	
plopped ¹⁰	turned	
popped ¹¹	used	
	changed	

Ex. 2 - Put the following verbs in the right column according to their pronunciation

accepted, allowed, answered, arrived, asked, attended, called, carried, changed, cleaned, contacted, cooked, cried, danced, decided, defended, died, dressed, ended, enjoyed, expected, explained, exported, finished, followed, happened, hated, helped, hoped, included, invited, kissed, landed, laughed, listened, lived, looked, loved, missed, needed, opened, passed, planned, played, presented, printed, pushed, shouted, started, stopped, talked, visited, waited, walked, washed, watched, worked.

/t/	/d/	/id/

After that, the teacher can review the irregular forms that students came across in the excerpts read in class from the book *Wonder*:

⁸ Look briefly, furtively.

⁹ To make your face, or part of it, into a tight shape in order to show an emotion.

¹⁰ Dropped.

¹¹ If something pops, it makes a short sharp sound.

¹² If you mumble, you speak very quietly and not clearly at all.

¹³ Dry and shrink.

Ex. 3 - Write the present tense form of the following irregular verbs you came across in the excerpts:

broke		came		caught		could		did	
felt		found		got		had		heard	
held		kept		knew		left		made	
meant		put		read		said		sat	
saw		stole		stood		thought		told	
took		was		went					

An exercise to practice regular and irregular past forms is provided. The text is taken from a passage that students have read in class.

Ex. 4 – This is a passage that you have already read. Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verbs. Use the simple past tense.

Go	Notice	Be	Do	Choose	Think	Keep	Start	Sit	Change
----	--------	----	----	--------	-------	------	-------	-----	--------

[On my first day at school] I _____¹ straight to room 301 on the third floor. [...] I _____² that some kids _____³ definitely staring at me. I _____⁴ my thing of pretending not to notice. I _____⁵ inside the classroom, and the teacher _____⁶ writing on the chalkboard while all the kids started sitting at different desks. The desks _____⁷ in a half circle facing the chalkboard, so I _____⁸ the desk in the middle toward the back, which I _____⁹ would make it harder for anyone to stare at me. I still _____¹⁰ my head way down, just looking up enough from under my bangs to see everyone's feet. As the desks _____¹¹ to fill up, I did notice that no one _____¹² down next to me. A couple of times someone _____¹³ about to sit next to me, then _____¹⁴ his or her mind at the last minute and sat somewhere else.

Then the teacher can review the interrogative and negative form of the past tense.
Question form

Question word	Auxiliary	Subject	Verb	Object
What	did	you	play	yesterday evening?
When	did	she	meet	her boyfriend?
Where	did	they	go	after the match?

Negative form

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Auxiliary</i>	<i>Not</i>	<i>infinitive without to</i>	<i>Object</i>
She	did	not	play	football
You	did	not	meet	Him
<i>Subject</i>	<i>Short form</i>		<i>infinitive without to</i>	<i>Object</i>
You	didn't		meet	him

Ex. 5 - Change the affirmative form to an interrogative form of the verbs in the exercise n. 4

Students are required to change the affirmative form to an interrogative form of the verbs they have put in the blanks.

Ex. 6 - Crossword

Through this exercise, students can widen their vocabulary, in particular feeling adjectives and sayings.

Fill in the blanks to complete the crossword!

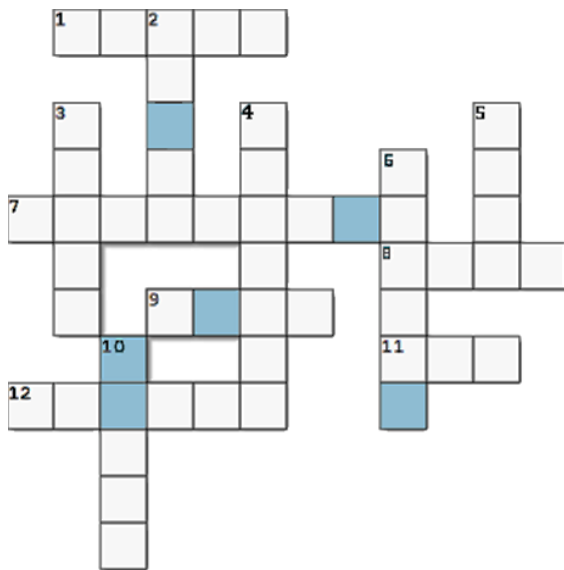
The shaded squares make up a secret word! Can you work out what it is?

Across

1. Don't _____ a book by its cover
7. It is better to know some of the _____ than all of the answers
8. Better _____ than never
9. To thine own self be _____
11. Waste _____, want _____
12. When given the choice between right or being kind, _____ kind

Down

2. Your _____ are your monuments
3. Have no friends not _____ to yourself
4. _____ teaches success
5. Be the type of person you want to _____
6. No man is an _____, entire of itself
10. Kind _____ do not cost much. Yet they accomplish much



Secret word: _____

The exercise - *Figures of sound and speech* – (provided during the previous lesson plan) is recalled in order to deal with some poetic elements which are common even in narrative works.

Production

Oral production

Premise: The point of view is the angle from which a scene is described, and a story told. The point of view does not simply refer to the description or perception of facts and events, but also to their interpretation. The narrative voice belongs to the person who is speaking, how he/she sees the fact, thinks and judges.

Students are organized into four groups. Each group is assigned to represent one character from the novel in order for the class to examine four different points of view. For this activity, students assume a collective role, where any of the participants can speak as that character. When assigning groups, the teacher provides some basic information to endow the characters.

Group 1 — Auggie’s sister Via: Being the sister of a boy with a facial deformity has its hardships. When things don’t work out, Auggie turns to her for advice, saying that he wants to quit school.

Group 2 — Auggie’s used-to-be friend, Jack: He has become friends with Julian, who is mean to Auggie. Julian will get anyone he can to go against Auggie.

Group 3 — Auggie’s mother: She is not sure that sending Auggie to school was the right decision. Homeschooling was going fine.

Group 4 — Auggie’s headmaster: He is aware that not all students are “friendly” towards Auggie. Some parents are complaining that Auggie should be removed from the school.

The teacher, in role as a guidance counsellor, interviews each of the characters to learn how Auggie has been progressing at school (How are things in school? So, how’s it going in school? So how is he doing in school?). For this collective role, a student can offer only one contribution until other group members have been heard from. The teacher, however, returns to the groups more than once.

“Wonder” — The Epilogue

Written production

Students are required to write an epilogue for the novel by considering how Auggie’s life might change once he enters high school, university, or the work world. To examine his life in the future, the epilogue can be written in role, with Auggie sharing his story and describing his world. Each student-written epilogue can serve as a monologue to be presented to others in the class.

6.4. Lesson plan based on a play: “The Shape of a Girl”, by J. MacLeod

Presentation

Warm-up phase

In order to introduce the topic, the teacher shows two pictures depicting a more traditional form of physical bullying, and a more recent, but no less harmful form of cyberbullying in which hurtful messages are posted on social media.

Ex. 1. Look at the two photographs below and then answer the following questions.



1. Which two different forms of bullying do they illustrate?
2. Do you think one is more serious than the other? If so, which?
3. In your opinion, are the following statements true or false?

a. Bullying is a problem only for young people of school age.	T	F
b. Bullying and being bullied are just parts of growing up.	T	F
c. Bullying is only a problem if it is physical.	T	F
d. If you are being bullied, you should try to solve the problem yourself without asking parents or teachers to intervene.	T	F
e. Bullying is a male activity.	T	F
f. The best way to deal with bullying is to ignore it.	T	F

Bridge: Through these pictures, we have seen two types of bullying, but 85% of bullying takes place in front of others. Now we are about to know the story of a bullied girl told by a bystander.

To better understand the drama, the teacher provides students with the plot of the play.

Plot: *The Shape of a Girl* is a one-act, one-character play. The protagonist is Braidie, a fifteen-year-old girl who speaks to her absent brother. The play presents the viewpoints of a number of characters caught in the web of bullying. It examines the code of silence and complicity that some teenagers find in a “mean girl” world. Hatred, combined with the urge to belong to a group, is at the centre of this story. The play is based on the notorious murder of the Canadian teenager Reena Virk.

The teacher hands out a first excerpt (provided in Appendix 2) of the drama and plays a record with a native speaker reading the play.

Practice

The teacher asks the students to answer some reading comprehension questions.

Ex. 1. First reaction to the text

Share your responses in pairs without reacting or discussing the statements.

- When I read this, I felt ...
- When I read this, I remembered ...
- When I read this, I wondered ...
- I predict ...

Ex. 2. Class Discussion

1. What information do we learn from this excerpt?
2. How authentic is this speech? Could it be true-to-life?
3. What questions might you ask the speaker?
4. How might you respond if you received this message about Penalty Day?
5. What do you think will happen at school or outside of school?
6. What do you think should happen?

Other passages (in Appendix 2) are read, and the students are required to muse about the narrated facts.

Ex. 3. Semantic field

In order to expand students' vocabulary, the teacher proposes an exercise with the purpose of gathering together some words and expressions according to their semantic area.

Ex. 4. Gather together the following words and expressions according to their semantic area

<i>Accuse somebody of</i>	<i>Assault</i>	<i>Back-pack</i>	<i>Beat up</i>	<i>Beg for help</i>	<i>Check each other out</i>
<i>Crap</i>	<i>Down and dirty</i>	<i>Enemy</i>	<i>Essay</i>	<i>Exasperating</i>	<i>Field trip</i>
<i>Figure out</i>	<i>Finish off</i>	<i>Fooling around</i>	<i>Hang out</i>	<i>Hate</i>	<i>Hideous</i>
<i>Homeroom</i>	<i>Kill</i>	<i>Homework</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Miserable</i>	<i>Phony</i>
<i>School bus</i>	<i>Teach someone a lesson</i>	<i>Watch one's back</i>	<i>Yell out</i>		

Adjectives/ expressions with a negative connotation	School vocabulary	Verbs related to friendship	Expressions/verbs related to war/fight

Grammar corner

Second Conditional

Through an inductive approach, the teacher introduces the second conditional tense using examples from the play.

- ***If you reported everyone, you would certainly have to watch your back at all times and look no one in the face, ever. You would have to go through your entire life, using only your peripheral vision.***
- ***If you put me in a room filled with girls, girls my age that I've never seen before in my life - I could divide them all up.***

The teacher underlines that the second conditional describes the present or future result of an imaginary situation. Based on their existing knowledge of the simple past form and the modal “would”, students can infer the rule.

Imaginary situation

If + Past Simple

If I had a million pounds,
If we took the car,

Result

subject + would ('d)/could

I would probably
we would

+ verb

buy a yacht.
have the problem of where
to park.

Then students can practise this form through a written exercise.

Ex. 5. Complete the second conditional sentences with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

1. If I _____ (be) you, I _____ (not tell) anyone about this.
2. It _____ (be) awful if you _____ (lose) your passport.
3. If people _____ (not eat) so many sweets, their teeth _____ (not fall) out
4. If he _____ (not work) so much, he _____ (not be) so stressed out.
5. If I _____ (have) a helicopter, I _____ (fly) to school.
6. If I _____ (win) the lottery, I _____ (not keep) all the money for myself.

Production

Role play: Penalty Day

Students work in groups of four or five to plan and develop a role play. Students take roles, including lead roles, according to the demands of their scenario.

Ex. 1. The scenarios outlined below are offered as events that might occur on Penalty Day. Work in groups of four or five to plan and develop a role play. You should take roles, including lead roles, according to the demands of each scenario.

Scenarios (in order of presentation):

- At the bus stop: Adrienne and her friends are discussing how they will target one girl for the whole day.
- Arriving at school: Students react to the WhatsApp message inviting others to join in Penalty Day.
- Recess time: A group of students learns about Penalty Day and tries to understand the rules.
- Recess time: Another group of students refuses to participate in Penalty Day in any way and discusses whether remaining silent is the best strategy.
- After school: Teachers in the staff room hear about Penalty Day and discuss what might be done.
- That evening: The events of Penalty Day are discussed with family members.

Once they have planned their scenes, groups present them sequentially for students to understand the different viewpoints connected to the bullying situation involving the mean girls.

Ex. 2. Offering Advice: “If I Were You . . .”

As a reflective activity, students are asked to give advice to Braidie. As Braidie walks down the school hallways to get to the bus, she passes many other students. The students, in role, approach Braidie one by one, sometimes making a physical connection, placing a hand on her shoulder.

As each student comes forward, he or she completes the stem:

“If I were you..., I would ...”.

The character walks between two rows of students who provide a commentary on how others see the character’s situation. Students — in role or out of role — offer advice or comment as the character passes them.

Apart from the practice of the second conditional, this strategy is useful in helping students reflect on the many facets that a character in a drama must face in making a choice. Students represent the possible conflicting thoughts of the character at the moment a decision is made. The voices become the character’s conscience, which gives the person advice, compelling him or her to make a hard choice that may have moral or life-threatening dimensions.

Ex. 3. Writing in Role

The teacher creates a Padlet in the form of a Facebook blog. Students assume the identity of a character of the drama (or of the novel or of the poem dealt with during the project) and post their contribution on the Padlet page.

Ex. 4. Choose the identity of a character of the drama (of the novel or of the poem dealt with during the project) and post your contribution on this Padlet Page.

You can write a:

Letter of Apology

Ex.: A former bully, now regretful, writes a letter or email of apology to the person he/she tormented.

Letter for Advice

Ex.: Write a letter to an advice columnist, describing a problem and articulating the victim’s feelings.

Diary

Ex.: The perpetrator (or the victim) of Penalty Day writes a diary entry about how he/she felt about this experience.

Poem

Ex.: Write a poem from a victim/bully/bystander’s point of view.

Letter from Parent

Ex.: Write in role as a parent of a bullied student. As mothers or fathers, write a letter to school authorities, a bully’s parent, or their son/daughter.

PART II

EMPIRICAL STUDIES:

***STUDENTS' AND TEACHER'S VIEWS ON THE USE OF LITERARY
TEXTS FOR EFL AND THE MOTHER TONGUE***

*Chapter 7. First-year students' views on the use of literature as a tool for
learning EFL*

The mind is not a vessel to be filled
but a fire to be ignited.
Plutarch, *Moralia*

This chapter aims to respond to the first cluster of research questions of this thesis which is:

- 1.1. What are students' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in ELT classes before experiencing lesson plans based on these three literary genres?
- 1.2. What are students' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in ELT classes after experiencing lesson plans based on these three literary genres?
Are there any changes in comparison to the views expressed at the pre-test stage?
- 1.3. Taking into account both the pre-test and the post-test stages, which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, do students perceive to contribute most to their learning?

In this chapter, we will answer research questions quantitatively and qualitatively by exploring pre-test and post-test questionnaire results for the three genres under analysis. Research question 1.1 and 1.2 will be answered in sections 7.2.1. (quantitatively) and 7.2.2 (qualitatively). In the same sections, a statistical comparison between pre-tests and post-tests will be carried out to answer research question 1.3. In the final chapter section, a discussion taking into account the different dimensions related to our investigation will ensue considering pre-tests and post-tests (section 7.3).

7.1. Method

Participants and context

The high school where the present study was conducted is located in the north of Italy. The educational offer of the school includes three different specializations: science, humanities and linguistics. The local context of the school has been characterized, over the last thirty years, by a process of residential and industrial urbanization that has generated a homogeneous urban settlement and road network system. The local working areas are mainly related to construction businesses, small and medium-sized industrial plants and commercial activities that offer numerous opportunities for collaboration with the high school. With these local companies, contacts are gradually being built by the school to implement internships and school-work “alternation courses”.

The participants in this study were 71 students, aged 14/15 (44% girls and 56% boys), belonging to three different First-Year classes of a *Liceo Scientifico* (scientific high school). Therefore, the sample was constituted of students who had not started studying literature in a foreign language yet. These students attended EFL classes for three hours a week, the same average amount as in other Italian high schools. The socio-economic status of students attending a scientific high school is usually medium-high because students attending this kind of school are more likely to carry on their academic career and attend university, while students attending a Technical High School do not usually tend to pursue their course of studies. According to the information provided by these students’ teachers, their level of English was A2, as described in the CEFR.

The European Parliament resolution on initiatives to complement school curricula providing appropriate support measures to include a European dimension in national mainstream courses,

with its plurilingual and multi-cultural background, entered the Italian school after the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, which took place on 1st November 1993.¹⁴ The subsequent law, 53/2003, took due account of the objectives elaborated in 2000 in Lisbon, especially concerning the concept of lifelong learning and the development of competences about local, national and European dimensions.

Italian Legislative Decree n. 59/2004 described the purpose of the various school orders. The primary school is supposed to promote the development of knowledge of necessary skills, including literacy in the English language, with an expected output level corresponding to A1+ of the Common European Framework of Reference. As far as Lower secondary school is concerned, the expected output level is A2.

As regards secondary school, on 1st September 2010, the Italian reform of the secondary education cycle became effective, providing new regulations for high schools, professional and technical institutes. As for the learning outcomes, common to all the courses of study, the acquisition of level B2 of the common European framework of reference was required.

Concerning high schools, which are the object of our research, the study of a foreign language and its culture must proceed along two fundamental axes: the development of communicative language skills and the development of the culture awareness. Usually teachers, following textbooks' didactic sequences, tend to teach linguistic topics during the first two years, and literature during the remaining three years. The teaching is often limited to the history of literature with the reading of some anthological passages from the works of authors belonging

¹⁴ Article 126 of the Maastricht Treaty stated that "Community action shall be aimed at: developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States".

Retrieved from: https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europaeu/files/docs/body/treaty_on_european_union_en.pdf.

to the literary canon. Exercises are usually linked to reading comprehension, main themes dealt with and stylistic choices as, for example, basic figures of speech.

Data collection and ethical requirements

The present study adopted a mixed-method approach since we wanted to obtain quantitative and qualitative data to explore trends of change regarding students' views on the use of poems, novels and plays for EFL. Quantitative data were obtained through three questionnaires, one per genre, designed on a 5-point Likert scale (see Appendix 3), which students completed before and after our three lesson plans were taught in class, one per each of the three genres under analysis (see chapter 6 for the teaching units). The three learning units included, and the three questionnaires tested, the benefits of using poems, novels and drama for EFL, as defined by existing studies in the field (see chapter 3 for these advantages). For poetry and novels, the questionnaire included 18 benefits — 6, 2 and 10 within, respectively, the linguistic, the sociocultural and the motivational dimensions. For drama, the questionnaire included 20 advantages — 6, 2 and 12 within, respectively, the linguistic, the sociocultural and the motivational dimensions.

For our qualitative study, open-ended questions were provided, asking participants' motivations and points of view regarding the use of literature in the language class after each lesson plan. The open-ended questions were asked in a questionnaire which contained the same questions students were administered for the quantitative study. We also asked students to:

- compare their initial expectations to their considerations after experiencing the lesson plans;
- state what they had enjoyed the most and why;
- state what they had found most difficult and why.

Moreover, 13 interviews were conducted voluntarily to collect further data. Through the interviews, we could access and acquire more in-depth knowledge of the participants' views.

Prior to the collection of data from students, an official authorisation was obtained from the school's headmaster and the teachers' board, that approved the project on February 27th, 2018. The questionnaires to be submitted to the students were subjected to the attention of the school principal who authorised its use. The conductor of the research assured the total anonymity of the students who took part in the project.

Personal information, such as names and audio recordings, was stored separately from research data and archived by giving each participant a serial number which was assigned to their research data. Word processor documents and electronic spreadsheets were stored securely on password-protected devices.

Data analysis

Quantitative analysis

To carry out our quantitative analysis, we gathered descriptive statistical data calculating measures of central tendency, such as means and standard deviations. Through these values, we created graphs which helped us break down visually the components into their constituent elements. Graphs were useful to present data in a clearly laid-out way and to complement and support our arguments. Then, we conducted paired *t*-tests matching each question in the pre-test with its equivalent in the post-test. After that, we ran paired *t*-tests comparing clusters of questions divided according to the analysed components linked to the linguistic competences, motivation and sociocultural competence. Besides, the results were compared to the three genres, along with the three different dimensions under consideration, and, in turn, the latter in relation to the two-time phases of the survey (pre-tests and post-tests). For this kind of investigation, we

employed a repeated-measures ANOVA applied to three factors: genre, dimension, and time of the survey. To run our statistical analyses, we used both SPSS and MS Excel.

The result of the internal consistency reliability for the questionnaires, measured with the Cronbach's coefficient, was $\alpha = .9$ for almost all of them, indicating that the internal consistency was very high and that the scale was reliable. For each test, we provided descriptive statistics, ran paired sample *t*-tests, and calculated the effect size (Cohen's *d*).

Qualitative analysis

Students' qualitative responses, which were obtained through open-ended questions and interviews, were indexed to sort answers so that materials with similar content or properties could be viewed as a whole. This way, we could focus on each topic in turn, so that details and distinctions, that lay within, could be scrutinised. Data were gathered into clusters according to the theme that they entailed. Subsequently, we tried to uncover what underpinned attitudes and motivations distinguishing factors that could lead to different perspectives within the sample (White et al., 2014, p. 380). This way, we tried to identify processes that were based on a complex interplay of perceptions, expectations, resources or barriers. The open-ended questions and the interviews took the form of narrative reports of the elements we considered meaningful. These reports of the educational practice, which is itself a form of experience, and as such, can be narrated, became part of the empirical basis to be analysed and interpreted.

7.2. Results

7.2.1. Quantitative results

Tables 2 (poetry), 3 (novel), and 4 (drama) below provide the results by genre at the pre-test and post-test stages. The Tables also offer a comparison between the two repeated-measures analyses in terms of their statistical significance. The results provided in these tables contain the data to answer research questions 1.1 and 1.2.

DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS	Pre-test		Post-test		<i>t</i> stat (N=69)	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD			
Using poems in the language classroom can contribute to the development of my							
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	3.37	1.00	3.93	.90	-8.88	.00	.82
listening skills	3.40	1.04	3.99	.91	-6.76	.00	.61
speaking skills	3.53	1.06	4.10	.90	-5.93	.00	.59
reading skills	3.46	1.12	3.97	.81	-4.96	.00	.53
writing skills	3.12	.95	3.78	.94	-6.12	.00	.70
vocabulary	3.91	.88	4.35	.81	-5.37	.00	.56
grammar	2.82	.93	3.37	1.04	-4.71	.00	.53
MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	2.95	1.08	3.83	.98	-13.50	.00	1.37
because I can better understand my personal emotions	2.62	1.04	3.57	1.25	-8.01	.00	.84
because I can better understand other people's emotions	2.62	1.08	3.72	1.01	-9.01	.00	1.07

because I can develop my interpretative skills	3.16	1.03	4.06	.86	-8.54	.00	.95
because I can become acquainted with figures of speech	3.34	1.15	4.35	.77	-8.50	.00	1.04
because poems can reveal a creative use of language	3.16	1.03	4.06	.90	-6.84	.00	.94
because poems deal with important values	3.19	1.08	3.66	1.09	-3.19	.00	.44
because poems normally deal with non-trivial topics	2.90	1.02	3.59	.97	-4.56	.00	.70
because poems are authentic material	2.84	1.22	3.60	1.04	-5.84	.00	.68
because using poems is an enjoyable experience	2.90	1.05	4.31	.93	-12.06	.00	1.43
because poems are usually concise	2.75	1.06	3.37	1.01	-4.91	.00	.60
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	3.14	1.16	3.26	1.13	-.94	.18	.13
because I can better understand the Anglophone culture	3.37	1.11	3.46	1.06	-.66	.26	.08
because I can better understand my own culture	2.91	1.22	3.07	1.20	-.84	.20	.13

Table 3

Comparison between pre-tests and post-tests related to novel

DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS	Pre-test		Post-test		<i>t</i> stat (N=70)	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD			
Using novels in the language classroom can contribute to the development of my							
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	3.83	.98	4.48	.70	-9.37	.00	1.35
listening skills	3.36	1.14	4.14	.91	-5.52	.00	.98
speaking skills	3.91	.91	4.5	.74	-6.52	.00	.92
reading skills	4.14	.91	4.67	.56	-5.71	.00	.83
writing skills	3.84	.93	4.31	.79	-4.4	.00	.73

vocabulary	4.27	.88	4.9	.35	-5.93	.00	1.01
grammar	3.43	1.12	4.36	.85	-6.5	.00	1.18
MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	3.27	1.03	4.26	.87	-14.7	.00	2.43
because I can better understand my personal emotions	2.99	1.2	4.06	1.2	-7.5	.00	1.4
because I can better understand other people's emotions	2.81	1.04	4.03	.95	-9.45	.00	1.67
because I can develop my interpretative skills	3.23	1.01	4.03	.95	-5.89	.00	1.14
because I can become acquainted with figures of speech	2.96	.94	4.24	.98	-1.37	.00	1.97
because novels can reveal a creative use of language	3.61	.97	4.39	.77	-6.58	.00	1.14
because novels deal with important values	3.44	1.02	4.41	.65	-8.07	.00	1.37
because novels normally deal with non-trivial topics	3.21	.93	4.19	.86	-1.18	.00	1.5
because novels are authentic material	2.84	1.07	4.09	1.02	-9.16	.00	1.66
because using novels is an enjoyable experience	3.73	1.15	4.6	.69	-6.86	.00	1.08
because novels can help me understand different points of view	3.86	.97	4.59	.6	-6.9	.00	1.08
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	2.76	1.06	3.95	1.08	-13.51	.00	1.95
because I can better understand the Anglophone culture	2.91	1	3.95	.93	-7.46	.00	1.24
because I can better understand my own culture	2.6	1.11	3.95	1.23	-4.77	.00	.93

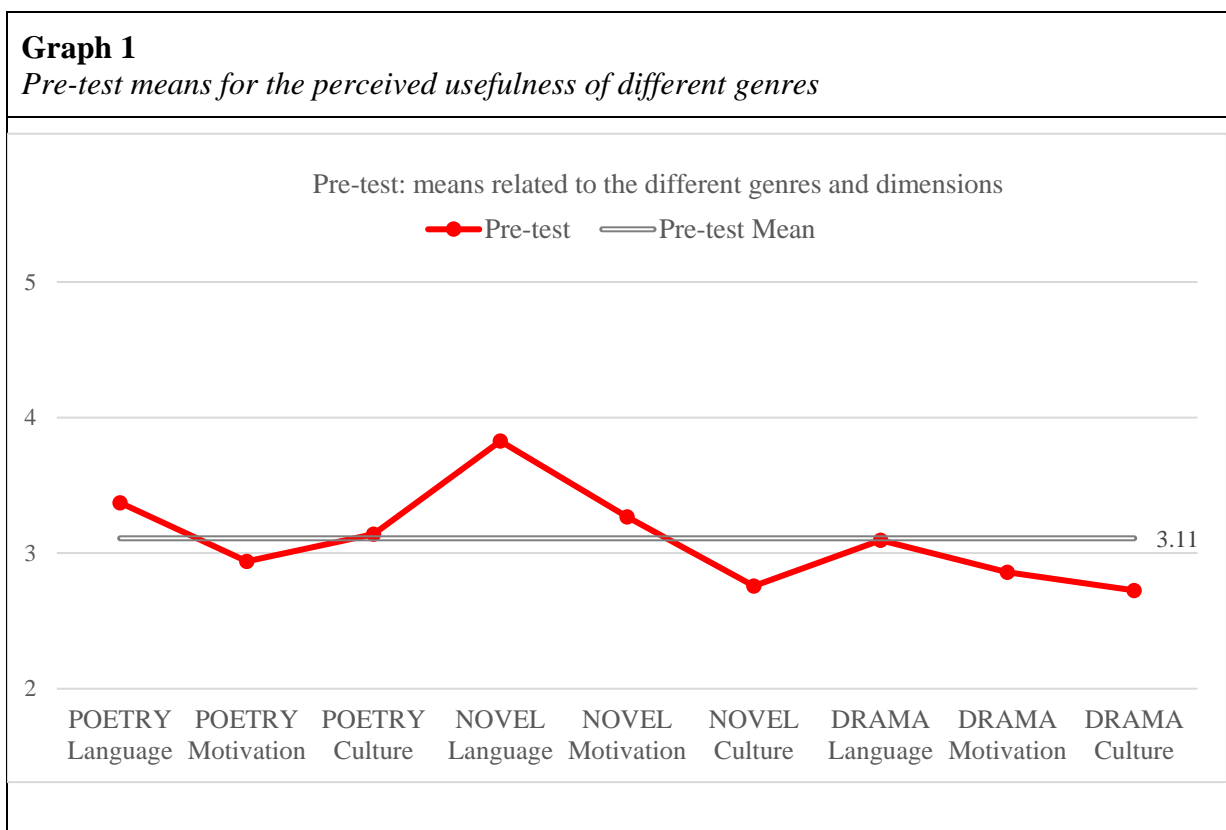
Table 4*Comparison from pre-test to post-test for the dimensions related to drama*

DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS							
	Pre-test		Post-test		<i>t stat</i> (N=71)	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD			
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	3.10	1.10	4.40	.83	-16.79	.00	2.74
listening skills	3.08	1.16	4.30	.95	-9.33	.00	1.50
speaking skills	3.30	1.07	4.55	.77	-1.46	.00	1.67
reading skills	3.03	1.07	4.30	.88	-9.22	.00	1.70
writing skills	2.92	1.13	4.14	.90	-9.88	.00	1.55
vocabulary	3.39	1.05	4.72	.51	-11.71	.00	1.80
grammar	2.86	1.10	4.40	.96	-1.17	.00	1.49
MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	2.86	1.07	4.06	.81	-17.16	.00	2.54
because I can better understand my personal emotions	2.37	.93	3.75	.98	-1.97	.00	2.13
because I can better understand other people's emotions	2.49	1.07	3.89	.90	-9.42	.00	1.87
because I can develop my interpretative skills	2.86	.95	3.90	.81	-7.71	.00	1.58
because I can become acquainted with figures of speech	2.77	1.15	3.87	.81	-7.51	.00	1.37
because plays can reveal a creative use of language	3.01	1.18	4.15	.84	-7.86	.00	1.39
because plays deal with important values	2.96	1.09	4.20	.86	-9.71	.00	1.63
because plays normally deal with non-trivial topics	2.77	1.15	4.00	.65	-8.99	.00	1.52
because plays are authentic material	2.87	.97	4.00	1.07	-7.39	.00	1.54
because using plays is an enjoyable experience	2.79	1.03	4.65	.66	-14.98	.00	2.59

because plays usually offer real lifelike settings	3.14	.98	4.00	.81	-7.66	.00	1.26
because plays can help me understand different points of view	3.03	1.17	4.21	.65	-9.07	.00	1.44
because I can find examples of colloquial and informal language	3.24	1.16	4.07	.68	-6.55	.00	1.02
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	2.73	1.16	3.61	1.06	-8.58	.00	1.28
because I can better understand the Anglophone culture	2.96	1.15	3.86	.91	-7.27	.00	1.12
because I can better understand my own culture	2.49	1.17	3.37	1.21	-6.04	.00	1.04

Research question 1.1: What are students' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in ELT classes before experiencing lesson plans based on these three literary genres?

In response to this research question, the data obtained revealed that participants considered literary texts sufficiently useful to develop their linguistic skills through novels and poems, while, they did not expect the drama to be particularly beneficial for the development of their linguistic abilities. Concerning motivation and culture, only novels were considered by pupils as a source of motivation, while neither poems nor plays were considered a valid tool to motivate them and to develop their cultural awareness. In fact, the values given by students were below the neutral level, as displayed in Graph 1.



Data revealed that participants considered novels sufficiently useful to enhance their linguistic skills ($M=3.83$, $SD=.98$) and their motivation ($M=3.27$, $SD=1.03$) but not their cultural

competence ($M=2.76$, $SD=1.06$). For poetry (Table 2), students' views were positive solely for the induction of linguistic competence ($M=3.37$, $SD=1.00$) and neutral regarding motivational ($M=2.95$, $SD=1.08$) and cultural ($M=3.14$, $SD=1.16$) gains.

For drama, students did not expect this genre to be particularly beneficial for the development of any of the three dimensions, whether linguistic ($M=3.10$, $SD=1.10$), motivational ($M=2.86$, $SD=1.07$) or cultural ($M=2.73$, $SD=1.16$). The subsections below provide a breakdown of results per genre.

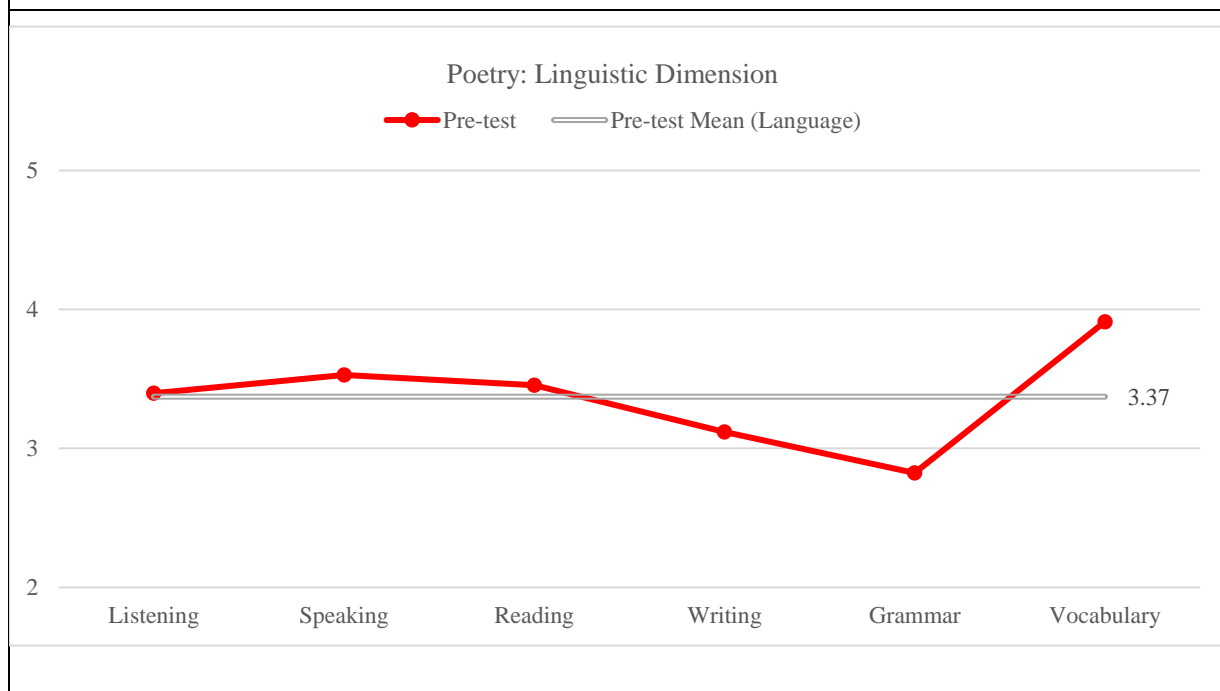
Pre-test results for the perceived usefulness of poetry

As shown in Graph 2, the results showed that students had a somewhat neutral attitude toward the use of poetry. In fact, the overall mean in the pre-test was 3.11 (SD=.35), a value very close to the middle choice pupils had the possibility to select, that, on a 5-point Likert scale, is 3.

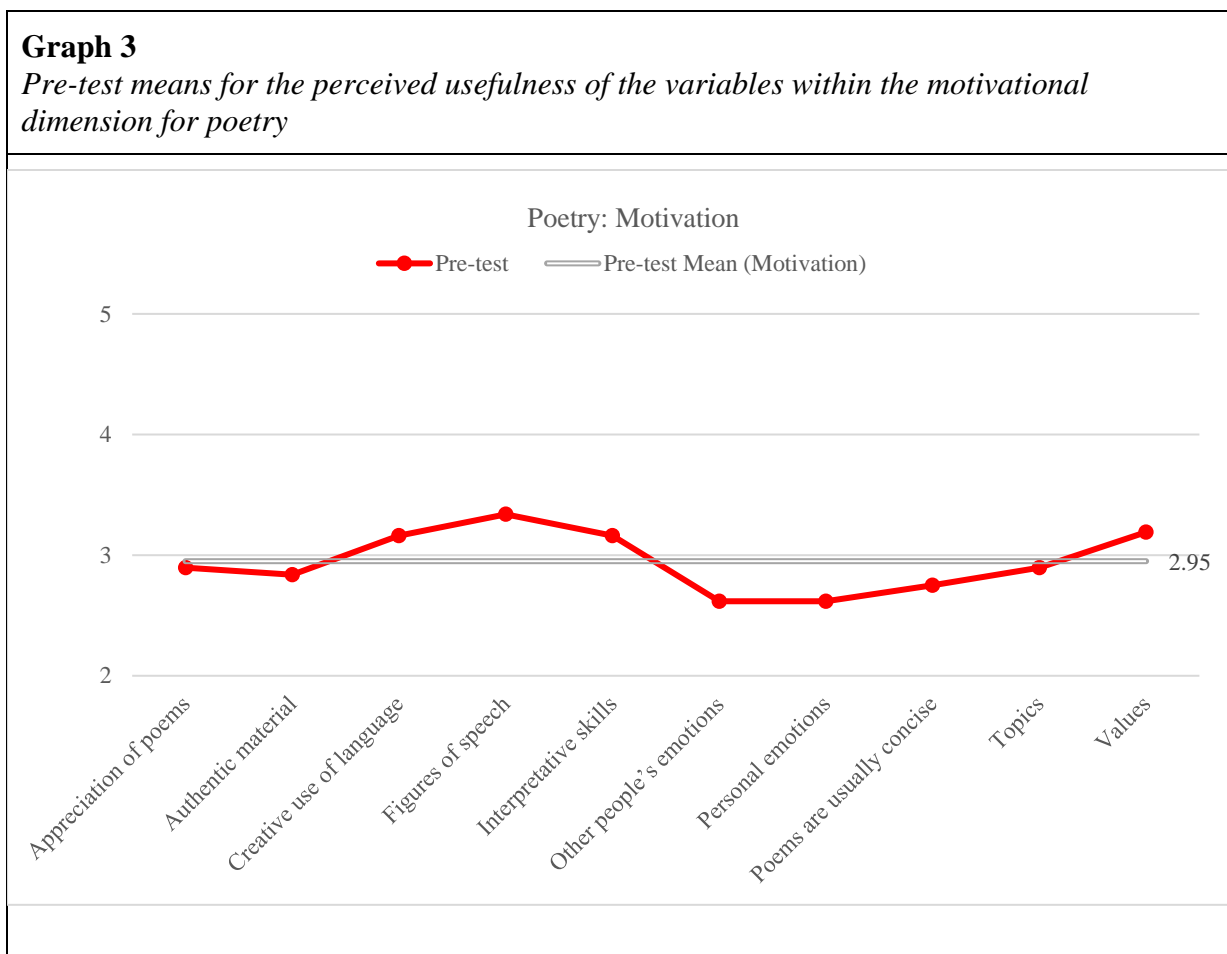
To tie the three different dimensions of the inquiry together, we created three different clusters (language, motivation and culture). As for the linguistic dimension, students' expectations about the usefulness of literature were modest, as it is evident from the scores that were close to the general mean of the linguistic dimension (M=3.37, SD=1.0). An in-depth analysis of the linguistic dimension revealed that, before starting the project, students considered literary texts a valuable source to learn vocabulary, but they did not consider them useful enough to learn grammar, as shown in Graph 2.

Graph 2

Pre-test means for the perceived usefulness of the variables within the linguistic dimension for poetry



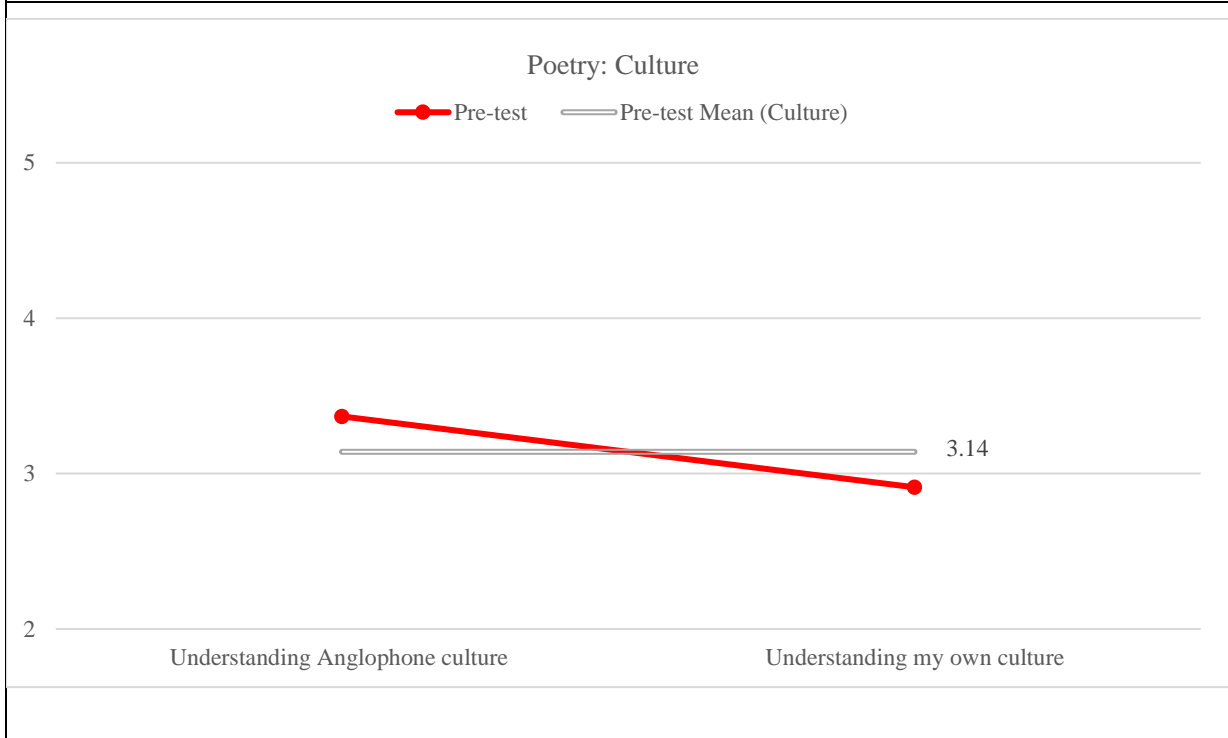
As for motivation, displayed in Graph 3, pupils deemed the use of poems not particularly suitable for stimulating their interest. As a matter of fact, the general mean was 2.95 (SD=1.08). The aspect they considered as the most useful was the learning of the figures of speech (M=3.34, SD=1.15), a distinctive trait of poetry, while the least useful was related to the understanding of personal and other people’s emotions (M=2.62, SD=1.08).



The cultural dimension received a neutral consideration, too. Pupils did not expect poems in English to be a particularly useful tool for learning the Anglophone culture (M=3.37, SD=1.11), and reading them to learn their own culture was considered even less advantageous (M=2.91, SD=1.22).

Graph 4

Pre-test means for the perceived usefulness of the variables within the cultural dimension for poetry

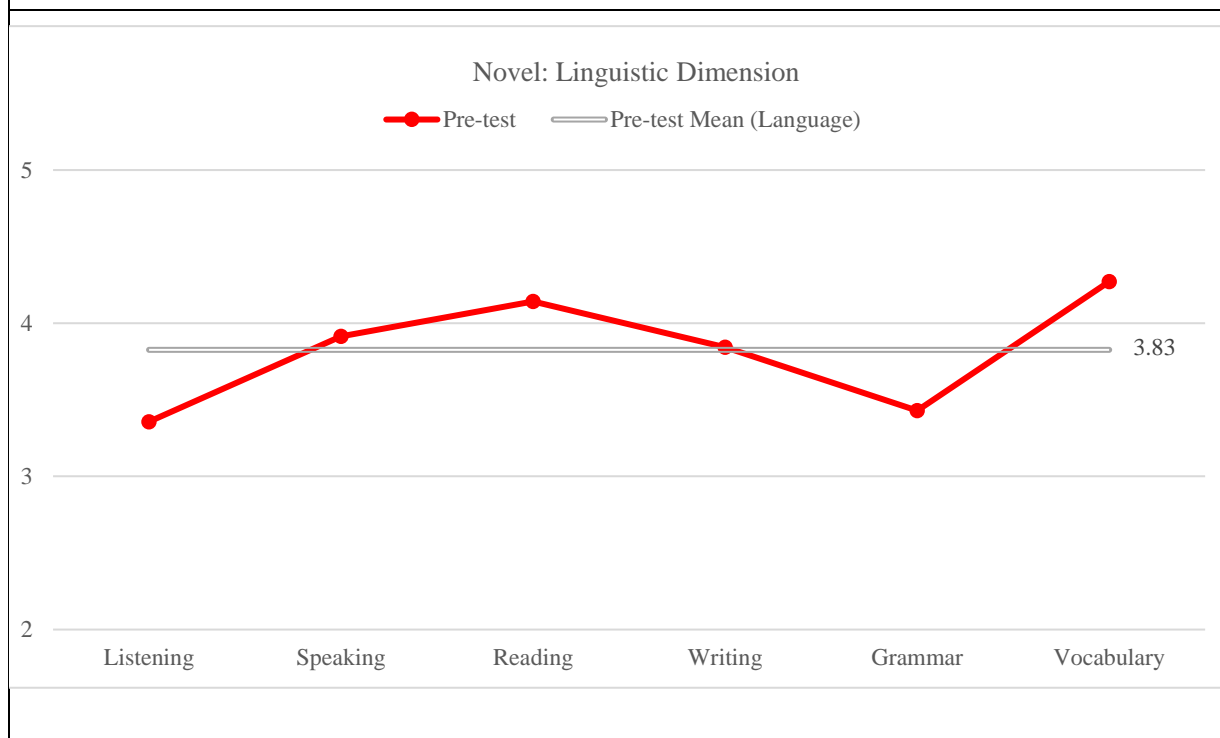


Pre-test results for the perceived usefulness of narrative literary texts (novels) for EFL

As shown in Graph 5, pupils considered the possibility of improving their linguistic skills through novels favourably; in fact, the general mean referred to the linguistic dimension, was 3.83. The linguistic skills that students expected to develop the most through the use of the novel were vocabulary (M=4.27, SD=.88) and reading (M=4.14, SD=.91), while as for listening skills and grammar functions, they did not foresee a remarkable benefit.

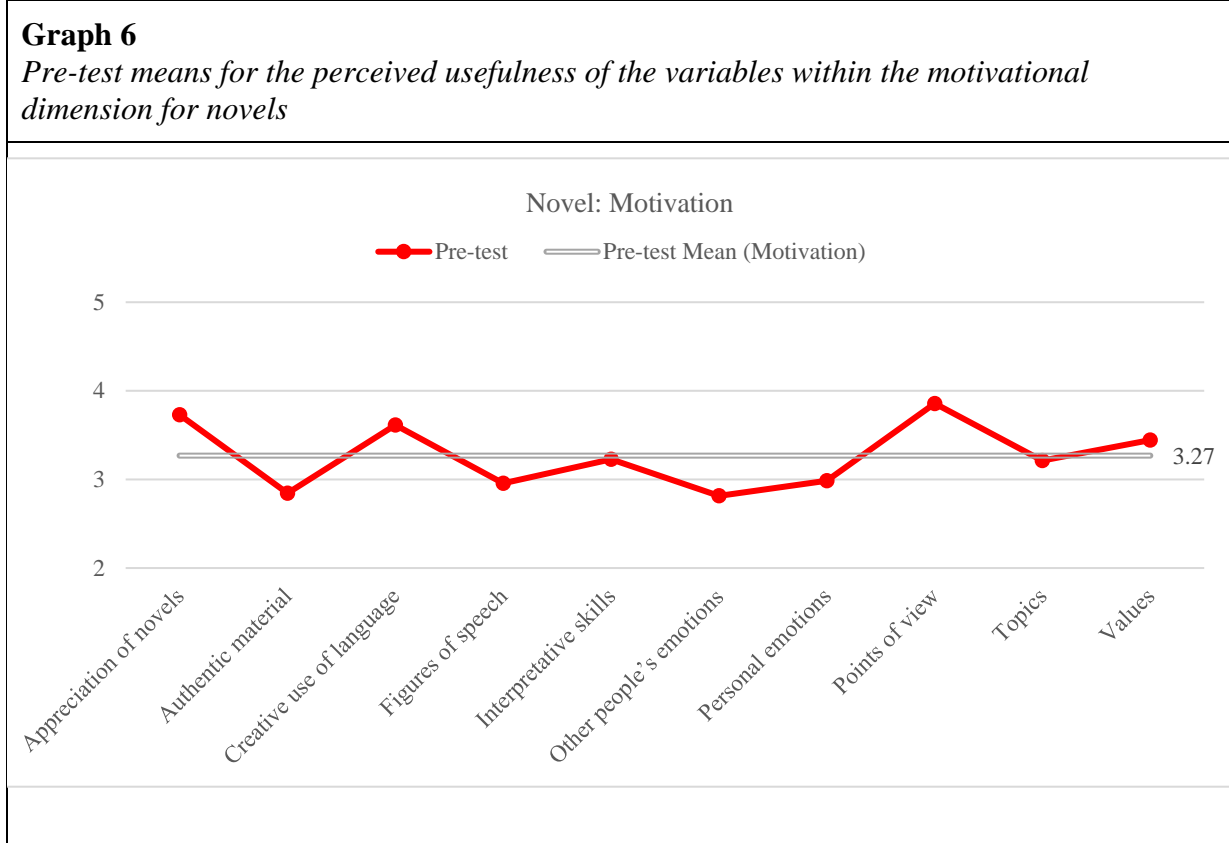
Graph 5

Pre-test means for the perceived usefulness of the variables within the linguistic dimension for novels



The overall mean related to motivation (M=3.27, SD=1.03), displayed in Graph 6, was lower than the one related to the development of linguistic skills, even though the item pupils appreciated the most was the point of view (M=3.86, SD=.97). Furthermore, they did not deem

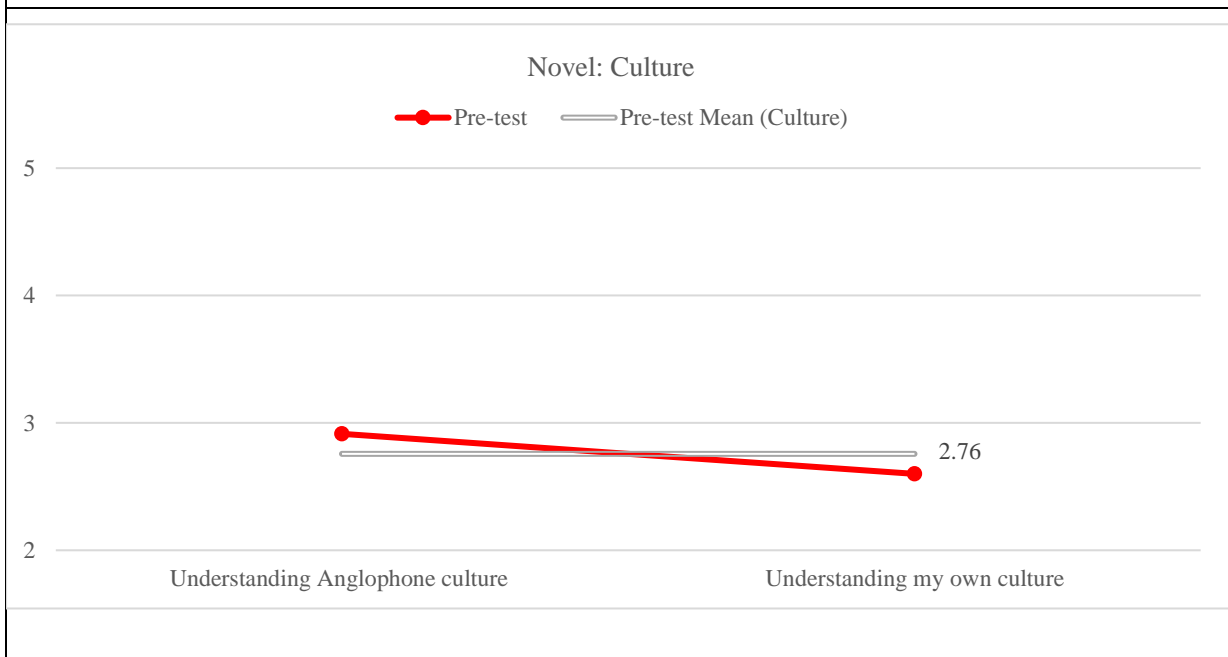
novels useful enough either to learn the figures of speech (M=2.96, SD=.94) or to better understand people’s emotions (M=2.81, SD=1.04).



As for the cultural dimension, as shown in Graph 7, pupils predicted novels would be beneficial to amplify neither the knowledge of their own culture (M=2.60, SD=1.11) nor the knowledge of Anglophone countries (M=2.91, SD=1.0).

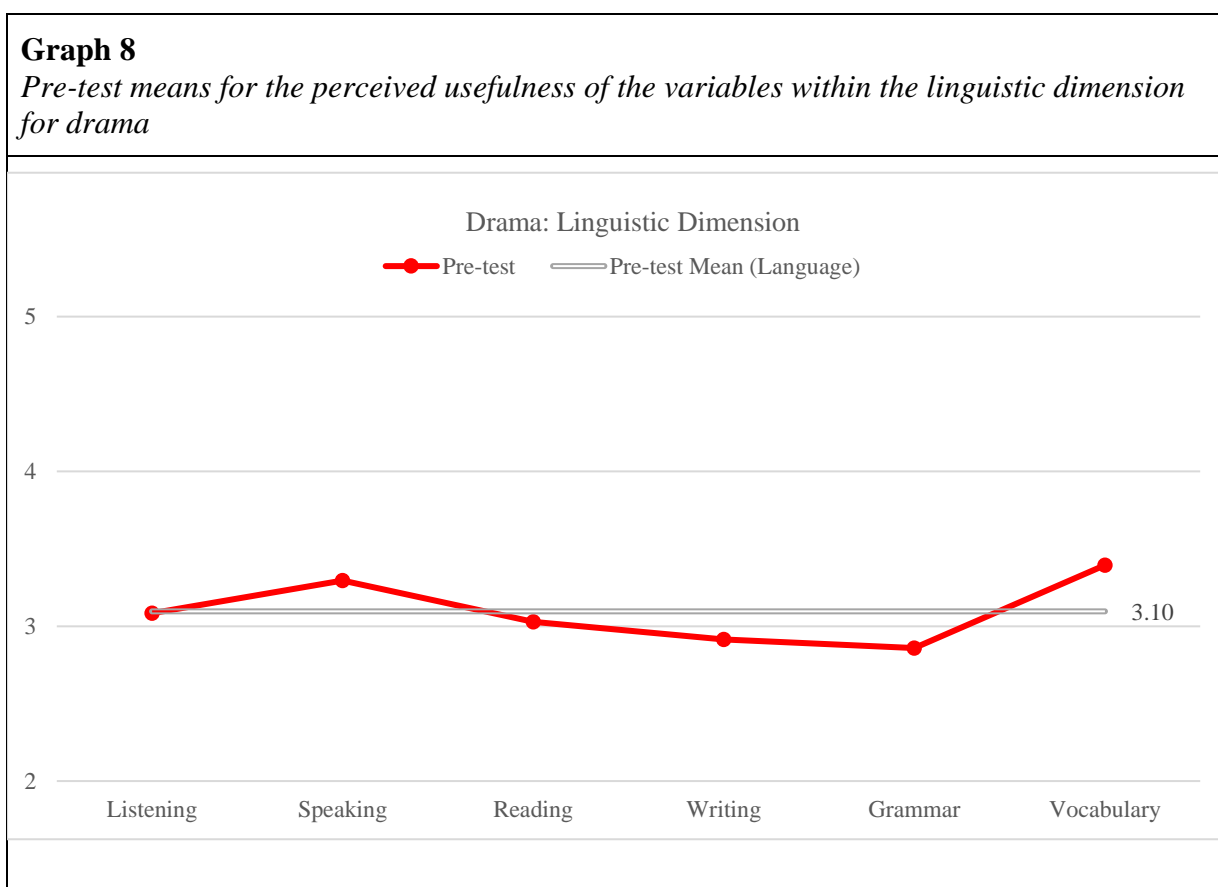
Graph 7

Pre-test means for the perceived usefulness of the variables within the cultural dimension for novels



Pre-test results for the perceived usefulness for EFL of dramatic literary texts

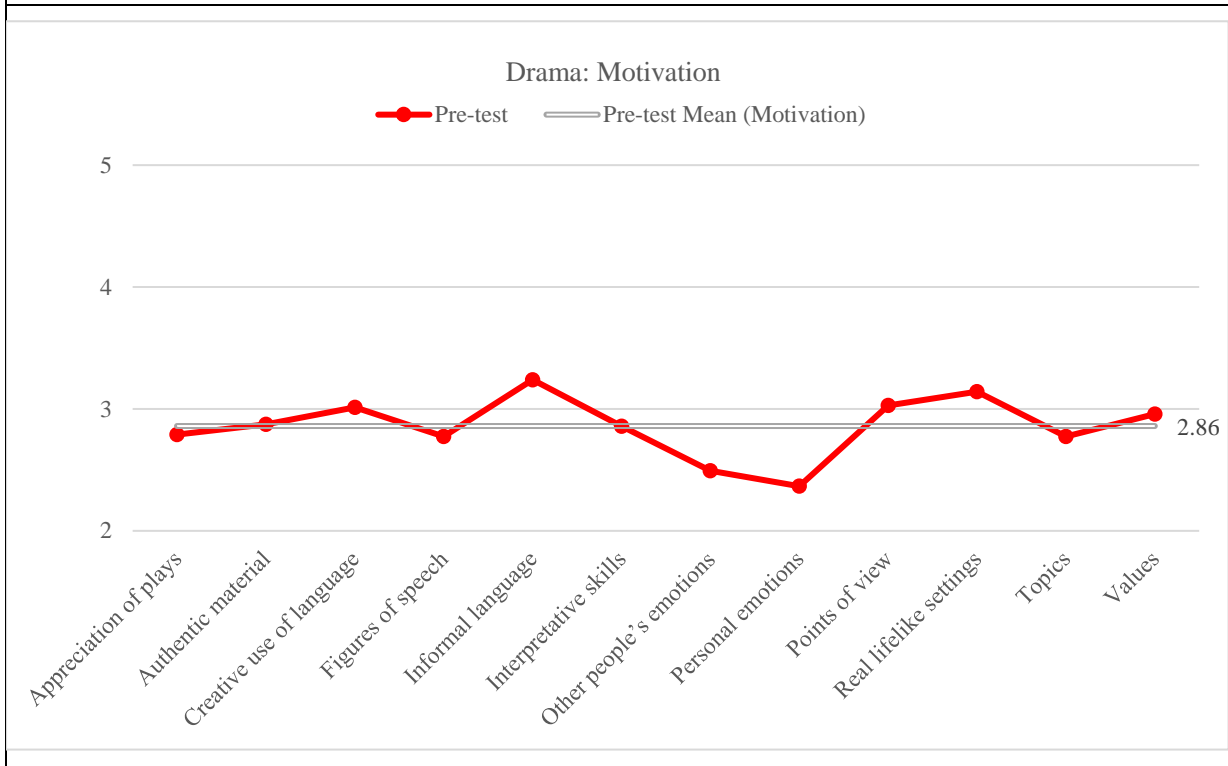
Pupils thought that drama was not very beneficial in terms of developing their linguistic skills (M=3.10, SD=1.10). Only the possibility of enriching their vocabulary through the play was given some credit (M=3.39, SD=1.05), as displayed in Graph 8. Other elements, like listening and reading, received neutral responses.



Motivation-related items obtained neutral results (M=2.86, SD=1.07), as displayed in Graph 9. The most appreciated aspects were those specific to the genre, such as the use of informal language (M=3.24, SD=1.16), and real-life settings (M=3.14, SD=.98), along with the presence of different points of view in plays (M=3.03, SD=1.17). Pupils did not expect plays to be markedly useful for understanding their own personal emotions better (M=2.37, SD=.93).

Graph 9

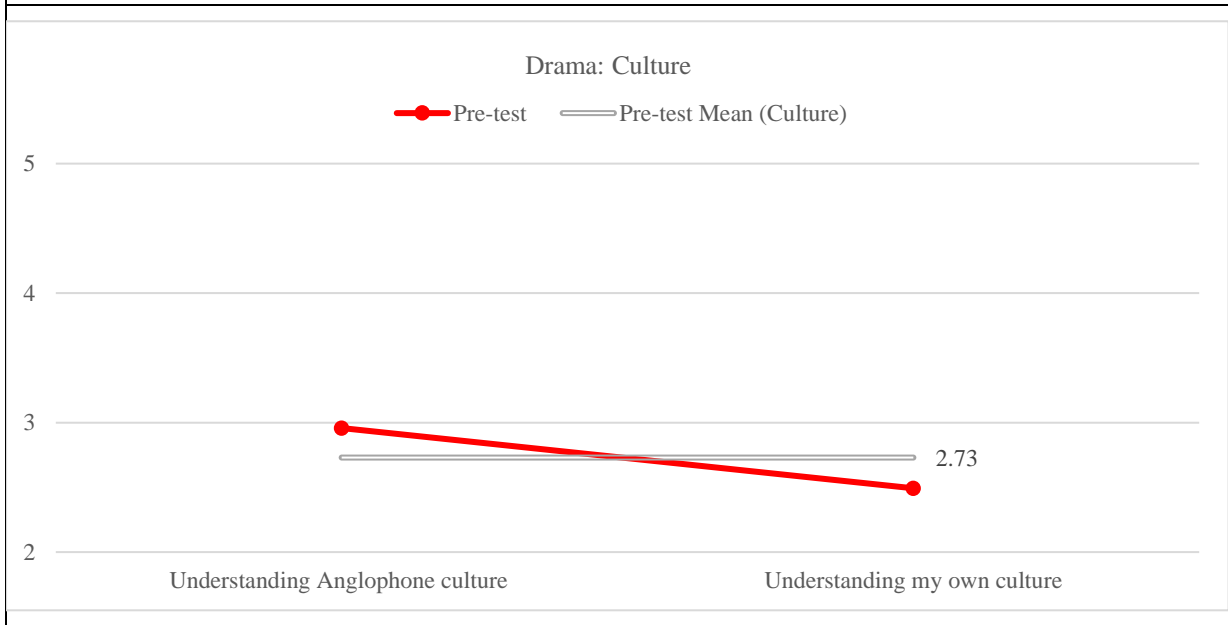
Pre-test means for the perceived usefulness of the variables within the motivational dimension for drama



As for culture, as shown in Graph 10, the mean was 2.73 (SD=1.16), which was slightly below the neutral value.

Graph 10

Pre-test means for the perceived usefulness of the variables within the cultural dimension for drama



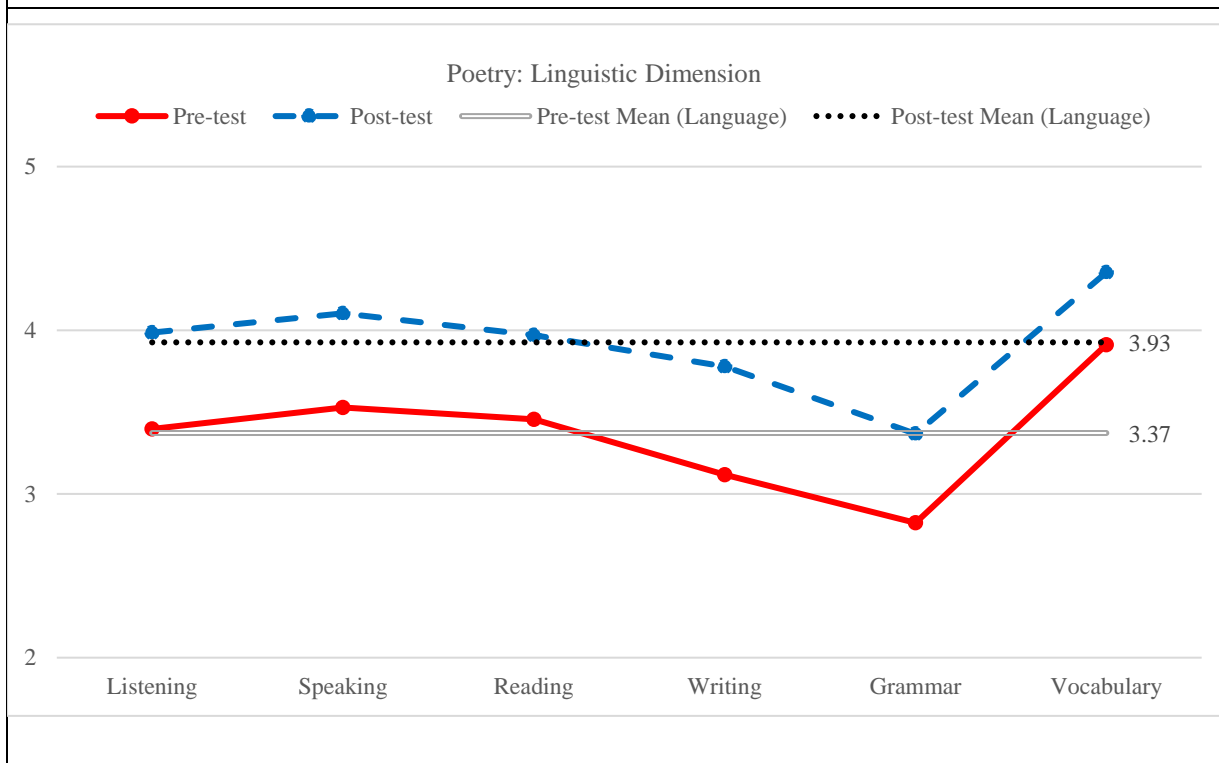
Research question 1.2: What are students' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in ELT classes after experiencing lesson plans based on three literary genres? Are there any changes in comparison to the views expressed at the pre-test stage?

Comparison between pre-test and post-test results for the perceived usefulness of poetic texts for EFL

Through the following analytical comparison between pre-tests and post-tests, we tried to answer the second part of the first research question (1.2), which aimed to explore what students' views were regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in ELT classes after experiencing lesson plans based on three literary genres, and whether there were any changes in comparison to the views expressed at the pre-test stage. We assumed that there would be a difference between students' scores after stimuli were introduced. In fact, in the post-tests, significant variances were detected. As shown in Graph 11, pupils valued poetry as a useful means to learn EFL (M=3.93, SD=.90) and, for all the items within the linguistic dimension, post-test values were higher than pre-test values. Statistically significant differences were also reported for almost all the components under analysis. The greatest impact of our intervention occurred for vocabulary (pre-test: M=3.91, SD=.88; post-test: M=4.35, SD=.81; $t=-5.37$, $p=.00$, $d=.56$), speaking (pre-test: M=3.53, SD=1.06; post-test: M=4.10, SD=.90; $t=-5.93$, $p=.00$, $d=.59$), listening (pre-test: M=3.40, SD=1.04; post-test: M=3.99, S=.91; $t=-6.76$, $p=.00$, $d=.61$) and reading (pre-test: M=3.46, SD=1.12; post-test: M=3.97, SD=.81; $t=-4.96$, $p=.00$, $d=.53$). Although significant differences were still reported, grammar (pre-test: M=2.82, SD=.93; post-test: M=3.37, SD=1.04; $t=-4.71$, $p=.00$, $d=.53$) was considered the least valuable.

Graph 11

Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of poetry both in the pre-test and in the post-test

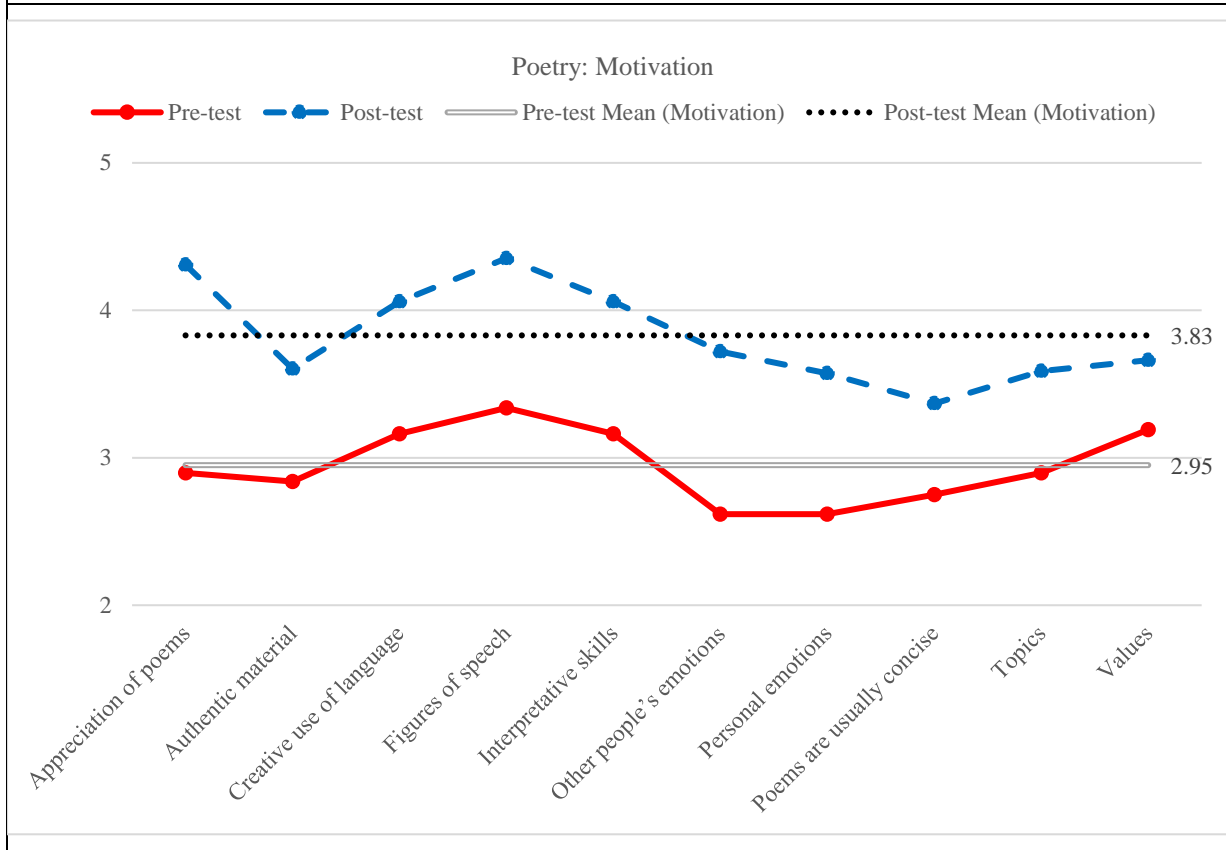


As for motivation, statistically significant differences were reported for almost all the items (Graph 12). The most considerable differences between values in pre-tests and post-tests regarded students' perception of their chances of becoming acquainted with figures of speech (pre-test: $M=3.34$, $SD=1.15$; post-test: $M=4.35$, $SD=.77$; $t = -8.50$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.04$). The poem used in class represented an unexpected source of motivation. Pupils did not expect it to be so engaging and enjoyable and at the end it made them appreciate poetry (pre-test: $M=2.90$, $SD=1.05$; post-test: $M=4.31$, $SD=.93$; $t = -12.06$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.43$), as displayed in Graph 12. The creative activities carried out in class motivated students in a way that they did not foresee (pre-test: $M=3.16$, $SD=1.03$; post-test: $M=4.06$, $SD=.90$; $t = -6.84$, $p = .00$, $d = .94$), as much as the possibility to develop their interpretative skills (pre-test: $M=3.16$, $SD=1.03$; post-test: $M=4.06$, $SD=.86$; $t = -8.54$, $p = .00$, $d = .95$) and the opportunity to recognize other people's emotions (pre-test: $M=2.62$, $SD=1.08$; post-test: $M=3.72$, $SD=1.01$; $t = -9.01$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.07$).

In general, the means related to the motivation were substantially higher in the post-tests and the differences were statistically significant.

Graph 12

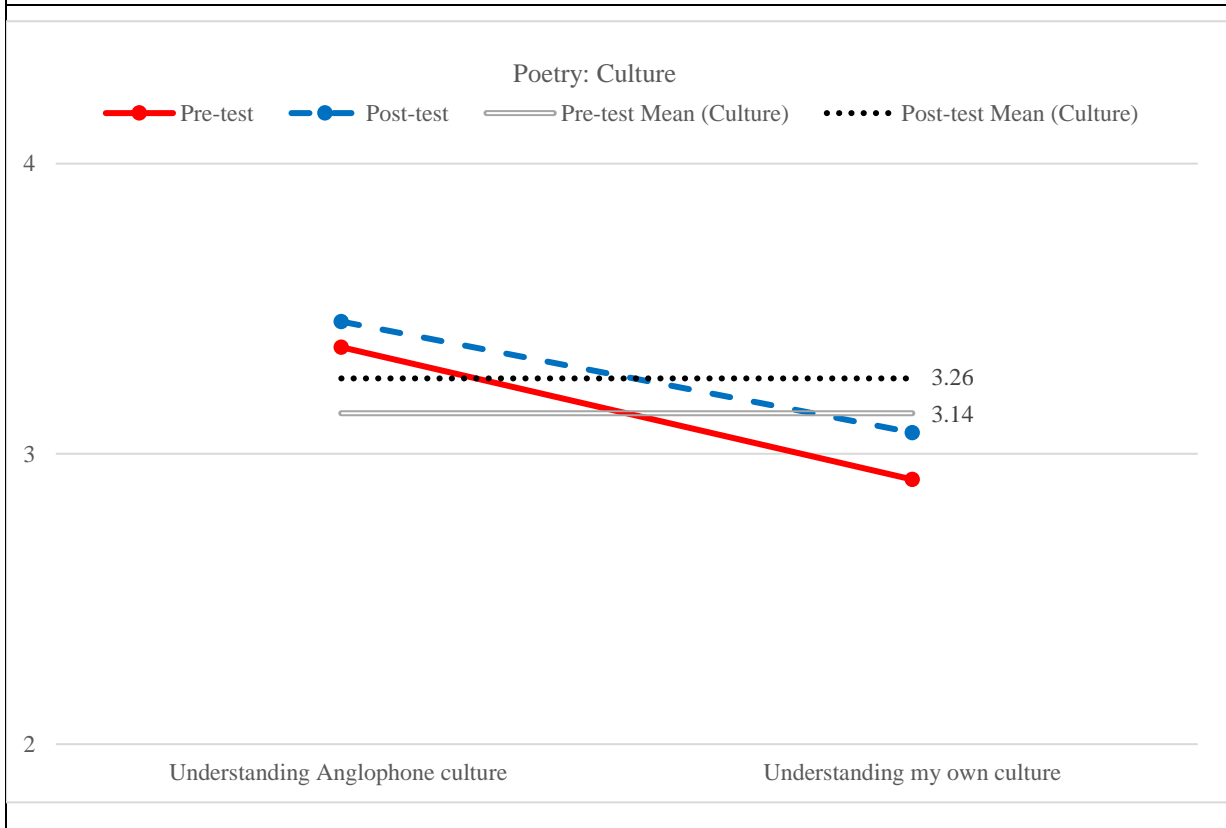
Means for the perceived usefulness of the motivational dimension of poetry, both in the pre-test and in the post-test



However, the difference between the overall means related to culture in the pre-test and in the post-test was minimal, as shown in Graph 13 (pre-test: $M=3.14$, $SD=1.16$; post-test: $M=3.26$, $SD=1.13$; $t = -.94$, $p = .18$, $d = .13$).

Graph 13

Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of poetry, both in the pre-test and in the post-test



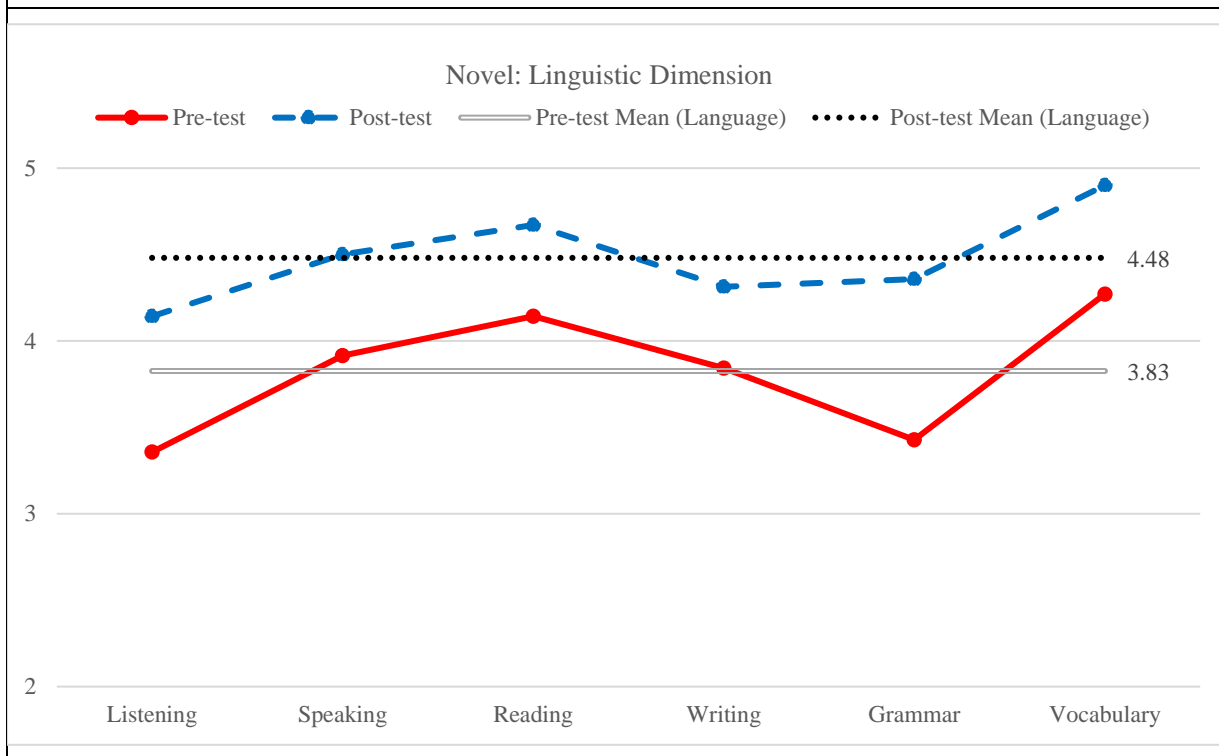
Comparison between pre-test and post-test results for the perceived usefulness of narrative literary texts (novels) for EFL

The linguistic dimension in novels (Graph 14) was the aspect pupils appreciated the most, as shown by the considerable statistical difference between pre-tests and post-tests (pre-test: $M=3.83$, $SD=.98$; post-test: $M=4.48$, $SD=.70$; $t = -9.37$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.35$). Vocabulary¹⁵ was so highly rated that its mean almost reached the highest possible value (pre-test: $M=4.27$, $SD=.88$; post-test: $M=4.90$, $SD=.35$; $t = -5.93$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.01$). Other linguistic skills that students thought that could be developed through novels were reading (pre-test: $M=4.14$, $SD=.91$; post-test: $M=4.67$, $SD=.56$; $t = -5.71$, $p = .00$, $d = .83$) and speaking (pre-test: $M=3.91$, $SD=.91$; post-test: $M=4.50$, $SD=.74$; $t = -6.52$, $p = .00$, $d = .92$), items which were already high in the pre-tests, but their means increased notably in the post-tests. It is also worth considering the differences related to grammar. It is apparent that students changed their opinion about the usefulness of novels to learn grammar, which increased considerably from 3.43 to 4.36 ($t = -6.50$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.18$).

¹⁵ We always refer to the linguistic competences or to the items related to motivation or culture considering how students deemed that they could develop these competences through the use of the different literary genres.

Graph 14

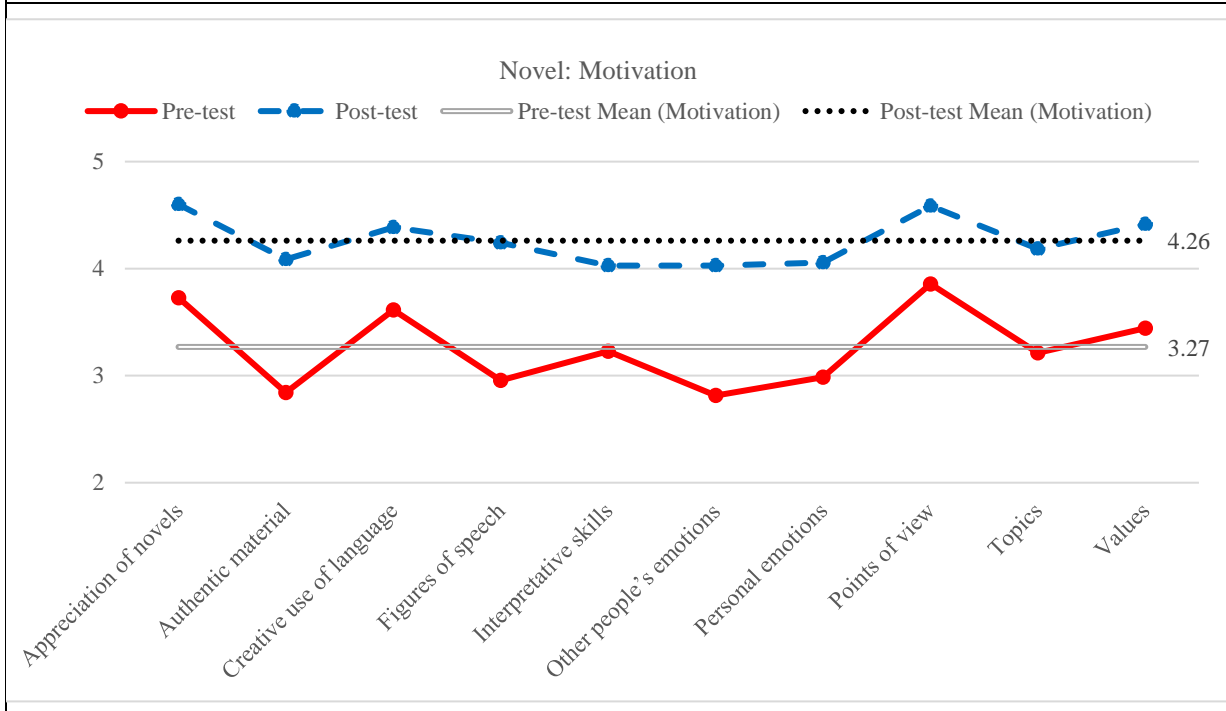
Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of novel both in the pre-test and in the post-test



Regarding motivation, students expressed their appreciation of using novels to learn English (pre-test: $M=3.73$, $SD=1.15$; post-test: $M=4.60$, $SD=.69$, $t = -6.86$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.08$), confirming their liking for this genre, as displayed in Graph 15. A significant difference could be found, comparing pre-tests and post-tests, in students' perception of the power novels have to nourish positive values (pre-test: $M=3.44$, $SD=1.02$; post-test: $M=4.41$, $SD=.65$; $t = -8.07$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.37$). The lessons, in fact, dealt with the theme of disability, encompassing people's general views, and students' own views on this matter. Their feedback proved that they appreciated the activities and started thinking critically about the topic (pre-test: $M=3.21$, $SD=.93$; post-test: $M=4.19$, $SD=.86$; $t = -1.18$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.50$), as also confirmed by the increase of the item linked to the recognition of other people's emotions (pre-test: $M=2.81$, $SD=1.04$; post-test: $M=4.03$, $SD=.95$; $t = -9.45$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.67$).

Graph 15

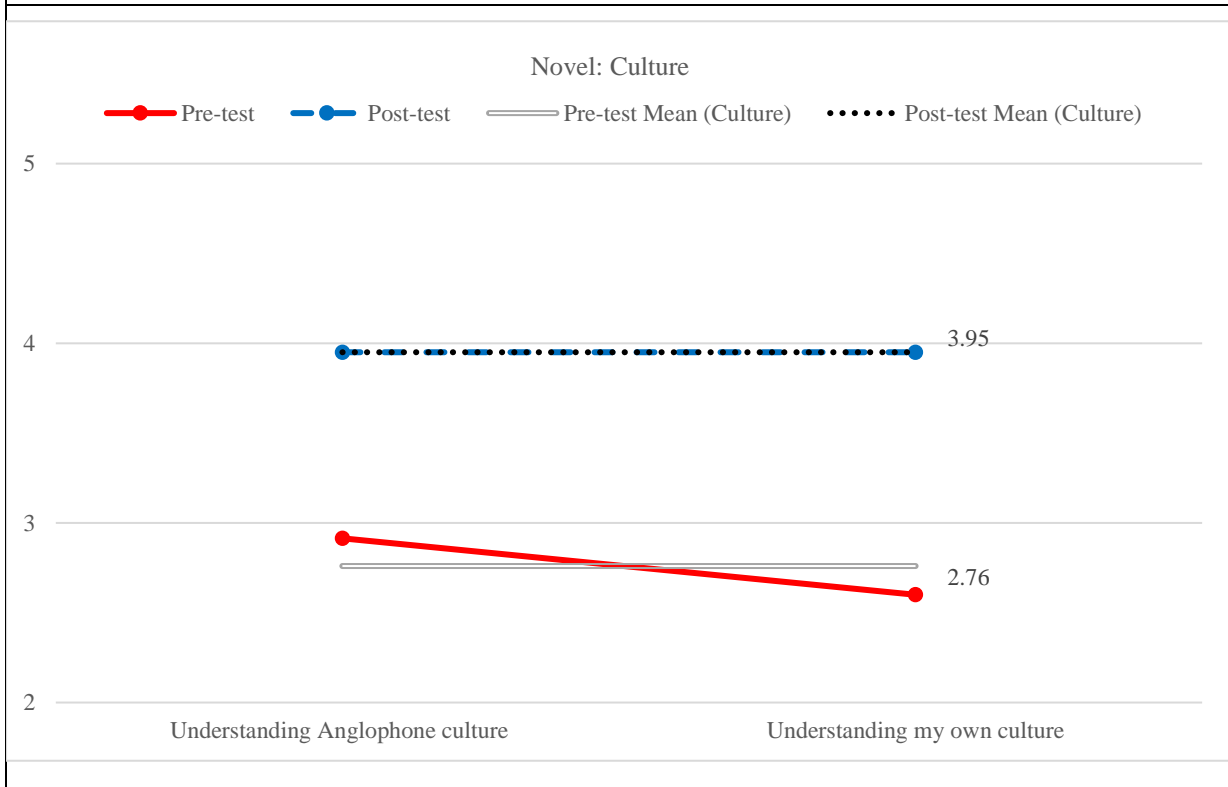
Means for the perceived usefulness of the motivational dimension of novel, both in the pre-test and in the post-test



In addition, pupils started to consider the possibility of becoming more acquainted with their own culture and that of Anglophone countries through literature (pre-test: $M=2.76$, $SD=1.06$; post-test: $M=3.95$, $SD=1.08$; $t = -13.51$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.95$), as shown in Graph 16.

Graph 16

Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of novel, both in the pre-test and in the post-test

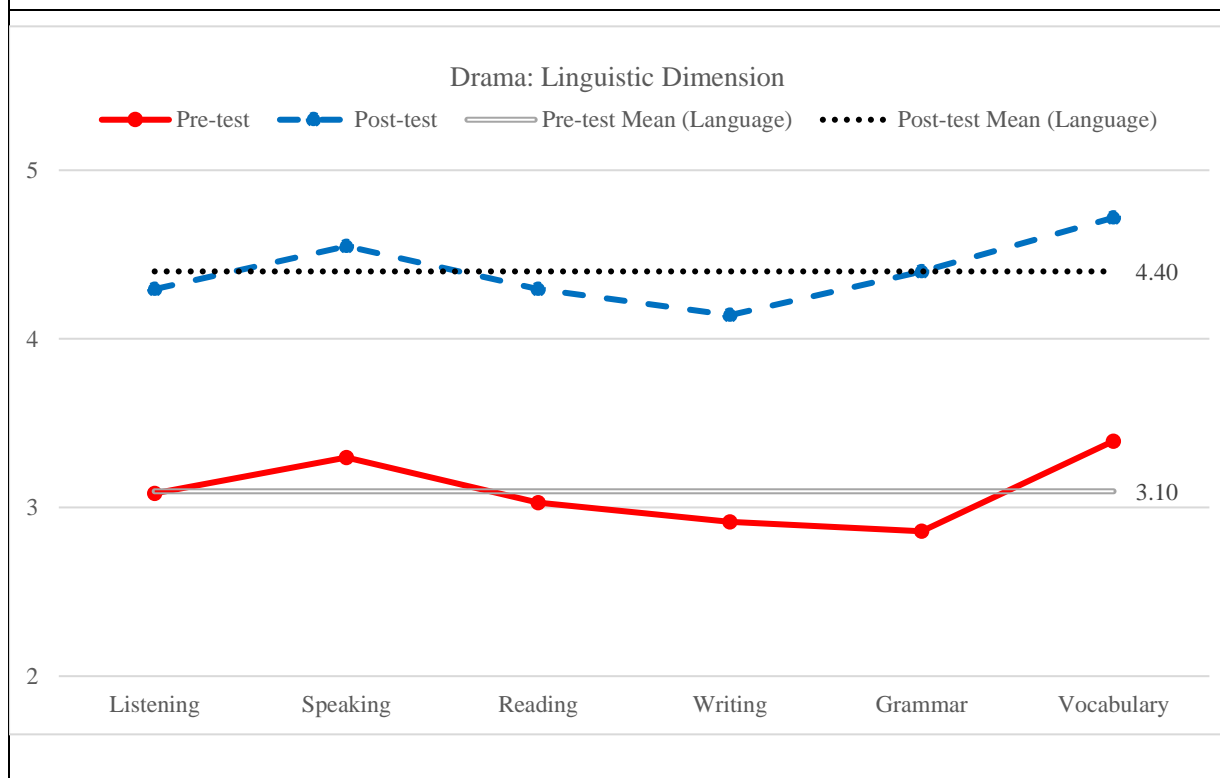


Comparison between pre-test and post-test results for the perceived usefulness for EFL of dramatic literary texts

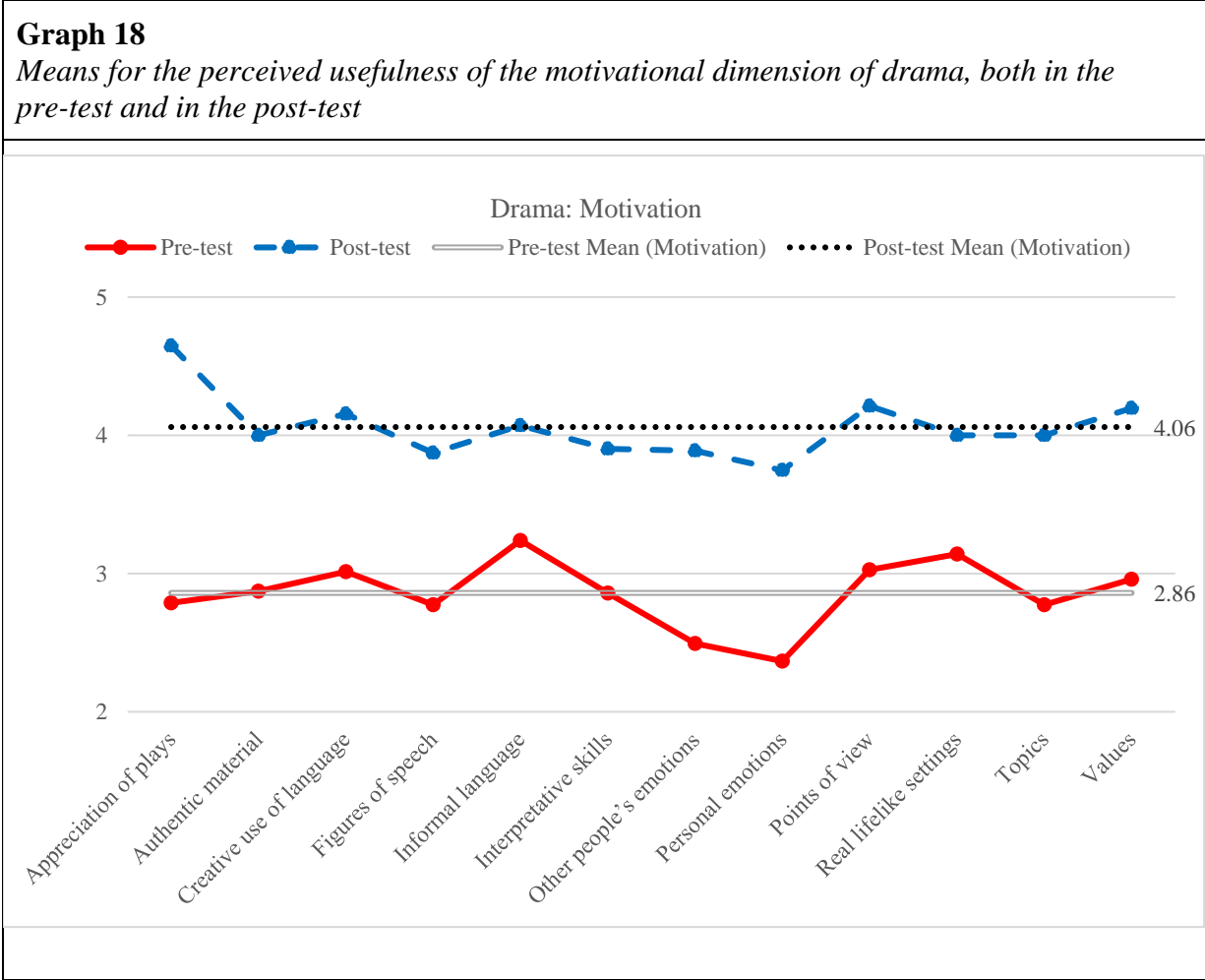
As shown in Graph 17, in the pre-test, pupils did not have great expectations that drama could help them develop their linguistic skills, while in the post-test agreement revealed statistically significant differences in this respect (pre-test: $M=3.10$, $SD=1.10$; post-test: $M=4.40$, $SD=.83$; $t = -16.79$, $p = .00$, $d = 2.74$). Vocabulary was confirmed as the preferred item (pre-test: $M=3.39$, $SD=1.05$; post-test: $M=4.72$, $SD=.51$; $t = -11.71$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.80$), while students appreciated the activities aimed at developing their speaking skills (pre-test: $M=3.30$, $SD=1.07$; post-test: $M=4.55$, $SD=.77$; $t = -1.46$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.67$). It is also interesting how, throughout the project, students started to consider the possibility of learning grammar through literary texts (pre-test: $M=2.86$, $SD=1.10$; post-test: $M=4.40$, $SD=.96$; $t = -1.17$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.49$).

Graph 17

Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of drama both in the pre-test and in the post-test



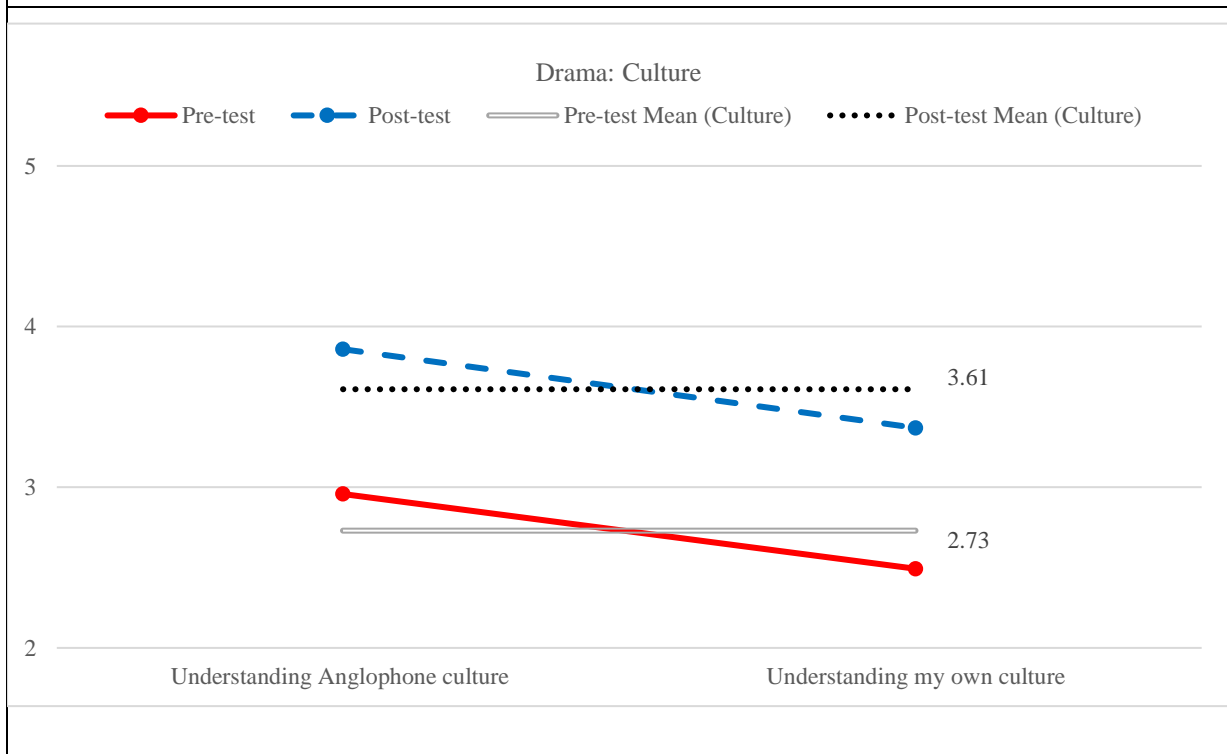
As for the motivational dimension, displayed in Graph 18, learners showed their appreciation of using a play in class by giving to this aspect the highest score, which increases its value if we compare it to their expectations (pre-test: $M=2.79$, $SD=1.03$; post-test: $M=4.65$, $SD=.66$; $t = -14.98$, $p = .00$, $d = 2.59$). Almost all the items linked to motivation in plays were appreciated by pupils, like the point of view (pre-test: $M=3.03$, $SD=1.17$; post-test: $M=4.21$, $SD=.65$; $t = -9.07$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.44$) and the values (pre-test: $M=2.96$, $SD=1.18$; post-test: $M=4.15$, $SD=.84$; $t = -7.86$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.39$). These items were linked to the topic of the lesson plan - bullying and cyberbullying - which profoundly engaged students.



There was also an increase for the cultural dimension, from 2.73 to 3.61 (pre-test: $M=2.73$, $SD=1.16$; post-test: $M=3.61$, $SD=1.06$; $t = -8.58$, $p = .00$, $d = 1.28$), which indicated that pupils changed their minds about the possibility of discovering new cultural dimensions through plays, as displayed in Graph 19.

Graph 19

Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of drama, both in the pre-test and in the post-test



Research question 1.3: Taking into account both the pre-test and the post-test stages, which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, do students perceive to contribute most to their learning?

In response to this research question, the data obtained revealed statistically significant values for all the individual dimensions (linguistic, motivational and sociocultural) and for all the interactions among dimensions (p value $< .05$), as shown in Table 5. The values of the partial eta squared showed that dimension (.58) and time (.89) were the most effective factors in determining the differences in the means. The tests were compared in relation to the three genres, along with the three different examined dimensions, and, in turn, the latter in relation to the two-time phases of the survey (pre- and post-tests). For this test, we employed a repeated-measures ANOVA applied to three factors: genre, dimension, and time. The factor “genre” consisted of the levels: poetry, prose, and drama; the factor “dimension” comprised the levels language, motivation, and culture; the factor “time” included the levels pre-tests and post-tests.

To demonstrate the statistical significance of the comparison among the three dimensions and the three genres referred to the two different phases of the data collection, we ran a Mauchly’s test, applying a Greenhouse-Geisser correction (displayed in Table 5).

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p value	Partial Eta Squared
Genre	Greenhouse-Geisser	14.67	1.77	8.28	5.34	.01	.07
Dimension	Greenhouse-Geisser	94.67	1.46	64.98	92.30	.00	.58
Time	Greenhouse-Geisser	201.26	1.00	201.26	545.95	.00	.89
Genre * Dimension	Greenhouse-Geisser	1.63	2.58	4.12	6.69	.00	.09

Genre * Time	Sphericity Assumed	18.10	2.00	9.05	2.36	.00	.23
Dimension * Time	Sphericity Assumed	1.19	2.00	5.09	23.64	.00	.26
Dimension * Time	Greenhouse- Geisser	1.19	1.84	5.55	23.64	.00	.26
Genre * Dimension * Time	Greenhouse- Geisser	6.34	3.21	1.98	8.08	.00	.11

In this table, we can see different values referred to the assumed sphericity according to each factor and dimension. Then every factor is put into correlation with all the other factors in pairs, and in the end, a correlation is established among all the factors. We can see significant values for all the dimensions and for all the interactions (p value $< .05$). The values of the partial eta squared showed that the dimension (.58) and the time (.89) were the most effective factors in determining the differences in the means.

Pairwise comparisons were run to analyse whether significant differences between the means could be found, considering each factor individually and in interaction, both in the pre- and post-tests. The pairwise comparison referred to the genre revealed significant differences, as shown in Tables 6 and 7. The poem obtained a lower mean than the novel (difference = $-.35$), while the novel obtained a higher mean than the play (difference = $.29$). Considering the p value obtained ($p < .05$), it can be therefore statistically affirmed that the novel was the most appreciated genre both in the pre-test and in the post-test.

Table 6*ANOVA test: general means according to each genre*

Genre	Mean	Std. Error
Poetry	3.41	.07
Novel	3.76	.06
Play	3.47	.05

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

Table 7*ANOVA test: Pairwise Comparisons according to the genre*

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

Considering both pre-tests and post-tests, the pairwise comparison among dimensions, displayed in Tables 8 and 9, revealed significant differences. The linguistic dimension obtained a higher score than the motivation (difference = .32) and the cultural dimensions (difference = .68), while the motivational dimension had a higher score than the cultural dimension (difference = .36). We can, therefore, affirm that the linguistic dimension was the most appreciated both in pre-tests and post-tests.

Table 8*ANOVA test: General means according to each dimension*

Dimension	Mean	Std. Error
Language	3.85	.042
Motivation	3.54	.037
Culture	3.24	.064

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

Table 9*ANOVA test: Pairwise comparisons according to dimension*

(I) Dimension	(J) Dimension	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	<i>p</i> value
Language	Motivation	.320	.036	.00
	Culture	.681	.063	.00
Motivation	Language	-.320	.036	.00
	Culture	.361	.048	.00
Culture	Language	-.681	.063	.00
	Motivation	-.361	.048	.00

As for the pairwise comparison referred to time, displayed in Tables 10 and 11, significant differences occurred between the two means (difference = .87). Therefore, it can be statistically affirmed that the difference between students' scores in the tests showed that pupils changed their minds about the use of literature in ELT, being ostensibly more favourable in the post-test.

Table 10*ANOVA test: General means according to each time*

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

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

Table 11*ANOVA test: Pairwise comparisons according to time*

(I) Time	(J) Time	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	<i>p</i> value
Pre-test	Post-Test	-.87	.03	.00
Post-Test	Pre-test	.87	.03	.00

The *d* values obtained (Table 12) revealed large effect sizes (they were over .8), and therefore they further confirmed the previously stated results that the novel was considered to bring the most significant contribution to EFL and that using literature for EFL had its greatest impact on the enhancement of the linguistic dimension.

Table 12*Effect size and p value related to each genre and dimension*

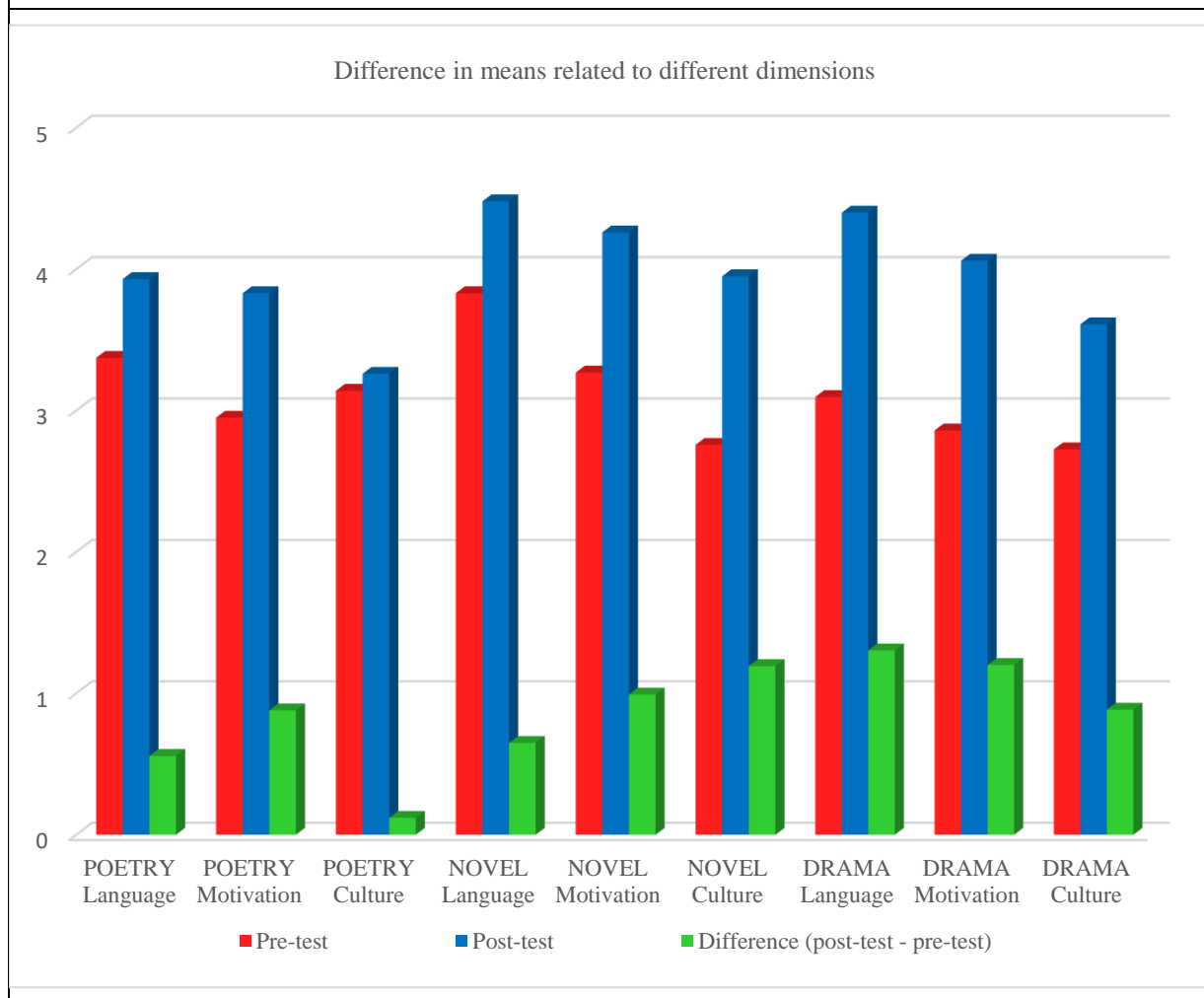
	Poetry		Novel		Play	
	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
Linguistic Dimension	.00	.82	.00	1.35	.00	1.35
Motivational Dimension	.00	1.37	.00	2.43	.00	2.43
Sociocultural Dimension	.18	.13	.00	1.95	.00	1.95

Note: *p* values are referred to paired *t*-tests between pre- and post-test

Besides, we tried to establish which genres and dimensions changed the most in pupils' responses, from pre-test to post-test stages. Recurring to the available data, we outlined which genre and which dimension underwent the most perceived usefulness increases according to the different times of the survey. Graph 20 displays the average increase for the three genres and the three dimensions under analysis.

Graph 20

Differences between means of the pre-tests and post-tests according to genre and dimension



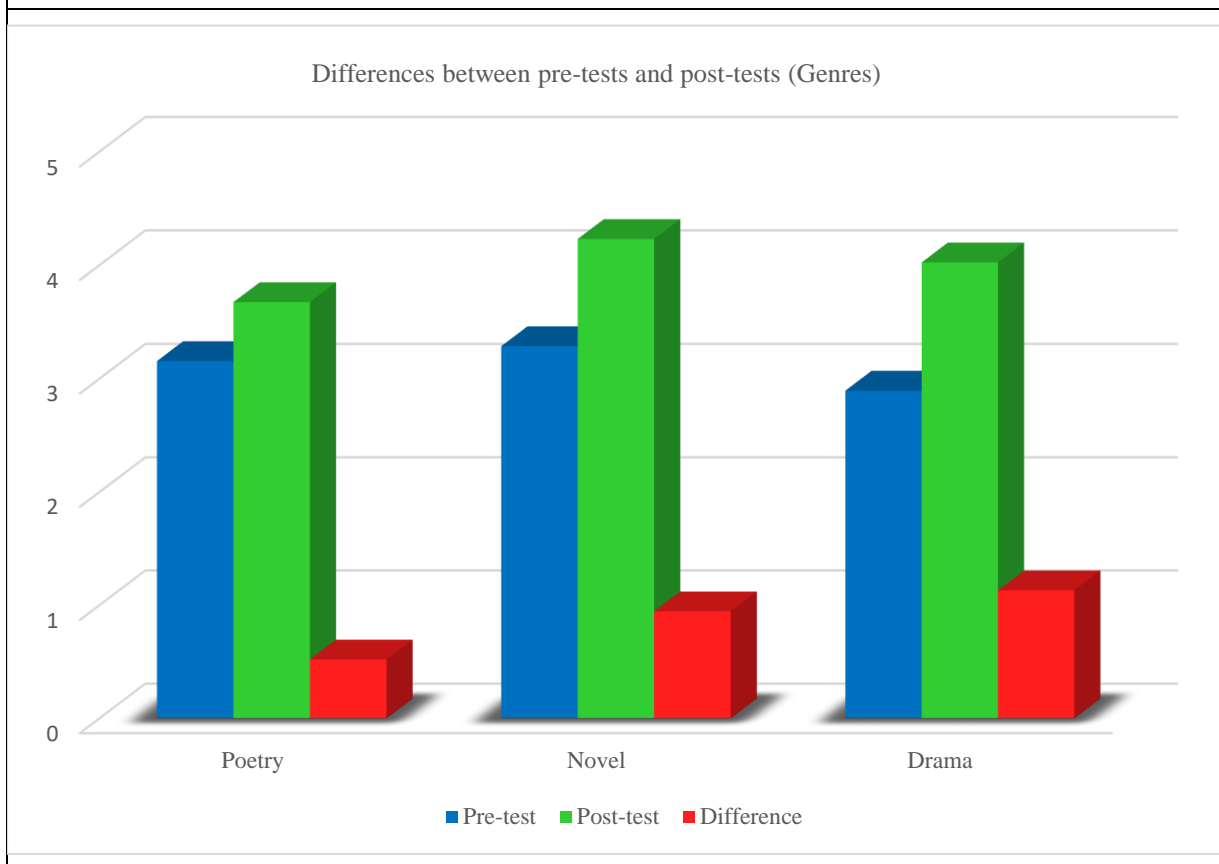
In this Graph, it is apparent how much students changed their minds before and after the intervention in class. Data confirmed pupils' astonishment about the usefulness of drama and its appreciation in class. Drama was considered to induce benefits pupils did not expect, especially regarding linguistic competence and motivation, while novel was considered the most useful

genre to develop the cultural competence and to provide motivation. Concerning poetry, students mainly confirmed their expectations about this genre, apart from the high motivation it could enhance.

As for the linguistic dimension, the highest differences between the scores in the means in the pre-tests and the post-tests were all characterised by the plays, as displayed in Graph 21.

Graph 21

Differences between means of the pre- and post-tests according to the genre

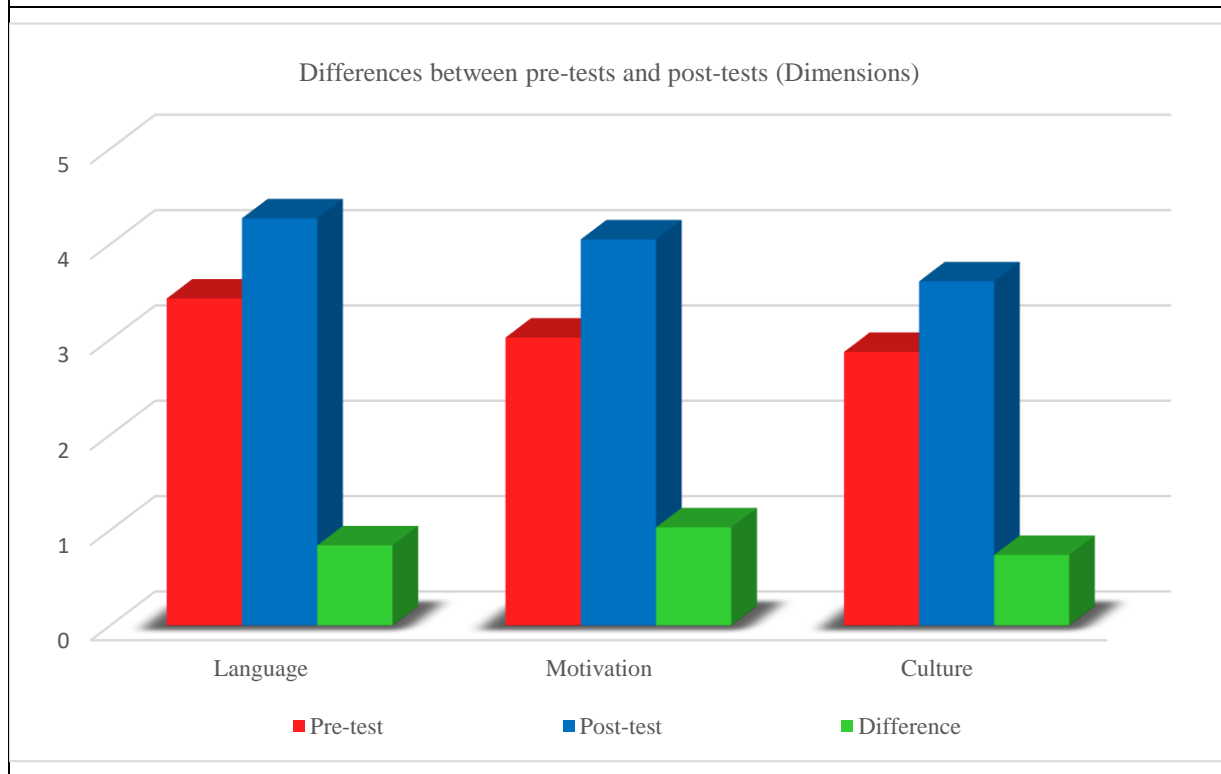


Moreover, after comparing results between pre-tests and post-tests according to the different dimensions, we could infer that the most perceived difference that pupils emphasised was related to the motivation that this project provided, as in Graph 22. Therefore, students changed their minds about the possibility of learning a foreign language through literary texts, especially concerning the motivation that literature could generate. Subsequently, they changed their views

about the possibility of improving their linguistic skills and finally, about the chance of developing their cultural competences.

Graph 22

Differences between means in the pre- and post-tests according to the different dimensions

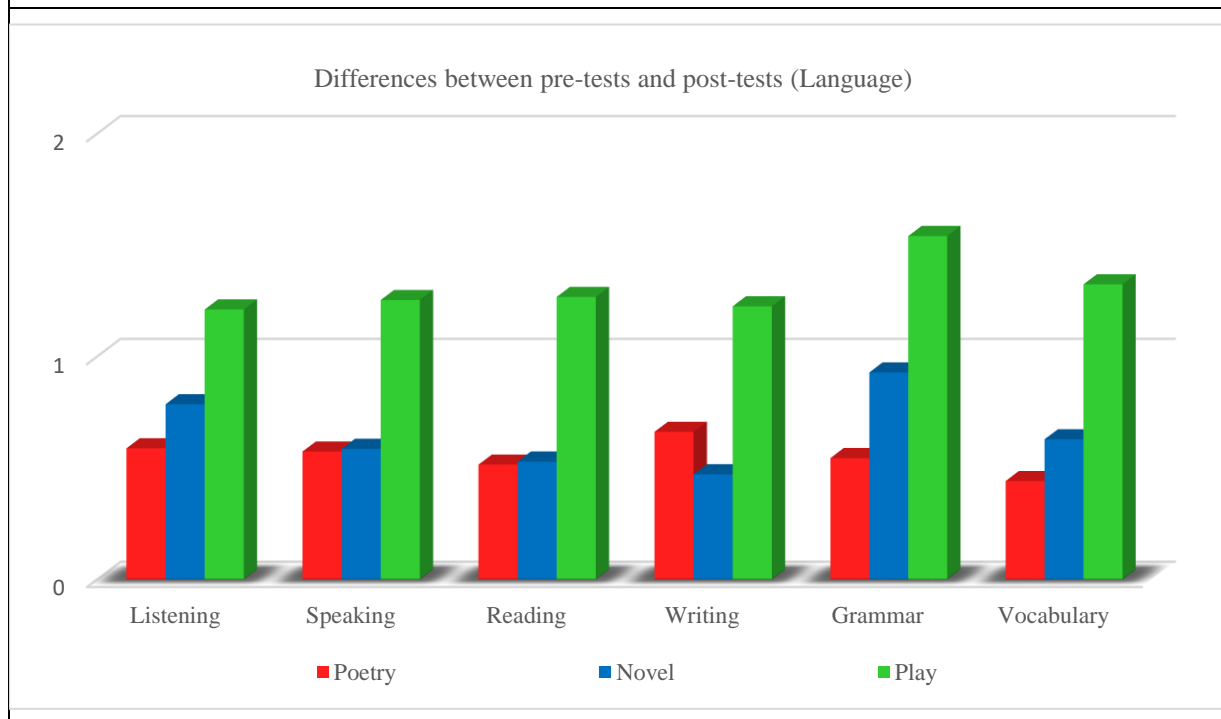


If we analyse in depth the linguistic dimension, displayed in Graph 23, the most evident difference among the single elements of each genre is related to plays, too. Grammar (difference=1.54), followed by vocabulary (difference=1.32), reading (difference=1.27), speaking (difference=1.25), writing (difference=1.23) and listening skills (difference=1.21) in plays showed the highest differences after our lesson plans based on literary texts. Through their scores, students revealed that, while studying novels, they could also improve their knowledge of grammar (difference=.93). Another meaningful variation to point out is the change in pupils' opinion related to the enhancement of their listening skills in novels (difference=.79). The only item whose difference in values was higher for poems, rather than novels, was writing (difference for poems=.66; difference for novels=.47).

These noticeable variations in students' views after our intervention, confirmed the newness, the potentiality, and the curiosity that literary texts arose.

Graph 23

Differences between the means in the pre-tests and post-tests related to the linguistic dimension in the three genres



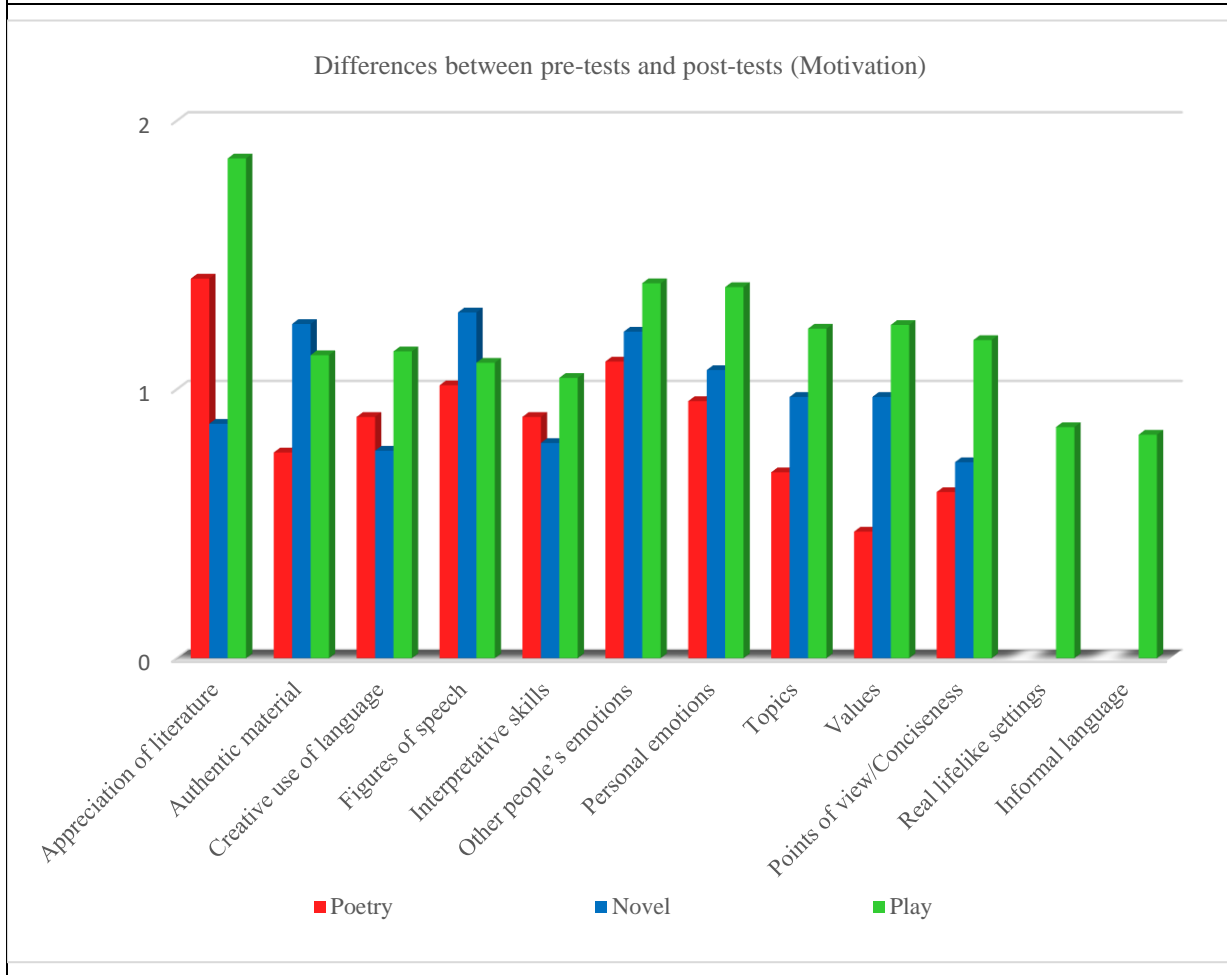
As for motivation, showed in Graph 24, the difference between the means is decidedly higher in the post-test for each genre, while the difference for the play is still remarkable, especially for the appreciation of the genre (difference=1.86) and for the chance to understand and share personal (difference=1.38) and other people's emotions (difference=1.39). Another noticeable difference is linked to the appreciation of poems (difference=1.41). It seems that students did not expect to enjoy studying this literary genre before the project started. Instead, they had already prefigured the likeliness of finding in poems serious topics (difference=.69) and relevant values (difference=.47).

Concerning novels, pupils changed their minds, especially for the authenticity of this literary genre (difference=1.24) and for the possibility to become acquainted with figures of speech

(difference=1.29). Students also acknowledged the chance to better understand their own emotions (difference=1.07) and other people’s emotions (difference=1.21) through novels.

Graph 24

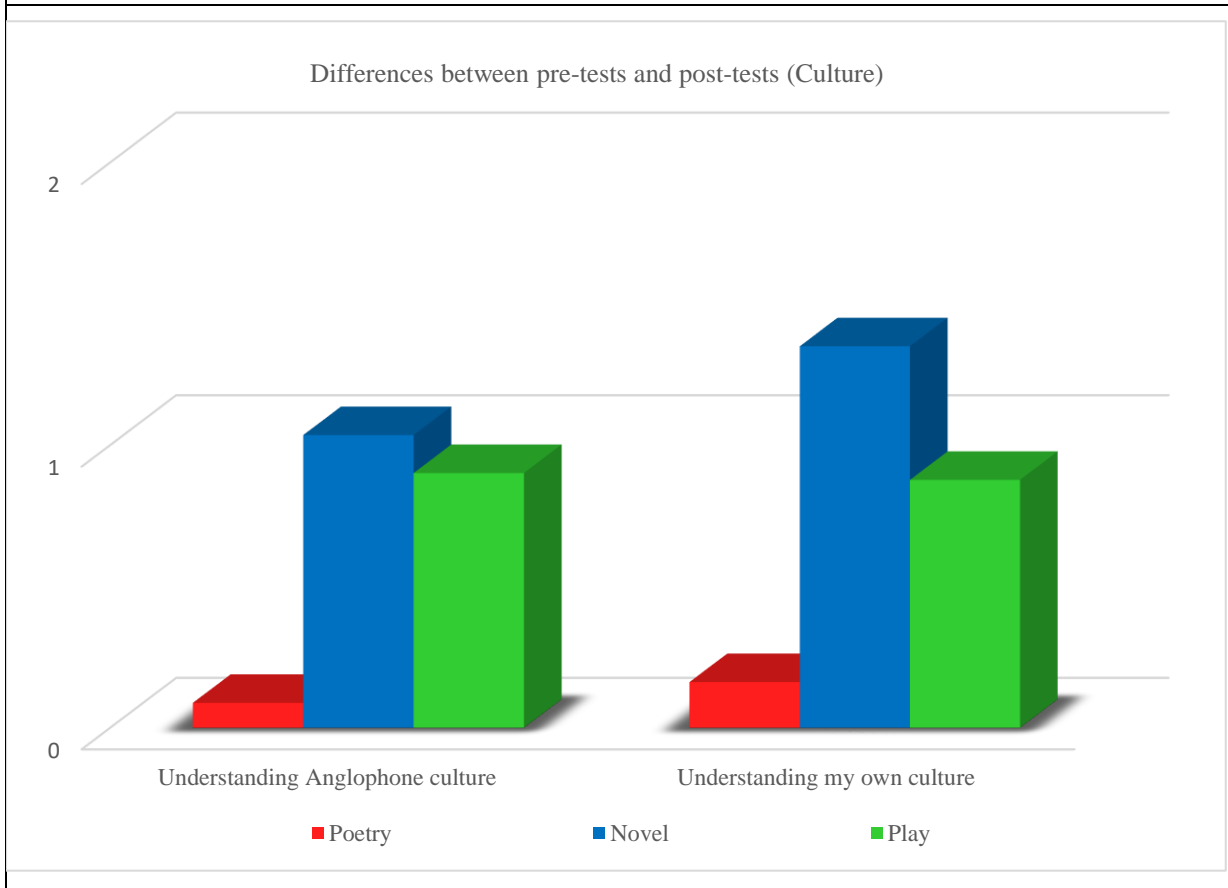
Differences between the means in the pre-tests and post-tests related to the motivational dimension in the three genres



As shown in Graph 25, in the beginning, when we dealt with poetry, students lacked a clear idea about the cultural implications of using literature in their language classes. In the end, they were able to grasp the presence of shared cultural elements between their own country and the Anglophone countries depicted in novels (difference=1.35 and 1.04, respectively) and plays (difference=.90 and .88, respectively).

Graph 25

Differences between the means in the pre-tests and post-tests related to the cultural dimension in the three genres



7.2.2. Qualitative results

Linguistic dimension

Regarding the linguistic dimension, students were particularly prolific in giving their feedback about the development of their productive skills. As we have seen in the pre-tests, pupils expected to improve their reading skills and to widen their vocabulary through literary texts. However, they did not expect to train their speaking and writing skills as much as they did.

“I didn’t think it would help me so much.”¹⁶

“Before we started, I didn’t think we were going to speak only in English.”

In fact, in their comments, they were positively amazed by the possibility of expressing themselves in English through speaking and writing exercises.

“We had to always speak in English.”

“If you have a lesson where the teacher speaks only English and makes questions in English, the pupils must strive to speak.”

“We spoke a lot in English.”

“I liked this type of lessons which helped me a lot with my writing ability.”

“We’ve written a lot.”

“There were a lot of written exercises.”

Most of the participants’ written comments emphasised how using poems in class could help them improve their listening skill. This improvement could be achieved both by listening to the recording played by the teacher and by listening to and imitating the other students reading or speaking.

“I read a lot and listened to others reading, too.”

“Usually, in class, we do not do many activities of listening, so it’s useful.”

¹⁶ Students generally wrote their comments in Italian and English. The researcher limited himself to translating into English and correcting the syntax and the spelling of unclear sentences.

The activities presented to students were based on the premises that positive social attitudes and self-esteem are far-reaching factors in effective learning. Apart from affecting students' emotional development, the use of literature in the classroom seemed to help to foster positive feelings and self-confidence towards personal linguistic skills.

“Now, I believe more in my abilities.”

Some pupils highlighted their expectations about grammar. They thought that a lesson based on literary texts would not have dealt with this aspect.

“Poems are very rich in grammar. In the beginning, I thought it helped me less about this.”

“I liked everything, especially the fact that we learned new vocabulary and grammar. I enjoyed reading the poem, also because I have never read a poem in English, so it was also interesting for that.”

Motivational dimension

Appreciation of lessons based on literary texts

During the interviews, pupils gave extremely positive feedback regarding the project. The adjectives most frequently used were ‘interesting’, ‘hard but fun’, ‘alternative’, ‘interactive’, ‘different’, ‘effective’, ‘useful’, ‘unusual’, ‘exciting’, ‘cool’. Many comments highlighted the difference between their low expectations and their astonishment in finding how literature could draw their attention.

“Definitely, I did not expect that this experience could enrich me in so many fields.”

“At first, I thought it would be an uninteresting experience, but then I realised that it is a more creative and fun way to learn English.”

“I didn’t expect it was such an interesting and fun experience.”

“I thought it was an activity as boring as other activities, but it wasn’t.”

“Using the poems was less tedious than I thought before, it was fun and very engaging.”

“It has changed my way of approaching the poems. I thought they were boring.”

A student expressed his appreciation of the lessons in a perhaps too enthusiastic way, but this may be justified both by his recognition of the worth of the issues discussed and by the novelty of the approach used in class.

“Actually, I have learned something, 90% more than what I use to do with my teachers.”

Appreciation of plays

Linked to the motivation which came from the appreciation of lessons based on literary texts, there was the widespread opinion that acting was one of the most engaging moments of the project. Students found the activity very original, reporting that they were not used to moving the desks and acting in the middle of the classroom during ordinary lessons. Through this creative task, they could develop and practise their linguistic competences keeping a high level of motivation and self-confidence and a low level of anxiety. Through these exercises, the affective variables did not hinder the “delivery of input to the language acquisition device”, as posited by Krashen (1982, p. 31), because students’ affective filters were low. Moreover, students found the activities fun.

“I didn’t expect plays were interesting, but I had to change my mind. The role-play was my favourite part!”

“I realised that drama is more interesting than I thought.”

“We learnt while having fun.”

“We learned new things by acting.”

“The acted part was an engaging moment.”

The appreciation of the designed lessons probably derived from the interactive lessons we had planned. A lot of comments, in fact, underlined the need for less frontal-type, teacher-centred lessons, which, despite modern pedagogists’ recommendations, are still prevalent in our classrooms.

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

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

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

“I changed my opinion about plays.”

Topics

Before the lessons, students thought that topics in literary texts were not relevant to their own experience. This idea could have been originated by the topics that they usually find in textbooks, whose contents are also often artificial.

“I didn’t expect that we dealt with those topics. Also, because we don’t have this kind of lessons at school, no one does that. Before I thought we were talking about abstract things, but we talked about concrete topics.”

“Initially I thought that it would not involve me much but, in the end, I changed my mind.”

“Before I thought we were talking about things a little abstract, instead we have been concrete.”

“Initially I expected to understand nothing of poetry, then gradually I began to understand, also thanks to the help of the teacher who kept students engaged.”

“I didn’t expect that. I thought we talked about the technique of poetry.”

In their comments, students asserted that the topics covered were relevant to their life. Furthermore, the protagonists of the literary texts (in the novel and the play) were young students and the topics dealt with were related to the same age level as the participants.

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

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

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

“We understood the daily life that a ‘different’ teenager must face.”

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

“I changed my opinion about disabled people.”

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

“Poems make you think.”

“I realised that racism may seem ‘trivial’...but it is not.”

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

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

“We opened our minds and our hearts.”

“I didn’t expect the project to be so interesting, but it was. I want to thank Mr Sirico, who dedicated his time to help us learn a language that is not easy at all, and that many people are teaching superficially and intimidating the pupils (any reference is not coincidental). Thank you, Mr Sirico, for your willingness. I’d love to have you as our teacher!”

Students’ interest in the topics was also due to the right selection of texts. Our main aim when choosing the literary texts was not pursuing the traditional literary canon but trying to reflect the lives and interests of the pupils.

“My idea has changed from before I started. I thought we were dealing with classical poems.”

“I didn’t expect this poem. I expected a poem by some more famous author.”

“Novels are often boring, but this one was really interesting.”

Emotions

Even in this area, students did not expect to deal with personal emotions.

“I thought this course in this area could not be useful; instead, it proved very useful.”

According to participants’ feedback, the literary texts we used in class allowed students to talk freely, to exchange their opinions, and to start empathising with marginalised others. The activities also helped them share their fears and develop empathy:

“Listening to your friends can be comforting.”

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

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

The positive perception of literary texts of encouraging the expression of personal opinions and feelings was reported in terms of the personal and human enrichment they acquired when they had the chance to know and compare their own emotions with the characters in the texts and with their schoolmates.

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

“From this point of view, I think that the project is very useful because you have to walk in other people’s shoes to better understand their emotions.”

Figures of speech and creative use of language

Students mentioned that the most challenging part of the project was the analysis of figures of speech. This was mainly due to the novelty of studying this subject in a foreign language.

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

In their comments, pupils emphasised how, before our lessons, they thought that figures of speech were used only in poems, while, after trying and finding them in novels and plays, they understood that in other literary genres, and in every context, they could detect these rhetorical devices.

“I think poems are more useful, but I’ve seen that also plays and novels contain similes, metaphors, etc... And plays can help improve your skills in finding them because in them figures of speech are less evident than in poems.”

Students appreciated learning to find hidden and deeper meanings in apparently trivial and straightforward poems. They also indicated their initial underestimation of the poem *Mort Aux Chats*, by Peter Porter, and their shallow interpretation based on a cursory reading.

“Now I think that even an unknown and apparently trivial poem can teach you something. Thanks to the project, I also realised that racism may seem ‘trivial’.”

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

Examining the poem in-depth with its denotations, a world of hidden and more profound meanings was disclosed to them, unveiling the evocative power of poetry.

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

A consistent number of students appreciated the proposed creative writing exercises. These activities not only put students in contact with foreign literature but made them value poetry, and even inspired an aesthetic sense of appreciation for literature.

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

“I liked the activity of creative poetry.”

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

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

Authentic material

The difficulty of using authentic material with young learners should not be underestimated, but the arduousness of the task could be turned into a positive challenge which might eventually increase students’ motivation. Moreover, literary texts gave students the opportunity to experience written language as a means of communication that could allow and foster first authentic and autonomous reading experiences.

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

“This way you can learn real English.”

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

Authenticity was characterised not only by the satisfaction students had while reading texts in their original language, but also by the chance of providing tasks and exercises that resembled real-life approaches to such texts.

“This kind of language isn’t always included in textbooks and is useful for everyday life.”

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

Sociocultural dimension

The cultural dimension was a very delicate aspect to deal with in the classroom. There was a lot of positive feedback from students about the possibility they had to widen their knowledge of the Anglophone countries through literature:

“We can learn something about the thoughts of these people.”

“Dealing with another culture you can understand yours better.”

“Plays show the background of the characters, their traditions, their past, their culture.”

However, we have to stress that at the beginning, students did not believe that foreign literature could enhance their own culture. This conception may stem from the belief that literary texts are exclusively associated with the expression of peculiar traits of a specific culture.

“At first I thought that this type of activity was not useful to understand one’s own culture, but then I realised that it could be useful to compare one’s culture with the Anglo-Saxon culture.”

In the end, some students understood the subtle and provocative tips of the researcher about the way we build our concept of social coexistence and active citizenship.

“You can make a comparison between your culture and Anglophone culture.”

“You can see the differences and particularities of your culture.”

“I can compare my culture with that of those who wrote the poem.”

“Yes, we talked about social problems, which are problems affecting everyone.”

“Talking about social problems, like discrimination, is talking about culture!”

However, some pupils proved to have a different opinion about the definition of culture and its features:

“I do not think that through this activity we can better understand the culture.”

“We have hardly ever spoken of the customs of the English people.”

“We almost never spoke of culture but of society.”

7.3. Discussion

It was statistically demonstrated that the means in the post-tests were higher than those in the pre-tests. Therefore, it can be stated that our intervention effectively changed students' views on the use of literature in class and that pupils started to consider literary texts as a valid tool to learn the foreign language, to enhance motivation and to develop cultural awareness. It was also statistically discovered which genre and which aspect were considered the most valuable for the participants.

The results obtained from our analysis confirmed that the students surveyed in our study considered using literary texts as a useful means in EFL classes. Our analysis showed that literature could have a positive impact primarily on pupils' linguistic competence, especially through novels and plays, but also on their motivation to learn the foreign language and, to a lesser extent, on the development of sociocultural competence.

There were several motives for the students' favourable change of attitude towards literature. As indicated in the previous section (7.2), their personal enthusiasm for the novelty of the approach to language learning was mainly responsible for their positive attitudes.

7.3.1. Linguistic dimension

The analysis of data showed that before the intervention, students had a neutral attitude toward the use of literature in learning linguistic abilities, whereas, after our lessons, pupils changed their minds and considered the possibility of learning through literature extremely favourably.

Listening skills

The increase in the perceived usefulness of lessons based on literary texts was also confirmed by our qualitative analysis. Pupils commonly asserted that they improved their listening skills, thanks to both the multimedia devices and the linguistic exchanges in class. This attitude was also asserted by Hişmanoğlu (2005, p. 59), who affirmed that having students read literature aloud together in class, with the use of ICT, contributes to developing listening abilities. The chance that students can change their mind about the possibility of improving their listening skills after experiencing lessons based on literary texts is in line also with the empirical study carried out in India by Thenmozhi & Sarika Gupta (2016). In this study, the number of university students who asserted that literary texts could enhance their listening skills increased from 15 in the pre-test (p. 122), to 45 in the post-test (p. 123).

Literary texts, during our lessons, provided those types of activities that were conducive to language acquisition through extensive listening tasks. As also confirmed by Durant (1995, p. 5), learners should be provided with appropriate materials and activities in which they can learn how to understand the English language.

Speaking skills

The possibility to develop learners' speaking skill through literature received in the post-test a higher score than the listening skill. In fact, the most widespread advantage mentioned by the learners in their feedback was related to the speaking activities. In their remarks, they referred to the request made by the researcher to use only the foreign language and found they had to work very hard in order to develop this skill. The importance of the development of the speaking skill was emphasised by Babae & Yahya (2014, p. 82), who stated that oral group activities

could improve productive and receptive skills. Pupils appreciated that the teacher only spoke in English, which meant the request for them to use only the foreign language.

Students witnessed that the contents of a poem, a novel or a play can be close to their own experiences in real life. The proposed exercises prompted discussion in class concerning stimulating topics. As stated by Khatib et al. (2011, p. 203), when students can freely reflect and critically comment on the suggested topics, speaking proficiency is facilitated and improved.

The essence of the chosen literary texts connected pupils to concerns about literacy (reading and writing skills) as well as oracy (listening and speaking skills). Students thought that the most useful way of developing their speaking skills was through the play that was used in our learning plan. The unforeseen power plays have to engage students and foster linguistic skills has been underlined by various authors, such as Winston (2012, p. 3), who affirmed that, through drama, students could better explore the linguistic resources they have to communicate. Students pointed out that they did not expect that reading and working in class on plays could have been so enthralling. They very much enjoyed the role-play as well as having a ‘different’ type of lesson, both physically and logistically, in which there was no longer the conventional class space, and pupils could communicate both linguistically and using a kind of Total Physical Response method to the linguistic stimulations, which allowed them to fully express themselves.

Reading skills, vocabulary and grammar

Concerning the reading skill and the enrichment of vocabulary, participants were not surprised about having to read a lot and about coming across new words. Several theorists have emphasised how literature can improve learners’ reading skills, which are considered as ongoing interactions that go “beyond the physical context of the text and look for meaning as well as processing information” (Aghagolzadeh & Tajabadi, 2012, p. 208).

Even though the improvement of vocabulary was considered as the most beneficial, pupil's consideration of grammar showed a significant increase in the post-tests. This perception is in line with the results reported by Çetinavcı & Tütüniş (2012, p. 83), who reported vocabulary and syntax as the main perceived advantage in their study. In the research carried out by Bloemert et al. (2019), the improvement of vocabulary was the most mentioned linguistic advantage about teaching EFL through literary texts (with 44% of students stressing its salience). The acquisition of vocabulary through literary texts has been underlined by Férez et al. (2020). In their study, the vocabulary-item received the highest mean among the linguistic skills that a poem could improve (M=5.67 in a 7-point Likert scale, a value that converted to a 5-point Likert scale equals M=4.12). Also in the research carried out by Duncan & Paran (2017), students associated literary texts with improvements in reading skills (M=5.53 in a 6-point Likert scale, that converted to a 5-point Likert scale equals M=4.62), and in vocabulary (M=5.45 in a 6-point Likert scale, a value that converted to a 5-point Likert scale equals M=4.56).

As for grammar, results showed that pupils did not expect, before our lessons, to develop this aspect so much through novels and, in particular, through plays. After our lesson plans, they were favourably amazed by the potential that plays have to develop the knowledge of grammar. The contribution of literary texts to the knowledge of grammar has been stressed by Hall (2005, p. 199), Lazar (2009, p. 18), and Férez et al. (2020, p. 65). The latter, in their empirical study, pointed out that participants rated grammar as the third most relevant linguistic dimension (M=4.95 in a 7-point Likert scale, a value that converted to a 5-point Likert scale equals M=3.64). As confirmed by theorists, an approach to the foreign language through literature could offer students valuable exposure to grammar and vocabulary in a more exciting and original context distinct from standard textbooks.

Writing skills

As we have underlined, students were extremely surprised at having to write so extensively. In particular, students appreciated the proposed creative activities. In fact, they were asked to write a poem collectively and alone, and they were asked to write in role imagining that they were the protagonists of the novel. For the activities of writing in role, students were also asked to write a letter of apology playing the part of the bullies and, subsequently pretending that they were the bullied, as an epilogue for the story. The importance of creative writing has been emphasised by Hanauer (2012) in his effort to make the literacy work in the class meaningful on personal and social levels, as well as to give a sense of depth and ownership to the writing itself. According to the author, the stress on meaningful learning through creative writing can enact a process in which the learner's experiences, feelings, beliefs, history and social environment are the contexts of language use. The students are directed to use writing in order to really express and explore themselves. For the scholar,

the whole perception of what learning a language is changes when authentic, meaningful, personal expression is at the centre of literacy instruction. The real reason for learning a language becomes an issue of extending personal understanding and personal expression (Hanauer, 2012, p. 110).

Putting Hanauer's meaningful-literacy instruction approach into action, Nicholes' study (2016) aimed to explore whether foreign language learners who "enjoy creative writing in English feel different levels of narrative-writing engagement between autobiographical and critical consciousness-raising creative writing" (p. 5). According to the author, through creative autobiographical writing, language can become meaningful when it allows a person to reconstruct his or her past through the language. This way, creative writing can represent a motivating and engaging classroom activity overall.

The chance to improve writing skill through literature has also been empirically studied by Choo (2005), who sought to demonstrate how literary texts could be used to teach the writing of business letters. The researcher divided the 65 university students involved in his study into a control group using a traditional teaching method and an experimental group using literary texts. The results showed that the short-term results between the two groups were similar (short-term control group: M=17.21; short-term experimental group: M=17.09), while the experimental group showed better long-term retention (long-term control group: M=15.61; long-term experimental group: M=17.89).

In our research, the students who participated in the literature classes showed their appreciation of the co-operative task of creating a poem together. This attitude about collaborative creative writing, seen as a means of constructing social and language identities through cognitive processes, has also been confirmed by Chin (2014, p. 119), who stated that, in creative writing, manifold aspects, such as mental outlooks, feelings, imagination as well as the creation of relationships are an integrated whole.

7.3.2. Motivational dimension

Appreciation of literature

After our lessons, pupils became aware of the potentiality that literary texts offer as a source of motivation and personal involvement. The difference between the pre- and post-tests confirmed, once again, that pupils did not expect plays to be so engaging. The key point about motivation is that, although students often say that their primary purpose in learning a FL is to be able to speak it, they do not talk readily in class, and the discussion lesson “in which the teacher does most of the talking is still too prevalent” (Nolasco & Artur 2015, p. 15). The role-play activities, carried out during the lessons based on the play, fostered a strong sense of

involvement which motivated and encouraged students “to learn through active participation” (Lazar, 2009, p. 138). Drama could help learners to become active participants in experiencing in the classroom a sort of real-life use of language. According to Khan & Alasmari (2018), drama can be used to bring literature to life for the students as it introduces activities representing “ice-breakers, energizers, brain-teasers” that can guide learners to understand the experiences occurred to them (p. 172).

Personal emotions and other people's emotions

Regarding the possibility pupils had to share their emotions and opinions and to develop their emotional awareness, it is important to stress how this kind of task might be seen as rather challenging to tackle and potentially disheartening. As asserted by Lazar (2009, p. 25), some students may not like to “discuss personal feelings” in class. Conversely, according to participants' feedback, literature allowed students to feel that they could speak openly without being afraid of judgement and, moreover, they highlighted the positive effects of this exchange of opinions. In line with our results, Férez et al. (2020) found out that poems are motivating because they can help learners understand other peoples' emotions (M=4.74 in a 7-point Likert scale, a value that converted to a 5-point Likert scale equals M=3.50).

Interpretative skills and figures of speech

Students showed their astonishment in finding novels and plays so useful to understand and examine rhetorical devices. They did not expect that these genres could contain such devices, especially because they were convinced that figures of speech were the main feature related to poems. The chance that literature, as a content area, can be used to enrich students' awareness

of the linguistic and rhetorical structure of literary discourse, has also been emphasised by Akyel & Yalcin (1990), who asserted that students should learn the importance of the writers' linguistic and rhetorical choices in classroom discussions. This way, pupils can find specific linguistic and rhetorical evidence in the texts and develop their "ability to talk and write more clearly and cogently" (p. 178).

Pupils affirmed that the literary texts they discussed in class, in particular the poem, helped them stimulate their interests and interpretive skills. Fostering students' reasoning about different meanings that the poem could offer, and sustaining them to go beyond a superficial reading are good ways to encourage students to reveal their opinions and feelings, and promote their personal engagement with texts, as also asserted by Alkhaleefah (2017, p. 193), Baba (2008, p. 17) and Lazar (2009, p. 14).

Creative use of language

A point underlined by students was the opportunity they had to write creatively alone and in group. Hanauer (2012, p. 105) stressed how the English language classroom has become dehumanised because of the desire to design language learning in terms drawn from the world of business management, in which abstract standards are imposed, and evaluation is tied to external standardised tests. Conversely, after our lessons, students found creative activities engaging, and some pupils stated that this kind of exercise inspired them to start writing poems.

The creative power of literature has been endorsed by manifold theorists. For Hişmanoğlu (2005, p. 62), literature allows students to make use of their creativity. It can increase their originality and sensitivity and trigger their problem-solving abilities. Creative writing activities, as stressed by Hanauer (2003, p. 77), can stimulate the activation of processes linked to the

development of personal, self-reflective understandings which can rouse an intrinsic personal motivation to learn a foreign language.

Topics and values

Before the lessons, students thought that topics in literary texts were not related to their lives. This idea could have been originated by the topics that they usually find in textbooks, whose contents are also often “unreal in the sense of irrelevant to the learners” (Sell, 2005, p. 92).

The choice of highly motivating topics and the attainment of a positive atmosphere of trust within the group, where making mistakes was not a problem, promoted the exchange of personal information and confidence among students. This way, the interactional authenticity represented a learning task that could arouse the same interactive processes which occur in spontaneous linguistic practice. This supported discourse skills and made language pleasurable and substantial for learners. In general, learners appreciated the proposed topics, stating that they were close to their interests. In their remarks, they emphasised how these themes were motivating since they were connected to real everyday life and could help them become better adults and citizens. A consistent number of comments were related to the debates that topics gave rise to, confirming their usefulness as a source of motivation.

The interest that topics emerging from literary passages could elicit has been underlined by some authors, like Lazar (2009, p. 27) and Duff & Maley (2007, p. 5), who stressed the possibilities offered by literature to display meaningful and memorable contexts. In the empirical study, carried out by Férrez et al. (2020), the non-triviality of the topics found in poems was considered by participants as a source of motivation, too (M=4.71 in a 7-point Likert scale, a value that converted to a 5-point Likert scale equals M=3.48).

In our study, students were engaged by the topics, and this aspect turned out to be a surprise because they did not expect that literary topics could have been so current and touch on their lives and experiences. Perhaps this came from the general idea that literature is only represented by the traditional canon, made up of famous, classic, or award-winning literary works that often contain language that is difficult for a learner to comprehend and deal with topics that are far from pupils' reality (Van 2009, p. 3). Supporters of the use of literature in EFL classes have indeed advised teachers to choose texts that are easily accessible to students, are related to their interests and can stimulate motivation (Lazar 2009, p. 198; Van 2009, p. 9).

Another decisive issue was linked to the development of critical thinking. In our rapidly changing societies, there is now a growing realisation that new approaches are needed to meet students' ever-changing educational needs. A lot of scholars have recommended that schools should embrace the development of 21st-century skills, focusing on cultivating such abilities (Susiani et al., 2018, p. 2). The importance of literature as a springboard for holistic learning and critical thinking has also been proposed by Hirvela & Boyle (1988, p. 181). Dealing with notable topics could introduce a range of benefits that affect the self-development of young students. These include raised self-esteem, increased confidence, development of transferable skills, sharpening of critical thinking, heightened ethical awareness, enhanced problem-solving abilities, more effective communication, development of independent learning, increased participation in other aspects affecting their adolescence and contribution to knowledge being valued. Overall, the benefits of our lessons were meant to be holistic and, we hope, long-lasting. Therefore, the assertions made by authors like Das (2014, p. 14) or Bobkina & Dominguez (2014, p. 251) about the intense power literature has in engaging students because it can deal with everlasting themes was confirmed: "Literature is news that STAYS news" (Pound, 1951, p. 29).

Authentic material

Concerning the adoption of authentic language materials, adherents of the Communicative approach have for years been advocating its use to overcome the typical problem that students cannot transfer what they learn in class to the outside world, as well as to expose students to natural language in a variety of situations. As stated by scholars, like Duff & Maley (2007, p. 6) and Lazar (2009, p. 207), teachers usually avoid using literature in class because it can be considered too 'dense' by learners (Hiebert, 1998, p. 211). The challenge of using authentic material with young learners should not be underestimated, but difficulties turned out to be a source of resilience that, in the end, increased the motivation.

As stressed by Viana & Zyngier (2019b), empirical studies on the integration of literature in language classes reveal a prejudice towards higher education (p. 2). The integration of authentic material is needed in EFL classes to supplement, or even to replace, pedantic, 'bookish' language, to pursue more authentic practice of English and its pragmatic communicative competence. As also observed by Bataineh et al. (2013), students should be exposed to authentic texts that engage them "with a spectrum of functional and pragmatic language, enabling them to communicate properly in real-world situations" (p. 671). Students appreciated authentic texts because any literary text can reflect a certain grasp of reality and, thus, in the relentless pursuit of authentic, pedagogically appropriate materials, literature can represent a microcosm that potentially reflects the macrocosm we live in.

7.3.3. Sociocultural dimension

The questions about sociocultural competence were linked to the possibility students had to become acquainted with the culture of Anglophone countries and to understand their own culture better, while working with literary texts. In the beginning, when dealing with the first genre, i.e.

poetry, students lacked a clear idea about the cultural implications of using literature in their language classes, but then they started to change their mind. In fact, except for poetry, the means were higher in the post-tests.

Concerning poetry, the difference between means was not statistically significant, which unveiled a prejudice about the connotation of the term ‘culture’, confirmed by the qualitative research. To figure this out, after the post-test about the lesson plan based on the poem, the issue was discussed in class. It came to light that students and teachers had a very biased perception of culture, linking it to conventional subjects, like famous monuments, traditional food, picturesque places and tourist attractions. In their opinion, talking about racism was not dealing with ‘culture’. Other authors, such as Duncan & Paran (2017, p. 20), had to confront the issue of clarifying the connotation of ‘culture’, too. After we explained that culture, according to the CEFR, could have a broader meaning, learners started to consider the possibility of expanding the range of its significance. This way, students began to compare their own culture to the culture of Anglophone countries and began to consider how vital themes, like racism, sexism, disability and bullying, are dealt with in different societies. They started developing their sociocultural competence, that, according to Byram (2013, p. 59), in its aims, include “moral or ethical education, education leading to action in the world.”

In some theoretical and empirical studies, cultural awareness was seen as a relevant factor, developed through the use of literary texts in ELF classes. Baba (2008, p. 147), for instance, reported that the majority of the participants to her project (80%) declared that literature helped them develop their knowledge and awareness of other people’s culture. In our research, however, students’ neutral view about the possibility of expanding their awareness of other cultures through poems was in line with the findings of some other studies. In the study carried out by Butler (2006, p. 277), only 4 participants, out of 85, made reference to the function of literary texts as carriers of cultural awareness. We found low rates of agreement about the perception of

culture also in Carroli's research (2002), where only 12 out of 39 participants detected in literature a window on culture and society (p. 117). In the quantitative section of the study carried out by Férez et al. (2020), the authors pointed out that participants considered poetry "a sound means" (p. 66) of developing cultural knowledge of the L2 (M=4.58 in a 7-point Likert scale, a value that converted to a 5-point Likert scale equals M=3.39). While, in the qualitative section of this same empirical study, participants gave no positive comments about the sociocultural dimension (p. 79). At any rate, it must be added that the fact that students did not provide comments could not directly mean that the general perception was negative.

However, students' views about the possibility of developing their cultural awareness through literature changed along our project. In fact, the values about culture improved in the post-test related to the novel and the play. Students started to be encouraged to see the world from different perspectives and to consider that each text is endowed with a specific cultural background. The importance of literature as a tool to promote sociocultural understanding has been emphasised by various authors, such as Spann (2015), who stressed the value of literary texts and the power they wield to encourage people to see the world from different points of views and to explore "our images of foreigners and foreign cultures" (p. 3).

Chapter 8.

Teachers' views on the use of literature as a tool for learning the FL

I can easier teach twenty what were good
to be done than to be one of the twenty
to follow mine own teaching
Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

This chapter aims to respond to the second cluster of research questions of this thesis which is:

- 2.1. What are teachers' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in FL classes before observing lesson plans based on three literary genres?
- 2.2. What are teachers' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in FL classes after observing lesson plans based on these three literary genres? Which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, do teachers perceive to contribute most to students' learning? Are there any changes in comparison to the views expressed at the pre-test stage?
- 2.3. Taking into account both the pre-test and the post-test stages, which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, do teachers perceive to contribute most to their students' learning?

2.4. Are there any differences between teachers and students, both at the pre-test and post-test stages, regarding their perceived usefulness of poetry, novels and drama for FL classes?

In this chapter, we will answer research questions quantitatively and qualitatively exploring pre-tests and post-tests results for the three genres under analysis. Research question 2.1 and 2.2 will be answered in sections 8.2.1 (quantitatively) and 8.2.2 (qualitatively). A statistical comparison between pre-tests and post-tests will be carried out to answer research question 2.3 in the last parts of sections 8.2.1 (quantitatively) and 8.2.2 (qualitatively). Thereafter, in section 8.3, in order to answer research question 2.4, we will compare students' views with teachers' views, both in the pre-tests and in the post-tests. The following sections, 8.4 and 8.5, will deal with a discussion related to teachers' views and to the difference between teachers' and students' views respectively.

8.1. Method

This chapter has two main aims: to explore teachers' perceptions regarding the use of literary texts for learning the FL and to compare, to the same end, teachers' views with students' views reported in the previous chapter. In light of this double objective, methodological information will be provided in two different sections.

8.1.1. Method for collecting and analysing teachers' views

Participants

The 30 teachers who took part in the survey had varied teaching experience. 7% of them were men, while 93% women. 16% of them had from one to ten years of teaching experience, 39% from 10 to 20 years, 35% from 20 to 30 and 10% had more than 30 years of teaching experience. To avoid that the sample could not be particularly reliable, it was not chosen according to a self-selected group of teachers. Instead, all the foreign language teachers¹⁷ of the school were exhorted to run the tests.

Data collection

The present study adopted a mixed-method approach since we wanted to obtain quantitative and qualitative data to explore trends of change regarding teachers' views on the use of poems, novels and plays for learning the FL. Quantitative data were obtained through three questionnaires, one per genre, designed on a 5-point Likert scale (see Appendix 3), which

¹⁷ 56% of teachers taught English, 10% French, 10% German and 24% Spanish.

teachers completed before and after observing three lesson plans, one per each of the three genres under analysis (see chapter 6 for the teaching units). The three teaching units included, and the three questionnaires tested, the advantages of using poems, novels and drama for EFL, as defined by existing studies in the field (see chapter 3). For poetry and novels, the questionnaire included 18 advantages — 6, 2 and 10 within, respectively, the linguistic, the sociocultural and the motivation dimensions. For drama, the questionnaire included 20 advantages — 6, 2 and 12 within, respectively, the linguistic, the sociocultural and the motivation dimensions.

Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and participants' written feedback. The semi-structured interviews took the form of narrative reports of the elements we considered meaningful. These reports of educational practice, which is itself a form of experience, and as such, can be narrated, became part of the empirical basis to be analysed and interpreted.

During the first phase of the project, i.e. during the teaching of the lessons dealing with the first genre (poetry), because of bureaucratic, safety and insurance-based reasons, the researcher could not be alone and teach the lessons in the classes, so three teachers, who were the curricular English teachers assigned to the classes, had to be present. This also happened because, during this first phase of empirical research, the project was conducted during the curricular English lessons. During the teaching of the second and third part of the project, that is the lessons based on the novel and the play, our lessons were conducted in the presence of other teachers who taught other subjects.

Before starting our project, the three teachers who were present in class were administered a pre-test (quantitative data) about teaching a foreign language through poetry. After we taught our lessons about poetry, these teachers were administered a post-test (quantitative data) and a semi-structured interview related to the items of the questionnaires (qualitative data).

Concerning the other 27 foreign language teachers who took part in the survey, they were administered the same pre-test too (quantitative data). Subsequently, they checked out and examined the lesson plans carried out in class to get a general idea of the work done with students and then were administered a post-test (quantitative data) to compare their impressions after they had gone through the prepared lesson plans.

This part of the survey was carried out also with the three teachers who were in class during the lessons about poetry. They joined the other teachers of the school because they had not observed the lessons about the other two genres, i.e. novel and drama.

In the pre-tests and in the post-tests (quantitative data), we embedded some questions to collect qualitative data too. These questions were related to:

- teachers' knowledge of their students' literary preferences and habits;
- the frequency with which teachers used/would like to use literary texts in their classes (before and after examining our lesson plans);
- the aspects which teachers perceived as more pleasant / difficult for students about the lesson plans.

Data analysis

Quantitative analysis

To analyse the teachers' pre-test (non-mediated) opinions on the advantages of the three literary genres under analysis for EFL, we used descriptive statistics with a view to calculating measures of central tendency, such as means and standard deviations. Before undertaking descriptive statistics, we measured the internal consistency reliability of the different

questionnaires through the Cronbach's coefficient, obtaining values of $\alpha > .9$, which revealed that their internal consistency was very high and that the scale was reliable.

At a second stage, pre-test and post-test results were compared through paired *t*-tests both for the linguistic, the sociocultural and the motivational components and for the specific items within each dimension. Pre-test and post-test results were also compared in relation to the three genres, along with the three different examined dimensions (linguistic, motivational and sociocultural) and, in turn, the latter in relation to the two-time phases of the survey (pre-tests and post-tests). To conduct these comparisons, we employed a repeated-measures ANOVA applied to three factors: genre, dimension, and time of the survey. For each test, we provided descriptive statistics and calculated the effect size (Cohen's *d*). To run our statistical analyses, we used both SPSS and MS Excel.

Qualitative analysis

Teachers' feedback was indexed to sort answers so that material with similar content or properties could be viewed as a whole. This way, we could focus on each topic in turn, so that details and distinctions, that lay within, could be scrutinised. Data were gathered into clusters according to the theme that they entailed. Subsequently, we tried to uncover what underpinned attitudes and motivations distinguishing factors that could lead to different perspectives within the sample (White et al., 2014, p. 380). This way, we tried to identify processes that were based on a complex interplay of perceptions, expectations, resources or barriers. The open-ended questions and the interviews took the form of narrative reports of the elements we considered meaningful. These reports of the educational practice, which is itself a form of experience, and as such, can be narrated, became part of the empirical basis to be analysed and interpreted.

8.1.2. Method for the comparison between students' and teachers' views

Participants

The participants in this part of our study were the 30 teachers referred to above (see section 8.1) and the 71 students whose views we explored in chapter 7.

Data collection

To compare students' and teachers' views, the data used in this section were the same used in previous sections. For students, we referred to data analysed in chapter 7, while, for teachers, we referred to the data we analysed in this chapter, specifically in section 8.2.

Data analysis.

To compare students' and teachers' pre-tests and post-tests, we resorted to a two-sample t -test assuming unequal variances. The unequal variance t -test, also called the Welch t -test, assumes that both groups of data are sampled from Gaussian populations, but does not assume that the two samples have the same standard deviation. For the unequal variance t -test, the null hypothesis is that the two samples' means are the same and the variances of the two samples differ. If the p value is significant, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the two samples' means are not so different (Peer et al., 2012, p. 235). This way, our admitted prime goal here is to find out how and whether the means related to the two samples differ and to quantify how far apart the two means are.

8.2. Results for teachers' views

8.2.1. Quantitative results for teachers' views

Tables 13 (poetry), 14 (novel), and 15 (drama) below provide the results by genre at the pre-test and post-test stages. The Tables also offer a comparison between the two times in terms of their statistical significance. The results provided in these tables contain the data to answer research questions 2.1 and 2.2.

DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS	Pre-test		Post-test		<i>t</i> stat (N=30)	<i>p</i> value	Effect size
	M	SD	M	SD			
Using poems in the language classroom can contribute to the development of my students'							
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	3.13	.82	4.21	.62	-5.03	.00	.37
listening skills	3.00	1.02	4.24	.83	-5.39	.00	.41
speaking skills	2.97	1.00	4.03	.78	-4.44	.00	.37
reading skills	3.41	1.13	4.38	.62	-3.52	.00	.31
writing skills	2.86	.86	4.03	.73	-5.26	.00	.41
vocabulary	3.66	1.35	4.62	.68	-3.76	.00	.30
grammar	2.86	.82	3.97	.94	-4.00	.00	.39
MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	3.14	.96	4.22	.57	-4.80	.00	.37

because they can better understand their own personal emotions	3.28	1.20	4.24	.79	-3.65	.00	.32
because they can better understand other people's emotions	3.24	1.04	4.34	.81	-4.42	.00	.36
because they can develop their interpretative skills	3.31	1.34	4.31	.71	-3.88	.00	.33
because they can become acquainted with figures of speech	3.62	1.35	4.48	.74	-3.24	.00	.27
because poems can reveal a creative use of language	3.41	1.22	4.31	.60	-3.66	.00	.30
because poems deal with important values	2.97	1.30	4.14	.99	-3.99	.00	.40
because poems normally deal with non-trivial topics	3.00	1.05	3.97	.68	-3.78	.00	.35
because poems are authentic material	3.00	1.11	4.28	.70	-4.78	.00	.42
because using poems is an enjoyable experience	3.14	.97	4.34	.61	-5.5	.00	.40
because poems are usually concise	2.45	1.16	3.83	1.07	-4.63	.00	.50
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	3.05	.87	3.62	.62	-4.92	.00	.22
because students can better understand the Anglophone culture	3.17	.91	3.59	.82	-3.92	.00	.16
because students can better understand their own culture	2.93	1.01	3.66	.72	-4.89	.00	.28

Table 14*Comparison from pre-test to post-test for the dimensions related to novel*

DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS	Pre-test		Post-test		<i>t</i> stat (N=29)	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD			
Using novels in the language classroom can contribute to the development of my students'	3.45	.82	4.57	.45	-6.50	.00	.35
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE							
listening skills	2.93	.92	4.41	.68	-6.74	.00	.48
speaking skills	3.14	.99	4.52	.63	-6.86	.00	.44
reading skills	3.86	.99	4.66	.55	-3.83	.00	.24
writing skills	3.45	1.12	4.59	.63	-5.04	.00	.35
vocabulary	3.93	1.13	4.72	.53	-4.37	.00	.24
grammar	3.41	.98	4.52	.69	-5.34	.00	.35
MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	3.23	.90	4.41	.68	-6.41	.00	.38
because they can better understand their own personal emotions	3.10	1.05	4.38	.78	-6.25	.00	0.41
because they can better understand other people's emotions	3.24	.99	4.48	.78	-5.79	.00	0.39
because they can develop their interpretative skills	3.38	1.18	4.52	.78	-5.04	.00	0.36
because they can become acquainted with figures of speech	3.07	1.16	4.45	.83	-5.31	.00	0.44
because novels can reveal a creative use of language	3.28	1.10	4.31	.93	-4.30	.00	0.34
because novels deal with important values	3.24	1.18	4.31	1.04	-4.00	.00	0.35
because novels normally deal with non-trivial topics	3.14	.92	4.31	.81	-5.89	.00	0.38

because novels are authentic material	3.10	1.21	4.38	.82	-5.49	.00	0.41
because using novels is an enjoyable experience	3.31	.97	4.59	.57	-6.66	.00	0.40
because novels can help students understand different points of view	3.66	1.04	4.38	.78	-3.91	.00	0.23
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	3.07	.94	4.14	.74	-5.99	.00	0.37
because students can better understand the Anglophone culture	3.24	1.02	4.28	.80	-4.61	.00	0.34
because students can better understand their own culture	2.90	1.01	4.00	.89	-6.09	.00	0.39

Table 15
Comparison from pre-test to post-test for the dimensions related to drama

DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS	Pre-test		Post-test		<i>t stat</i> (N=29)	<i>p value</i>	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD			
Using plays in the language classroom can contribute to the development of my students							
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	2.99	.83	4.22	.66	0.35	.00	.41
listening skills	2.93	1.00	4.14	.79	-5.52	.00	.41
speaking skills	3.07	1.07	4.34	.77	-5.91	.00	.42
reading skills	3.03	.98	4.21	.77	-5.72	.00	.39
writing skills	2.55	.83	4.00	.96	-6.43	.00	.51
vocabulary	3.59	1.15	4.66	.48	-5.23	.00	.33
grammar	2.79	1.08	4.00	1.13	-5.39	.00	.42

MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	3.12	.76	4.25	.54	-7.31	.00	.38
because they can better understand their own personal emotions	3.24	1.18	4.48	.69	-6.32	.00	.39
because they can better understand other people's emotions	3.28	1.03	4.52	.69	-5.64	.00	.39
because they can develop their interpretative skills	3.34	1.01	4.31	.93	-4.30	.00	.32
because they can become acquainted with figures of speech	3.21	1.24	4.34	1.08	-4.92	.00	.37
because plays can reveal a creative use of language	3.1	1.28	4.28	1.07	-4.41	.00	.38
because plays deal with important values	3.14	1.09	4.21	1.26	-3.87	.00	.35
because plays normally deal with non-trivial topics	3.00	1.09	4.07	.92	-3.45	.00	.37
because plays are authentic material	3.03	1.02	4.21	.90	-5.72	.00	.39
because using plays is an enjoyable experience	2.80	.98	4.24	.87	-5.76	.00	.48
because plays usually offer real lifelike settings	2.90	1.26	4.03	1.15	-5.98	.00	.39
because plays can help students understand different points of view	3.24	1.02	4.17	.85	-7.70	.00	.31
because they can find examples of colloquial and informal language	3.21	1.01	4.17	.93	-5.74	.00	.33
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	2.91	1.01	3.88	1.05	-6.49	.00	.35
because students can better understand the Anglophone culture	2.93	1.07	4.03	1.12	-5.87	.00	.38
because students can better understand their own culture	2.90	1.08	3.72	1.10	-5.87	.00	.31

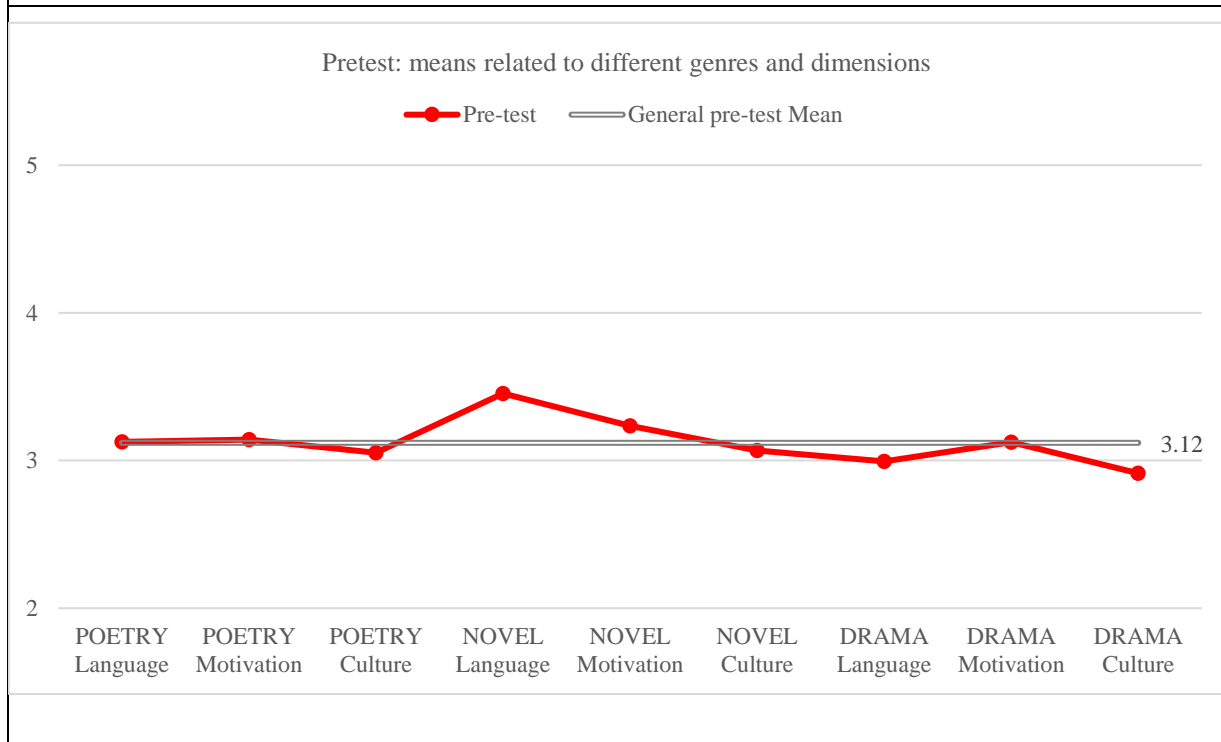
Research question 2.1: What are teachers' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in FL classes before observing lesson plans based on three literary genres?

In response to this research question, the data obtained revealed that teachers considered literary texts sufficiently useful to develop students' linguistic skills through novels, while they did not expect poetry and drama to be particularly beneficial for the development of their students' linguistic abilities.

Concerning motivation and culture, only novels were considered by teachers as a possible source of motivation, while neither poems nor plays were regarded as a valid tool to motivate students and to develop their cultural awareness. Especially for the dimension of culture in drama, teachers gave a very low value, that is below the neutral level, as displayed in Graph 26.

Graph 26

Means for the perceived usefulness of different dimensions and genres in the pre-test



The data obtained (Table 14) revealed that participants considered novels sufficiently useful to enhance students' linguistic skills ($M=3.45$, $SD=.82$) and their motivation ($M=3.23$, $SD=.90$) but not their cultural competence ($M=3.07$, $SD=.94$). Regarding poetry (Table 13), teachers' views were neutral for the induction of the linguistic ($M=3.13$, $SD=.82$), motivational ($M=3.14$, $SD=.96$) and cultural ($M=3.05$, $SD=.87$) gains. As for drama (Table 15), teachers did not expect this genre to be particularly beneficial for the development of any of the three dimensions, whether linguistic ($M=2.99$, $SD=.83$), motivational ($M=3.12$, $SD=.76$) or cultural ($M=2.91$, $SD=1.01$). The subsections below provide a breakdown of results per genre.

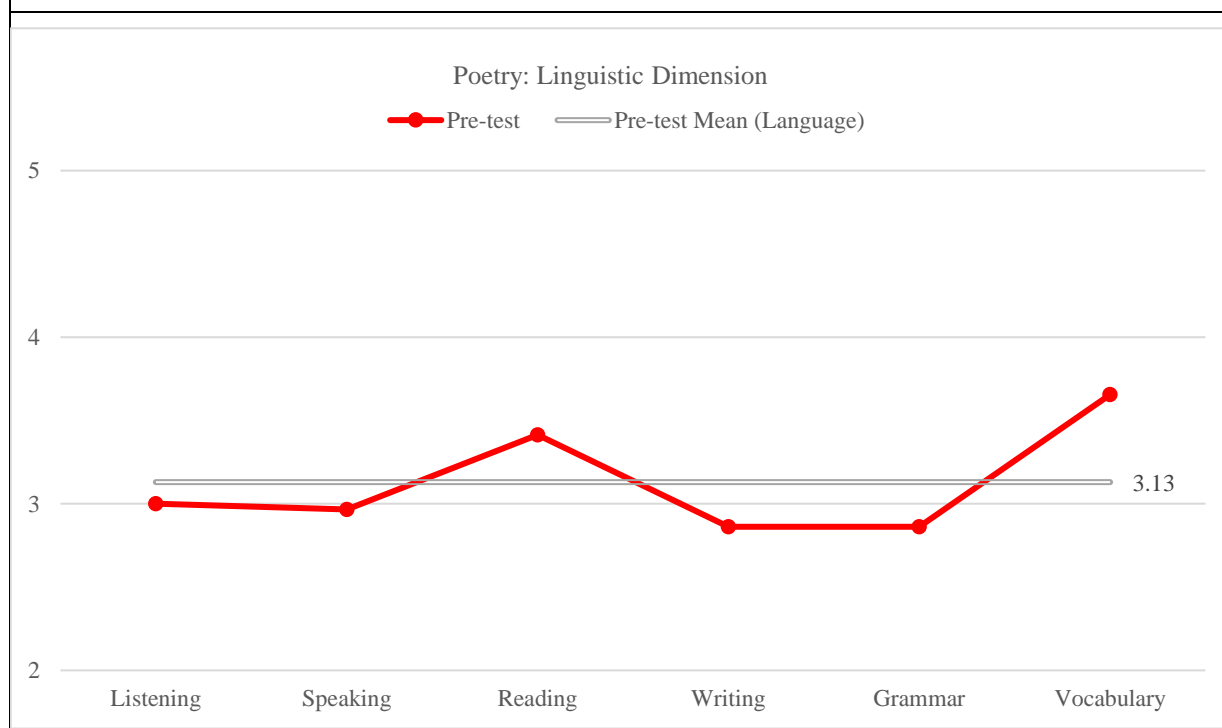
Pre-test results for the perceived usefulness of poetry

The results showed that teachers had a somewhat neutral attitude toward the use of poetry used as a means to teach the foreign language. The clusters we created to tie together the three different dimensions of the inquiry together (language, motivation, and culture) revealed that teachers' expectations about the usefulness of literature were neutral too. In fact, the overall mean of the pre-test was 3.13 (SD=1.10). With regard to the overall mean related to the linguistic dimension, the mean was the same (M=3.13, SD=.82), a value very close to the middle choice that in 5-point Likert scale is three (3).

If we analyse in-depth the linguistic dimension, we can see that teachers, before observing the lesson plans, considered poetic texts a valuable source to learn vocabulary, but they did not consider them useful enough to learn other skills, such as listening, speaking, writing and grammar, as shown in Graph 27.

Graph 27

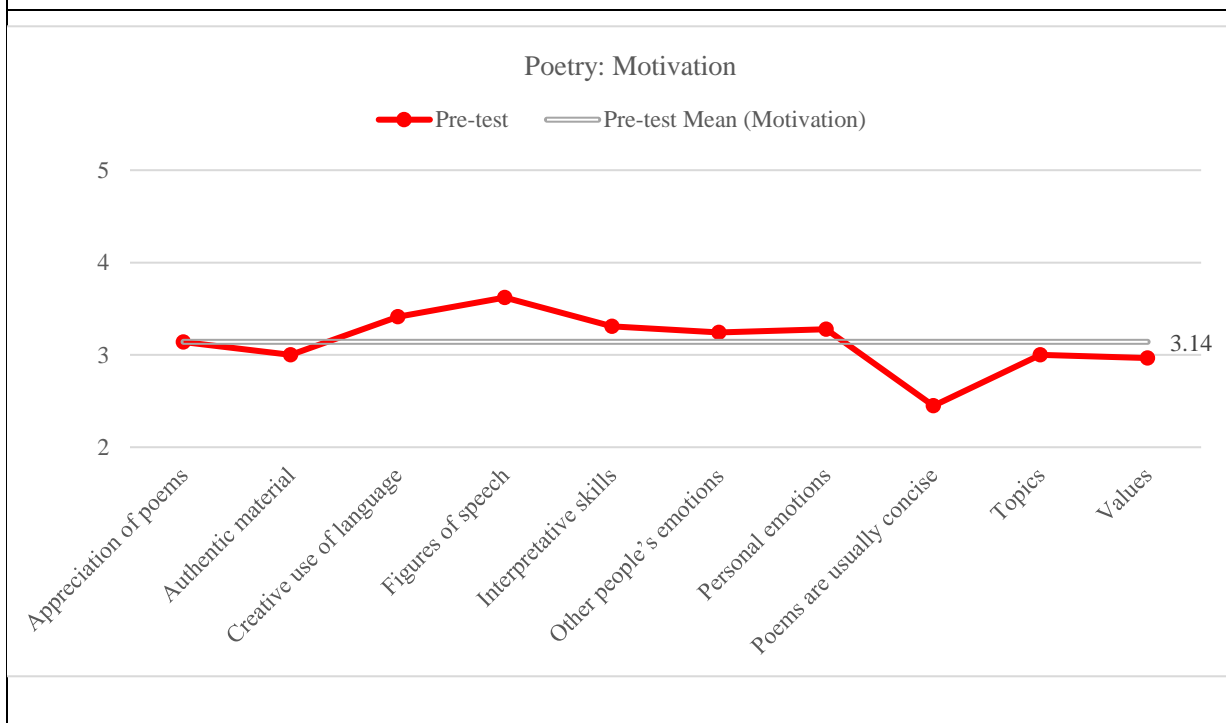
Pre-test means for the perceived usefulness of the variables within the linguistic dimension for poetry



As for the motivational dimension, displayed in Graph 28, teachers assumed that poems were not particularly appropriate for stimulating students' interest; in fact, the general mean was 3.14 (SD=.96). Poetry was considered by teachers a useful tool to make pupils learn the figures of speech (M=3.62, SD=1.34) and to develop a creative use of language (M=3.41, SD=1.22), which are distinctive traits of poetry. While, for them, the least useful elements that could generate the necessary motivation in students were those related to the conciseness of poems (M=2.45, SD=1.16), to values (M=2.97, SD=1.30) and to topics (M=3.00, SD=1.05). Moreover, the use of poems as authentic material was not considered by teachers in line with authentic communication and genuine experiences for students, giving a neutral score to this element (M=3.00, SD=1.11).

Graph 28

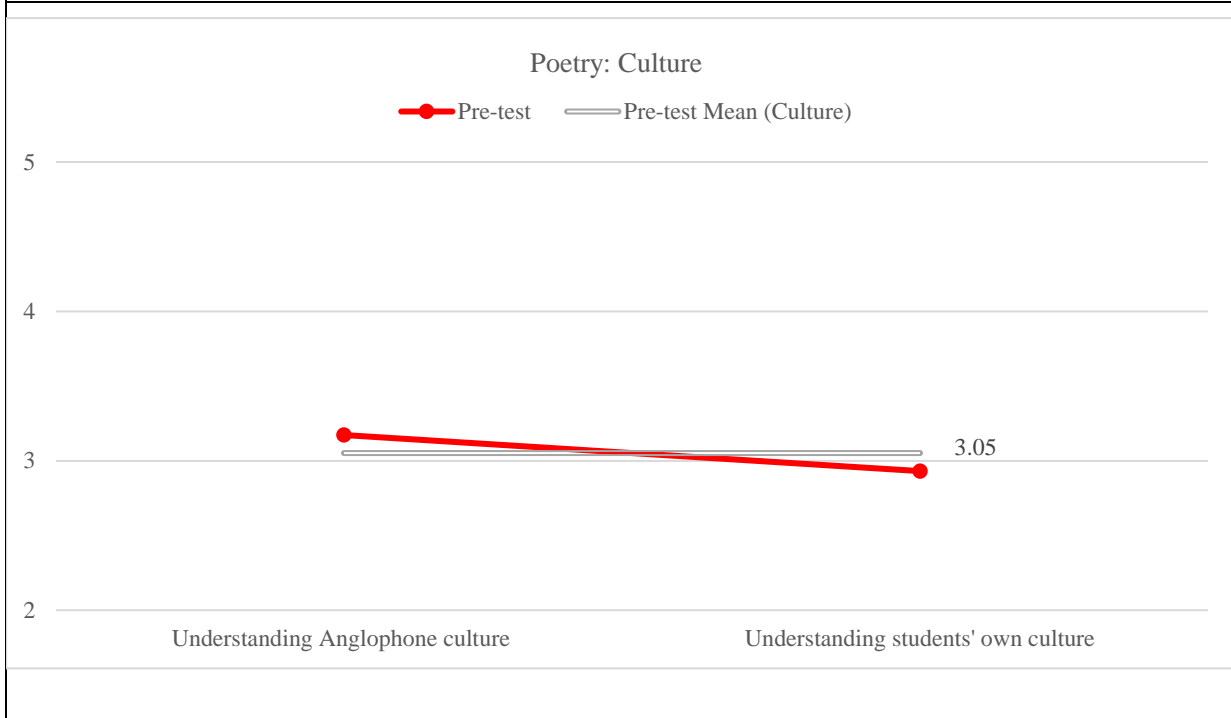
Pre-test means for the perceived usefulness of the variables within the motivational dimension for poetry



The cultural dimension received a neutral consideration too (as shown in Graph 29). Teachers did not expect that, through English poems, students could better learn either the Anglophone culture (M=3.17, SD=.91) or pupils' own culture (M=2.93, SD=1.01).

Graph 29

Pre-test means for the perceived usefulness of the variables within the cultural dimension for poetry

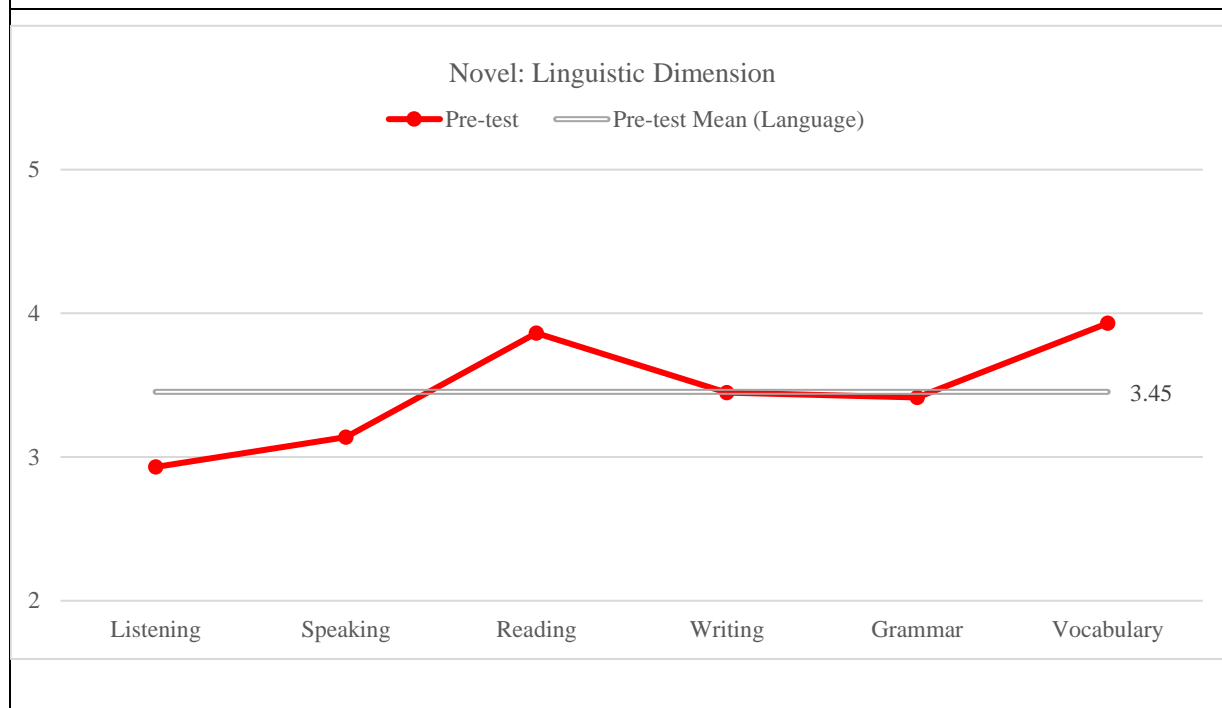


Pre-test results for the perceived usefulness of narrative literary texts (novels)

Teachers showed a neutral attitude also towards the use of novels. The clusters we created to tie the three different dimensions of the inquiry together revealed that their expectations about the usefulness of novels were neutral enough; in fact, the overall mean of the pre-test was 3.30 (SD=.09). As shown in Graph 30, teachers considered that novels could only broaden students' vocabulary (M=3.93, SD=1.13) and improve their reading skills (M=3.86, SD=.99), while, as for all the other linguistic skills and functions, they did not foresee a significant benefit.

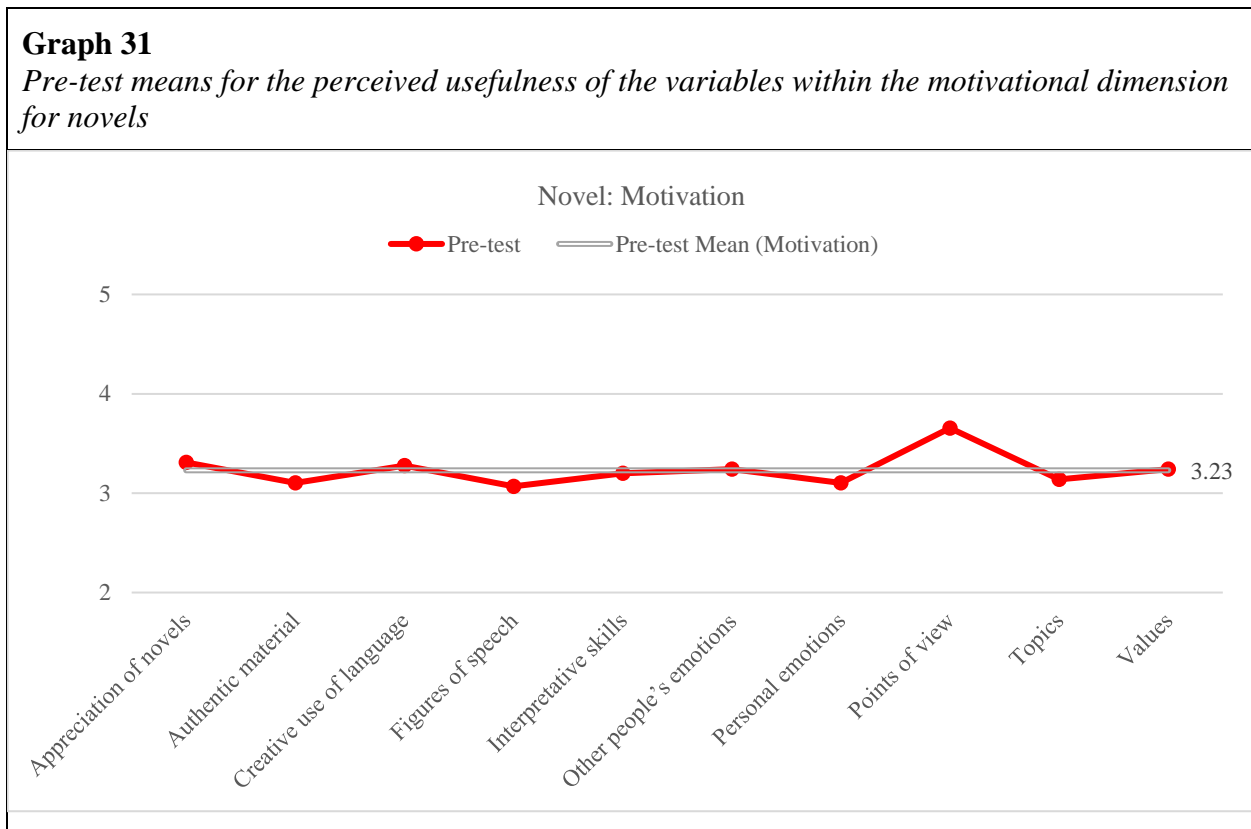
Graph 30

Pre-test means for the perceived usefulness of the variables within the linguistic dimension for novels



Teachers did not expect that novels could be particularly motivating to teach the foreign language. In fact, the overall mean related to motivation (M= 3.23, SD=.90), as displayed in Graph 31, was lower than the one related to the development of linguistic skills (M=3.45, SD=.82). The aspect teachers thought that pupils could mainly learn from novels was the point

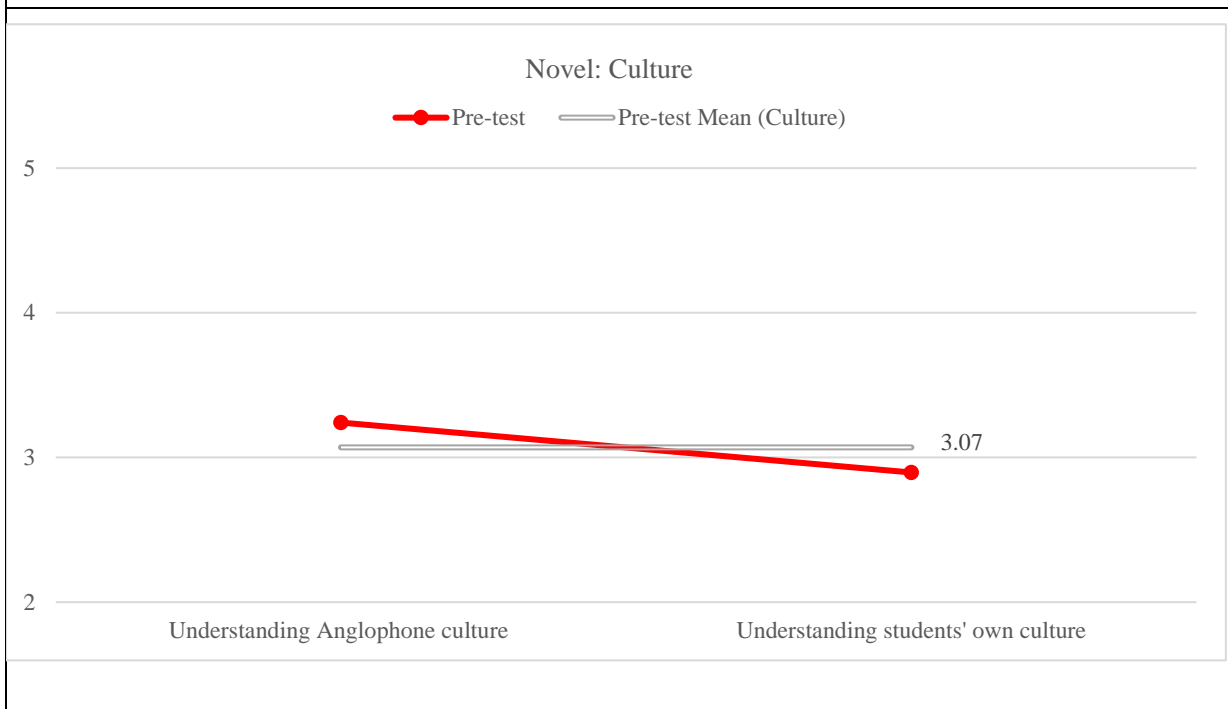
of view ($M=3.66$, $SD=1.04$). Furthermore, they did not deem novels useful enough to learn either the figures of speech ($M=3.07$, $SD=1.16$) or to understand learners' own emotions better ($M=3.10$, $SD=1.05$). The use of novels as authentic material, which was not considered essential for poems, was not considered crucial for novels either ($M=3.10$, $SD=1.21$).



Regarding the cultural dimension, as shown in Graph 32, teachers predicted that students would not improve the knowledge of their own culture through novels ($M=2.90$, $SD=1.01$), while they showed a neutral view concerning the usefulness of using this genre to improve students' knowledge of Anglophone countries ($M=3.24$, $SD=1.02$).

Graph 32

Pre-test means for the perceived usefulness of the variables within the cultural dimension for novels

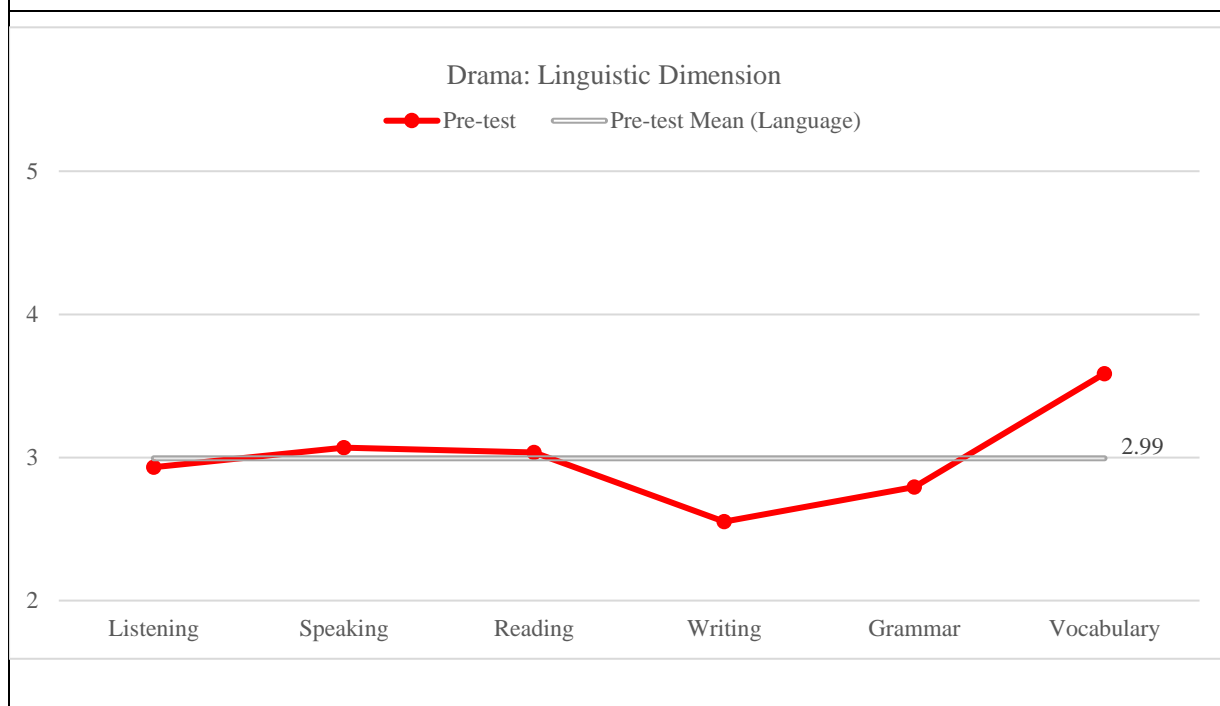


Pre-test results for the perceived usefulness for EFL of dramatic literary texts

Teachers did not expect that drama would be beneficial in developing students' linguistic skills. In fact, the general mean related to this dimension was neutral ($M=2.99$, $SD=.83$). Only the possibility of enriching students' vocabulary was seriously considered by teachers, as displayed in Graph 33, while other items, like writing ($M=2.55$, $SD=.83$) and grammar ($M=2.79$, $SD=1.08$), were not given sufficient consideration.

Graph 33

Pre-test means for the perceived usefulness of the variables within the linguistic dimension for drama

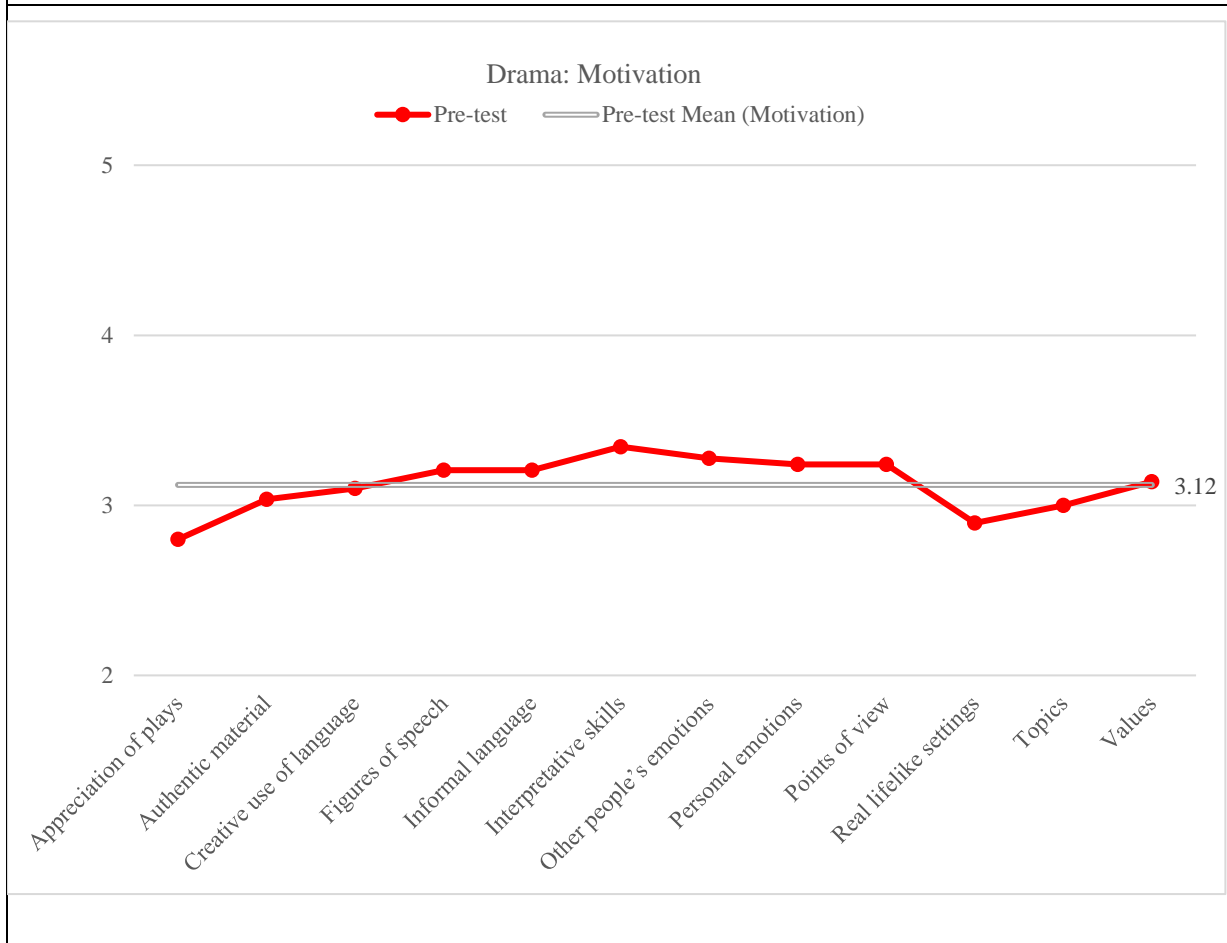


Motivation-related items were within the average range, as displayed in Graph 34. The most appreciated elements were the interpretative skills ($M=3.34$, $SD=1.01$) and the possibility to understand other people's emotions ($M=3.28$, $SD=1.03$). Data showed that teachers did not expect plays to be a genre which could be appreciated by students ($M=2.79$, $SD=.90$). Besides,

real-life settings (M=2.90, SD=1.26) and topics (M=3.00, SD=1.04) were not considered a valuable source of motivation for teachers.

Graph 34

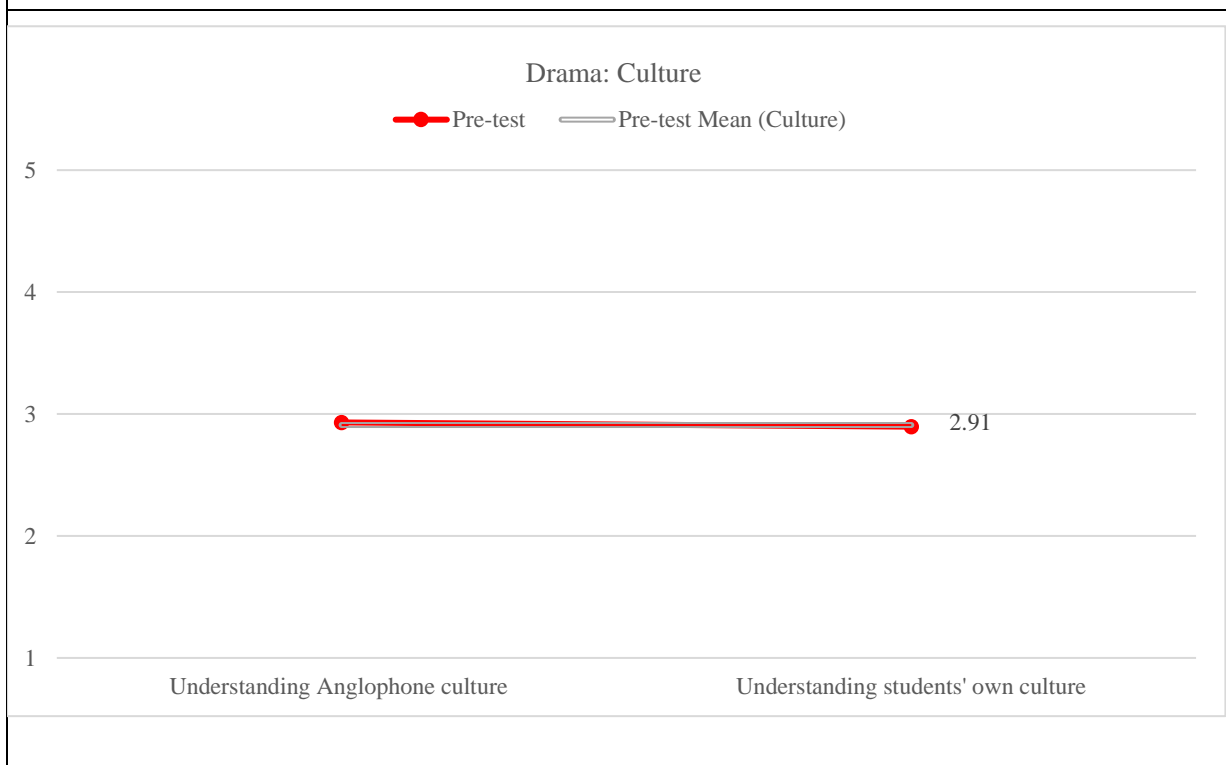
Pre-test means for the perceived usefulness of the variables within the motivational dimension for drama



As for culture, as shown in Graph 35, teachers considered plays not very useful to learn either the Anglophone culture (M=2.93, SD=1.07) or students' own culture (M=2.90, SD=1.08), scores that are slightly below the neutral choice.

Graph 35

Pre-test means for the perceived usefulness of the variables within the cultural dimension for drama



Taking into account the data of the pre-tests that we have so far analysed, we can answer the first part of the second research question, which concerned teachers' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in FL classes before observing the lesson plans based on three literary genres and which genre and which dimension of advantages teachers perceived to contribute most to students' learning. We can, therefore, affirm that, in general, in the pre-tests, teachers considered literary texts, especially novels, quite useful to develop students' linguistic skills. Teachers were not enthusiastic about using poems to teach a foreign language and did not consider them as motivating tools either. Drama was not expected to be a particularly beneficial genre for developing students' linguistic abilities. Moreover, teachers considered that the most engaging genre would be the novel, while the least engaging would be drama.

Research question 2.2: What are teachers' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in FL classes after observing lesson plans based on three literary genres? Which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, do teachers perceive to contribute most to students' learning? Are there any changes in comparison to the views expressed at the pre-test stage?

Comparison between pre-test and post-test results for the perceived usefulness of poetic texts for the FL

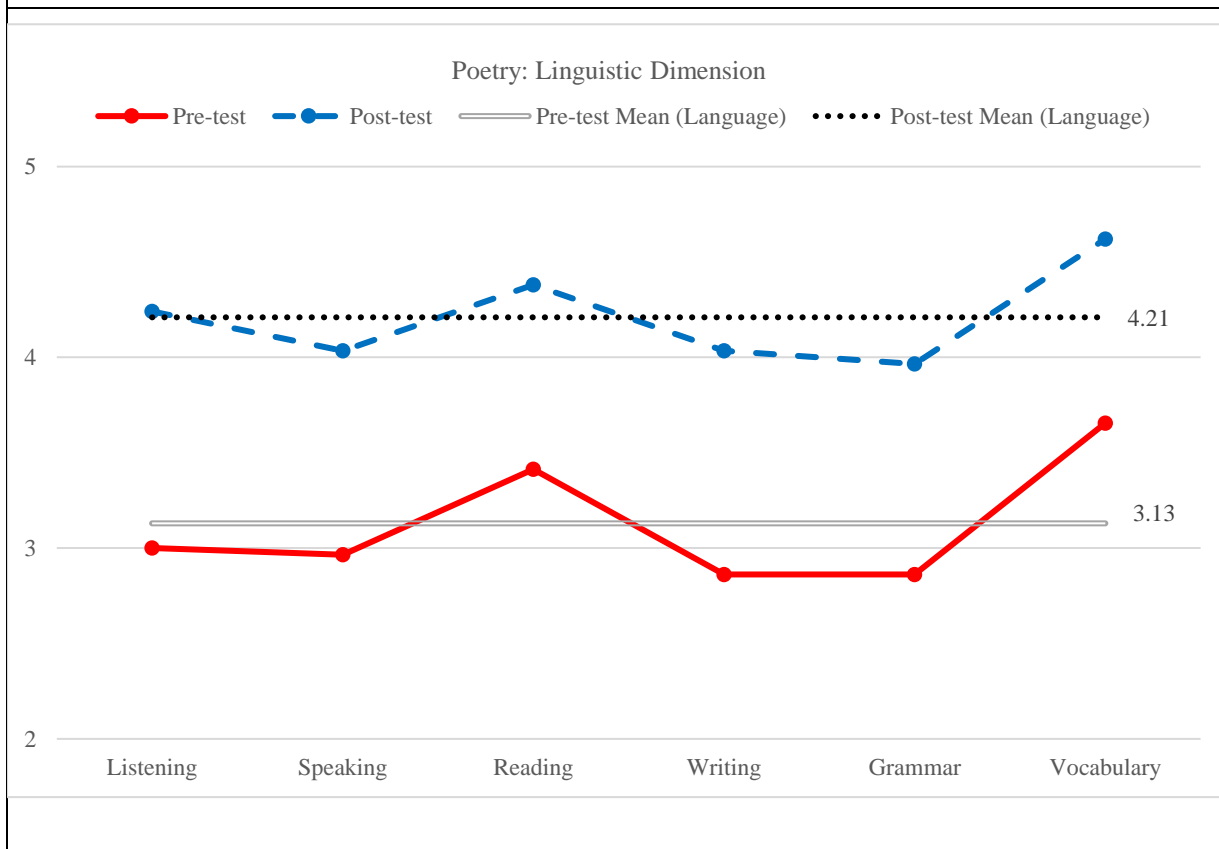
Through the following analytical comparison between pre-tests and post-test, we tried to answer the second part of the second research question (2.2), which aimed to explore how, after showing teachers our lesson plans, their views changed regarding learning a FL through literary texts. We assumed that there would be a difference between teachers' scores after stimuli were introduced. In fact, there were numerous significant differences in favour of the post-tests, as discussed in detail below.

The post-study data revealed that teachers valued poetry as a useful means to learn the foreign language (pre-test: $M=3.14$, $SD=.96$; post-test: $M=4.21$, $SD=.62$; $t = -5.03$, $p = .00$, $d = .37$). Graph 36 shows that, for all the items within the linguistic dimension, post-test values were higher than pre-test values. In fact, statistically significant differences were reported for all of them.

As shown in Graph 36, after our intervention, teachers considered that the skills students could more effectively develop through poetry were vocabulary (pre-test: $M=3.66$, $SD=1.35$; post-test: $M=4.62$, $SD=.68$; $t = -3.76$, $p = .00$, $d = .30$) and reading (pre-test: $M=3.41$, $SD=1.13$; post-test: $M=4.38$, $SD=.62$; $t = -3.52$, $p = .00$, $d = .31$), while grammar (pre-test: $M=2.86$, $SD=.82$; post-test: $M=3.97$, $SD=.94$; $t = -4.00$, $p = .00$, $d = .39$), writing (pre-test: $M=2.86$, $SD=.86$; post-test: $M=4.03$, $SD=.73$; $t = -5.26$, $p = .00$, $d = .41$) and speaking (pre-test: $M=2.97$, $SD=1.00$; post-test: $M=4.03$, $SD=.78$; $t = -4.44$, $p = .00$, $d = .37$) were considered the least valuable, even though significant differences were still reported.

Graph 36

Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of poetry both in the pre-test and in the post-test



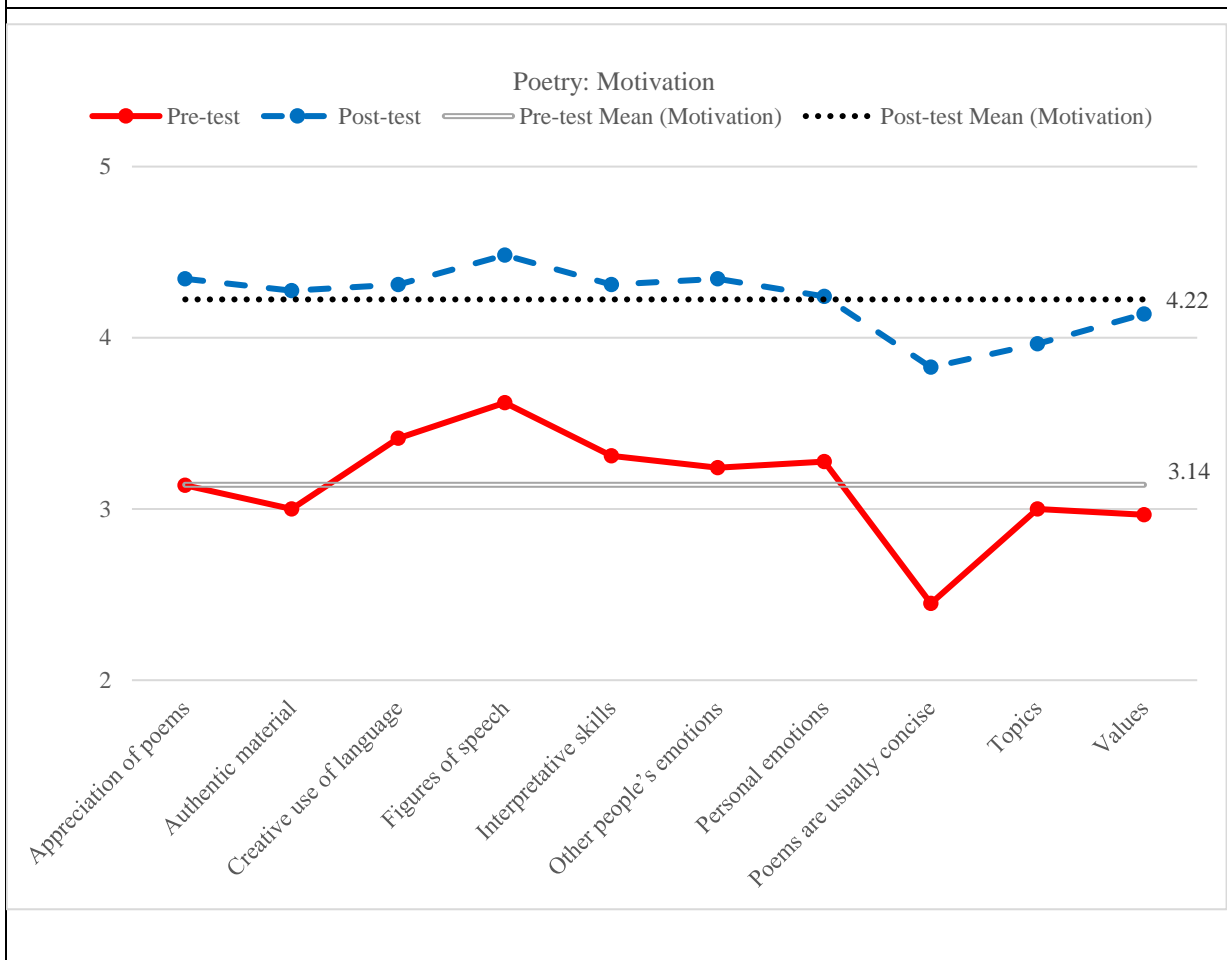
As for motivation, statistically significant differences were reported for almost all the items (Graph 37). The most considerable differences between values in pre-tests and post-tests resulted to be in the chance that the poems used in class could help students become acquainted with the figures of speech (pre-test: $M=3.62$, $SD=1.35$; post-test: $M=4.48$, $SD=.74$; $t = -3.24$, $p = .00$, $d = .27$).

Teachers also thought that the poem used in class represented a source of motivation that students could consider engaging and enjoyable. This led to a higher score related to the general appreciation of poetry (pre-test: $M=3.14$, $SD=.97$; post-test: $M=4.34$, $SD=.61$; $t = -5.50$, $p = .00$, $d = .40$), as displayed in Graph 37. Also the creative activities carried out in class represented, for teachers, a source of motivation that they did not foresee (pre-test: $M=3.41$, $SD=1.22$; post-

test: $M=4.31$, $SD=.60$; $t = -3.66$, $p = .00$, $d = .30$), as much as the possibility to develop students' interpretative skills (pre-test: $M=3.16$, $SD=1.34$; post-test: $M=4.31$, $SD=.71$; $t = -3.88$, $p = .00$, $d = .33$) and the opportunity for students to recognize other people's emotions (pre-test: $M=3.24$, $SD=1.04$; post-test: $M=4.34$, $SD=.81$; $t = -4.42$, $p = .00$, $d = .36$). Teachers also started to recognise the crucial importance of using authentic material in class as a source of motivation (pre-test: $M=3.00$, $SD=1.11$; post-test: $M=4.28$, $SD=.70$; $t = -4.78$, $p = .00$, $d = .42$). In general, the means related to the motivation were substantially higher in the post-tests and the differences were statistically significant.

Graph 37

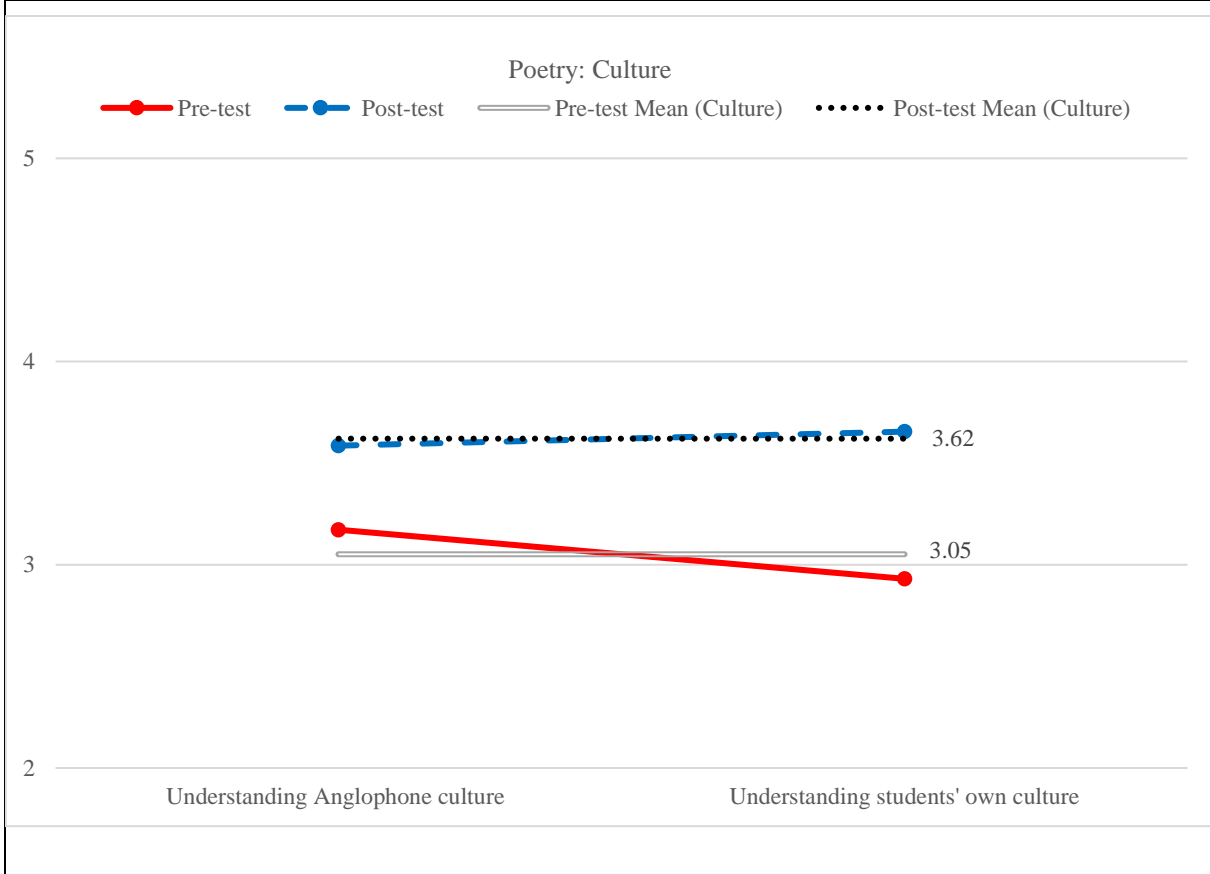
Means for the perceived usefulness of the motivational dimension of poetry, both in the pre-test and in the post-test



Regarding the possibility to expand students' knowledge of the culture of Anglophone countries (pre-test: $M=3.17$, $SD=.91$; post-test: $M=3.59$, $SD=.82$, $t = -3.92$, $p = .00$, $d = .16$) and students' own country (pre-test: $M=2.93$, $SD=1.01$; post-test: $M=3.66$, $SD=.72$; $t = -4.89$, $p = .00$, $d = .28$), as also shown in Graph 38, teachers' attitudes underwent a statistically significant change in the post-tests. As a matter of fact, they recognised that poems could improve these dimensions.

Graph 38

Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of poetry, both in the pre-test and in the post-test

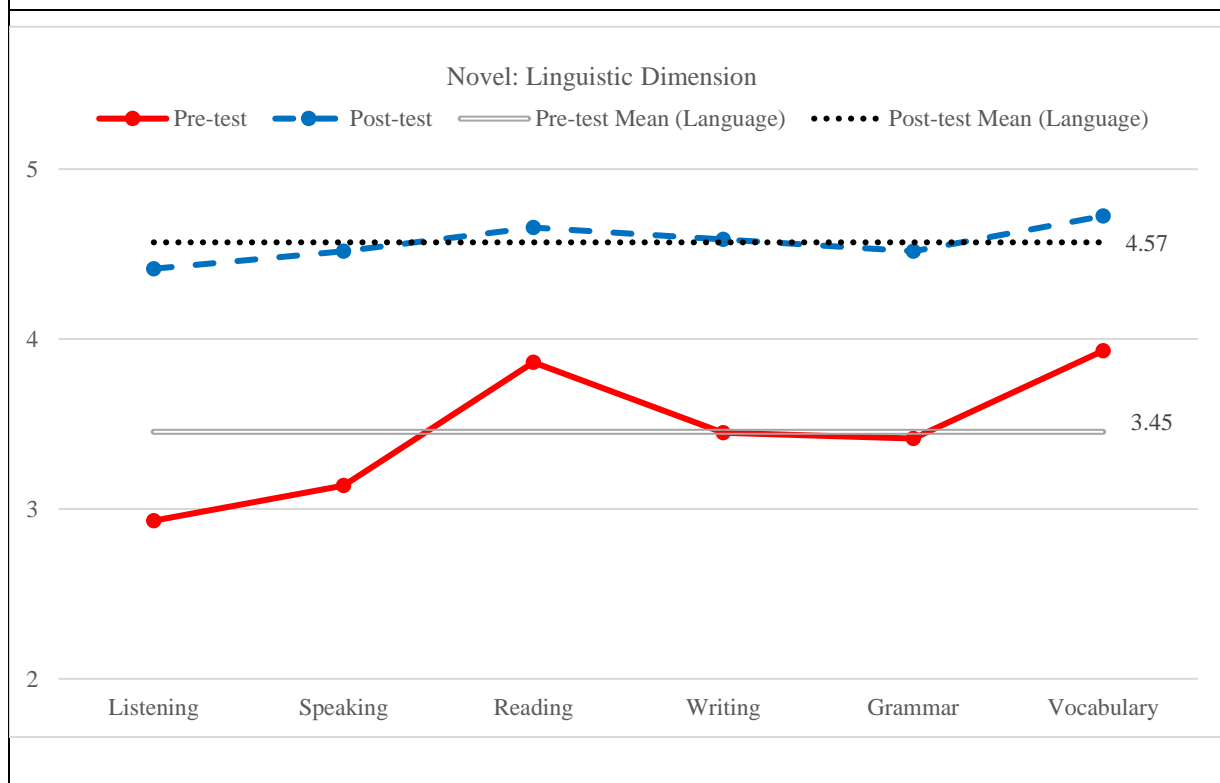


Comparison between pre-test and post-test results for the perceived usefulness of narrative literary texts (novels)

The linguistic dimension of novels was the component that teachers considered as the most useful in the teaching of a foreign language, giving this factor a very high score (pre-test: $M=3.45$, $SD=.82$; post-test: $M=4.57$, $SD=.45$; $t = -6.50$, $p = .00$, $d = .35$), as shown in Graph 39. Vocabulary (pre-test: $M=3.93$, $SD=1.13$; post-test: $M=4.72$, $SD=.53$; $t = -4.37$, $p = .00$, $d = .24$) and reading (pre-test: $M=3.86$, $SD=.99$; post-test: $M=4.66$, $SD=.55$; $t = -3.83$, $p = .00$, $d = .24$) were the linguistic skills that teachers deemed that students could most develop through novels, as much as listening (pre-test: $M=2.93$, $SD=.92$; post-test: $M=4.41$, $SD=.68$; $t = -6.74$, $p = .00$, $d = .48$) and speaking (pre-test: $M=3.14$, $SD=.99$; post-test: $M=4.52$, $SD=.63$; $t = -6.86$, $p = .00$, $d = .44$), whose values markedly increased.

Graph 39

Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of novel both in the pre-test and in the post-test

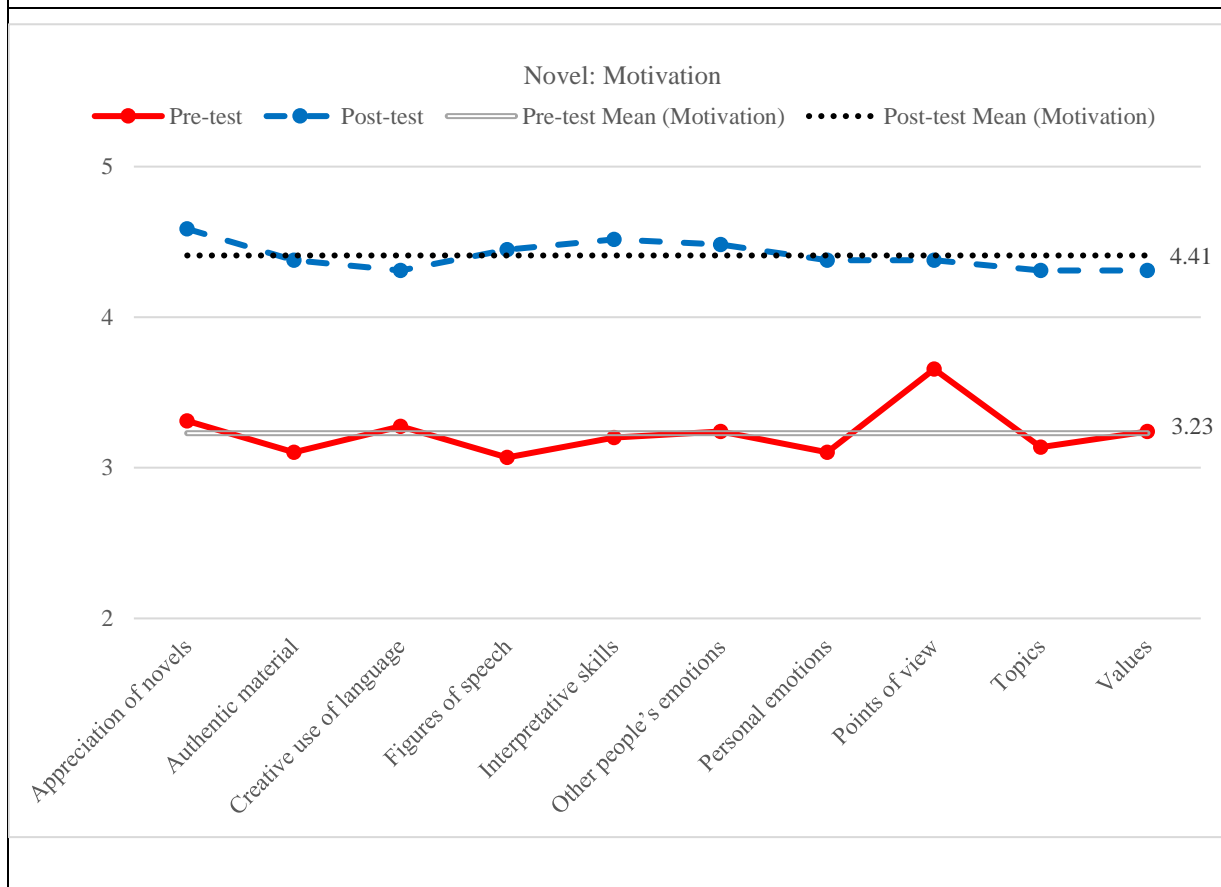


Regarding the motivation that novels can enhance, teachers acknowledged that students would recognise that novels could be a source of motivation to learn the FL (pre-test: $M=3.23$, $SD=.90$; post-test: $M=4.41$, $SD=.68$; $t = -6.41$, $p = .00$, $d = .38$) confirming their inclination for this genre, as displayed in Graph 40.

However, since all the values in the post-test were close to the overall mean, no significant differences could be found among the varied elements linked to motivation. Notwithstanding, the values given by teachers were commonly higher in the post-test, as apparent in the perception of the power novels have to nourish positive values (pre-test: $M=3.24$, $SD=1.18$; post-test: $M=4.31$, $SD=1.04$; $t = -4.00$, $p = .00$, $d = .35$). The teachers seemed to appreciate the theme conceived for the lessons, that is the topic of disability. Their feedback proved that they appreciated the proposed activities and considered the possibility that students could start thinking critically about the topic (pre-test: $M=3.14$, $SD=.92$; post-test: $M=4.31$, $SD=.81$; $t = -5.89$, $p = .00$, $d = .38$), and could better understand both their own emotions (pre-test: $M=3.10$, $SD=1.05$; post-test: $M=4.38$, $SD=.78$; $t = -6.25$, $p = .00$, $d = .41$), and other people's emotions (pre-test: $M=3.24$, $SD=.99$; post-test: $M=4.48$, $SD=.78$; $t = -5.79$, $p = .00$, $d = .39$).

Graph 40

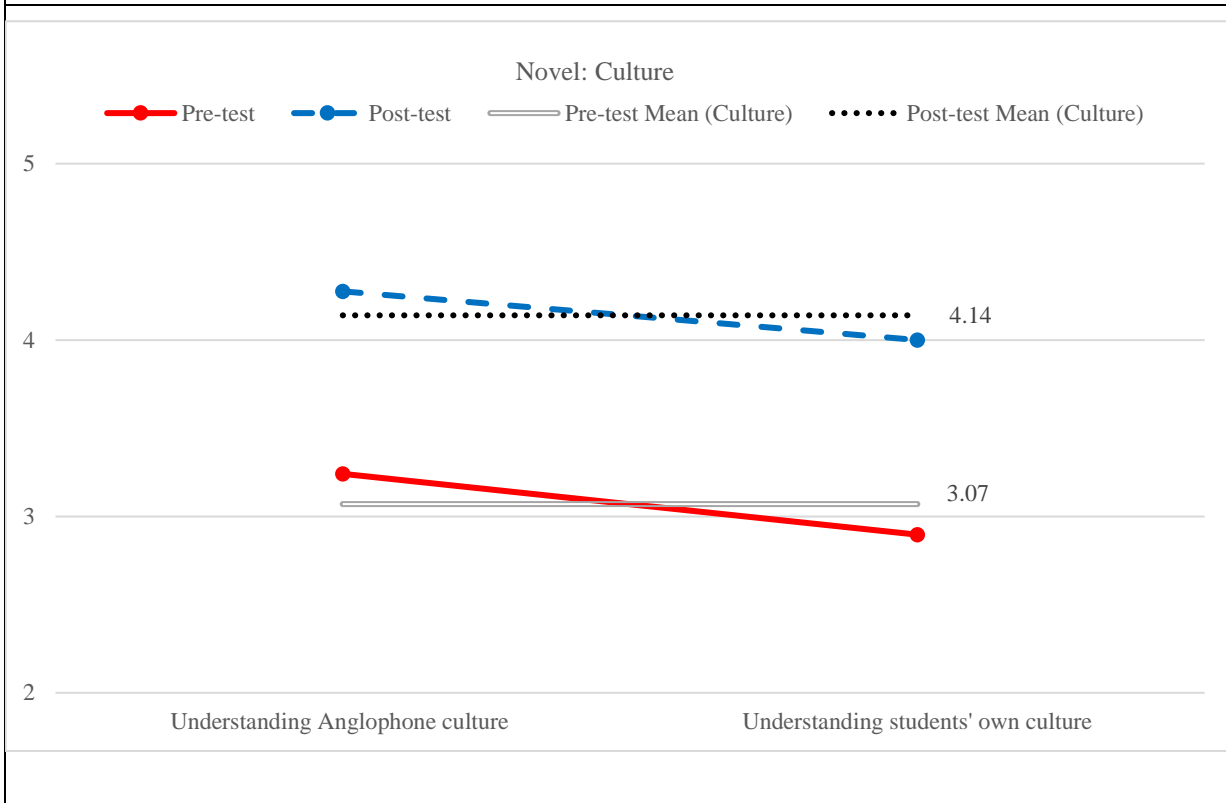
Means for the perceived usefulness of the motivational dimension of novel, both in the pre-test and in the post-test



Regarding the cultural dimension, values showed an increase in teachers' appreciation. In fact, both the item referred to the understanding of the culture of Anglophone countries (pre-test: $M=3.24$, $SD=1.02$; post-test: $M=4.28$, $SD=.80$; $t = -4.61$, $p = .00$, $d = .34$) and the item referred to the cultural awareness of students' own country (pre-test: $M=2.90$, $SD=1.01$; post-test: $M=4.00$, $SD=.89$; $t = -6.09$, $p = .00$, $d = .39$) underwent an increase in the scores given by teachers. However, the general trend of the pre-test was reiterated in the post-test, as shown in Graph 41.

Graph 41

Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of novel, both in the pre-test and in the post-test



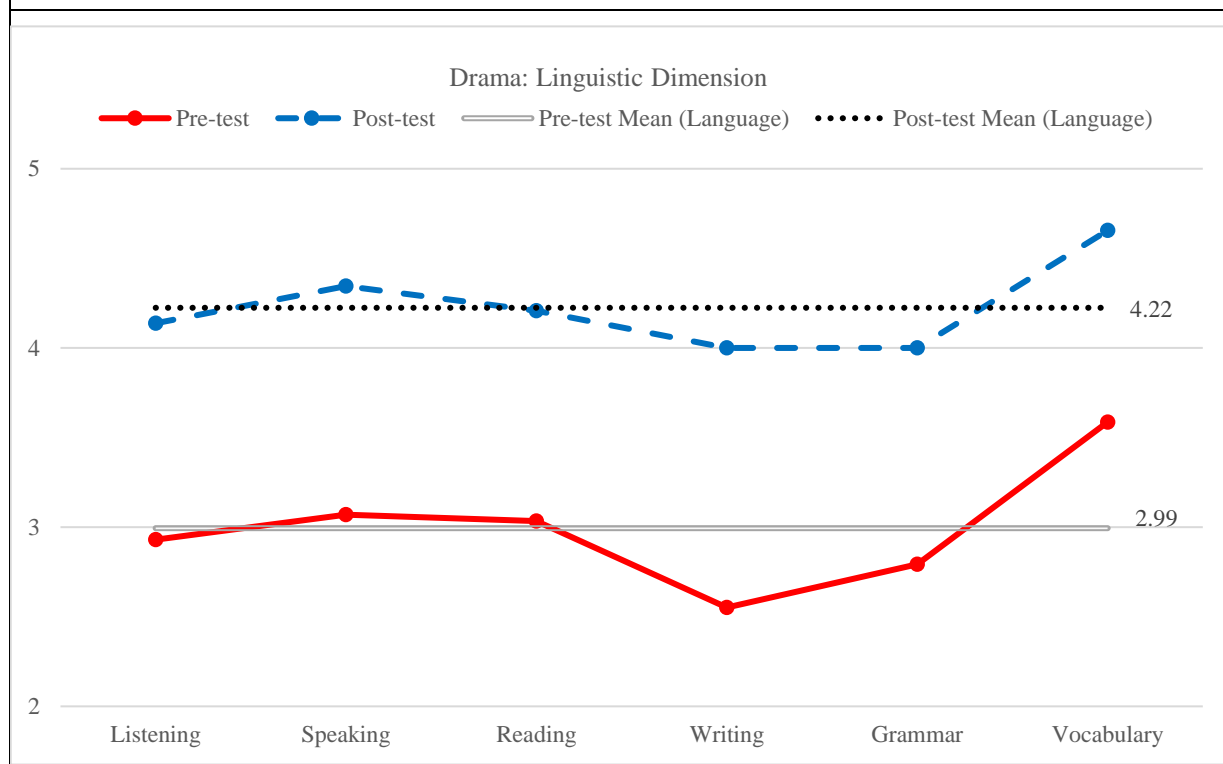
Comparison between pre-test and post-test results for the perceived usefulness of dramatic literary texts

As shown in Graph 42, teachers did not expect that drama could help students develop their linguistic skills, while, in the post-test, agreement in this respect revealed statistically significant differences (pre-test: $M=2.99$, $SD=.83$; post-test: $M=4.22$, $SD=.66$; $t = -6.44$, $p = .00$, $d = .41$). Vocabulary was confirmed as the preferred item (pre-test: $M=3.59$, $SD=1.15$; post-test: $M=4.66$, $SD=.48$; $t = -5.23$, $p = .00$, $d = .33$), while teachers appreciated the activities aimed at developing students' speaking skills (pre-test: $M=3.07$, $SD=1.07$; post-test: $M=4.34$, $SD=.77$; $t = -5.91$, $p = .00$, $d = .42$).

It is also interesting how, throughout the project, teachers started to consider the possibility of teaching grammar through literary texts (pre-test: $M=2.79$, $SD=1.08$; post-test: $M=4.00$, $SD=1.13$; $t = -5.39$, $p = .00$, $d = .42$).

Graph 42

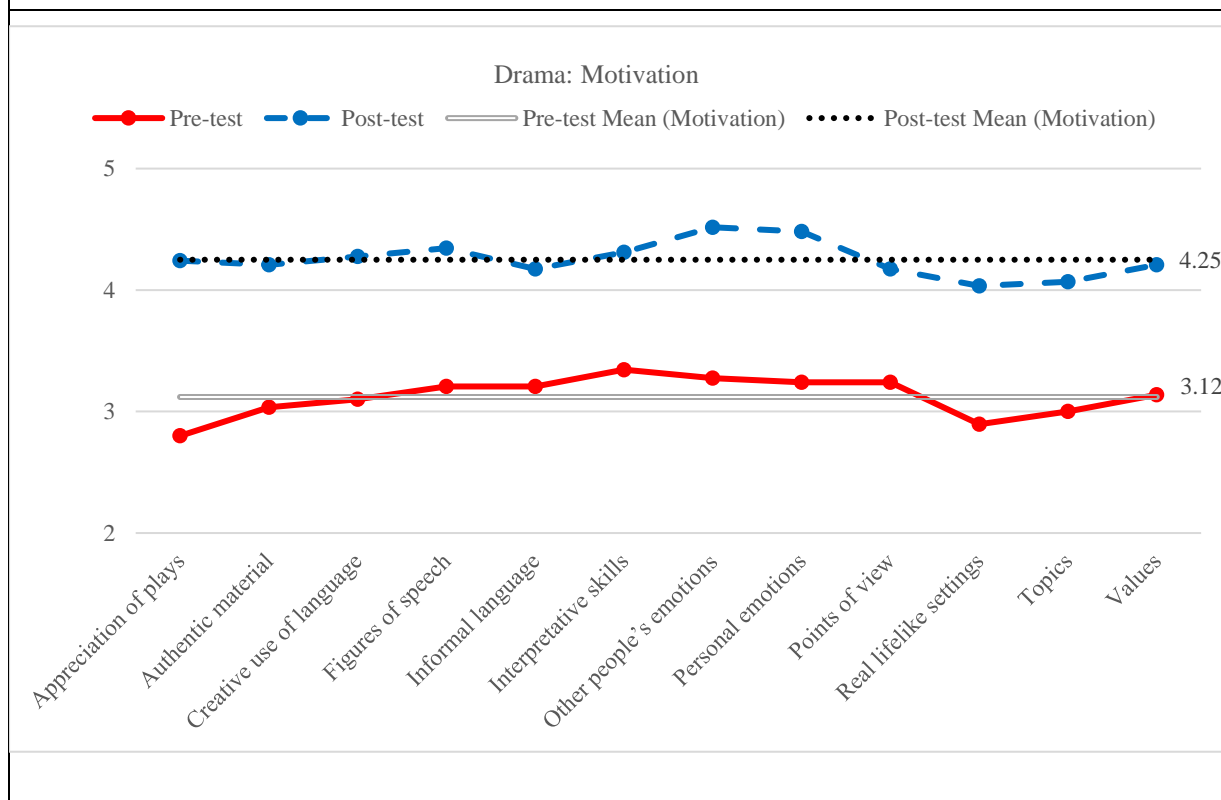
Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of drama both in the pre-test and in the post-test



As for the motivational dimension, displayed in Graph 43, data showed that teachers started to consider that students would appreciate the use of plays as a tool to learn the foreign language. In fact, this aspect increased considerably (pre-test: $M=2.79$, $SD=.90$; post-test: $M=4.24$, $SD=.87$; $t = -5.76$, $p = .00$, $d = .48$). Almost all the elements linked to motivation in plays were considered useful by teachers, in particular, the ones related to the understanding of personal (pre-test: $M=3.24$, $SD=1.18$; post-test: $M=4.48$, $SD=.69$; $t = -6.32$, $p = .00$, $d = .39$) and other peoples' emotions (pre-test: $M=3.28$, $SD=1.03$; post-test: $M=4.52$, $SD=.69$; $t = -5.64$, $p = .00$, $d = .39$).

Graph 43

Means for the perceived usefulness of the motivational dimension of drama, both in the pre-test and in the post-test

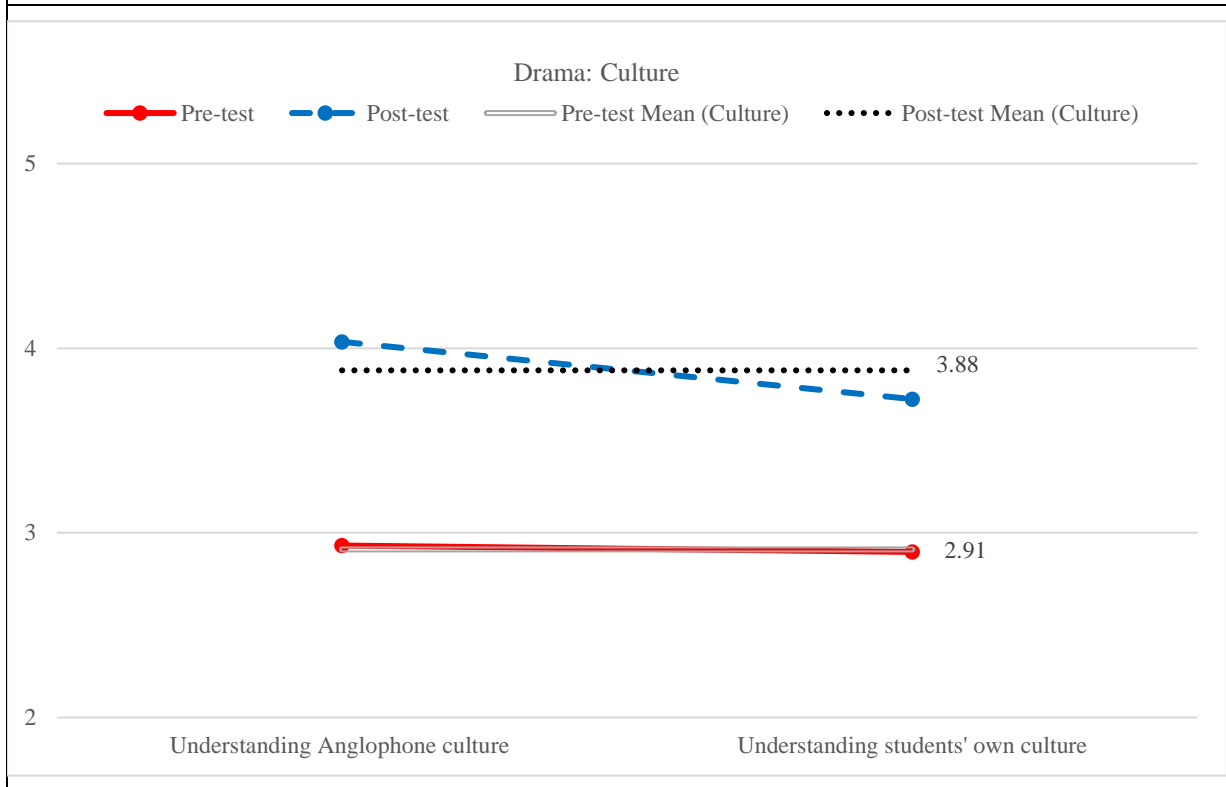


Regarding the cultural dimension, teachers increased their scores. This means that they started to consider the possibility for students to learn the culture of Anglophone countries through plays (pre-test: $M=2.93$, $SD=1.07$; post-test: $M=4.03$, $SD=1.12$; $t = -5.87$, $p = .00$, $d = .38$), even though

a less significant increase can be seen as regards the element linked to the knowledge of students' own culture (pre-test: $M=2.90$, $SD=1.08$; post-test: $M=3.72$, $SD=1.10$), $t = -5.87$, $p = .00$, $d = .31$), as displayed in Graph 44.

Graph 44

Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of drama, both in the pre-test and in the post-test



Research question 2.3: Taking into account both the pre-test and the post-test stages, which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, do teachers perceive to contribute most to their students' learning?

To answer this research question, pre-tests and post-tests were compared in relation to the three genres, along with the three different examined dimensions, and, in turn, the latter concerning the two phases of the survey (pre- and post-tests). For the paired *t*-tests, the results of each question were merged in order to grasp the overall differences among the various dimensions (language, motivation and culture). In all genres, the results showed that the differences were statistically significant, with *p* values = .00 in all the paired questions and in the analysed collective clusters.

For this test, we employed a repeated-measures ANOVA applied to three factors: genre, dimension and time. The factor “genre” consisted of the levels: poetry, prose and drama; the factor “dimension” comprised the levels: language, motivation and culture; the factor “time” included the levels: pre-tests and post-tests.

To demonstrate the statistical significance of the comparison among the three dimensions and the three genres referred to the two different phases of the data collection, we ran a Mauchly's test, and then applied a Greenhouse-Geisser correction (displayed in Table 16).

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	<i>p</i> value	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power
Genre	Greenhouse-Geisser	9.27	1.86	5.00	3.85	.03	.27	.78
Dimension	Sphericity Assumed	8.42	2.00	4.21	13.43	.00	.39	.95
Time	Sphericity Assumed	136.65	1.00	136.65	52.23	.00	.65	1.00
Genre * Dimension	Sphericity Assumed	1.47	4.00	.37	1.07	.38	.00	.65
Dimension * Time	Sphericity Assumed	.90	2.00	.45	1.29	.01	.07	.22
Genre * Time	Greenhouse-Geisser	.90	1.95	.46	1.29	.28	.07	.22
Genre * Dimension * Time	Greenhouse-Geisser	.57	2.68	.21	1.10	.00	.17	.34

In this table, we can see different values referred to the assumed sphericity according to each factor and dimension. Every factor was put into correlation with all the other factors in pairs and, in the end, a correlation was established among all the dimensions. We can see significant values for almost all the dimensions and for all the interactions. The values of the partial eta squared showed that the dimension (.39) and the time (.65) were the most effective factors in determining the differences in the means. Even though the interaction between genre and time violated the hypothesis of sphericity assumed ($p = .38$), we proceeded with the analysis monitoring the results regarding the means referred to this interaction.

Apart from the correlation between the genre and the time, the p values, referred to the assumed sphericity, showed significant figures for all the factors and for all the interactions ($p < .05$). The values referred to the “observed power” reveal that there was a significant statistical change in almost all the surveys.

As for the pairwise comparison referred to the genre, as shown in Tables 17 and 18, significant differences were found. The poetry and the play had a lower mean than the novel (difference = -.28). Considering a p value inferior to .05, it can be therefore statistically affirmed that the novel was the most appreciated genre.

Table 17 <i>ANOVA test: General means according to each genre</i>						
Genre	M (SD)	Dimension	M (SD)	Time	M (SD)	Std. Error
Poetry	3.64 (.59)	Language	3.67 (.77)	Pre-Test	3.13 (.82)	.15
				Post-Test	4.21 (.62)	.12
		Motivation	3.68 (.77)	Pre-Test	3.14 (.96)	.18
				Post-Test	4.22 (.57)	.11
		Culture	3.34 (.40)	Pre-Test	3.05 (.87)	.16
				Post-Test	3.62 (.62)	.12
Novel	3.87 (.62)	Language	4.01 (.79)	Pre-Test	3.45 (.77)	.15
				Post-Test	4.57 (.45)	.08
		Motivation	3.82 (.83)	Pre-Test	3.23 (.90)	.17
				Post-Test	4.41 (.68)	.13
		Culture	3.71 (.76)	Pre-Test	3.07 (.94)	.17
				Post-Test	4.14 (.74)	.14
Play	3.64 (.62)	Language	3.61 (.87)	Pre-Test	2.99 (.83)	.15
				Post-Test	4.22 (.66)	.12
		Motivation	3.69 (.80)	Pre-Test	3.12 (.76)	.13
				Post-Test	4.25 (.54)	.10
		Culture	3.40 (.68)	Pre-Test	2.91 (1.01)	.19
				Post-Test	3.88 (1.05)	.19

Table 18 <i>ANOVA test: Pairwise Comparisons according to the genre</i>				
(I) Genre	(J) Genre	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p value
Poetry	Novel	-.28	.10	.03
Novel	Play	.28	.11	.05
Play	Poetry	.00	.13	.05

The pairwise comparison referred to the dimension, displayed in Tables 19 and 20, showed significant differences among the means of the three dimensions. The linguistic dimension had a higher score than the motivation (difference = .03) and the cultural dimension (difference = .28), while the motivational dimension had a higher score than the cultural dimension (difference = .25). We can, therefore, affirm that the linguistic dimension was the most appreciated.

Table 19 <i>ANOVA test: General means according to each dimension</i>		
Dimension	Mean	Std. Error
Language	3.76	.007
Motivation	3.73	.007
Culture	3.48	.10

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

Table 20 <i>ANOVA test: Pairwise Comparisons according to the dimensions</i>				
(I) Dimension	(J) Dimension	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	<i>p</i> value
Language	Motivation	.03	.04	.05
	Culture	.28	.08	.00
Motivation	Language	-.03	.04	.05
	Culture	.25	.06	.00
Culture	Language	-.28	.08	.00
	Motivation	-.25	.06	.00

As for the pairwise comparison referred to the time, displayed in Tables 21 and 22, significant differences occurred between the two means (difference = 1.02), and it can be statistically affirmed that the difference between teachers' scores in the tests showed that teachers changed their minds about the use of literature for learning the FL.

Table 21*ANOVA test: General means according to each time of analysis*

Time	Mean	Std. Error
Pre-test	3.15	.12
Post-Test	4.17	.07

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

Table 22*ANOVA test: Pairwise Comparisons according to the time*

(I) Time	(J) Time	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	<i>p</i> value
Pre-test	Post-Test	-1.02	.014	.00
Post-Test	Pre-test	1.02	.014	.00

Our findings have also been strengthened by the calculation of Cohen's *d* (Cohen, 1988). This tool could help estimate the stability of research across samples, generalisations and analyses, allowing evaluation of the practical relevance of the research outcomes (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 283). From Table 23, we can infer that all the paired *t*-tests confirmed the statistical significance of our hypothesis ($p = .00$). The effect size, instead, proved to be generally moderate ($d = .4$).

Table 23*Effect size and p values related to each genre and dimension*

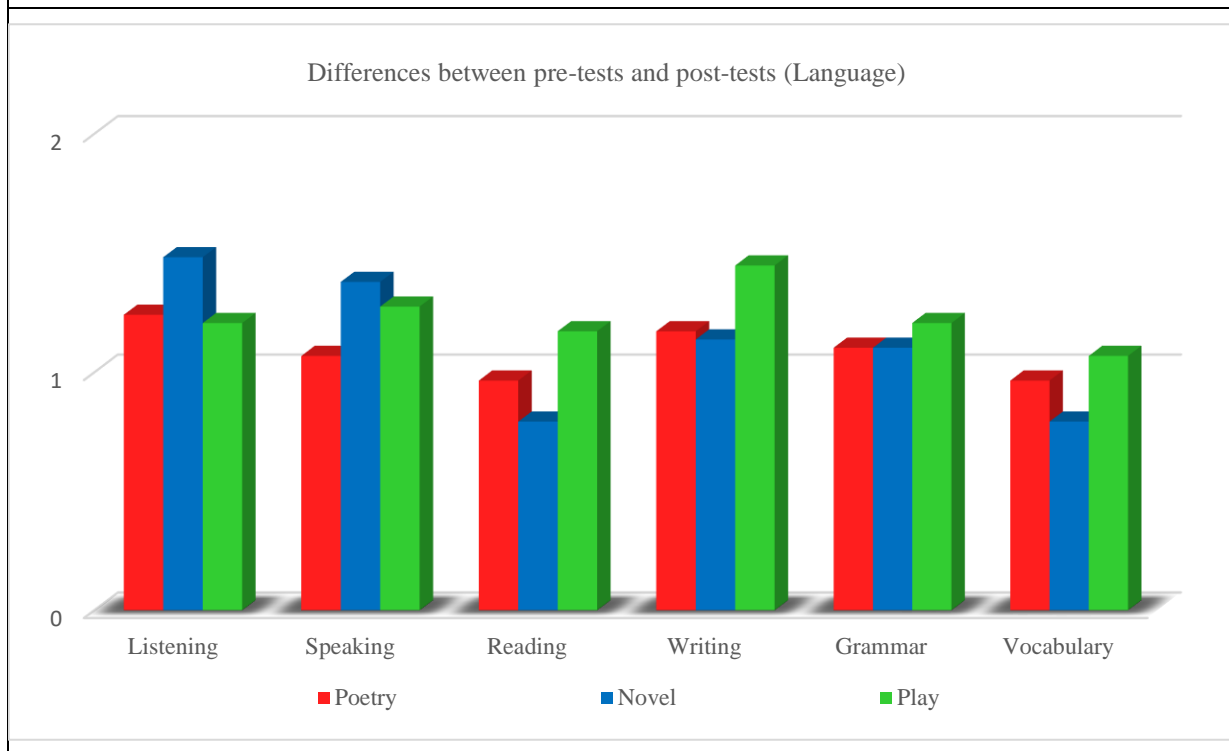
	Poetry		Novel		Play	
	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
Linguistic Dimension	.00	.40	.00	.40	.00	.40
Motivational Dimension	.00	.40	.00	.40	.00	.40
Sociocultural Dimension	.00	.20	.00	.40	.00	.40

Note. The *p* values shown here are referred to paired *t*-tests between pre- and post-tests.

The analysis of the difference between the means in the pre-tests and in the post-tests, as displayed in Graph 45, showed that means were decidedly higher in the post-tests for each genre. Teachers thought that the most useful way of developing students listening and speaking skills was through the novel, while for all the other skills (reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary) the highest difference was represented by the play used in our learning plan.

Graph 45

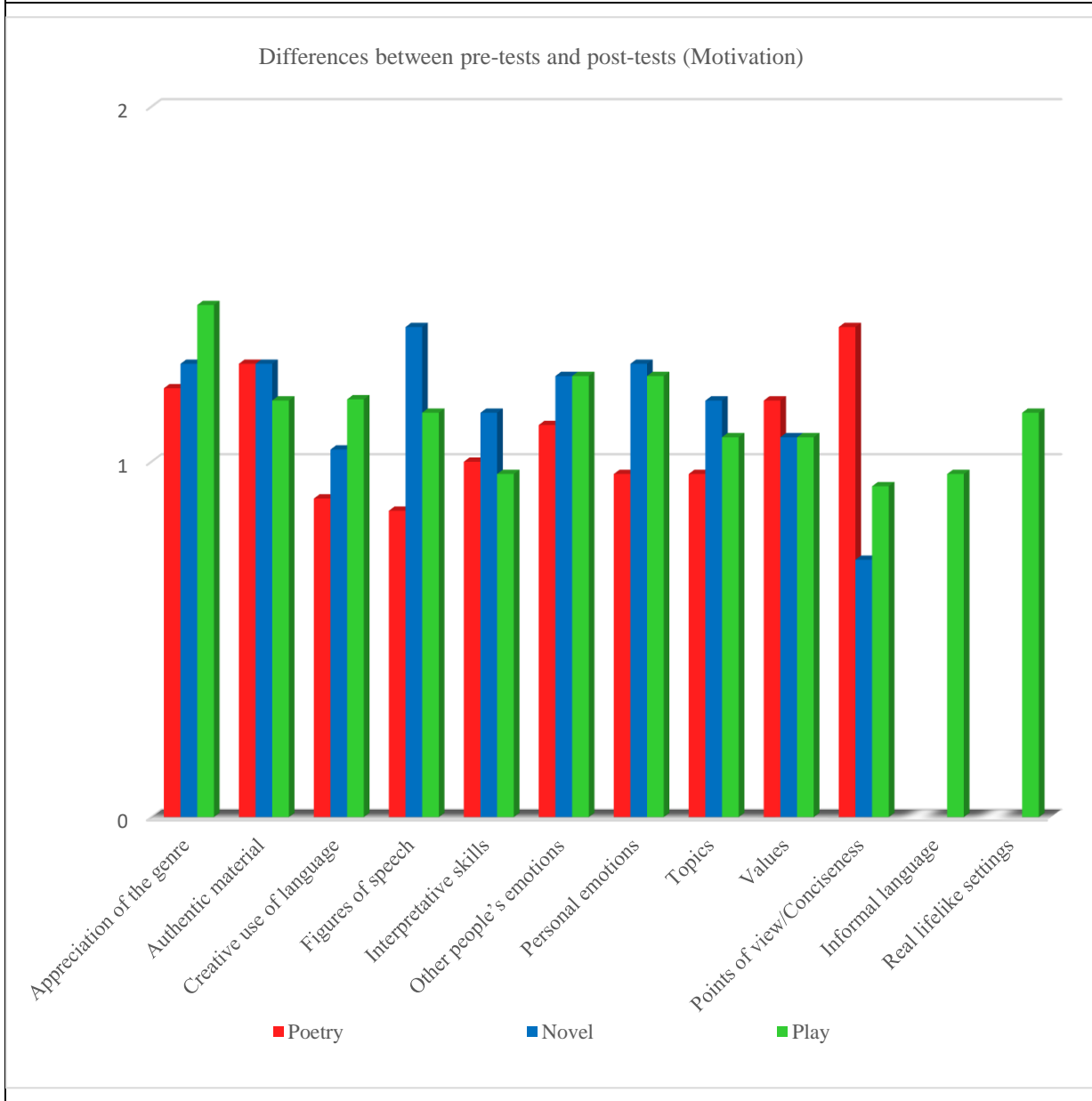
Differences between the means in the pre-tests and post-tests related to the linguistic dimension in the three genres



As for motivation, shown in Graph 46, the difference between the means in the pre- and post-tests were decidedly higher in the post-test for each genre, while the difference for the play was still remarkable, especially for the appreciation of the genre (difference=1.44) and for the chance to understand and share personal (difference=1.24) and other people's emotions (difference=1.24). Another noticeable difference was linked to the conciseness of poems (difference=1.38) and the possibility to learn the figures of speech through novels (difference=1.38).

Graph 46

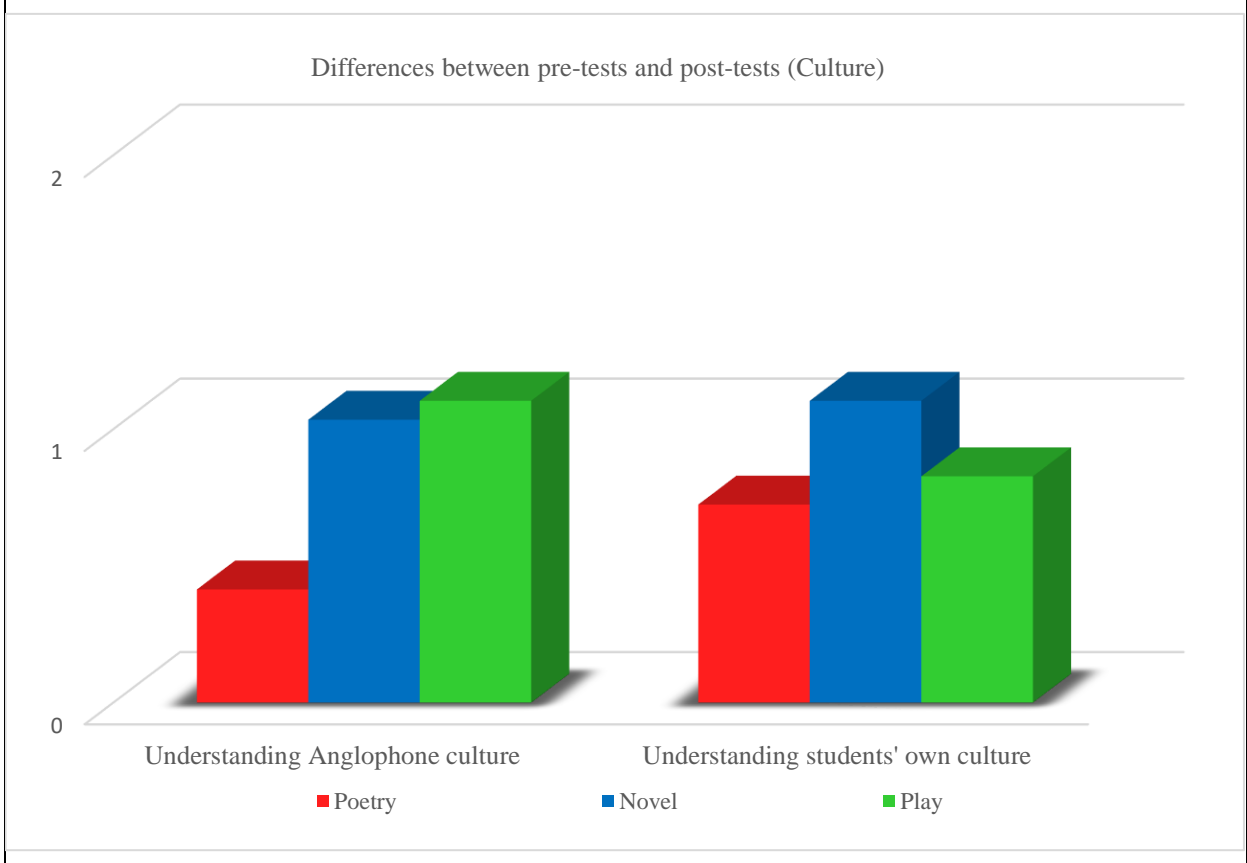
Differences between the means in the pre-tests and post-tests related to the motivational dimension in the three genres



As we can infer from Graph 47, teachers deemed that the poem we used in class could help students to understand the Anglophone culture better, even though the difference was rather small (.41). Their view changed alongside the other genres, and after we tried to establish a common ground to define what culture could represent.

Graph 47

Differences between the means in the pre-tests and post-tests related to the cultural dimension in the three genres



8.2.2. *Qualitative results for teachers' views*

In order to obtain qualitative data, when the first part of the project was over, that is, after the lessons based on poetry were taught, we administered a semi-structured interview to the three teachers who were present in class during these first lessons. To uncover if, and mainly how, teachers had changed their views about the use of literature in the foreign language classes, after having observed our lesson plans, we conducted three interviews based on the single aspects they had answered in the pre-tests and post-tests. Through these in-depth interviews, we wanted to achieve both breadths of coverage across key issues and depth of content within each one of the tested elements.

Consequently, our analysis was built around two main sets of data:

- three interviews through which we could acquire information about teachers' views about the advantages of poetical texts introduced in the lesson plans;
- teachers' answers to specific questions contained in the questionnaires. These questions were about:
 - the knowledge of students' literary preferences and habits;
 - the frequency with which teachers used/would like to use literary texts in class (before and after examining our lesson plans);
 - what they thought would be more pleasant / difficult for students (about the lesson plans), and why.

Teachers' comments about the lesson plans

The following comments are based on the interviews we conducted with three teachers present in class during the lesson plan about poetry and on the answers provided by all the teachers to the specific questions contained in the questionnaires.

Linguistic dimension

The level of linguistic literacy required to understand the texts on which we based our lesson plans was considered by some teachers too high to be used in a class to teach a foreign language. In their comments, some teachers reported the difficulty that students could find because of their lack of linguistic skills (28 references) needed to understand sophisticated literary texts. Regarding the listening skill, a teacher showed appreciation of the fact that the lessons were all taught in English and that this helped students with their listening ability.

Teachers did not agree with each other about the development of the linguistic skills. In fact, a teacher complained that students did not listen to the poem enough because, in her opinion, it had to be read multiple times.

“We listened to the poem only once. And the listening skills were more concentrated on the conversations you had with students, not on poems in general.”¹⁸

When asked about the improvement of students' speaking skills, teachers were willing to admit that students developed this skill during our lessons, even though they underlined that some shy pupils did not take part in the lessons actively enough.

“Not all of them spoke because of many different reasons, because they are shy and they didn't want to show their weakness. Most of them spoke and improved their abilities. Others didn't. Not because of the plan of the lesson, but because of other kinds of reasons, that are related to their personality, or maybe time.”

¹⁸ Interviews were conducted in English. Some comments, provided by the teachers in Italian, were translated into English by the researcher.

The reading skill and the writing skill were appreciated by teachers, too. Like students, they expected pupils to read a lot during literature-based lesson plans but, in their comments, they emphasised that they did not expect that students were going to be asked to carry out so many written exercises.

“I think that the way you explained literature to them was useful also for the reading skills.”

“I didn’t expect that there were so many exercises. I read some of the students’ exercises, and they are very good. I didn’t expect them to be so good at writing.”

“They improved their writing. You made them write more than I expected.”

Teachers’ comments about vocabulary were discordant. Two teachers affirmed that pupils could learn a lot of new words:

“I tested them on new vocabulary, many of the students memorised it.”

Another teacher criticised the sequence of the instructions we had designed in our lesson plan. She did not agree with placing the reading comprehension activity and the explanation of the vocabulary after reading the poem:

“If you want students to enjoy poetry as poetry, when you relate with the text you don’t have to deal with other things. So, working on vocabulary with the idea of using it as vocabulary, not as a poetical activity, must be done before and not after you read the poem. Otherwise, it takes away the emotion from poetry, which is essential.”

Moreover, the same teacher found the teaching of grammar through poems inappropriate:

“It’s even wrong to think of using poetry to teach grammar. It’s not the point. Teaching grammar is to be accurate when you speak. Poetry is something completely different and should be rid of burdens [*of grammatical rules*].”

As for grammar, similar assertions referring to the didactic choices of our lesson plans were also raised by a teacher who claimed that we did not deal with grammar during the first lesson plan based on poetry because, in her opinion, phrasal verbs cannot be considered grammar but rather vocabulary.

“I don’t consider phrasal verbs grammar; they are only vocabulary.”

Motivational dimension

Appreciation of literary texts

Some teachers claimed that acting could have been a hindrance for students, while some other teachers (8 references) emphasised how this activity could be a source of motivation in the class. Other adjectives used by participants to describe the project were: “funny”, “stimulating”, “not common”, “creative”, “more active”.

Emotions and topics

Concerning the understanding of other peoples’ emotions and the empathy we tried to promote through the chosen topics, some teachers understood this as a genuine effort to make students empathise with victims and oppose the injustices that they had read about. However, other teachers thought that talking about emotions was not possible because pupils did not know the researcher well enough to talk openly.

“I don’t think that they can understand or share their emotions through that poem.”

“I think that you have given them some means to show their personal feelings. They didn’t show, but now they know how they can do it.”

“Emotion is something personal, and in a group, not all students express themselves, because it’s something that makes them shy.”

The use of the poem as a source to understand the evocative power of poetry and as a trigger for creativity was a conflicting point, too. Some teachers appreciated the activity proposed to students to create a collective poem as a class. Other teachers asserted that pupils were too young to create poems and understand the evocative power of poetry.

“They are too young to understand it; they are not so ready for the evocative language of poetry.”

“They liked it a lot, the fact that they could invent a poem together, they didn’t expect it. I think that the point of creativity worked.”

Authentic material

Some comments emphasised the authenticity of the adopted texts, and the real context pupils were called to deal with. However, two teachers affirmed that they did not like the chosen poem and that it should not have been used as authentic material.

“Students didn’t understand that it was authentic material.”

However, another teacher changed her mind about the use of authentic materials. While, in the beginning, she was sceptical towards the use of a poem to learn English; in the end, she seemed to appreciate the activities and to reconsider their validity:

“I thought that authentic material could discourage them because it seems too difficult for them, and sometimes I have this impression. But then, during your lessons, they understood what they had to do, little by little, they understood what they had to do.”

Other drawbacks highlighted by teachers were the difficulty in recognising the figures of speech, and the hidden meanings that poems could encompass. Teachers also underlined how reading long texts could be a tedious activity for students because, in their opinion, they are not used to it.

Some comments (7 references) reported the difficulty that students could have in acting out in class, in front of their schoolmates. A teacher revealed her personal point of view about plays and about her idea of what useful didactics means, denying the usefulness of literature-based lessons:

“Students at this age are usually shy, and theatre is not made for shy people... the risk is just wasting hours of ‘real’ work.”

Sociocultural dimension

The cultural aspect was a *vexata questio* we had to face not only when we addressed it with students, but also with teachers. A striking point was provided by a teacher who, while commenting on the cultural implications linked to the poem we had chosen, claimed that racism had nothing to do with culture, claiming that the culture we live in was not a consequence of the context of values we are used to sharing in our society and did not depend on the stories, on the educational background and framework in which we grew up:

“If you are talking about our culture and other cultures, racism is not a matter of culture. It’s really just a gut feeling.”

This connotation of culture was also shared by some students during the project and was discussed in class after the first post-test.

Finally, a teacher showed a shallow consideration of pupils’ cognitive abilities and their possibility to understand and recognise the connotations related to culture:

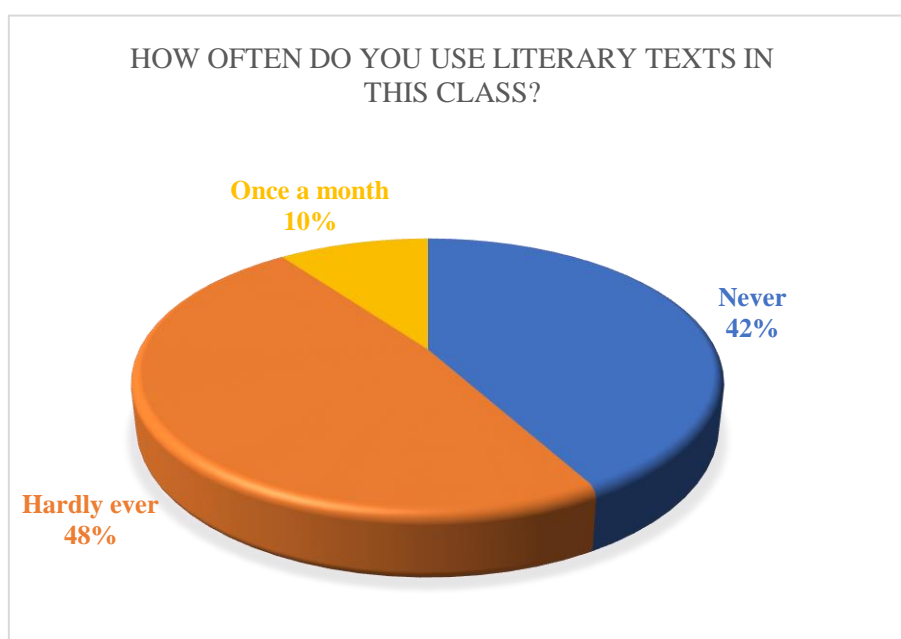
“They are in their first year, so they don’t have such a broad view of the world or of the historical background. So, in my opinion, they are not aware of their own culture.”

Frequency of use

An important aspect to consider regarding the qualitative analysis is linked to the frequency with which teachers affirmed to use literary texts in the two different moments of the survey. Before teachers could observe the lesson plans we designed, they were asked a simple, straightforward question: “How often do you use literary texts in this class?”¹⁹ As shown in Graph 48, only 10% of respondents claimed to use literature once a month in their foreign language classes.

Graph 48

Teachers' frequency of use of literature in the pre-test



Note. Percentage of answers in the pre-test related to the frequency with which teachers affirmed to use literary texts during their foreign language lessons with a first class of a high school.

¹⁹ The first class of a scientific high school, object of the first part of our research.

Regarding the genres that teachers affirmed to use more in class, a remarkable difference can be detected in their answers. As we can see in Table 24, the most used genre was the novel, with a meagre percentage of teachers using poems in their language classes. The most crucial factor is related to drama, which proves to be a genre thoroughly neglected by teachers.

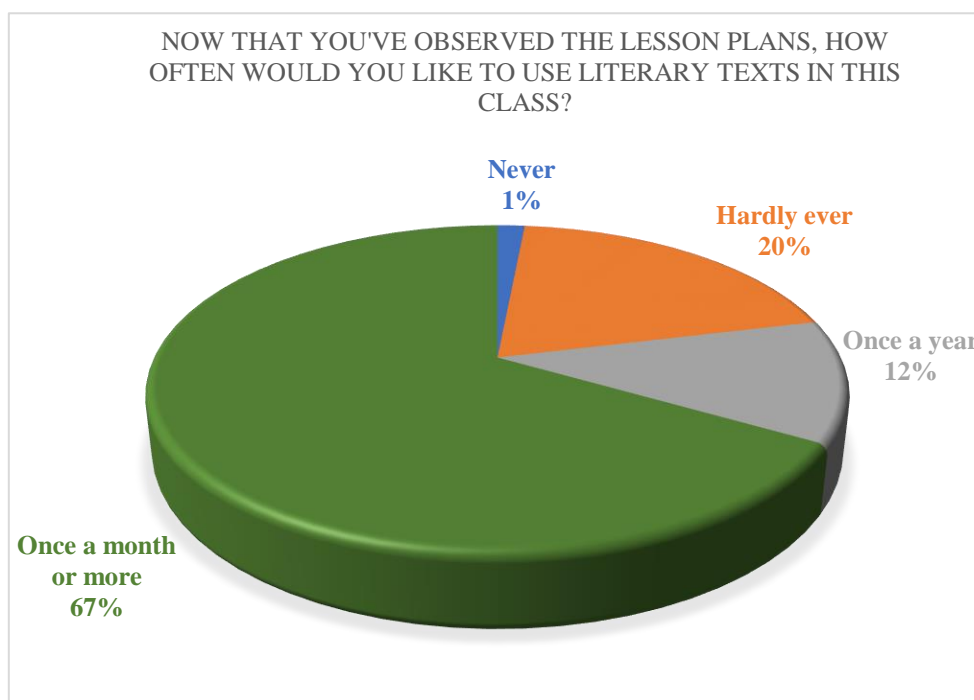
Table 24 <i>Teachers' frequency of use of literature in the pre-test</i>			
	Poetry (Pre-test)	Novel (Pre-test)	Play (Pre-test)
Never	23%	17%	86%
Hardly ever	68%	63%	14%
Once a year	0%	0%	0%
Once a month	9%	20%	0%
<i>Note.</i> Percentage of answers in the pre-test related to the frequency with which teachers affirmed to use different literary genres during their foreign language lessons with the first class of a high school.			

Following teachers' observation of our lesson plans based on literary texts, we asked the participants the same question: "Now that you've observed the lesson plans, how often would you like to use literary texts in this class?"

If we compare Graph 48 and Graph 49 and also data in Table 25, we can infer that a noteworthy change occurred in teachers' opinions. The ratio referred to the possibility of not using literature in their lessons decreased from 90% (never = 42% + hardly ever = 48%) to 21% in the post-test, and the chances of using literary texts once a month, or more, increased from 10% to 67%.

Graph 49

Teachers' frequency of use of literature in the post-test



Note. Percentage of answers in the post-test related to the frequency with which teachers would like to use literary texts in their foreign language classes.

The most impressive figure is related to the use of plays, which increased from total absence to 69% (sum of the frequencies: once a year, once a month, twice a month and once a week, shown in Table 25).

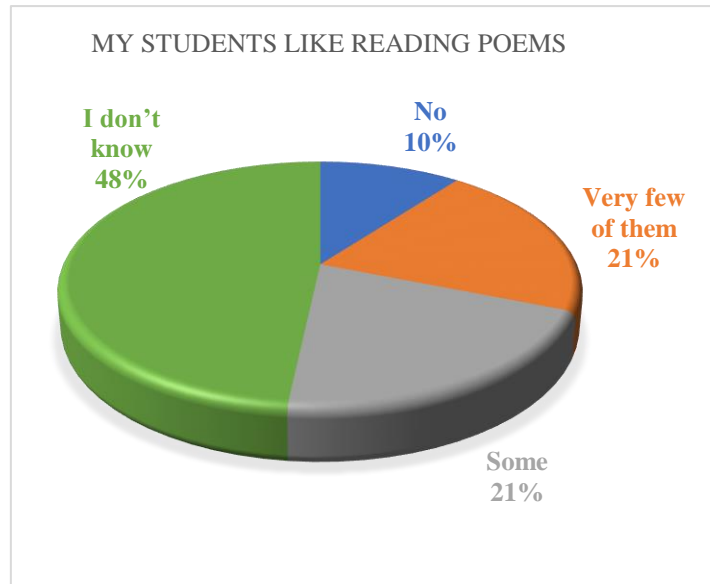
Table 25 <i>Teachers' frequency of use of literature in the pre- and post-tests</i>						
	Poetry (Pre-test)	Poetry (Post-test)	Novel (Pre-test)	Novel (Post-test)	Play (Pre-test)	Play (Post-test)
No answer	0%	9%	0%	9%	0%	9%
Never	23%	0%	17%	0%	86%	4%
Hardly ever	68%	27%	63%	14%	14%	18%
Once a year	0%	14%	0%	9%	0%	14%
Once a month	9%	32%	20%	45%	0%	45%
Twice a month	0%	18%	0%	9%	0%	5%
Once a week	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	5%
<i>Note.</i> Percentage of answers in the pre-tests and post-tests related to the frequency with which teachers use or would use literary texts in a first class of a high school.						

Knowledge of pupils' literary preferences and reading habits

A crucial aspect in choosing the tools necessary to design learning units is represented by the texts that teachers should use in class. Educators often uphold a method, claiming that it is the best teaching *modus operandi*, excluding the voice of those who experience the syllabus first and foremost, i.e. pupils. To meet this need, we asked teachers a question about what kind of texts students preferred reading. As shown in Graphs 50, the most significant part of teachers (58%) did not know or deemed that students did not like reading poems, with a smaller percentage claiming that some of them liked reading poetic texts (21%).

Graph 50

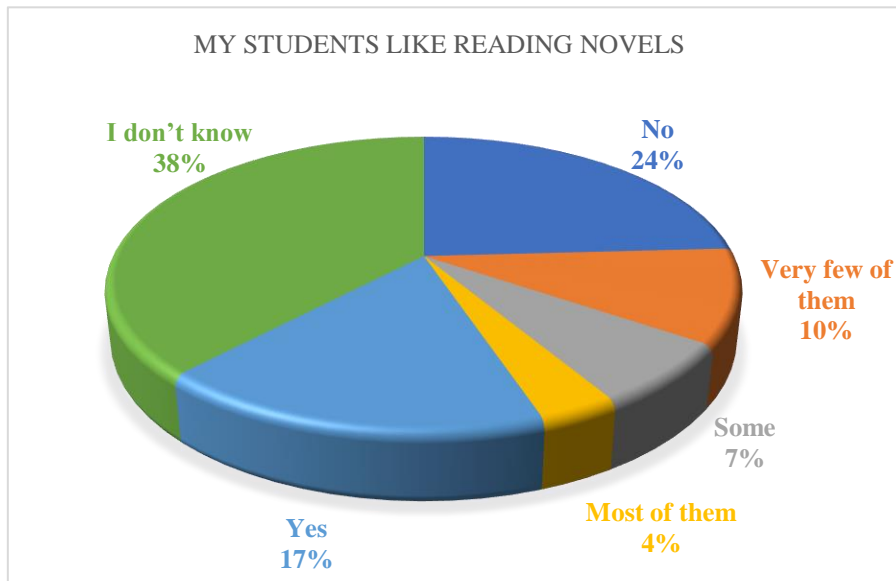
Percentage of answers related to students' reading preferences about poetry



A better position can be seen for novels (as displayed in Graph 51) where, notwithstanding the high percentage of teachers who did not know about students' reading preferences (38%) or affirmed that pupils did not like reading (24%), teachers claimed that some students enjoyed reading texts in prose (Yes: 17% + Most of them: 4% + Some: 7% = 28%).

Graph 51

Percentage of answers related to students' reading preferences about novels



A different situation is related to drama, where the percentage of teachers who stated either that students did not like drama or that they did not know whether pupils liked or not this genre was extremely high (86%), as shown in Graph 52. Only a tiny portion of participants recognised that students liked plays.

Graph 52

Percentage of answers related to students' reading preferences about plays



8.3. Results for teachers' views compared to students' views

Research question 2.4: Are there any differences between teachers and students, both at the pre-test and post-test stages, regarding their perceived usefulness of poetry, novels and drama for FL classes?

Comparison between students' and teachers' pre-tests for the perceived usefulness of literary texts for FL classes

Tables 26, 27 and 28 provide the results by genre at the pre-test stages between teachers' and students' views. The Tables also offer a comparison between the two surveys in terms of their statistical significance.

Table 26 <i>Comparison between students' and teachers' pre-tests for the dimensions and items related to poetry</i>							
DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS	Students' Pre-Test		Teachers' Pre-Test				
	M	SD	M	SD	<i>t</i> -stat	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
Using poems in the language classroom can contribute to the development of							
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	3.37	1.00	3.13	0.82	-1.43	0.08	-0.09
listening skills	3.40	1.04	3.00	1.02	-1.53	0.07	-0.10
speaking skills	3.53	1.06	2.97	1.00	-2.66	0.01	-0.21
reading skills	3.46	1.12	3.41	1.13	0.11	0.45	-0.20
writing skills	3.12	0.95	2.86	0.86	-1.55	0.06	0.10
vocabulary	3.91	0.88	3.66	1.35	-0.87	0.20	-0.43
grammar	2.82	0.93	2.86	0.82	0.36	0.32	0.27

MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	2.95	1.08	3.14	0.96	0.99	0.16	-0.04
because students can better understand their own personal emotions	2.62	1.04	3.28	1.20	2.54	0.01	0.20
because students can better understand other people's emotions	2.62	1.08	3.24	1.04	2.64	0.01	0.23
because students can develop their interpretative skills	3.16	1.03	3.31	1.34	0.53	0.30	0.03
because students can become acquainted with figures of speech	3.34	1.15	3.62	1.35	0.97	0.16	-0.01
because poems can reveal a creative use of language	3.16	1.03	3.41	1.22	0.96	0.16	0.15
because poems deal with important values	3.19	1.08	2.97	1.30	-0.81	0.21	0.08
because poems normally deal with non-trivial topics	2.90	1.02	3.00	1.05	0.44	0.33	0.03
because poems are authentic material	2.84	1.22	3.00	1.11	0.63	0.27	0.06
because using poems is an enjoyable experience	2.90	1.05	3.14	0.97	0.95	0.16	0.04
because poems are usually concise	2.75	1.06	2.45	1.16	-1.01	0.16	0.15
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	3.14	1.16	3.05	0.87	-0.44	0.33	-0.32
because students can better understand the Anglophone culture	3.37	1.11	3.17	0.91	-0.89	0.19	-0.12
because students can better understand their own culture	2.91	1.22	2.93	1.01	0.08	0.47	0.10

Table 27

Comparison between students' and teachers' pre-tests for the dimensions and items related to novel

DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS	Students' Pre-Test		Teachers' Pre-Test		<i>t</i> -stat	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD			
Using novels in the language classroom can contribute to the development of							
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	3.83	.98	3.45	.82	-2.14	.02	-.13
listening skills	3.36	1.14	2.93	.92	-1.94	.03	-.17
speaking skills	3.91	.91	3.14	.99	-3.63	.00	-.29
reading skills	4.14	.91	3.86	.99	-1.32	.10	-.08
writing skills	3.84	.93	3.45	1.12	-1.67	.05	-.13
vocabulary	4.27	.88	3.93	1.13	-1.45	.08	-.10
grammar	3.43	1.12	3.41	.98	.47	.07	-.01
MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	3.27	1.03	3.23	.90	.47	.43	-.01
because students can better understand their own personal emotions	2.99	1.20	3.10	1.05	.50	.31	.04
because students can better understand other people's emotions	2.81	1.04	3.24	.99	1.93	.03	.16
because students can develop their interpretative skills	3.23	1.01	3.38	1.18	.60	.27	.05
because students can become acquainted with figures of speech	2.96	.94	3.07	1.16	.46	.32	.04
because novels can reveal a creative use of language	3.61	.97	3.28	1.10	-1.44	.08	-.12
because novels deal with important values	3.44	1.02	3.24	1.18	-.80	.21	-.07
because novels normally deal with non-trivial topics	3.21	.93	3.14	.92	-.38	.35	-.03
because novels are authentic material	2.84	1.07	3.10	1.21	1.01	.16	.10
because using novels is an enjoyable experience	3.73	1.15	3.31	.97	-1.85	.03	-.15

because novels can help students understand different points of view	3.86	.97	3.66	1.04	-.89	.19	-.07
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	2.76	1.06	3.07	.94	1.53	.07	.12
because students can better understand the Anglophone culture	2.91	1.00	3.24	1.02	1.46	.08	.12
because students can better understand their own culture	2.60	1.11	2.90	1.01	1.29	.10	.12

Table 28

Comparison between students' and teachers' pre-tests for the dimensions and items related to drama

DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS	Students' Pre-Test		Teachers' Pre-Test		<i>t</i> -stat	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD			
Using novels in the language classroom can contribute to the development of							
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	3.10	1.10	2.99	.83	-.59	.28	-.04
listening skills	3.08	1.16	2.93	1.00	-.67	.25	-.06
speaking skills	3.30	1.07	3.07	1.07	-.96	.16	-.09
reading skills	3.03	1.07	3.03	.98	.03	.49	.00
writing skills	2.92	1.13	2.55	.83	-1.78	.04	-.17
vocabulary	3.39	1.05	3.59	1.15	.78	.22	.06
grammar	2.86	1.10	2.79	1.08	-.28	.39	-.03
MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	2.86	1.07	3.12	.76	1.68	.05	.10
because students can better understand their own personal emotions	2.37	.93	3.24	1.18	3.56	.00	.31
because students can better understand other people's emotions	2.49	1.07	3.28	1.03	3.41	.00	.28

because students can develop their interpretative skills	2.86	.95	3.34	1.01	2.22	.02	.17
because students can become acquainted with figures of speech	2.77	1.15	3.21	1.24	1.62	.06	.16
because plays can reveal a creative use of language	3.01	1.18	3.10	1.05	1.07	.14	.03
because plays deal with important values	2.96	1.09	3.14	1.09	.75	.23	.07
because plays normally deal with non-trivial topics	2.77	1.15	3.00	1.04	1.07	.15	.09
because plays are authentic material	2.87	.97	3.03	1.02	.73	.23	.06
because using plays is an enjoyable experience	2.79	1.03	2.79	.90	.81	.21	.00
because plays usually offer real lifelike settings	3.14	.98	2.90	1.26	-.93	.18	-.10
because plays can help students understand different points of view	3.03	1.17	3.24	1.02	.91	.18	.08
because students can find examples of colloquial and informal language	3.24	1.16	3.21	1.01	-.14	.44	-.01
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	2.73	1.16	2.91	1.01	.85	.20	.07
because students can better understand the Anglophone culture	2.96	1.15	2.93	1.07	-.11	.46	-.01
because students can better understand their own culture	2.49	1.17	2.90	1.08	1.65	.05	.16

In response to the first part of research question 2.4 (Comparing students' and teachers' pre-tests to infer differences in views and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the use of poetry, novels and drama in FL classes), the data obtained revealed that in the pre-tests, teachers' values were higher than students' values for poetry and drama and lower for novels. This figure is apparent if we consider the difference between the general means, as displayed in Table 29.

Table 29 <i>Difference between the general means in teachers' and students' pre-tests</i>					
	Students' Pre-Test		Teachers' Pre-Test		
	M _s	SD _s	M _t	SD _t	Difference M _s - M _t
Poetry	3.11	.09	3.19	.18	.08
Novel	3.40	.10	3.30	.09	-.10
Drama	2.92	.08	3.06	.10	.15

Note. M_s = students' general mean, SD_s = students' standard deviation; M_t = teachers' general mean, SD_t = teachers' standard deviation.

Comparing teachers' and students' answers in the pre-tests, we can affirm that teachers expected that poetry (mean difference = .08) and drama (mean difference = .15) could be beneficial to pupils in learning a foreign language, while students assigned lower ratings to the utility of poetry and drama and higher to the benefits of using novels (mean difference = .10).

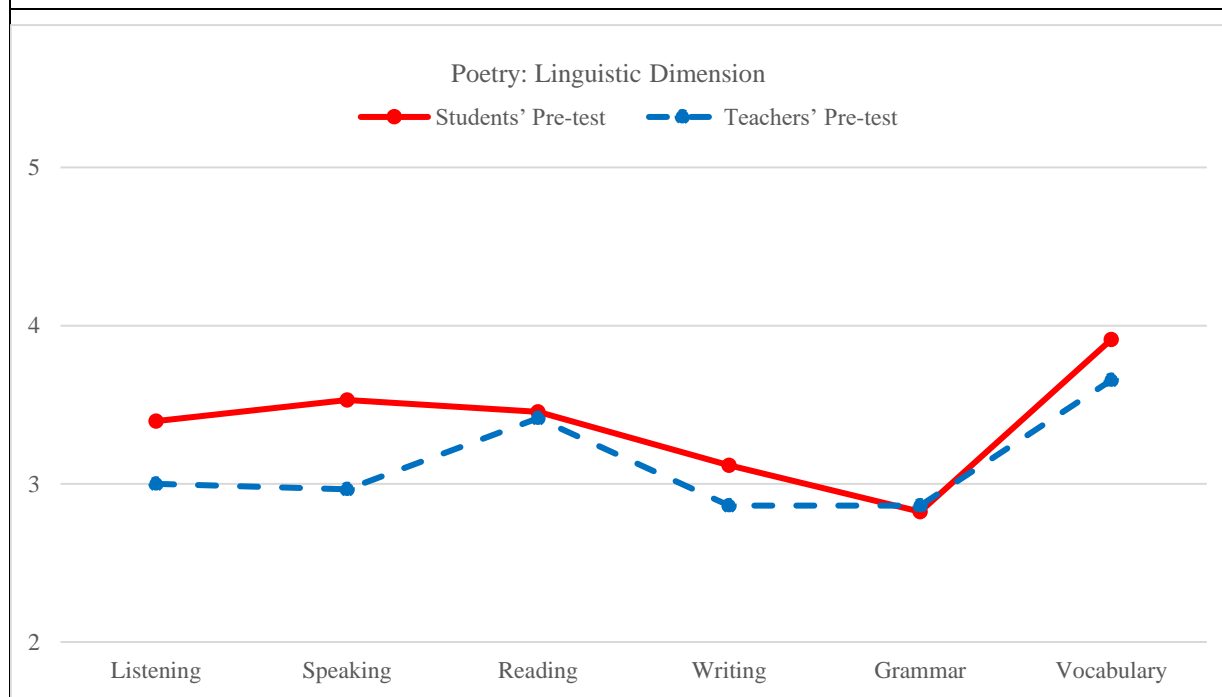
Pre-test results for the perceived usefulness of poetry

As shown in Graph 53, the results showed that both students and teachers had a somewhat neutral attitude toward the use of poetry. Concerning the linguistic dimension, before starting the project, pupils considered this type of literary texts a valuable source to learn vocabulary, but they did not consider them useful enough to learn grammar.

An in-depth analysis of the differences for the linguistic dimension showed that students expected to broaden and improve, more than teachers, their vocabulary (pre-test students: $M=3.91$, $SD=.88$; pre-test teachers: $M=2.86$, $SD=.82$; $t = -.87$, $p = .20$, $d = -.43$) listening (pre-test students: $M=3.40$, $SD=1.04$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.00$, $SD=1.02$; $t = -1.53$, $p = .07$, $d = -.10$), speaking (pre-test students: $M=3.53$, $SD=1.06$; pre-test teachers: $M=2.97$, $SD=1.00$; $t = -2.66$, $p = .01$, $d = -.21$) and writing skills (pre-test students: $M=3.12$, $SD=.95$; pre-test teachers: $M=2.86$, $SD=1.13$; $t = -1.55$, $p = .006$, $d = .10$).

Graph 53

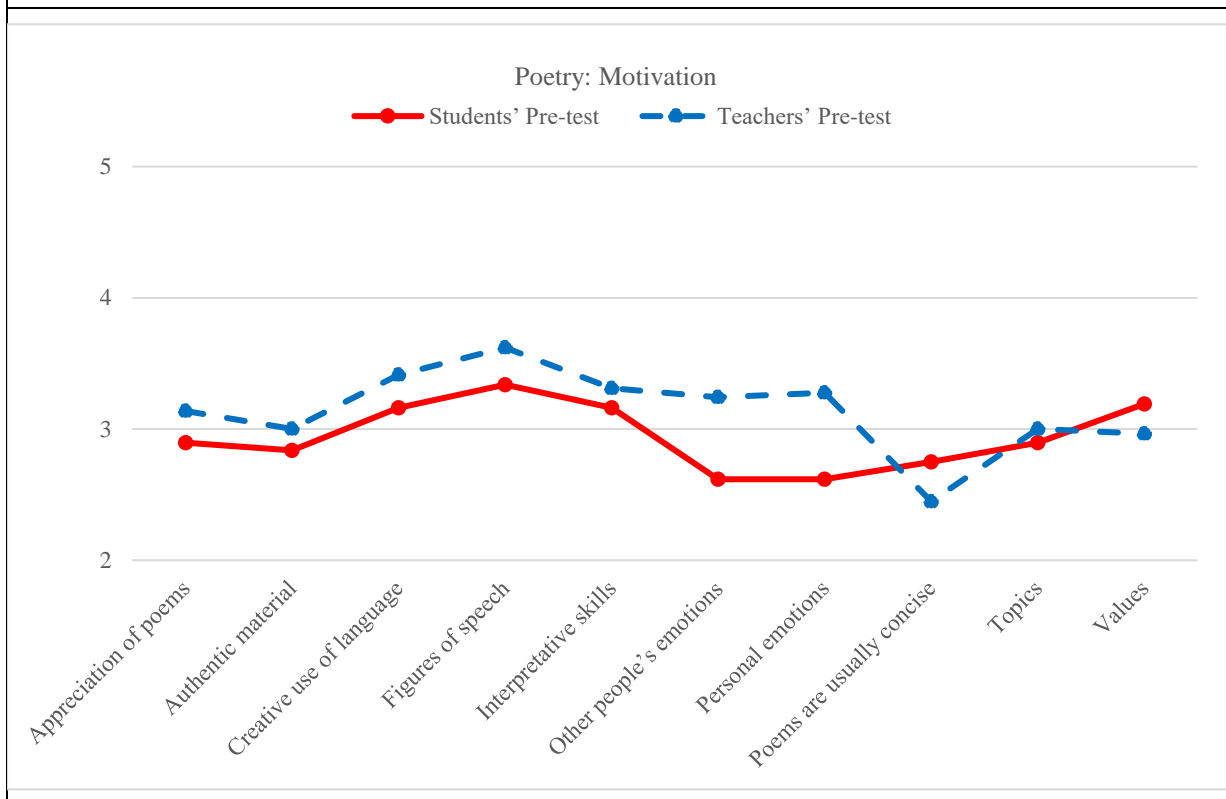
Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of poems in students' and teachers' pre-tests



As displayed in Graph 54, teachers expected, more than students, that poems could be a valid source of motivation (pre-test students: $M=2.95$, $SD=1.08$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.14$, $SD=.96$; $t = .99$, $p = .16$, $d = -.04$). In particular, teachers' values were higher in relation to these items: appreciation of poems (pre-test students: $M=2.90$, $SD=1.05$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.14$, $SD=.97$; $t = .95$, $p = .16$, $d = .04$), understanding of personal emotions (pre-test students: $M=2.62$, $SD=1.04$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.28$, $SD=1.20$; $t = 2.54$, $p = .01$, $d = .20$), other people's emotions (pre-test students: $M=2.62$, $SD=1.08$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.24$, $SD=1.04$; $t = 2.64$, $p = .01$, $d = .20$), authentic material (pre-test students: $M=2.84$, $SD=1.22$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.00$, $SD=1.11$; $t = .63$, $p = .27$, $d = .06$), creative use of language (pre-test students: $M=3.16$, $SD=1.03$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.41$, $SD=1.22$; $t = .96$, $p = .16$, $d = .15$), figures of speech (pre-test students: $M=3.34$, $SD=1.15$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.62$, $SD=1.35$; $t = .97$, $p = .16$, $d = -.01$). While students gave higher scores for the conciseness of poems (pre-test students: $M=2.75$, $SD=1.06$; pre-test teachers: $M=2.45$, $SD=1.16$; $t = -1.01$, $p = .16$, $d = .15$) and the values (pre-test students: $M=3.19$, $SD=1.08$; pre-test teachers: $M=2.97$, $SD=1.30$; $t = -.81$, $p = .21$, $d = .08$) they dealt with in class.

Graph 54

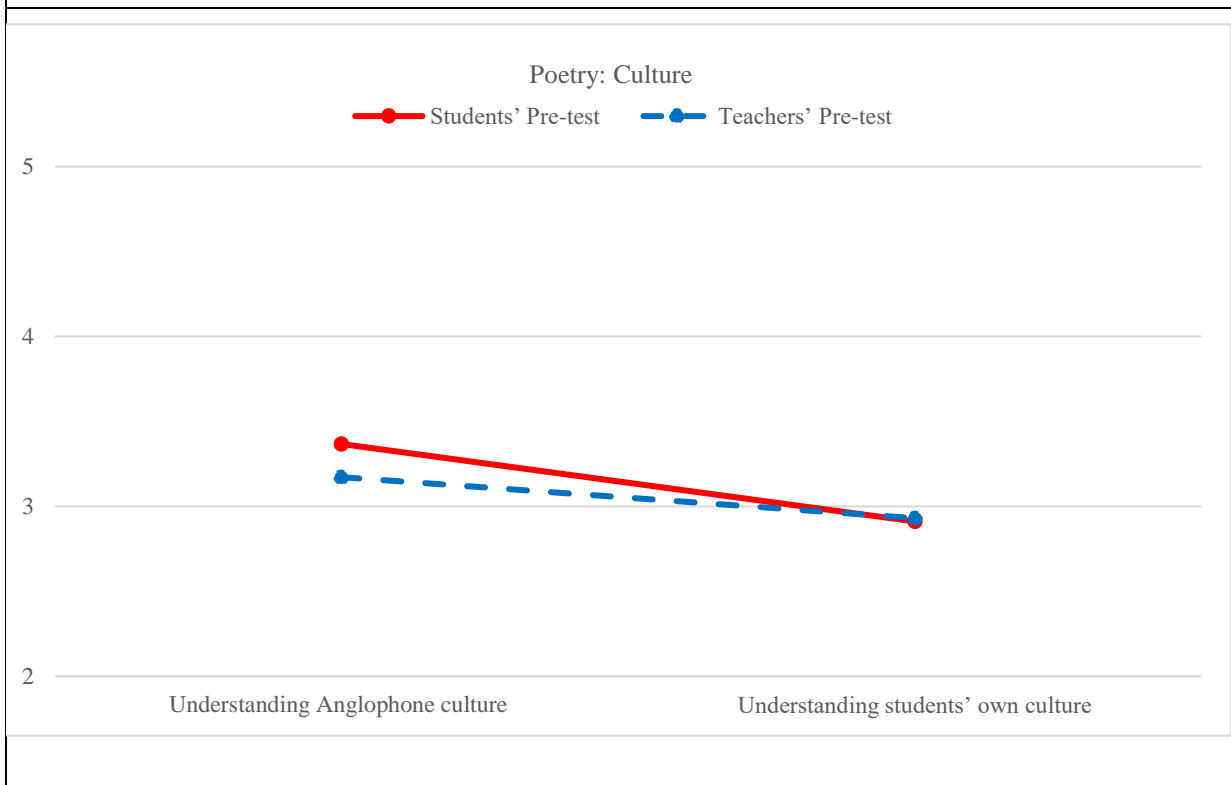
Means for the perceived usefulness of the motivational dimension of poetry in students' and teachers' pre-tests



Regarding culture, as displayed in Graph 55, no considerable differences could be found between the two pre-tests regarding the understanding of students' own culture, because both stakeholders showed quite the same trend, while students showed a higher consideration of the possibility of developing their awareness related to the Anglophone culture (pre-test students: $M=3.37$, $SD=1.11$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.17$, $SD=.91$; $t = -.89$, $p = .19$, $d = -.12$).

Graph 55

Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of poetry in students' and teachers' pre-tests

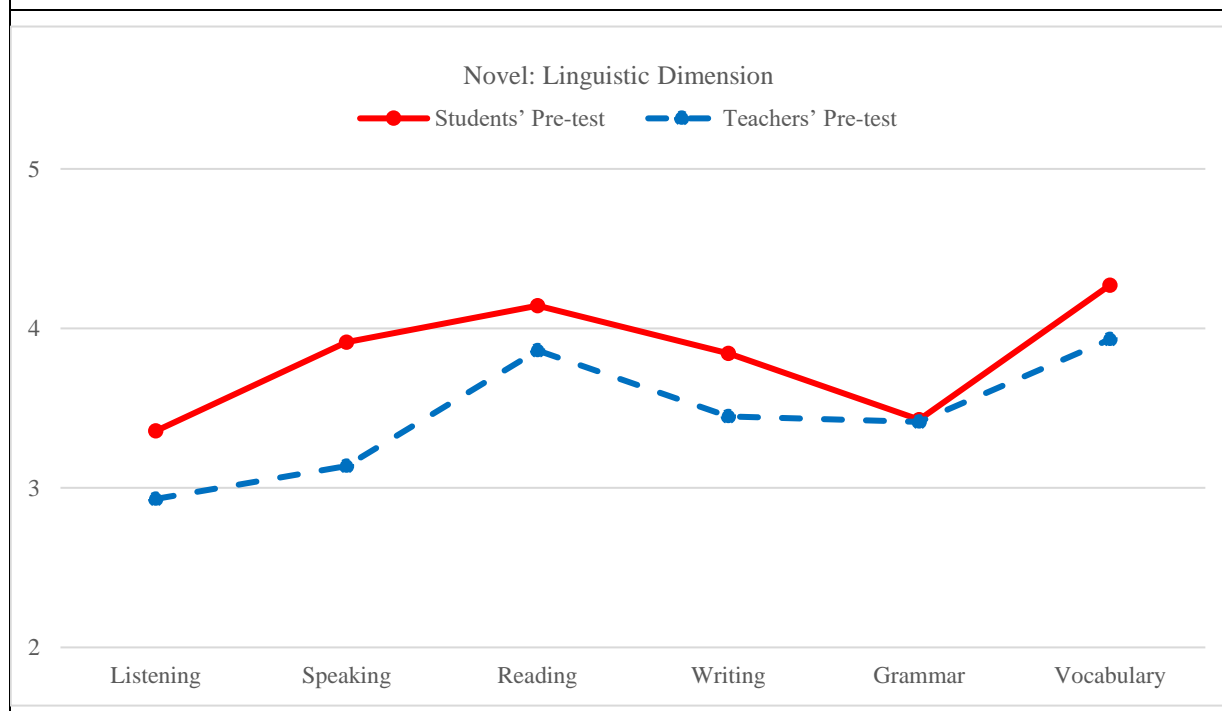


Pre-test results for the perceived usefulness of novels

As displayed in Graph 56, although teachers showed a very positive attitude towards the possibility of improving students' linguistic competences through novels, it turned out that students expected to appreciate the use of novels to develop their linguistic skills more than teachers (pre-test students: $M=3.83$, $SD=.98$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.45$, $SD=.82$; $t = -2.14$, $p = .02$, $d = -.13$).

Graph 56

Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of novel in students' and teachers' pre-tests



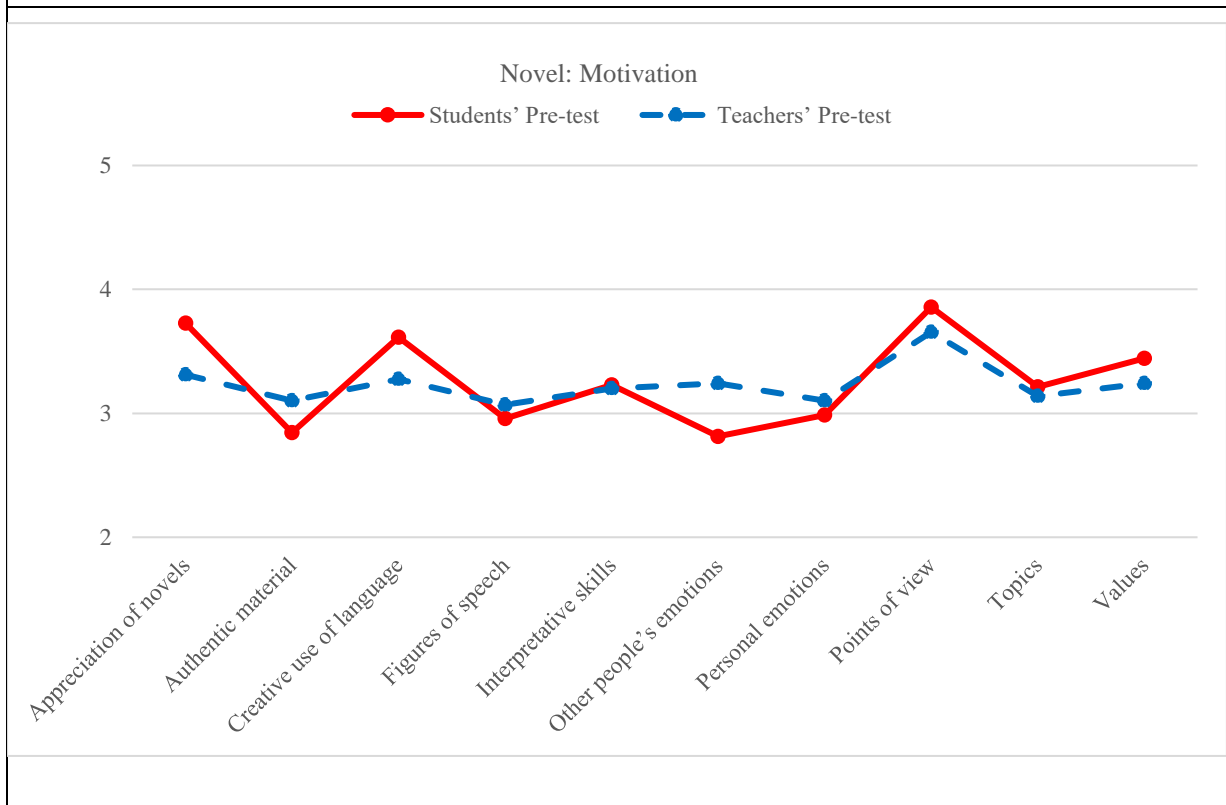
In particular, students' values were higher in relation to the following items: listening (pre-test students: $M=3.36$, $SD=1.14$; pre-test teachers: $M=2.93$, $SD=.92$; $t = -1.94$, $p = .03$, $d = -.17$), speaking (pre-test students: $M=3.91$, $SD=.91$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.14$, $SD=.99$; $t = -3.63$, $p = .00$, $d = -.29$), reading (pre-test students: $M=4.14$, $SD=.91$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.86$, $SD=.99$; $t = -1.32$, $p = .10$, $d = -.08$), writing (pre-test students: $M=3.84$, $SD=.93$; pre-test

teachers: $M=3.45$, $SD=1.12$; $t = -1.67$, $p = .05$, $d = -.13$) and vocabulary (pre-test students: $M=4.27$, $SD=.88$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.93$, $SD=1.13$; $t = -1.45$, $p = .08$, $d = -.10$).

As shown in Graph 57, regarding motivation, teachers considered in a neutral way the possibility that novels could be appreciated by students, who, in turn, assigned a higher score to the appreciation of novels (pre-test students: $M=3.73$, $SD=1.15$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.31$, $SD=.97$; $t = -1.85$, $p = .03$, $d = -.15$), the development of a creative use of language through novels (pre-test students: $M=3.61$, $SD=.97$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.28$, $SD=1.10$; $t = -1.44$, $p = .08$, $d = -.12$), and to the values contained in them (pre-test students: $M=3.44$, $SD=1.02$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.24$, $SD=1.18$; $t = -.80$, $p = .21$, $d = -.07$). While teachers deemed that students could understand other peoples' emotions better through novels (pre-test students: $M=2.81$, $SD=1.04$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.24$, $SD=.99$; $t = 1.93$, $p = .03$, $d = .16$).

Graph 57

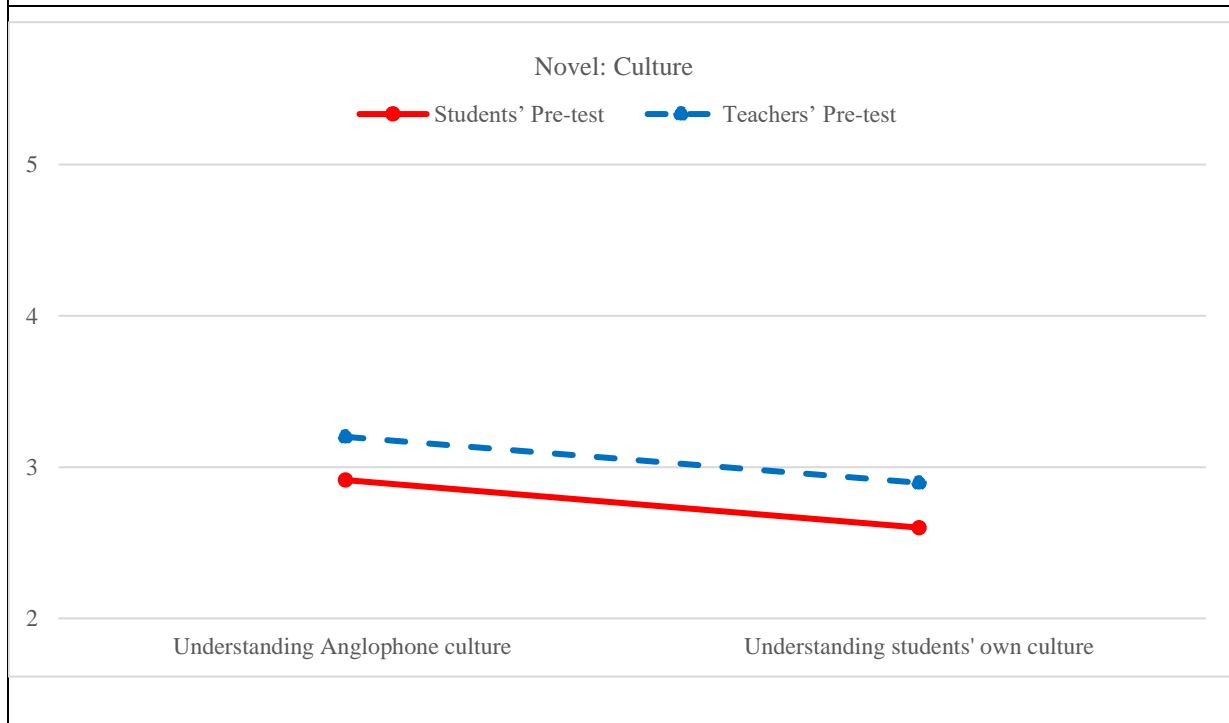
Means for the perceived usefulness of the motivational dimension of novel in students' and teachers' pre-tests



As for the cultural dimension, even though in a moderate way, teachers expected that novels could develop this dimension more than students did, for the understanding of both the Anglophone countries (pre-test students: $M=2.91$, $SD=1.00$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.24$, $SD=1.02$; $t = 1.46$, $p = .08$, $d = .12$) and students' own country (pre-test students: $M=2.60$, $SD=1.11$; pre-test teachers: $M=2.90$, $SD=1.01$; $t = 1.29$, $p = .10$, $d = .12$).

Graph 58

Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of novel in students' and teachers' pre-tests

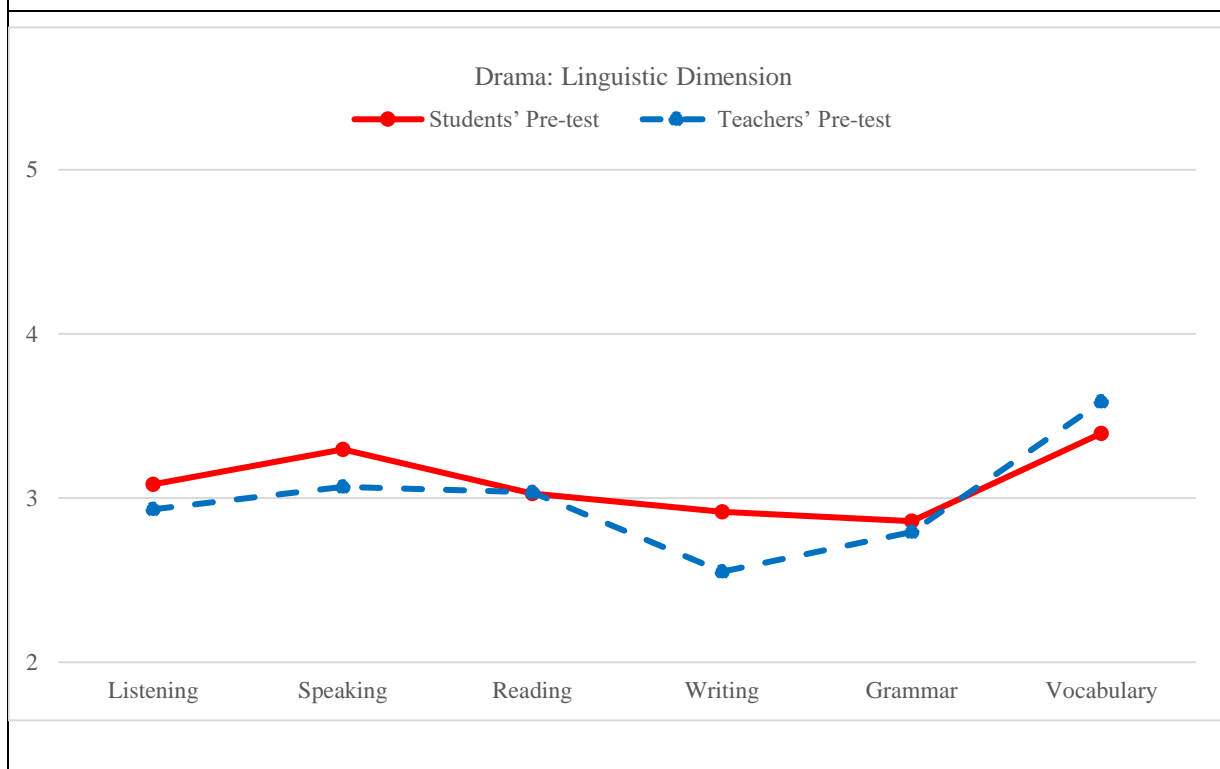


Pre-test results for the perceived usefulness of drama

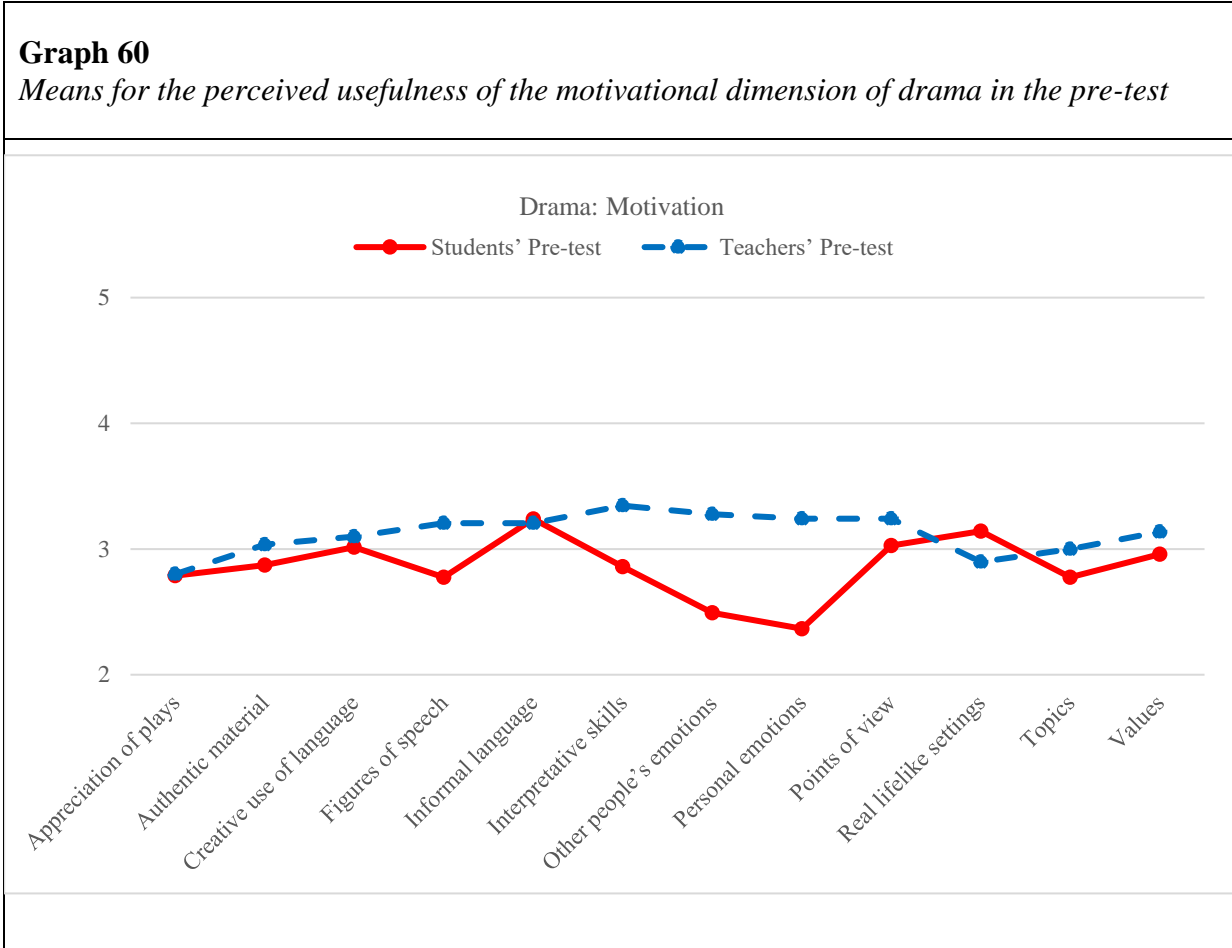
Regarding the linguistic dimension of drama, displayed in Graph 59, students expected to improve their linguistic skills more than teachers would have envisaged (pre-test students: $M=3.10$, $SD=1.10$; pre-test teachers: $M=2.99$, $SD=.83$; $t = -.59$, $p = .28$, $d = .04$). The differences can be found in the development of the listening (pre-test students: $M=3.08$, $SD=1.16$; pre-test teachers: $M=2.93$, $SD=1.00$; $t = -.67$, $p = .25$, $d = .06$), speaking (pre-test students: $M=3.30$, $SD=1.07$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.07$, $SD=1.07$; $t = -.96$, $p = .16$, $d = -.09$), and writing skills (pre-test students: $M=2.92$, $SD=1.13$; pre-test teachers: $M=2.55$, $SD=.83$; $t = -1.78$, $p = .04$, $d = .17$). While teachers gave higher scores for the expansion of vocabulary compared to those given by students (pre-test students: $M=3.39$, $SD=1.05$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.59$, $SD=1.15$; $t = .78$, $p = .22$, $d = .06$).

Graph 59

Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of drama in students' and teachers' pre-tests



Concerning motivation, showed in Graph 60, teachers foresaw an improvement in students' comprehension of the figures of speech (pre-test students: $M=2.77$, $SD=1.15$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.21$, $SD=1.24$; $t = 1.62$, $p = .06$, $d = .16$), of their interpretative skills (pre-test students: $M=2.86$, $SD=.95$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.34$, $SD=1.01$; $t = 2.22$, $p = .02$, $d = .17$) and in the development of their own personal emotions (pre-test students: $M=2.37$, $SD=.93$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.24$, $SD=1.18$; $t = 3.56$, $p = .00$, $d = .31$) and in students' understanding of other people's emotions (pre-test students: $M=2.49$, $SD=1.07$; pre-test teachers: $M=3.28$, $SD=1.03$; $t = 3.41$, $p = .00$, $d = .28$).

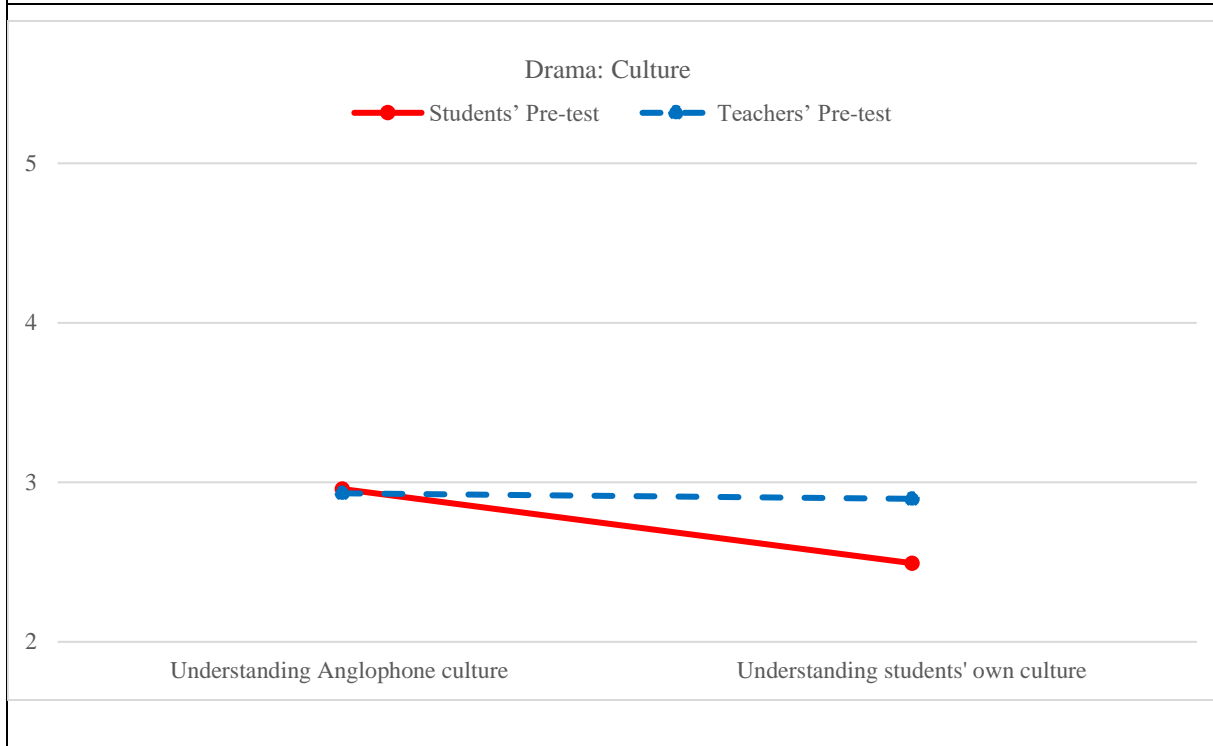


Regarding culture, no considerable differences could be found between the two pre-tests for the understanding of the Anglophone culture, because both stakeholders showed quite the same

trend, while teachers showed a higher consideration of the possibility of developing students' awareness of their own culture (pre-test students: $M=2.49$, $SD=1.17$; pre-test teachers: $M=2.90$, $SD=1.08$; $t = 1.08$, $p = .05$, $d = .16$).

Graph 61

Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of plays in students' and teachers' pre-tests



Comparison between students' and teachers' post-tests for the perceived usefulness of literary texts for FL classes

Tables 30, 31, and 32 below provide the results by genre at the post-test stages between teachers' and students' views. The Tables also offer a comparison between the two surveys in terms of their statistical significance.

Table 30 <i>Comparison between students' and teachers' post-tests for the dimensions and items related to poetry</i>							
DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS	Students' Post-Test		Teachers' Post-Test		<i>t</i> -stat	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD			
Using poems in the language classroom can contribute to the development of							
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	3.93	.90	4.21	.62	2.02	.02	.08
listening skills	3.99	.91	4.24	.83	1.35	.09	.07
speaking skills	4.10	.90	4.03	.78	-.38	.35	-.02
reading skills	3.97	.81	4.38	.62	2.58	.01	.11
writing skills	3.78	.94	4.03	.73	1.44	.08	.08
vocabulary	4.35	.81	4.62	.68	1.68	.05	.07
grammar	3.37	1.04	3.97	.94	2.77	.00	.18
MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	3.83	.98	4.22	.57	3.07	.00	.11
because students can better understand their own personal emotions	3.57	1.25	4.24	.79	3.17	.00	.19
because students can better understand other people's emotions	3.72	1.01	4.34	.81	3.21	.00	.17
because students can develop their interpretative skills	4.06	.86	4.31	.71	1.49	.07	.07
because students can become acquainted with figures of speech	4.35	.77	4.48	.74	.78	.21	.04

because poems can reveal a creative use of language	4.06	.90	4.31	.60	1.61	.05	.07
because poems deal with important values	3.66	1.09	4.14	.99	2.10	.01	.14
because poems normally deal with non-trivial topics	3.59	.97	3.97	.68	2.18	.01	.11
because poems are authentic material	3.60	1.04	4.28	.70	3.71	.00	.19
because using poems is an enjoyable experience	4.31	.93	4.34	.61	.22	.41	.01
because poems are usually concise	3.37	1.01	3.83	1.07	1.97	.02	.14
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	3.26	1.13	3.62	.62	2.16	.02	.12
because students can better understand the Anglophone culture	3.46	1.06	3.59	.82	.65	.25	.04
because students can better understand their own culture	3.07	1.20	3.66	.72	2.94	.00	.19

Table 31

Comparison between students' and teachers' post-tests for the dimensions and items related to novel

DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS	Students' Post-Test		Teachers' Post -Test		<i>t</i> -stat	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD			
Using novels in the language classroom can contribute to the development of							
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	4.48	.70	4.57	.45	.93	.18	.02
listening skills	4.14	.91	4.41	.68	1.63	.05	.07
speaking skills	4.50	.74	4.52	.63	.12	.45	.00
reading skills	4.67	.56	4.66	.55	-.13	.45	.00
writing skills	4.31	.79	4.59	.63	1.81	.04	.07
vocabulary	4.90	.35	4.72	.53	-1.65	.05	-.04
grammar	4.36	.85	4.52	.69	.98	.16	.04

MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	4.26	.87	4.41	.68	1.09	.14	.04
because students can better understand their own personal emotions	4.06	1.20	4.38	.78	1.65	.05	.09
because students can better understand other people's emotions	4.03	.95	4.48	.78	2.46	.01	.12
because students can develop their interpretative skills	4.03	.95	4.52	.78	2.65	.01	.13
because students can become acquainted with figures of speech	4.24	.98	4.45	.83	1.06	.15	.06
because novels can reveal a creative use of language	4.39	.77	4.31	.93	-.39	.35	-.02
because novels deal with important values	4.41	.65	4.31	1.04	-.50	.31	-.03
because novels normally deal with non-trivial topics	4.19	.86	4.31	.81	.69	.25	.03
because novels are authentic material	4.09	1.02	4.38	.82	1.51	.07	.08
because using novels is an enjoyable experience	4.60	.69	4.59	.57	-.10	.46	.00
because novels can help students understand different points of view	4.59	.60	4.38	.78	-1.28	.10	-.06
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	3.95	1.08	4.14	.74	1.18	.12	.05
because students can better understand the Anglophone culture	3.95	.93	4.28	.80	2.65	.01	.09
because students can better understand their own culture	3.95	1.23	4.00	.89	3.10	.00	.01

Table 32 <i>Comparison between students' and teachers' post-tests for the dimensions and items related to drama</i>							
DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS	Students' Post-Test		Teachers' Post-Test				
Using novels in the language classroom can contribute to the development of	M	SD	M	SD	<i>t</i> -stat	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	4.40	.83	4.22	.66	1.25	.11	-.05
listening skills	4.30	.95	4.14	.79	-.85	.20	-.05
speaking skills	4.55	.77	4.34	.77	-1.21	.12	-.06
reading skills	4.30	.88	4.21	.77	-.50	.31	-.03
writing skills	4.14	.90	4.00	.96	-.68	.25	-.04
vocabulary	4.72	.51	4.66	.48	-.68	.25	-.02
grammar	4.40	.96	4.00	1.13	.50	.00	-.12
MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	4.06	.81	4.25	.54	1.71	.05	.05
because students can better understand their own personal emotions	3.75	.98	4.48	.69	4.26	.00	.19
because students can better understand other people's emotions	3.89	.90	4.52	.69	3.78	.00	.16
because students can develop their interpretative skills	3.90	.81	4.31	.93	2.07	.02	.11
because students can become acquainted with figures of speech	3.87	.81	4.34	1.08	2.12	.02	.13
because plays can reveal a creative use of language	4.15	.84	4.28	1.07	.55	.29	.03
because plays deal with important values	4.20	.86	4.21	1.26	.48	.04	.00
because plays normally deal with non-trivial topics	4.00	.65	4.07	.92	.37	.36	.02
because plays are authentic material	4.00	1.07	4.21	.90	1.39	.08	.06

because using plays is an enjoyable experience	4.65	.66	4.24	.87	-2.26	.01	-.11
because plays usually offer real lifelike settings	4.00	.81	4.03	1.15	.44	.15	.01
because plays can help students understand different points of view	4.21	.65	4.17	.85	-.22	.41	-.01
because students can find examples of colloquial and informal language	4.07	.68	4.17	.93	.54	.30	.03
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	3.61	1.06	3.88	1.05	1.21	.12	.08
because students can better understand the Anglophone culture	3.86	.91	4.03	1.12	.75	.23	.05
because students can better understand their own culture	3.37	1.21	3.72	1.10	1.55	.06	.11

In response to the second part of research question 2.4 (Comparing students' and teachers' post-tests to infer differences in views and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the use of poetry, novels and drama in FL classes), the data obtained revealed that in the post-tests, teachers' values were higher than students' values for all the genres, especially for poetry. This figure is apparent if we consider the difference between the general means displayed in Table 33.

Table 33 <i>Difference between the general means in teachers' and students' post-tests</i>					
	Students' Post-Test		Teachers' Post -Test		Difference $M_t - M_s$
	M_s	SD_s	M_t	SD_t	
Poetry	3.80	.13	4.15	.13	.35
Novel	4.30	.22	4.43	.14	.13
Drama	4.12	.16	4.21	.19	.09

Note. M_s = students' general mean, SD_s = students' standard deviation; M_t = teachers' general mean, SD_t = teachers' standard deviation.

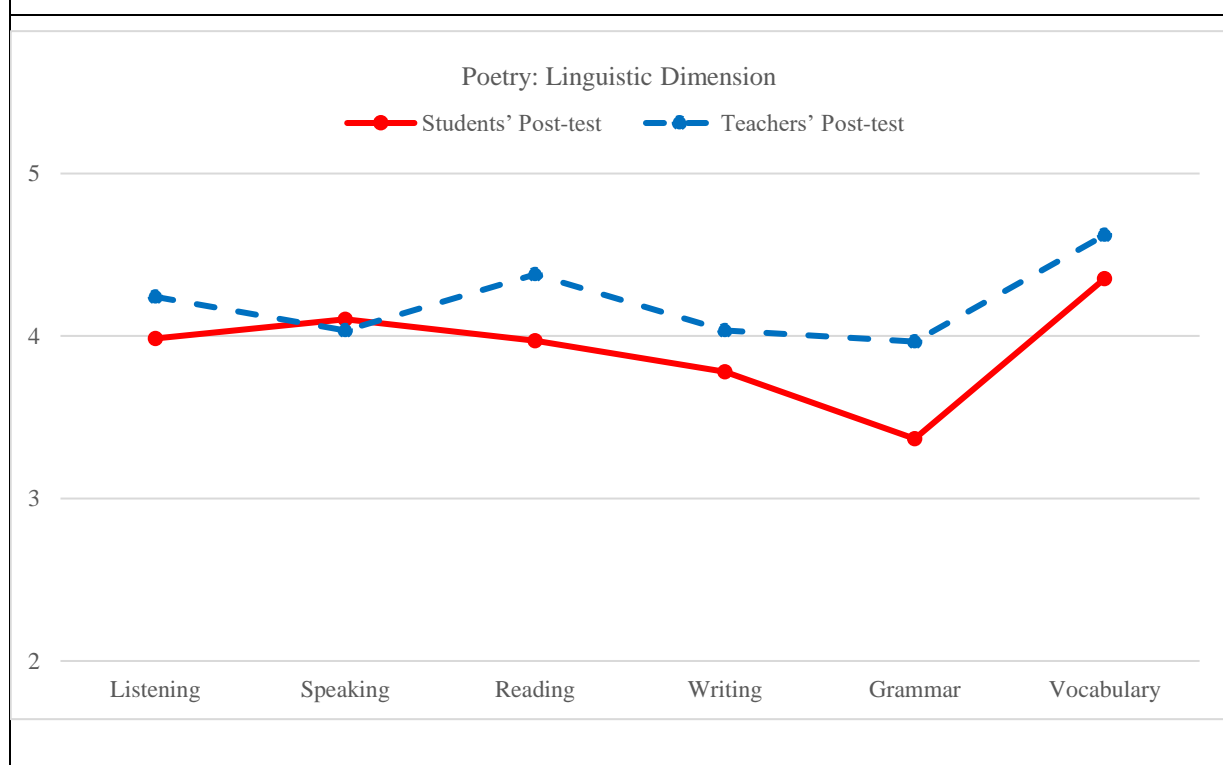
Comparing teachers' and students' answers in the post-tests, we can affirm that the former gauged more than the latter that poetry (mean difference = .35), novels (mean difference = .13) and drama (mean difference = .09) could be beneficial in learning a foreign language.

Post-test results for the perceived usefulness of poetry

An in-depth analysis of the differences for the linguistic dimension, as shown in Graph 62, demonstrated that teachers displayed an overall appreciation of the use of poetry in language teaching after observing the lesson plans. In the post-test, apart from the speaking skills, which were valued almost in the same way, teachers considered more positively than pupils the possibility of improving learners' linguistic skills (post-test students: $M=3.93$, $SD=.90$; post-test teachers: $M=4.21$, $SD=.62$; $t = 2.02$, $p = .02$, $d = .08$).

Graph 62

Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of poetry both in students' and teachers' post-tests



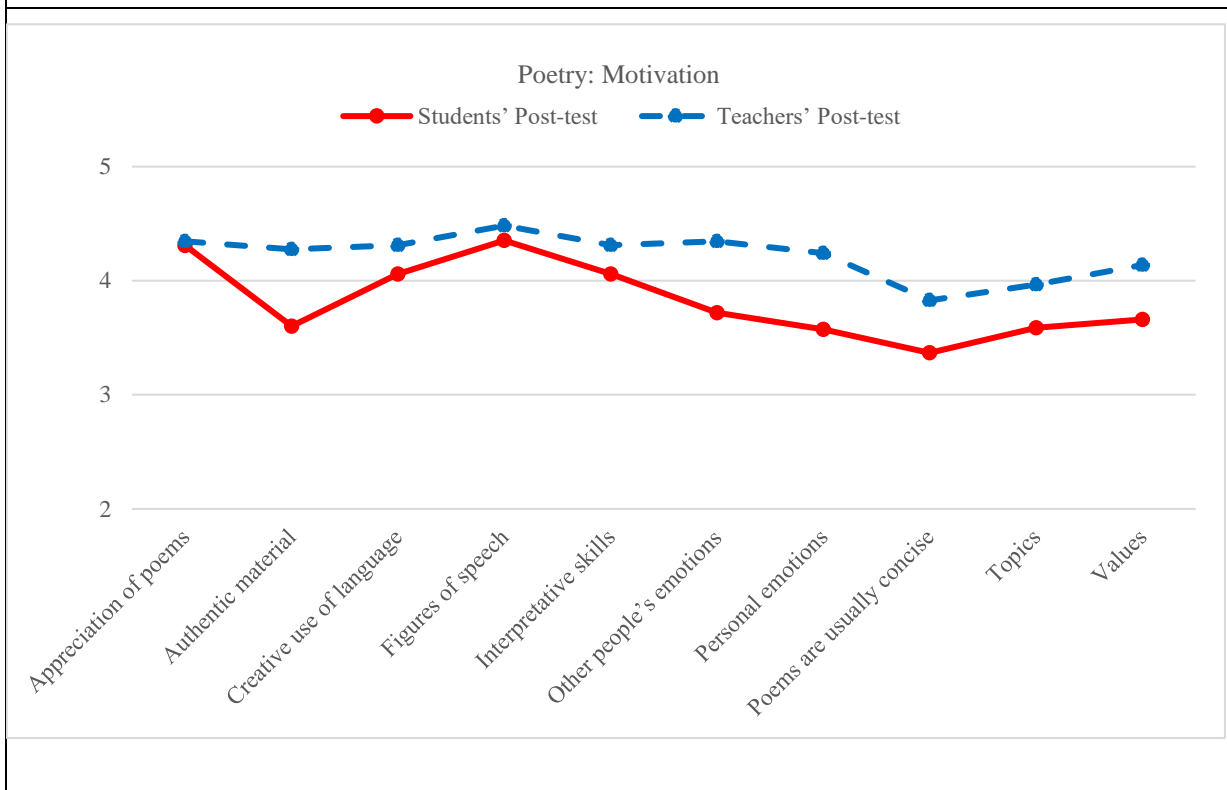
In particular, teachers assigned higher ratings to listening (post-test students: $M=3.99$, $SD=.91$; post-test teachers: $M=4.24$, $SD=.83$; $t = 1.35$, $p = .09$, $d = .07$), reading (post-test students: $M=3.97$, $SD=.81$; post-test teachers: $M=4.38$, $SD=.62$; $t = 2.58$, $p = .01$, $d = .11$), writing (post-test students: $M=3.78$, $SD=.94$; post-test teachers: $M=4.03$, $SD=.73$; $t = 1.44$, $p =$

.08, $d = .08$), vocabulary (post-test students: $M=4.35$, $SD=.81$; post-test teachers: $M=4.62$, $SD=.68$; $t = 1.68$, $p = .05$, $d = .07$) and grammar (post-test students: $M=3.37$, $SD=1.04$; post-test teachers: $M=3.97$, $SD=.94$; $t = 2.77$, $p = .00$, $d = .18$).

As displayed in Graph 63, teachers' high appreciation of poems was also apparent in the motivation that poems could generate (post-test students: $M=3.83$, $SD=.98$; post-test teachers: $M=4.22$, $SD=.57$; $t = 3.07$, $p = .00$, $d = .11$). In particular, teachers' values were higher in relation to these items: understanding of personal emotions (post-test students: $M=3.57$, $SD=1.25$; post-test teachers: $M=4.24$, $SD=.79$; $t = 3.17$, $p = .00$, $d = .19$), understanding of other people's emotions (post-test students: $M=3.72$, $SD=1.01$; post-test teachers: $M=4.34$, $SD=.81$; $t = 3.21$, $p = .00$, $d = .17$), authentic material (post-test students: $M=3.60$, $SD=1.04$; post-test teachers: $M=4.28$, $SD=.70$; $t = 3.71$, $p = .00$, $d = .19$), creative use of language (post-test students: $M=4.06$, $SD=.90$; post-test teachers: $M=4.31$, $SD=.60$; $t = 1.61$, $p = .05$, $d = .07$), conciseness of poems (post-test students: $M=3.37$, $SD=1.01$; post-test teachers: $M=3.83$, $SD=1.07$; $t = 1.97$, $p = .02$, $d = .14$), values (post-test students: $M=3.66$, $SD=1.05$; post-test teachers: $M=4.14$, $SD=.99$; $t = 2.10$, $p = .01$, $d = .14$) and topics (post-test students: $M=3.59$, $SD=.97$; post-test teachers: $M=3.97$, $SD=.68$; $t = 2.18$, $p = .01$, $d = .11$).

Graph 63

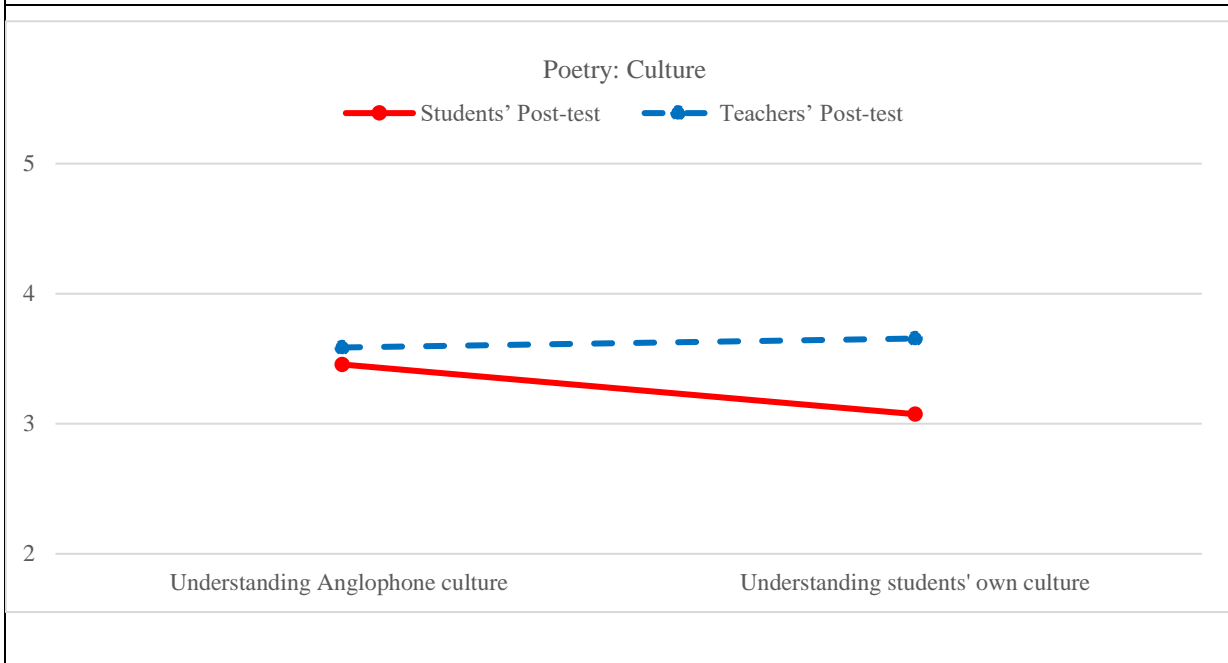
Means for the perceived usefulness of the motivational dimension of poetry both in students' and teachers' post-tests



Regarding culture, as displayed in Graph 64, no considerable differences could be found between the two post-tests for the understanding of the culture of Anglophone countries, because both teachers and students showed quite the same trend, while teachers showed a higher consideration of the possibility of developing students' awareness of their own culture through poems (post-test students: $M=3.07$, $SD=1.20$; post-test teachers: $M=3.66$, $SD=.72$; $t = 2.94$, $p = .00$, $d = .19$).

Graph 64

Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of poetry both in students' and teachers' post-tests

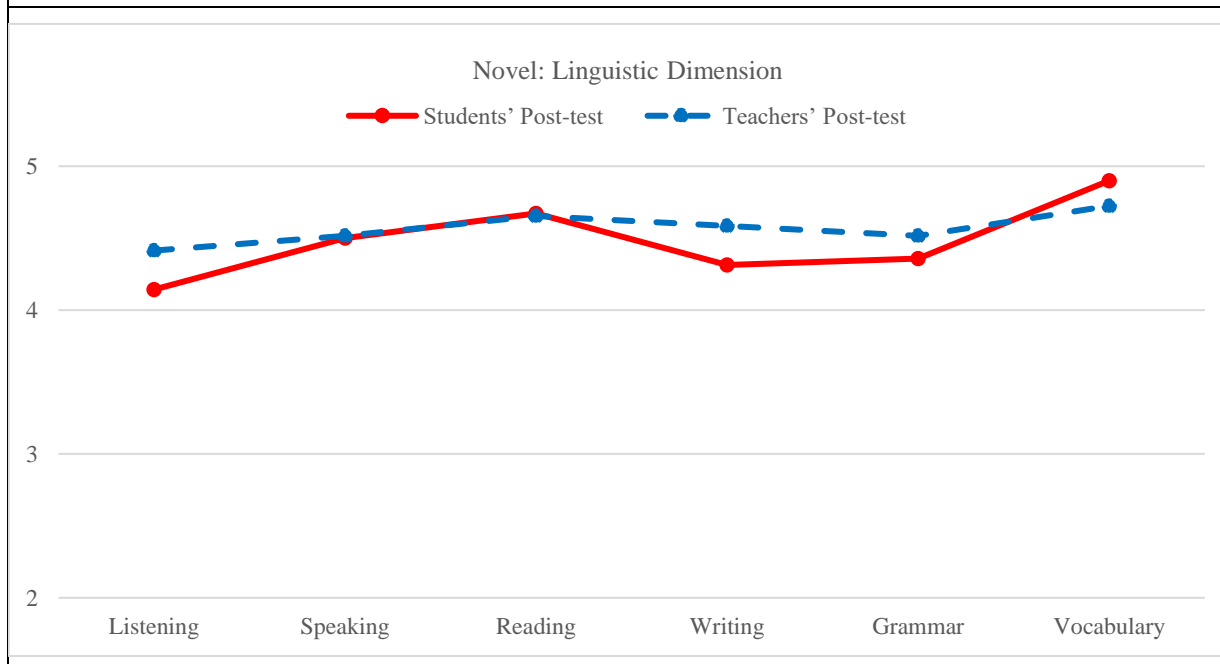


Post-test results for the perceived usefulness of novels

As for the novel, shown in Graph 65, pupils' and teachers' trends were quite similar. Students deemed that novels could lead to an improvement of their vocabulary (post-test students: $M=4.90$, $SD=.35$; post-test teachers: $M=4.72$, $SD=.53$; $t = -1.65$, $p = .05$, $d = -.04$) more than teachers would assume. While speaking (post-test students: $M=4.50$, $SD=.74$; post-test teachers: $M=4.52$, $SD=.63$; $t = .12$, $p = .45$, $d = .00$) and reading skills (post-test students: $M=4.67$, $SD=.56$; post-test teachers: $M=4.66$, $SD=.55$; $t = -.13$, $p = .45$, $d = .00$) received the same consideration, listening (post-test students: $M=4.14$, $SD=.70$; post-test teachers: $M=4.57$, $SD=.45$; $t = .93$, $p = .18$, $d = .02$), writing (post-test students: $M=4.31$, $SD=.79$; post-test teachers: $M=4.59$, $SD=.63$; $t = 1.81$, $p = .04$, $d = .07$) and grammar (post-test students: $M=4.36$, $SD=.85$; post-test teachers: $M=4.52$, $SD=.69$; $t = .98$, $p = .16$, $d = .04$) received a higher regard by teachers, who considered that through poems students would considerably acquire these skills.

Graph 65

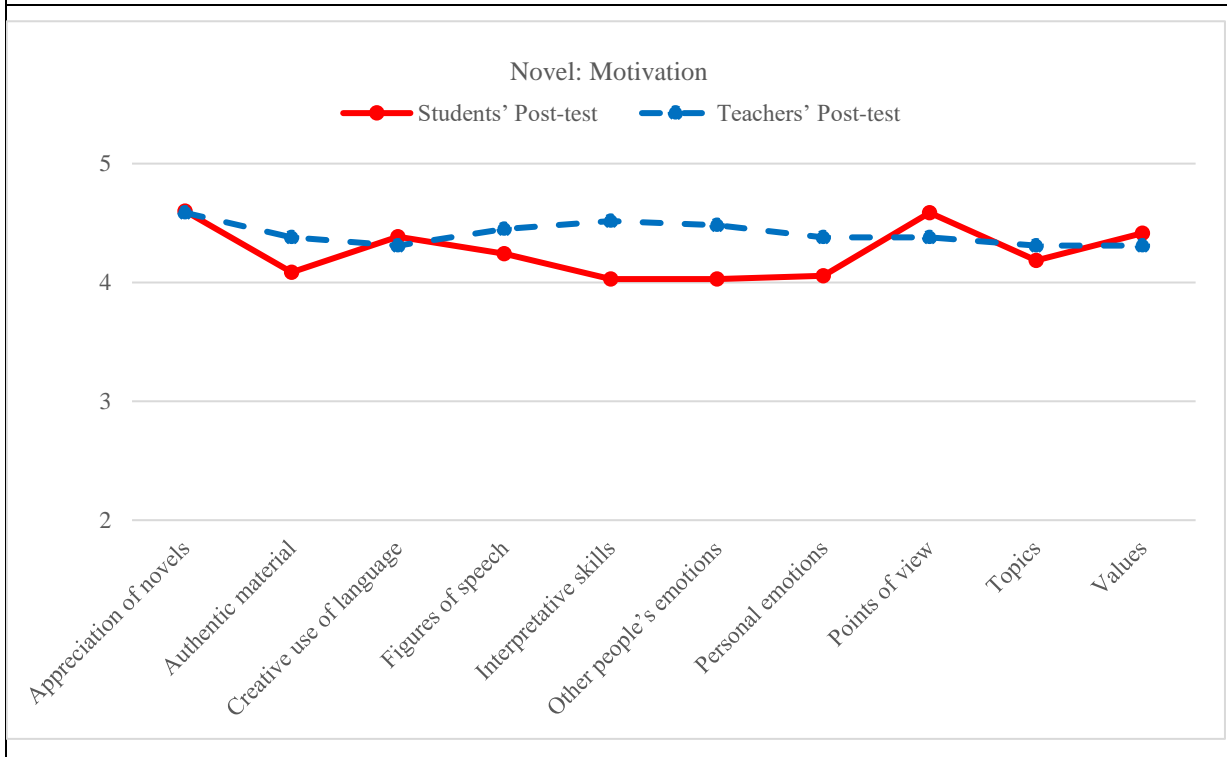
Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of novel both in students' and teachers' post-tests



Regarding motivation, displayed in Graph 66, teachers considered novels a very incisive source of motivation (post-test students: $M=4.26$, $SD=.87$; post-test teachers: $M=4.41$, $SD=.68$; $t = 1.09$, $p = .14$, $d = .04$). The item that received more positive consideration by students was the point of view (post-test students: $M=4.59$, $SD=.60$; post-test teachers: $M=4.38$, $SD=.78$; $t = -1.28$, $p = .10$, $d = -.06$), while the fact that novels are authentic material (post-test students: $M=4.09$, $SD=1.02$; post-test teachers: $M=4.38$, $SD=.82$; $t = 1.51$, $p = .07$, $d = .08$), and the possibility of better understanding the figures of speech (post-test students: $M=4.24$, $SD=.98$; post-test teachers: $M=4.45$, $SD=.83$; $t = 1.06$, $p = .15$, $d = .06$) were appreciated more by teachers. Moreover, teachers deemed, more than students, that novels could develop pupils' interpretative skills (post-test students: $M=4.03$, $SD=.95$; post-test teachers: $M=4.52$, $SD=.78$; $t = 2.65$, $p = .01$, $d = .13$) and could help them understand and share their personal emotions (post-test students: $M=4.06$, $SD=1.20$; post-test teachers: $M=4.38$, $SD=.78$; $t = 1.65$, $p = .05$, $d = .09$) and other people's emotions (post-test students: $M=4.03$, $SD=.95$; post-test teachers: $M=4.48$, $SD=.78$; $t = 2.46$, $p = .01$, $d = .12$). Finally, for teachers, more than for students, novels could be a valuable source of motivation for the topics (post-test students: $M=4.19$, $SD=.86$; post-test teachers: $M=4.31$, $SD=.81$; $t = .69$, $p = .25$, $d = .03$) that they contain.

Graph 66

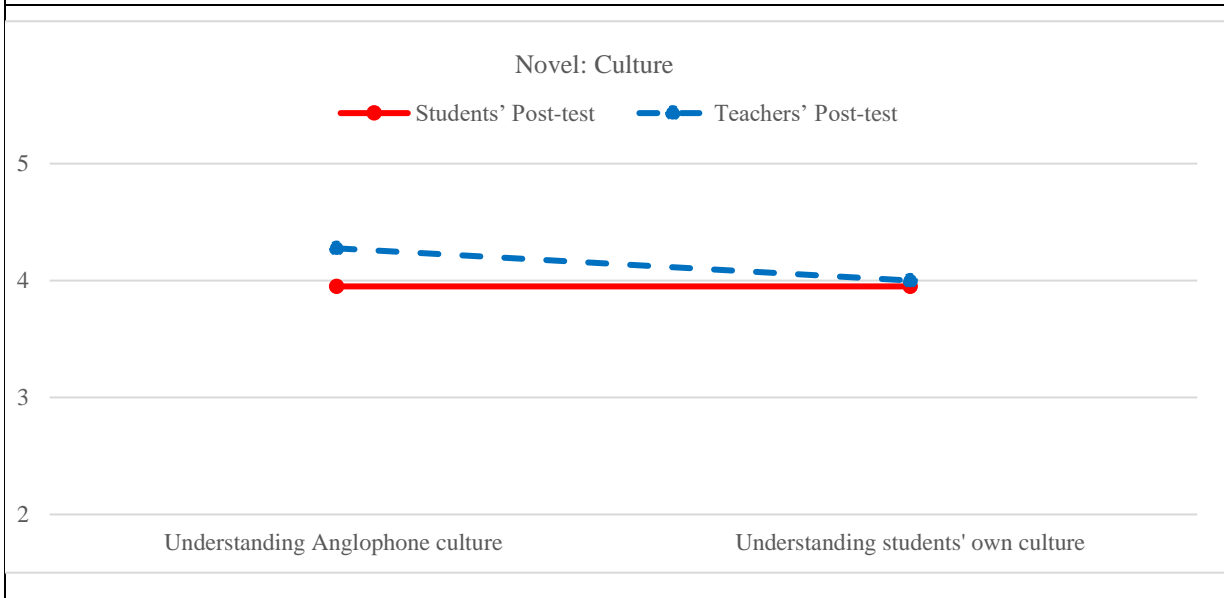
Means for the perceived usefulness of the motivational dimension of novel both in students' and teachers' post-tests



Regarding culture, as displayed in Graph 67, no considerable differences could be found between the two post-tests for the understanding of students' own culture, because both teachers and students showed quite the same trend. However, teachers showed a higher consideration of the possibility of developing students awareness related to the Anglophone culture (post-test students: $M=3.95$, $SD=.93$; post-test teachers: $M=4.28$, $SD=.80$; $t = 2.65$, $p = .01$, $d = .09$).

Graph 67

Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of novel in students' and teachers' post-tests

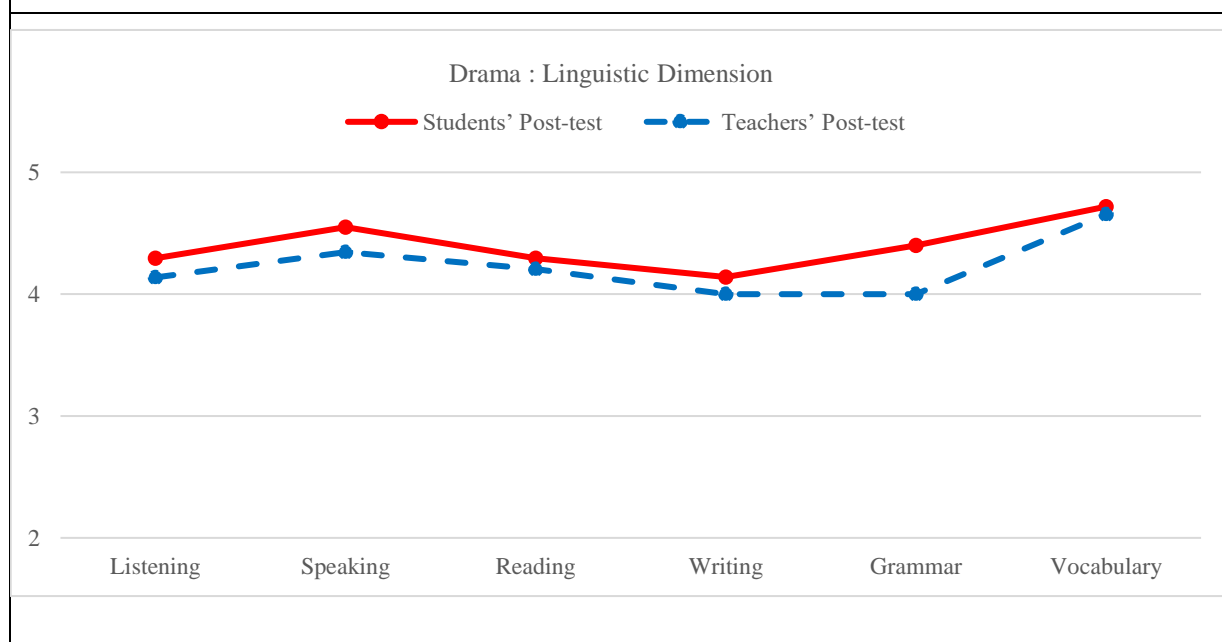


Post-test results for the perceived usefulness of drama

As for the linguistic dimension of drama, the trend followed in the previous genres was not respected. Students showed a consideration related to this genre which was higher than the one showed by teachers. As we can see in Graph 68, students assigned values for all the aspects of drama which were higher than those given by teachers, especially for the item related to the learning of grammar (post-test students: $M=4.40$, $SD=.96$; post-test teachers: $M=4.00$, $SD=1.13$; $t = .50$, $p = .00$, $d = -.12$).

Graph 68

Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of drama both in students' and teachers' post-tests

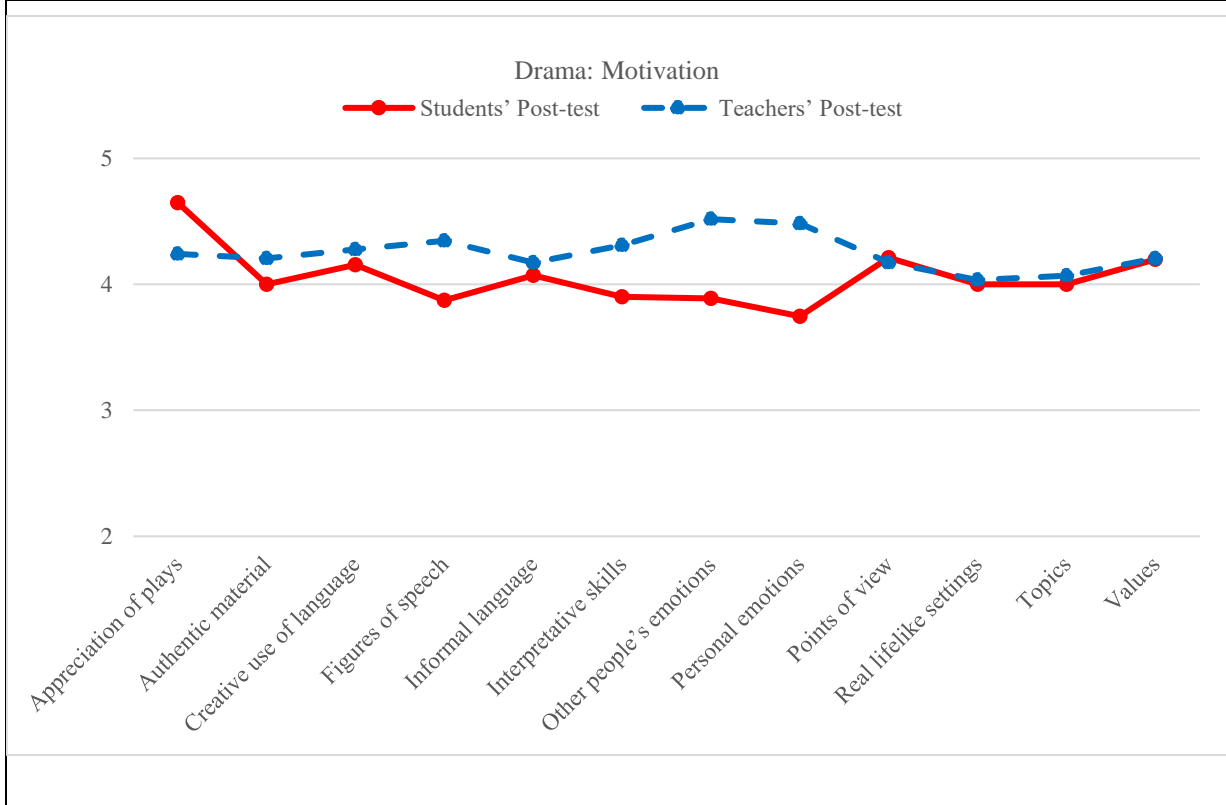


Concerning motivation (Graph 69), the item of the appreciation of plays received a higher score by pupils as compared to teachers' evaluation (post-test students: $M=4.65$, $SD=.66$; post-test teachers: $M=4.24$, $SD=.87$; $t = -2.26$, $p = .01$, $d = -.11$). However, teachers attributed higher values for the items of authenticity (post-test students: $M=4.00$, $SD=1.07$; post-test teachers: $M=4.21$, $SD=.90$; $t = 1.39$, $p = .08$, $d = .06$), creative use of language (post-test students: $M=4.15$,

SD=.84; post-test teachers: M=4.28, SD=1.07; $t = .55, p = .29, d = .03$), figures of speech (post-test students: M=3.87, SD=.81; post-test teachers: M=4.34, SD=1.08; $t = 2.12, p = .02, d = .13$), interpretative skills (post-test students: M=3.90, SD=.81; post-test teachers: M=4.31, SD=.93; $t = 2.07, p = .02, d = .11$) and understanding of personal (post-test students: M=3.75, SD=.98; post-test teachers: M=4.48, SD=.69; $t = 4.26, p = .00, d = .19$) and other people's emotions (post-test students: M=3.89, SD=.90; post-test teachers: M=4.52, SD=.69; $t = 3.78, p = .00, d = .16$).

Graph 69

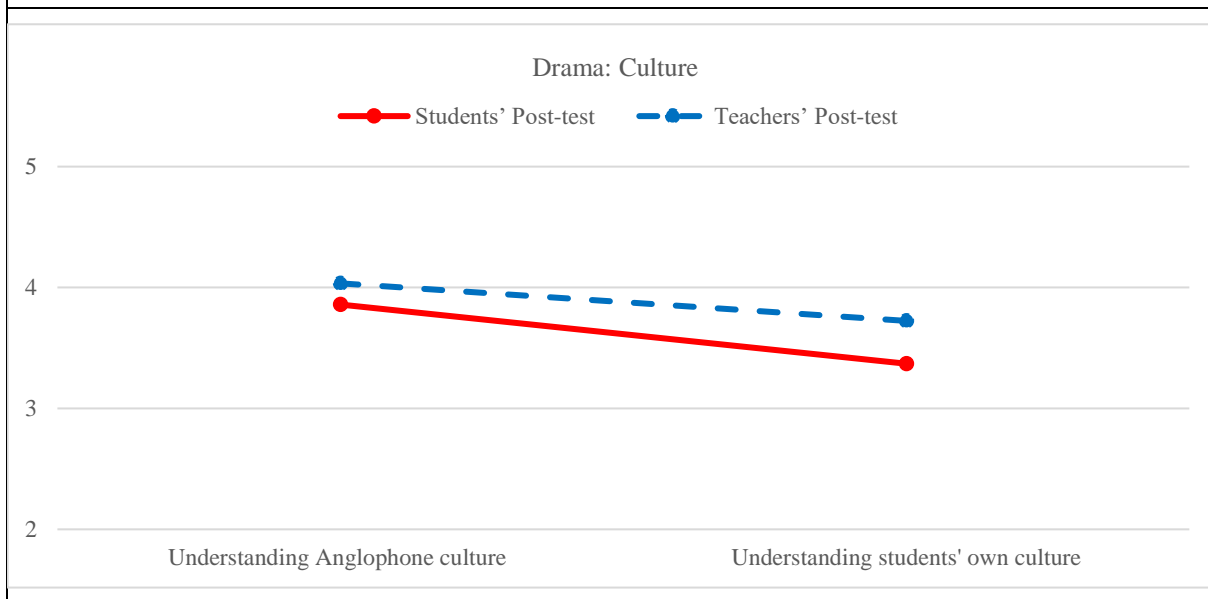
Means for the perceived usefulness of the motivational dimension of drama both in students' and teachers' post-tests



As for the cultural dimension, even though in a moderate way, teachers gauged that plays could develop this aspect more than students had valued, both for the understanding of the Anglophone countries (post-test students: M=3.86, SD=.91; post-test teachers: M=4.03, SD=1.12; $t = .75, p = .23, d = .05$) and students' own country (post-test students: M=3.37, SD=1.21; post-test teachers: M=3.72, SD=1.10; $t = 1.55, p = .06, d = .11$).

Graph 70

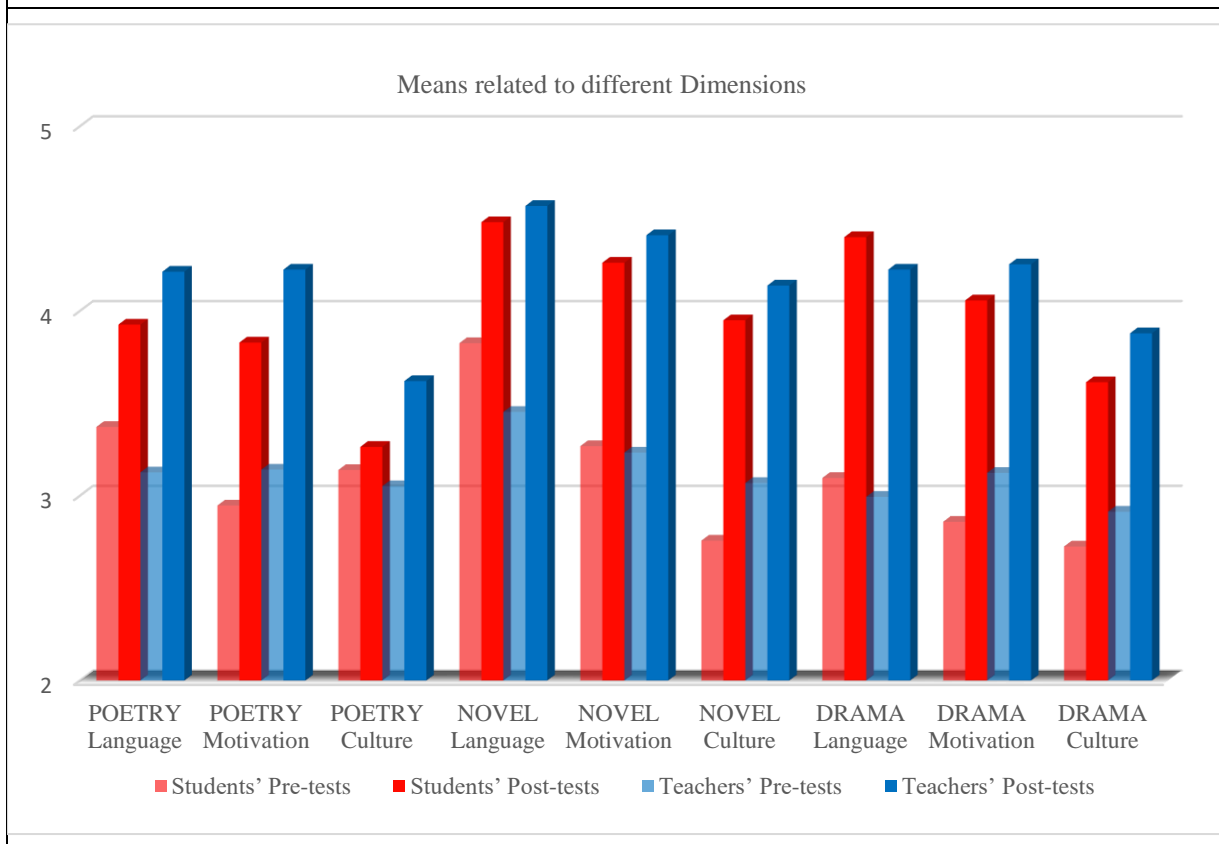
Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of novel in students' and teachers' post-tests



If we match students' with the teachers' outcomes, as displayed in Graph 71, a common trend can be found for almost all the genres, except for the play. Teachers and students gave the latter very low values in the pre-test, while, in the post-tests, students proved to be more enthusiastic than teachers about the benefits which could derive from the use of drama to learn the foreign language.

Graph 71

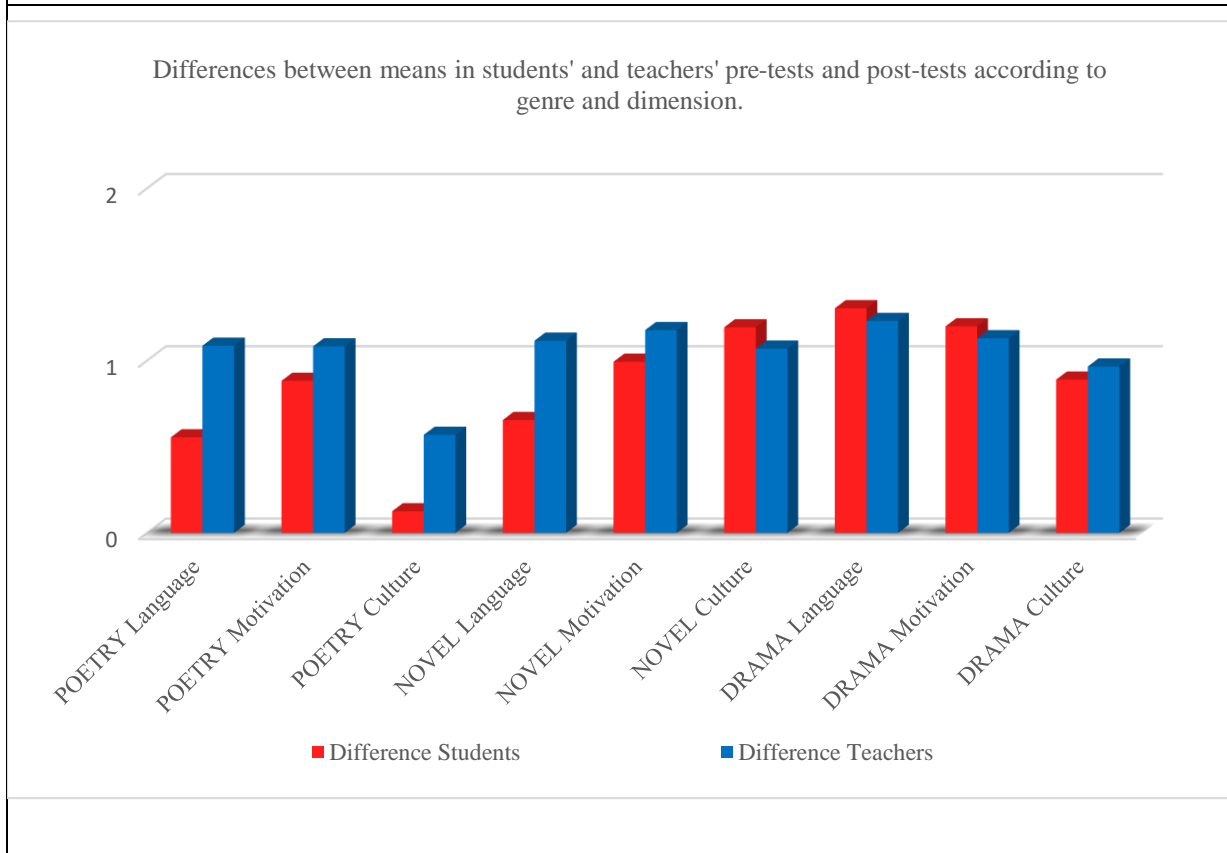
Means related to the different genres and dimensions, both in students' and teachers' pre-tests and post-tests



Moreover, as displayed in Graph 72, teachers increased their rates markedly in the post-tests. However, students showed a more relevant change concerning both the improvement of their linguistic skills (students' mean difference = 1.30, teachers' mean difference = 1.23) and the motivation (students' mean difference = 1.20, teachers' mean difference = 1.13) that drama activities can provide, and also an improvement regarding their cultural awareness (students' mean difference = 1.19, teachers' mean difference = 1.07) through novels.

Graph 72

Means related to the different genres and dimensions, both in students' and teachers' pre-tests and post-tests



8.4. Discussion about teachers' views

Comparing teachers' pre-tests and post-tests, we can absolutely affirm that teachers changed their minds about the use of literature as a tool for learning a foreign language. This was also statistically demonstrated through paired *t*-tests and repeated measure ANOVA pair comparisons, as presented in section 8.1.3. In the post-tests, a favourable attitude towards literary texts can be pointed out.

8.4.1. Linguistic dimension

In this section, we present an overview followed by a discussion of the main findings about teachers' beliefs as we could gather them in the previous analyses (sections 8.1 and 8.2). In the pre-tests, data showed that teachers had a somewhat neutral attitude toward the use of poetry used as a means to teach the foreign language. The questionnaires revealed that teachers' expectations about the usefulness of literature were neutral. An in-depth analysis of the linguistic dimension showed that, before observing the lesson plans, teachers considered poetic texts a valuable source for learning vocabulary, but they did not consider them useful enough for learning other skills, such as listening, speaking, writing and grammar. Teachers' neutral attitude in pre-tests was also observed with regards to the use of novels in learning a FL. Teachers considered that novels could only broaden students' vocabulary and improve their reading skills, while as for all the other linguistic skills and functions, they did not foresee a significant benefit. For drama, teachers did not expect that this genre would be beneficial in developing students' linguistic skills. Only the possibility of enriching students' vocabulary was seriously considered by teachers, while other elements like writing and grammar were not given sufficient consideration.

This negative attitude towards the use of poems in class was observed by Masbuhin & Liao (2017), who found out that the more English teachers studied poetry, the more they were

unwilling to teach the language through it because they deemed that poetry was too difficult for both teachers and students (p. 31). This attitude was also confirmed by Savvidou (2004) who pointed out that teachers often consider literature inappropriate to the language classroom because in poetry and prose students can find deviations from the conventions and grammatical rules, common in the standard language. Moreover, according to the author, in poetry, grammar and vocabulary can be “manipulated to serve orthographic or phonological features of the language” (p. 2).

In the pre-test results, participants agreed that the essential characteristic of learning a language through literary texts was the enlargement of the vocabulary and that novels could be an important tool to develop students’ linguistic skills. Some authors highlighted the idea that novels can be more useful in learning a foreign language both for the linguistic accessibility related to syntax and vocabulary that do not hinder immediate understanding and for the literary accessibility linked to its narrative and descriptive features. Lazar (2009), for instance, affirmed that a good novel can engage students intellectually and linguistically (p. 204). Moreover, Kellermann (1981), in her study on foreign-language literacy, observed that the readability grade of a text written in a foreign language essentially depends on how it is devoid of “lexical and grammatical traps” (p. 88).

In the post-tests, teachers valued poetry as a useful means to learn the foreign language. For all the items within the linguistic dimension, post-test values were higher than pre-test values. In fact, statistically significant differences were reported for all of them.

After our intervention, teachers considered that the skills students could more effectively develop through poetry were vocabulary and reading, while grammar, writing and speaking were considered the least valuable, even though significant differences were still reported. The linguistic dimension of novels was the aspect that teachers considered as the most useful in the teaching of a foreign language, giving this component a very high score. Vocabulary and reading

were the linguistic skills that teachers deemed that students could most develop through novels, as much as listening and speaking, whose values markedly increased. Concerning drama, in the post-test, teachers changed their minds as confirmed by the statistically significant differences between pre- and post-tests. Vocabulary was confirmed as the preferred element, while teachers showed their appreciation for the activities aimed at developing students' speaking skills. Teachers also started to consider the possibility of teaching grammar through literary texts.

Teachers did not completely agree with each other about the development of the linguistic skills. In fact, a teacher claimed that the listening skills had not been sufficiently developed during our lessons, and another claimed that not all the students had developed their speaking skills in class during the project. Concerning the listening skills, actually, in class we played the recording of the poem *Mort Aux Chats* twice. A first time it was played excluding the last two lines, and a second time as a whole. Moreover, after that, the poem was also read a lot of times by the researcher and by the students during the lessons in order to answer the related exercises. Therefore, it is difficult to face the expectations that teachers have when they claim that the development of the listening skill is confined only to the ritual listening of the lines of a poem.

Regarding the speaking activities, we have to admit that some students were not long-winded, notwithstanding we tried to generate a supportive and carefree environment. It must be admitted that the time limits prevented us from knowing in-depth all students and their learning styles. However, even the most hesitant pupils had the possibility to talk and gave in the questionnaires positive feedback about the lessons.

Furthermore, concerning the teacher who criticised the sequence of the instructions we had designed in our lesson plan, she did not agree with placing the reading comprehension activity and the explanation of the vocabulary after reading the poem. We regret, but we took this decision because we thought that it was more difficult for students to perform a reading comprehension before reading the text.

An interesting issue was then raised by a teacher who claimed that during our lesson plan based on poetry, we did not deal with grammar. Actually, in our learning units we included the following structures:

- lesson plan based on poetry:
 - verb plus preposition forms (phrasal verbs),
 - future forms;
- lesson plan based on novel:
 - simple past (positive, question and negative forms of regular and irregular verbs);
- lesson plan based on drama:
 - conditionals.

Debating about which category phrasal verbs should belong to could be exciting but pointless, also because these structures possess unique semantic, syntactic and stylistic properties (Kovács, 2014, p. 8). In our experience, phrasal verbs have always been included in leading grammar textbooks, such as the *Oxford Practice Grammar*. Moreover, the definitions given in dictionaries confirm our choice of categorising phrasal verbs as a grammatical topic. In the *Learner's Dictionary*, issued by Merriam-Webster, the definition of phrasal verbs is categorised as an entry whose context of usage belongs to grammar: “[count] grammar: a group of words that functions as a verb and is made up of a verb and a preposition, an adverb, or both.”²⁰ The same categorisation occurs in the *Collins Dictionary*: “[In English grammar] a phrase that consists of a verb plus an

²⁰ <http://www.learnersdictionary.com/definition/phrasal%20verb>
Same definition found in <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/phrasal%20verb>

adverbial or prepositional particle.”²¹ So, we can assert that our choice of considering the ‘verb plus preposition form’ as a grammatical structure was not incorrect.

Apart from these cases, in general, the analysis that was carried out showed that, after observing our lessons, teachers changed their minds and considered the possibility of teaching through literature to a greater extent. The difference between the means in the pre- and post-tests showed that, even though the item that received the highest values in almost all the genres was “reading”, the elements that changed the most, in teachers’ opinion, were, in decreasing order of relevance: listening in novels, writing in plays, speaking in novels, speaking in plays, listening in poems, grammar in plays, listening in plays, writing in poetry, reading in plays, writing in novels, grammar in novels, grammar in poetry, speaking in poetry, and vocabulary in plays. Therefore, in a nutshell, teachers mostly changed their minds about all the items related to drama and, for poems and novels, they changed their views about listening, speaking, writing, grammar.

Teachers’ views about the possibility of expanding students’ linguistic knowledge through literary texts have been discussed by other researchers. Baba (2008), in her qualitative study, interviewed three teachers who took part in her project and underlined that these participants believed that the application of literature in a FLT context was beneficial because it offered valuable language input (p. 221). Baba claimed that literature facilitated and expanded students’ vocabulary acquisition through the exposure to new vocabulary contained in the literary texts. The researcher also assumed that if students obtained a broader set of vocabulary items, they could express their ideas and thoughts more efficiently, especially in their writing assignments (p. 230).

Baba, moreover, claimed that the teachers who took part in her project “acknowledged that they had gained some knowledge on how to approach and exploit literary works in their

²¹ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/phrasal-verb>

teaching” (p. 235), emphasising that teachers showed a new perspective in approaching literary texts. This finding is in line with our analysis. In fact, our participants started considering that literary texts could be engaging material that can help them teach the foreign language more effectively. In particular, they started acknowledging the importance of choosing the appropriate elements to concentrate on and determining the types of activities to carry out in order to create a balanced focus on the language contained in the texts and their literary aspect, that is the stylistics and literariness.

Our results are also in line with Duncan & Paran (2017). In their research, the areas that exhibited the highest means regarding the contribution of literary texts to language skills, according to teachers’ views, were the improvement of the reading skill (M=5.53 in a 6-point Likert scale, that converted to a 5-point Likert scale equals M=4.62) and vocabulary (M=5.45 in a 6-point Likert scale, that converted to a 5-point Likert scale equals M=4.56).

A reason to explain why teachers appreciated the activities related to the speaking and listening tasks might come from the issue that teachers often neglect oral English. As underlined by Chen & Goh (2011, p. 340), oral activities are not a priority for teachers who cannot implement these skills effectively and cannot “balance students’ needs” (p. 336). According to the authors, teachers have also to disregard oral English activities because they cannot afford the time required to devote to these tasks.

The inclination towards the use of literary texts in EFL classes was confirmed by Masbuhin & Liao (2017). The authors analysed teachers’ perceptions of poetry and their educational background through a single online questionnaire that was distributed to English teachers at a university in Western Pennsylvania and central Indonesia by email and Facebook. The researchers found out that 42% of participants (N=54) asserted that poetry was beneficial to improve students’ knowledge of the language (p. 31).

8.4.2. Motivational dimension

As for motivation, in the pre-tests, teachers assumed that poems were not particularly appropriate for stimulating students' interest. Poetry was considered by teachers as a useful tool to make pupils learn the figures of speech and to develop a creative use of language, which are distinctive traits of poetry. On the contrary, for them, the least useful elements that could generate the necessary motivation in students were those related to the conciseness of poems, to the values and to topics. Moreover, the use of poems as authentic material was not considered by teachers in line with the goal of offering students some samples of authentic communication and genuine experiences, which brought them to give a neutral score to this element.

The negative nuance of meaning that conciseness could take on with its double-edged perception was underlined by Férrez et al. (2020). In this study, some participants assigned a low value to the conciseness of poetic texts and considered it as a disadvantage for practising reading because of its poetical shortness (p. 66).

Concerning novels in pre-tests, teachers did not expect that this genre could be particularly motivating to teach the foreign language. The element that teachers thought that pupils could mainly learn from novels was the point of view. Furthermore, they did not deem novels useful enough to learn either the figures of speech or to understand learners' own emotions better. The use of novels as authentic material, element that was not considered important for poems, was not considered crucial for novels either.

Motivation-related items for drama were within the average range, too. The most appreciated elements were the interpretative skills and the possibility to understand other people's emotions. Data showed that teachers did not expect plays to be a genre which could be appreciated by students.

Teachers' concerns about using literature in FL classes was emphasised by Jones & Carter (2012). In their survey, the researchers administered a questionnaire to twelve English language teachers at the University of Central Lancashire to obtain a cross-section of teachers' views about using literature in FL classrooms. For 50% of the participants to this study, literature did not meet students' needs, and 50% was unsure if learners would react positively to it (p. 73).

In our study, a considerable difference between values in pre-tests and post-tests could be found in the chance that the poems used in class could help students become acquainted with the figures of speech. Teachers also thought that the poem used in class represented a source of motivation that students could consider engaging and enjoyable. This led to a higher score related to the general appreciation of poetry. The creative activities carried out in class also represented a source of motivation that teachers did not foresee, as much as the possibility to develop students' interpretative skills and the opportunity for students to recognize other people's emotions. Teachers also started to recognise the crucial importance of using authentic material in class as a source of motivation. In general, for poetry, the means related to the motivation were substantially higher in the post-tests, and the differences were statistically significant.

Concerning novels, the values given by teachers in the post-test were commonly higher, as it is apparent from the perception of the power that novels have to nourish positive values. Teachers seemed to appreciate the theme conceived for the lessons, that is the topic of disability. Teachers' feedback proved that they appreciated the proposed activities and considered the possibility that students could start thinking critically about the topic, as also confirmed by students' recognition of their own emotions, and other people's emotions.

As for the motivational dimension linked to drama, data showed that teachers started to consider that students would appreciate the use of plays as a tool to learn the foreign language. In fact, this aspect increased considerably. Almost all the elements linked to motivation in plays

were considered beneficial by teachers, in particular, the ones related to the understanding of personal and other peoples' emotions.

The possibility of learning through drama proved to be a successful tool for teachers. In fact, the differences between the means in the pre-test and the post-test were substantial (section 8.2.1). Nevertheless, some teachers considered the request of acting out in class as a demanding activity, unsuitable for shy students, which could hinder pupils' perceptive skills and prevent them from taking part in the lesson. We did not actually perform a play in class; instead, we made use of an interactive form of didactics that emotionally engaged learners through drama techniques.

The educational effectiveness of drama was stressed by Winston (2012), who stated that plays can help learners to feel more confident and can "stimulate the visual, kinaesthetic and auditory aspects of learning" (p. 7). Moreover, tasks based on drama "can bring the feeling of authenticity to the communication project because they provide contexts for language that are dynamic and that feel real" (p. 3). In class, we experienced that even shyer learners managed to enact the minimal acting they were involved in, and the activities were considered delightful by students. They also generated interesting discussions, originated from the fact that different groups produced different interpretations of the passages we read in class. As also stated by Collie & Slater (2009, p. 66), students can consider acting out brief scenes in class an extraordinarily engaging activity.

As we have emphasised, teachers changed their minds about the possibility of using literary texts as authentic material; in fact, the difference between the means in the pre-test and post-test was remarkable. As it has been underlined, if the ultimate goal in language teaching is to enable students to deal with the authentic language of the real world, they should learn how to cope with it in the classroom. In our study, teachers recognized the importance of using authentic material even though some teachers objected to the aesthetic value of the chosen texts, in particular to the

poem *Mort aux chat*, by Peter Porter. The teacher at issue claimed that the poem was not worth to be defined as poetry. We can only reply listing the awards the author received in his life. In 2002 he was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry. In 2003 he was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, and in early 2004 he received the medal of the Order of Australia. A group of British academics and authors proposed to nominate Porter as Professor of Poetry at Oxford University (Bruce, 2006, p. 61). Then, in 2007, he was made a Companion of the Royal Society of Literature.²²

The importance of using authentic material was confirmed by participants in Duncan & Paran's research (2017, p. 63). In their study, teachers considered authenticity one of the most engaging properties of literary texts (M=5.22 in a 6-point Likert scale, that converted to a 5-point Likert scale equals M=4.38). This element represents an essential aspect, considering that the communicative approach is focused on authentic contexts. Therefore, literature can represent an ideal resource in language education through activities that are based on real-life communication set in an authentic context to promote learning.

Other researchers, such as Hanauer (2001, p. 300) and Mattix (2002, p. 517), maintained that poetry is an authentic and relevant teaching tool that provides language enrichment and personal involvement for students. Moreover, as it has been pointed out by Amer (2003), the authenticity of literary texts can provide a "motivating medium for language learning" (p. 63).

Another relevant change in teachers' views is related to the creative use of language. The interviewed teachers, who followed part of the project in class, admitted that one of the activities that students appreciated the most was the one related to the oral and written exercises in which students were asked to work creatively. Also, in the research carried out by Baba (2008), one of the three teachers interviewed stated that exposure to literary texts encouraged creativity and

²² <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Peter-Porter>

imagination in students (p. 220). This point has also been confirmed by Duncan & Paran (2017, p. 63), who asserted that using literary texts in class could foster creativity (M=4.88 in a 6-point Likert scale, that converted to a 5-point Likert scale equals M=4.10).

As for the chance that literary texts can reveal a creative use of language, some participants disagreed and expressed concern regarding this item. In fact, some teachers asserted that pupils were too young to write poems and understand the evocative power of poetry. Doing so, they denied students the possibility of appreciating the peculiar features of poetry, its imagery, and its appeal to feelings and personal experience, which make it exciting and enjoyable to readers. Assuming that students are not able to appreciate poems and that they are too immature to create poetic forms, implies that students' motivation can only stem from forms and styles imposed by the teachers, i.e. forms of colonised imagination that do not help students to think individually. Instead, in our lessons, students were confronted with tasks that required each one to complete in their own ways processes which produced linguistic inventions.

The necessity to foster creative writing was stressed by Xerri (2016), who affirmed that the devaluation of students' creative and personal responses to literary texts originates from teachers' inclination to indoctrinate learners into a pattern of response. According to the researcher, the effect of not adequately encouraging students' creativity is that "it may fail to be nurtured" (p. 25). This aspect has also been emphasised by Disney (2014), who stated that our priority as teachers should be "identifying individual processes underlying creative production" (p. 42).

Another important element that underwent a change, compared to the pre-test, was the pleasurable involvement students could experience by emotionally engaging with the texts. This aspect was confirmed by Baba (2008). The participants in her survey affirmed that they became personally involved with the events they saw portrayed in the texts they read. They also stated that the events described in the texts represented everyday events, human conflicts and

relationships that they could easily identify with. Therefore, they were inherently impelled to be emotionally engaged in their reading, and this provoked further motivation to read literary texts (p. 186).

The use of creative writing and its emotional involvement in learners has been scrutinised by Hanauer, too (2015). According to the researcher, in foreign language acquisition, the writing activities facilitate a process in which the learner is emotionally engaged while gaining ownership over the new language (p. 67).

This point has been emphasised by Zyngier & Fialho (2010), who analysed how the emotional involvement of the reader could impact upon the reading. For them, teaching language through literature can become a space for questioning how texts can become meaningful and how reading them can be relevant to the individual student to become emotional, critical, and culturally independent (p. 29).

The emotional appeal of literature and the importance of enjoying literature and enjoying reading has also been stressed by Duncan & Paran (2017). In their study, they reported that a significant number of teachers, who took part in their survey, stressed the “importance of emotions in the use of literature and in teaching generally” (p. 48). The authors also underlined how this element could be a source of motivation and interest for students.

The possibility of nurturing empathy, tolerance for diversity, and emotional intelligence, which is essential for the understanding of both one’s own and other people’s feelings has extensively been emphasised not only by linguists, such as Xerri & Xerri Agius (2019, p. 71) but also by scientists. The mechanisms of mirroring and embodied simulation can empirically establish the role of empathy in aesthetic experience through the relationship between empathic feelings aroused in the observer from the simulation of the content of the artwork. Actions, emotions and sensations, portrayed in artworks, induce the activation of certain areas in the brain

that usually underpin our actions, emotions and feelings, as well as the activation of individual memories and imagination (Gallese et al., 2007, p. 142).

Mental involvement in fictional worlds of fiction is a universal sociocultural principle that suggests that such production is a consequence of the evolutionary adaptation mechanism. This idea is supported by the fact that people all over the world find specific stories attractive from a cognitive and emotional point of view. The fascination with storytelling is so intense that it sometimes becomes a virtual dependence. Not only narrative texts help us to face the world and increase our ability to cooperate and confront reality, but these provisions have also evolved as an adaptive function. Stories can provide preparation for life, can be a source of information, can explore different points of view for regulating social behaviour. Literature, pleasantly experimented and remembered, provides a set of complex and useful models that guide and inspire human actions. The adaptation derives from the ability of the human mind to construct a warehouse to store experiences in terms of concrete and individual cases, which are not only composed of experiences actually lived and described by the person who has experienced them, but also of the stories accumulated in the narrative tradition: tales, myths, technical knowledge, fairy tales that inspire a morality and that, in general, represent the baggage of the oral tradition of a society (Dutton, 2009).

We have to add that, the three teachers that took part in the project and that, at the beginning, accepted to host the researcher during their classes, after the first lesson plan based on poetry, changed their minds and started to complain about the number of lessons they had to grant for the project, even though the number of lessons had been clearly stated in the application submitted to the headmaster and had been presented to the boards of teachers to obtain an official authorization. In order to avoid troubles and controversies, the researcher drew up a new calendar in which he was hosted by teachers who taught other disciplines and, therefore, not during English teachers' classes. This change, of course, could have affected students' attitudes towards

the project. In fact, since our intent was to measure beliefs and points of view, teachers' attitudes towards the project could have influenced pupils' opinions. Theorists have demonstrated that enthusiastic teachers can motivate and challenge students better. Learners' motivation is also essential to ensure the successful integration of the literature. Ehrman et al. (2003, p. 324) affirmed that the higher the level of motivation in teachers is, the more successful the learning process is supposed to be. However, when teachers begin to lose their own interest in the lessons, their attitudes affect students' motivation as well. This attitude was reflected by one of the English teachers who admitted that at the beginning of the study, she was very excited but, as it progressed, she lost interest in the lessons because she did not like the poem chosen and the didactic approach. However, even though her enthusiasm decayed, her attitude towards our project did not reflect her change of heart. In fact, we learnt from some students that two teachers had started to deal with literature in class without informing the researcher, showing that this project inspired them significantly.

We have also to underline that, during the project, a supply teacher, who had been teaching in a class since the beginning of the school year, was replaced by a curricular teacher who had never seen the students before. This teacher was not in favour of the project and tried to jeopardise it, denying the permission to go on with the lessons. This situation was the last straw that convinced the researcher to carry out the project during the hours of teachers of other subjects. The researcher was also told by students that the new teacher affirmed that, after the lesson plans about novels, she had not seen evident linguistic improvements in students. These judgements could have compromised the success of the project, especially taking into account that it is sensibly impossible to see substantial linguistic improvements after only three lessons.

Some of the 30 teachers who answered our questionnaires shared a similar idea about the use of literature. Some of them revealed that they were against the idea of using literature simply because there is a lack of time allocated for teaching, so precious lessons could not be wasted on

materials that require too much time to read them, like novels or plays. Accordingly, literature becomes a luxury that teachers cannot invest time on, as they have to work through their tight time work schedule.

Notwithstanding, as stated by Hanauer (2012, p. 106), learning a language is an experience that involves the whole human being, beyond purely intellectual faculties. Experiences and emotions intrinsic in the process of learning a language cannot be removed during language classes by taking into account only the communicative and purely intellectual aims of language usage. The recent trend in language teaching, also influenced by the stress given to pre-set level tests, seems to be to avoid any emphasis on the human being to accentuate the learning and assessing phases in a decontextualized backdrop. We tried to convey the idea that, including exciting topics and themes through literary texts could be a way to humanise English classes.

8.4.3. Sociocultural dimension

In the pre-test, the cultural dimension in poetry received a neutral consideration. Teachers did not expect that, through English poems, students could better learn either the Anglophone culture or pupils' own culture. The same trend was repeated for novels, where teachers predicted that students would not improve the knowledge of their own culture through novels, and showed a neutral view concerning the usefulness of using the novels written by Anglophone authors to improve students' knowledge of Anglophone countries. As for drama, teachers considered this genre not very useful to learn either the Anglophone culture or students' own culture.

However, in the post-test, attitudes underwent a statistically significant change regarding the possibility of expanding students' knowledge of the culture of Anglophone countries and students' own country through poems and novels. In fact, values showed a positive attitude

regarding teachers' views for both the aspect referred to the understanding of Anglophone countries and the one referred to the understanding of students' own country. Teachers started to consider also the possibility for students to learn the culture of Anglophone countries through plays, even though a less significant increase could be seen as regards the element linked to the knowledge of students' own culture.

The possibility of developing students' cultural competence through literature has been pointed out by Duncan & Paran (2017, p. 62). In their survey, results suggested that respondents considered literary texts important for developing students' sociocultural understanding (M=5.42 in a 6-point Likert scale, that converted to a 5-point Likert scale equals M=4.54).

As we had already made it explicitly clear in designing our lesson plans, whose theoretical background and premises had been presented to the teachers who took part in the project when we administered the questionnaires to them, the development of cultural competence and of critical thinking were part of our teaching aims. Students seemed to have a biased concept of "culture" and, after the post-test²³ about poetry, we discussed the connotation they attached to this term. The same happened with a teacher who claimed that using a poem that dealt with racism could develop neither students' cultural awareness nor their critical thinking because, in her opinion, racism was not linked to culture but to basic and primitive instincts. This meant that talking about racist behaviours, analysing different points of view, especially the victims' ones, could not promote a "different culture" based on reception and welcome, on empathy and understanding, rather than on hatred and contempt for the "other" and for the "unknown neighbour". As we can read in the document issued by the European Commission, "We are Europe",²⁴ in schools, students should learn values to develop effective strategies to combat

²³ After teaching the lessons based on poetry, we administered the first post-test. Subsequently, after teaching the lessons based on the novel, another post-test was administered and so on.

²⁴ We are Europe - Framework for the Key Citizenship Competences (March 2016) is a project funded with support from the European Commission. Retrieved from http://www.wreurope.eu/uploads/1/6/2/1/16214540/framework_for_key_citizenship_competences.pdf

racism and xenophobia (p. 20). However, sometimes teachers do not regard establishing “education to citizenship” as an easy task, nor are they aware that enhancing citizenship is part of the schools’ goals and responsibility (p. 22). Notwithstanding, the European Guidelines have often insisted on the development of personal and social life skills and the importance of the enhancement of empathic values in educational contexts.

Some authors, such as Crozet & Liddicoat (1997, p. 3), have stated that relating to otherness “is the essence of intercultural competence”, which is one of the crucial benefits linked to the use of poetry in language classes. Similarly, Hanauer (2001, p. 299) also asserted that poetry is a genre with deep historical and cultural roots. Moreover, poetry has the “function of enhancing discourse and cultural awareness and creating personal motivation” (Hanauer, 2003, p. 71).

The cultural awareness, which is essential to develop critical thinking, can be a source of motivation in learning a foreign language. As underlined by Zyngier & Fialho (2010), through literature, students can “challenge authoritative interpretations and think for themselves” (p. 14). Our own culture and values are forged through stories and narratives that we read and listen to every day since our childhood. We are significantly influenced by literary texts, by mass media and by social agents, as stated by Mar & Oatley (2008, p. 184), because narrative texts have the potential to encourage empathy with marginalised others or to spread hatred. Literary texts can change attitudes and lead to the acquisition of our knowledge of the world (Mar & Oatley, 2008, p. 182).

8.5. Discussion about teachers' views compared to students' views

In order to answer the last item of the second research question, which is about comparing students' and teachers' pre-tests and post-tests to infer differences in views and perceptions, a statistical analysis was conducted about correlating teachers' and students' questionnaires. The differences proved to be, to a large extent, statistically significant.

8.5.1. Students' and teachers' pre-tests

In response to the first part of research question 2.4, which compares students' and teachers' pre-tests to infer differences in views and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the use of poetry, novels and drama in ELT classes, the data obtained revealed that, in the pre-tests, teachers' values were higher than students' values for poetry and drama and lower for novels.

Comparing teachers' and students' answers in the pre-tests, we can affirm that teachers expected that poetry and drama could be beneficial to pupils in learning a foreign language, while students assigned lower ratings to the utility of poetry and drama and higher to the benefits of using novels.

The results showed that both students and teachers had a somewhat neutral attitude toward the use of poetry. Concerning the linguistic dimension, before starting the project, pupils regarded literary texts as a valuable source to learn vocabulary, but they did not consider them useful enough to learn grammar. The analysis of the differences for the linguistic dimension showed that students expected to broaden their vocabulary and to improve their listening, speaking and writing skills more than teachers.

Although teachers showed a very positive attitude towards the possibility of improving students' linguistic competences through novels, students turned out to expect to appreciate the

use of novels to develop their language skills more than teachers. In particular, students' values were higher in relation to the following items: listening, speaking, reading, writing and vocabulary.

Regarding the linguistic dimension of drama, students expected to improve linguistic skills more than teachers would have envisaged. The differences can be found in the development of the listening, speaking, and writing skills; while teachers gave higher scores for the expansion of vocabulary compared to those given by students.

As for motivation, teachers expected that poems could be a valid source of motivation more than students. In particular, teachers' values were higher in relation to these items: appreciation of poems, understanding of personal emotions, other people's emotions, authentic material, creative use of language, figures of speech. While students gave higher scores for the conciseness of poems and the values they dealt with in class.

Regarding novels, teachers considered the possibility that this genre could be appreciated by students in a neutral way. In turn, the latter assigned a higher score to the appreciation of novels, the development of a creative use of language through novels, and to the values contained in them. Teachers, instead, deemed that students could understand other peoples' emotions better through novels. Concerning plays, teachers foresaw an improvement in students' comprehension of the figures of speech, in their interpretative skills, in the development of students' personal emotions and in the understanding of other people's emotions.

With regard to culture, no considerable differences could be found between the two pre-tests for the understanding of students' own culture through poems, because both stakeholders showed quite the same trend, while students showed a higher consideration of the possibility of developing their awareness related to the Anglophone culture. As for the cultural dimension in novels, even though in a moderate way, teachers expected that this genre could develop students' cultural awareness more than students expected for the understanding of both the Anglophone

countries and students' own country. Concerning plays, no considerable differences could be found between the two pre-tests for the understanding of the Anglophone culture, because both teachers and students showed quite the same trend, while teachers showed a higher consideration of the possibility of developing students' awareness of their own culture.

8.5.2. Students' and teachers' post-tests

In response to the second part of research question 2.4 (Comparing students' and teachers' post-tests to infer differences in views and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the use of poetry, novels and drama in FL classes), the data obtained revealed that in the post-tests, teachers' values were higher than students' values for all the genres, especially for poetry. Comparing teachers' and students' answers in the post-tests, we can affirm that teachers gauged more than students that poetry, novels and drama could be beneficial to students in learning a foreign language.

An in-depth analysis of the differences for the linguistic dimension shows that teachers displayed an overall appreciation of the use of poems in language teaching after observing the lesson plans. In the post-test, apart from the speaking skill, which was valued almost in the same way, teachers considered more positively the possibility of improving learners' linguistic skills than pupils. In particular, teachers assigned higher ratings to listening, reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar.

As for the novel, pupils' and teachers' trends were quite similar. Students deemed that novels could lead to an improvement in their vocabulary more than teachers would assume. While speaking and reading skills received the same consideration, listening, writing and grammar received higher regard by teachers, who considered that, through poems, students would considerably acquire these skills.

As for the linguistic dimension of drama, the trend followed in the previous genres was not respected. Students showed a consideration related to this genre which was higher than the one showed by teachers. Students assigned values for all the aspects of drama, which were higher than those given by teachers, especially for the item related to the learning of grammar.

Teachers' high appreciation of poems is also apparent in the motivation that poems can generate. In particular, teachers' values were higher in relation to these items: understanding of personal emotions, understanding of other people's emotions, authentic material, creative use of language, conciseness of poems, values and topics.

Regarding motivation, teachers considered novels a very incisive source of motivation. The items that received more positive consideration by students were the point of view, the fact that novels are authentic material, and the possibility of better understanding the figures of speech. Moreover, teachers deemed, more than students, that novels could develop pupils' interpretative skills and could help them understand and share their personal emotions and other people's emotions. Finally, for teachers, more than for students, novels could be a valuable source of motivation for the topics that they contain.

Concerning motivation in plays, the item of the appreciation of plays received a higher score by pupils as compared to teachers' evaluation. However, teachers attributed higher values for the items of authenticity, creative use of language, figures of speech, interpretative skills and understanding of personal and other people's emotions.

Regarding culture in poems, no considerable differences could be found between the two post-tests for the understanding of the culture of Anglophone countries, because both teachers and students showed quite the same trend. In contrast, teachers showed a higher consideration of the possibility of developing students' awareness of their own culture through poems.

Regarding novels, no considerable differences could be found between the two post-tests for the understanding of students' own culture. While teachers showed a higher consideration of the possibility of developing students awareness related to the Anglophone culture. As for plays, even though in a moderate way, teachers gauged that plays could help students understand the culture of Anglophone countries and students' own country more than students had valued.

If we match students' outcomes with the teachers' ones, a common trend can be found for almost all the genres, except for the play. Teachers and students gave this genre very low values in the pre-test, while, in the post-tests, students proved to be more enthusiastic than teachers about the benefits which could derive from the use of this genre to learn the foreign language. Moreover, in the post-tests, teachers increased their rates markedly, but students showed a more relevant change concerning the improvement of their linguistic skills that drama activities can provide and for the development of their cultural awareness through novels.

Chapter 9.

Senior students' views on the use of literature as a tool for learning the mother tongue and EFL

To pore upon a book, to seek the light of truth.
Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost*

This chapter aims to respond to the third cluster of research questions of this thesis which is:

3.1. What are students' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in their foreign language classes and in their native language classes? Which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, do students perceive to contribute most to their learning, in their mother tongue and in their EFL classes? Are there any differences?

In this chapter, we will quantitatively explore the results for the three genres under analysis (section 9.2.1). After that, data will be analysed qualitatively for students' views about English and Italian literature (section 9.2.2). Finally, a discussion that considers the different dimensions related to our investigation will ensue in section 9.3.

9.1. Method

Participants

The 52 students who took part in this third and last study attended three different senior classes of the same school where we had conducted the other two studies. They were aged between 18 and 19 (62% girls, 38% boys). Seniors in high school were chosen because they were able to provide their feedback at the end of their course of study, having studied literature in a foreign language and in their mother tongue for three years. As for their proficiency, according to the national syllabus, at the end of non-compulsory secondary education, students should reach the B2 level of the CEFR.

Data collection

The senior students who took part in the survey were administered various questionnaires and were given two hours to complete them. Since we wanted to explore their views regarding the use of poems, novels and plays for learning EFL and Italian (students' L1), the instrument through which we gathered our data consisted of questionnaires, written comments and answers to specific questions embedded in the questionnaires.

The paradigm of the investigation was based on a mixed-method enquiry that involved different combinations of qualitative and quantitative research both in data collection and analysis levels.

To obtain quantitative data, senior students were administered a 5-point Likert scale test about their views regarding the use of literary texts (poetry, novels and plays) in their English classes and in their Italian classes. The questionnaires intended to test the advantages of using poems, novels and drama for EFL and Italian, as defined by existing studies in the field (see chapter 3 for the advantages related to the learning of the FL and chapter 4 for the L1).

Concerning English, for poetry and novels, the questionnaire included 18 advantages — 6, 2 and 10 within, respectively, the linguistic, the sociocultural and the motivation dimensions. For drama, the questionnaire included 20 advantages — 6, 2 and 12 within, respectively, the linguistic, the sociocultural and the motivation dimensions.

For the Italian questionnaire, we merged some questions because of the limited time available. The merged questions were those referred to the four linguistic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and the ones concerning the cultural dimension. Considering that Italian language lessons do not tend to deal with the Anglo-Saxon world, we only asked students whether Italian literary texts could help them understand their own culture. Therefore, the questionnaire included 14 advantages — 3, 1 and 10 within the linguistic, the sociocultural and the motivation dimensions respectively. For drama, the questionnaire included 16 advantages — 3, 1 and 12 within the linguistic, the sociocultural and the motivational dimensions respectively.

Qualitative data were obtained by means of comments we asked students to provide to justify the scores they had given to the items in the questionnaires about the use of both Italian and English literary texts in class. Moreover, we asked two more open-ended questions that we included at the end of the questionnaires for the three literary genres and the two languages. These questions aimed to tap into students' willingness to use literature for their EFL and L1 lessons. Specifically, these two questions, for EFL, were: "Have your teachers, in their language courses, ever used English literature with the explicit intention of developing your linguistic skills in English?"; and "Would you have liked it if your teachers had used English literature to improve your linguistic skills in English?". Then, we asked the same questions about students' L1 ("Have your teachers ever used Italian literature with the explicit intention of developing your linguistic skills in Italian?"; and "Would you have liked it if your teachers had used Italian literature to improve your linguistic skills in Italian?").

Data analysis

To carry out our quantitative analysis, we gathered descriptive statistical data calculating measures of central tendency, such as means and standard deviations. Though these values, we created graphs which helped us to visually break down the components into their constituent elements. Graphs were useful to present data in a clearly laid-out way and to complement and support our arguments. Then, we conducted paired *t*-tests matching each question related to students' beliefs about the use of English literary texts in their English class to its equivalent related to the use of Italian literary texts in the Italian class. After that, we ran paired *t*-tests comparing clusters of questions divided according to the analysed components and items linked to the linguistic competence, to motivation and to the sociocultural competence. Besides, the results were compared in relation to the three genres, along with the three different examined dimensions. To run our statistical analyses, we used both SPSS and MS Excel.

Concerning our qualitative research, students' comments and answers were allocated according to their similar content and properties that could be viewed as a whole. This way, we could focus on each topic in turn, so that details and distinctions, that lay within, could be scrutinised. Data were gathered into clusters according to the theme that it entailed. Subsequently, we tried to uncover what underpinned attitudes and motivations distinguishing factors that could lead to different perspectives within the sample (White et al., 2014, p. 380). This way, we tried to identify processes that were based on a complex interplay of perceptions, expectations, resources or barriers. The open-ended questions took the form of narrative reports of the elements we considered meaningful. These reports of the educational practice, which is itself a form of experience, and as such, can be narrated, became part of the empirical basis to be analysed and interpreted.

9.2. Results

9.2.1. Quantitative results

Tables 34 (poetry), 35 (novel), and 36 (drama) below provide the results by genre for senior students' views about the impact of literature, both in their mother tongue and in English, on the three investigated dimensions (language, motivation and culture). The tables also offer a comparison between the two analyses in terms of their statistical significance. The results provided in these tables contain the data to answer the third research question.

Table 34 <i>Comparison between dimensions and items related to poetry in L1 and L2</i>							
DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS	English		L1		<i>t</i> stat (N=52)	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD			
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	2.77	.60	2.87	.86	-.50	.31	.03
listening skills	2.77	1.00	2.94	1.00	-1.03	.31	.08
speaking skills	2.68	.96	2.94	1.00	-1.03	.31	.08
reading skills	3.28	.90	2.94	1.00	-1.03	.31	.08
writing skills	2.28	.98	2.94	1.00	-1.03	.31	.08
vocabulary	3.37	.89	3.19	.97	.90	.37	-.07
grammar	2.25	.84	2.46	1.02	-1.40	.17	.11
MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	2.64	.60	2.70	.68	-.43	.34	.03
because I can better understand my personal emotions	2.79	.98	2.52	1.29	-1.02	.31	-.14

because I can better understand other people's emotions	2.29	.98	2.44	1.23	-.77	.44	.08
because I can develop my interpretative skills	3.02	.94	3.04	1.05	-.11	.91	.01
because I can become acquainted with figures of speech	3.44	.98	3.31	.98	.82	.42	-.05
because poems can reveal a creative use of language	2.90	.87	2.90	1.18	.00	1.00	.00
because poems deal with important values	2.69	1.15	2.92	1.20	-1.01	.32	.11
because poems normally deal with non-trivial topics	2.42	.85	2.44	1.00	-.11	.92	.01
because poems are authentic material	2.42	.89	2.52	1.11	-.48	.63	.05
because using poems is an enjoyable experience	2.79	1.12	2.92	1.11	-.60	.55	.06
because poems are usually concise	2.13	.84	1.94	.83	1.18	.24	-.13
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	2.61	.70	3.56	1.02	-5.22	.00	.36
because I can better understand the Anglophone culture	2.96	.88	-	-	-5.22	.00	.36
because I can better understand my own culture	2.26	.90	3.56	1.02	-5.22	.00	.36

Table 35

Comparison between dimensions and items related to the novel in L1 and L2

DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS	English		L1		<i>t</i> stat (N=52)	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD			
Using novels can contribute to the development of my							
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	3.19	.76	3.31	.79	.04	.49	.00
listening skills	2.92	1.03	3.29	.94	-.63	.53	.04
speaking skills	3.06	1.02	3.29	.94	-.63	.53	.04
reading skills	3.69	.96	3.29	.94	-.63	.53	.04

writing skills	3.08	.84	3.29	.94	-.63	.53	.04
vocabulary	3.75	.88	2.98	1.09	.48	.64	-.35
grammar	3.02	.83	3.67	.86	.11	.92	.25
MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	2.81	.58	2.74	.61	.59	.28	-.04
because I can better understand my personal emotions	2.25	2.31	1.01	1.16	-.26	.80	.03
because I can better understand other people's emotions	2.17	2.25	1.08	1.19	-.36	.72	.04
because I can develop my interpretative skills	2.81	2.87	.97	.93	-.32	.75	.03
because I can become acquainted with figures of speech	2.54	2.52	1.04	1.08	.10	.92	-.01
because novels can reveal a creative use of language	3.04	2.69	.91	1.04	1.73	.09	-.17
because novels deal with important values	3.06	3.08	1.04	.99	-.09	.93	.01
because novels normally deal with non-trivial topics	3.04	2.81	1.07	1.05	1.13	.27	-.11
because novels are authentic material	2.50	2.23	.94	1.08	1.30	.20	-.16
because using novels is an enjoyable experience	3.06	3.12	.87	1.02	-.19	.85	.03
because novels can help me understand different points of view	3.65	3.54	1.03	1.15	.60	.55	-.04
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	2.49	.76	3.46	1.11	-5.31	.00	.38
because I can better understand the Anglophone culture	2.92	.99	-	-	-5.31	.00	.38
because I can better understand my own culture	2.06	.78	3.46	1.11	-5.31	.00	.38

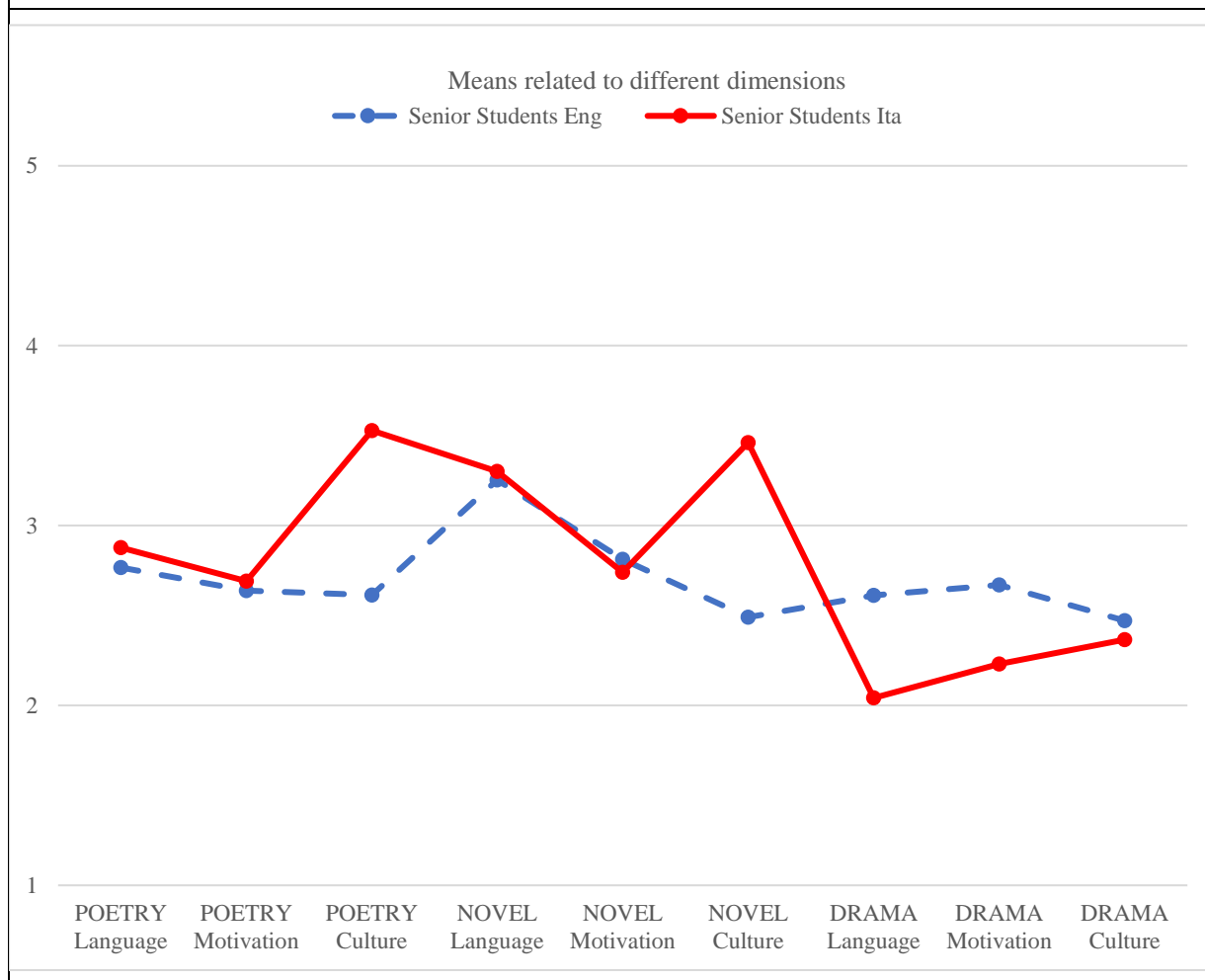
Table 36
Comparison between dimensions and items related to drama in L1 and L2

DIMENSIONS AND ITEMS	English		L1		<i>t</i> stat (N=52)	<i>p</i> value	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD			
Using novels can contribute to the development of my							
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	2.63	.69	2.12	.86	3.43	.00	-.29
listening skills	2.63	.86	1.96	.82	4.97	.00	-.45
speaking skills	2.79	1.00	1.96	.82	4.97	.00	-.45
reading skills	3.00	.93	1.96	.82	4.97	.00	-.45
writing skills	2.10	.87	1.96	.82	4.97	.00	-.45
vocabulary	2.90	1.03	2.33	1.12	2.93	.01	-.32
grammar	2.25	.90	2.08	.90	1.09	.28	-.11
MOTIVATION TO LEARN EFL	2.76	.66	2.28	.77	3.55	.00	-.28
because I can better understand my personal emotions	2.19	1.03	1.87	.86	1.87	.07	-.23
because I can better understand other people's emotions	2.27	1.05	2.06	1.13	1.00	.32	-.13
because I can develop my interpretative skills	2.46	.75	2.13	.97	2.26	.03	-.20
because I can become acquainted with figures of speech	2.56	1.06	2.00	1.03	3.05	.00	-.35
because plays can reveal a creative use of language	2.79	.91	2.37	1.10	2.11	.04	-.23
because plays deal with important values	2.77	1.02	2.29	1.16	2.33	.02	-.27
because plays normally deal with non-trivial topics	2.69	.90	2.21	1.09	2.86	.01	-.28
because plays are authentic material	2.33	1.06	1.92	1.01	2.05	.05	-.27

because using plays is an enjoyable experience	2.71	1.11	2.35	1.03	1.85	.07	-.20
because plays usually offer real lifelike settings	2.92	1.15	2.60	1.19	1.52	.14	-.16
because plays can help me understand different points of view	3.10	.98	2.46	1.16	3.17	.00	-.33
because I can find examples of colloquial and informal language	3.25	1.01	2.52	1.18	3.69	.00	-.38
SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE	2.47	.78	2.37	1.10	.60	.27	-.06
because I can better understand the Anglophone culture	2.83	1.04	-	-	.60	.27	-.06
because I can better understand my own culture	2.12	.83	2.37	1.10	.60	.27	-.06

The data obtained revealed that participants considered literary texts in their L1, especially poems and novels, useful to develop their cultural awareness, while only novels were deemed valuable enough to develop their linguistic skills. Moreover, they considered all the dimensions linked to drama and the motivational dimension of poems and novels not particularly beneficial for better learning their L1.

Concerning the acquisition of the L2, only novels were considered useful to learn the English language, while none of the dimensions related to drama was considered as a valid tool. Even though novels were deemed beneficial to develop students' linguistic skills in the L2, they did not receive the same regard concerning the possibility of developing students' cultural awareness. In fact, the values given by students to this component were below the neutral level, as displayed in Graph 73.

Graph 73*Means for the perceived usefulness of different genres*

The data obtained revealed that participants considered novels sufficiently useful to enhance their linguistic skills (English: $M=3.19$, $SD=.76$; Italian: $M=3.31$, $SD=.79$; $t = .04$, $p = .49$, $d = .00$) and their cultural competence (English: $M=2.49$, $SD=.76$; Italian: $M=3.46$, $SD=1.11$; $t = -5.31$, $p = .00$, $d = .38$) both in their L1 and in the FL, with a statistically significant difference. For poetry, students' views were positive solely for the induction of cultural awareness in the L1 (English: $M=2.61$, $SD=.70$; Italian: $M=3.56$, $SD=1.02$; $t = -5.22$, $p = .00$, $d = .36$) and lower than the average choice for all the elements of drama and for motivation in poems (English: $M=2.64$, $SD=.60$; Italian: $M=2.70$, $SD=.68$; $t = -.43$, $p = .34$, $d = .03$) and in novels (English: $M=2.81$, $SD=.58$; Italian: $M=2.74$, $SD=.61$; $t = .59$, $p = .28$, $d = -.04$). Concerning the FL, the same

negative remarks were reiterated by students about all the elements of drama and the cultural dimension of novels (English: $M=2.49$, $SD=.76$; Italian: $M=3.46$, $SD=1.11$; $t = -5.31$, $p = .00$, $d = .38$), with a statistically significant difference between the FL and the L1. The subsections below provide a breakdown of results per genre.

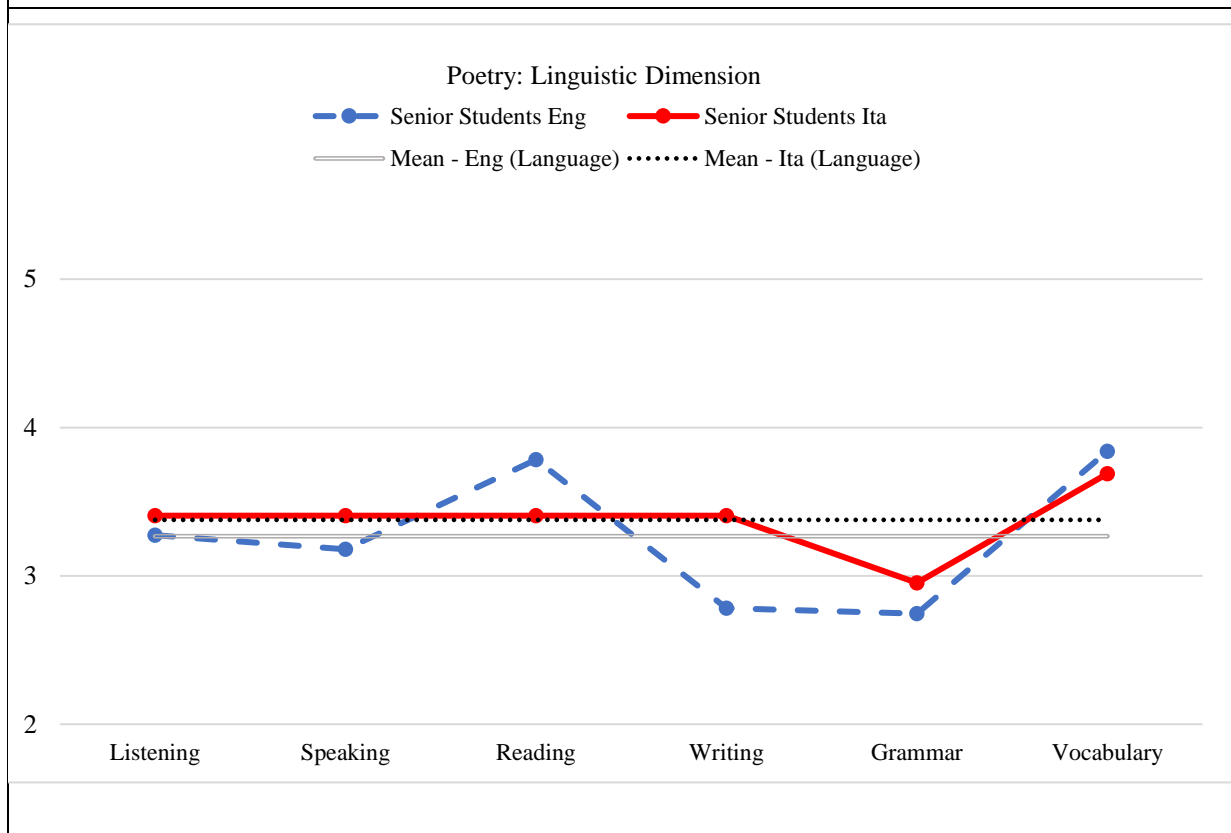
Results for the perceived usefulness of poetry

As shown in Graph 74, the results showed that students had a somewhat neutral attitude toward the use of poetry as a tool to acquire linguistic skills both in their mother tongue and in the foreign language. In fact, the mean of the linguistic dimension (English: $M=2.77$, $SD=.60$; Italian: $M=2.87$, $SD=.86$; $t = -.50$, $p = .31$, $d = .03$) was under the middle choice students had the possibility to select, that, on a 5-point Likert scale, is 3.

Analysing in-depth the linguistic dimension in the FL, students considered poems an adequate source to develop their reading skills (English: $M=3.28$, $SD=.90$; Italian: $M=2.94$, $SD=1.00$; $t = -1.03$, $p = .31$, $d = .08$) and vocabulary (English: $M=3.37$, $SD=.89$; Italian: $M=3.19$, $SD=.97$; $t = .90$, $p = .37$, $d = -.07$), but they did not consider them useful enough to learn grammar (English: $M=2.25$, $SD=.84$; Italian: $M=2.46$, $SD=1.02$; $t = -1.40$, $p = .17$, $d = .11$) and improve their writing skills (English: $M=2.28$, $SD=.98$; Italian: $M=2.94$, $SD=1.00$; $t = -1.03$, $p = .31$, $d = .08$).

Graph 74

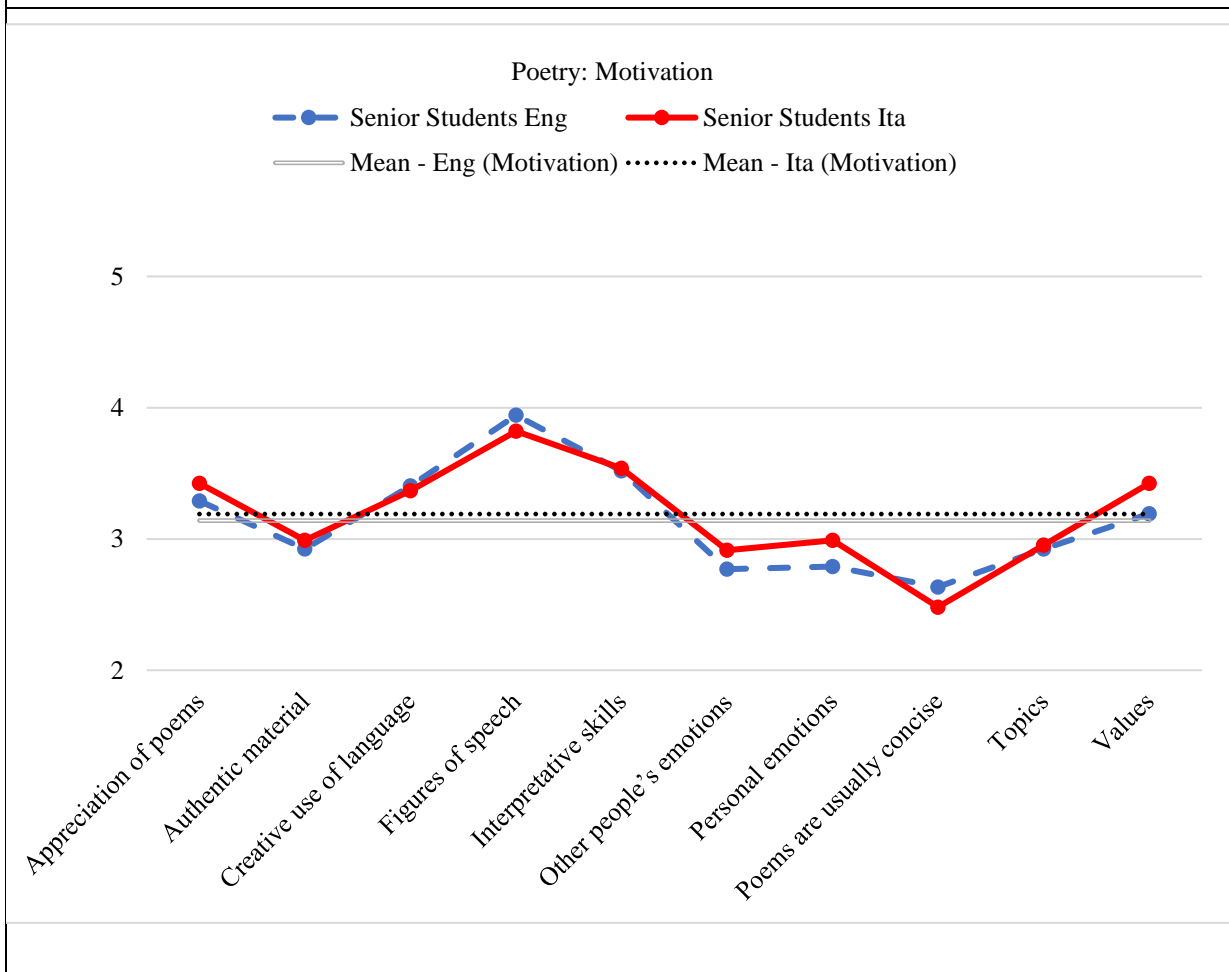
Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of poems in English and Italian



As for motivation, displayed in Graph 75, students gave almost the same answers both for English and Italian literature. They deemed the use of poems not particularly suitable for stimulating their interest; in fact, the general mean, for English, was 2.64 (SD=.60) and, for Italian, it was 2.70 (SD=.68, $t = -.43$, $p = .34$, $d = .03$). The item that they considered as the most useful was the learning of the figures of speech in English and in Italian (English: $M=3.44$, $SD=.98$; Italian: $M=3.31$, $SD=.98$; $t = .82$, $p = .42$, $d = -.05$), a distinctive trait of poetry, while the least useful were related to the conciseness of poems (English: $M=2.13$, $SD=.84$; Italian: $M=1.94$, $SD=.83$; $t = 1.18$, $p = .24$, $d = -.13$), and the understanding of personal emotions (English: $M=2.29$, $SD=.98$; Italian: $M=2.52$, $SD=1.29$; $t = -1.02$, $p = .31$, $d = -.14$) and other people's emotions (English: $M=2.29$, $SD=.98$; Italian: $M=2.44$, $SD=1.23$; $t = -.77$, $p = .44$, $d = .08$).

Graph 75

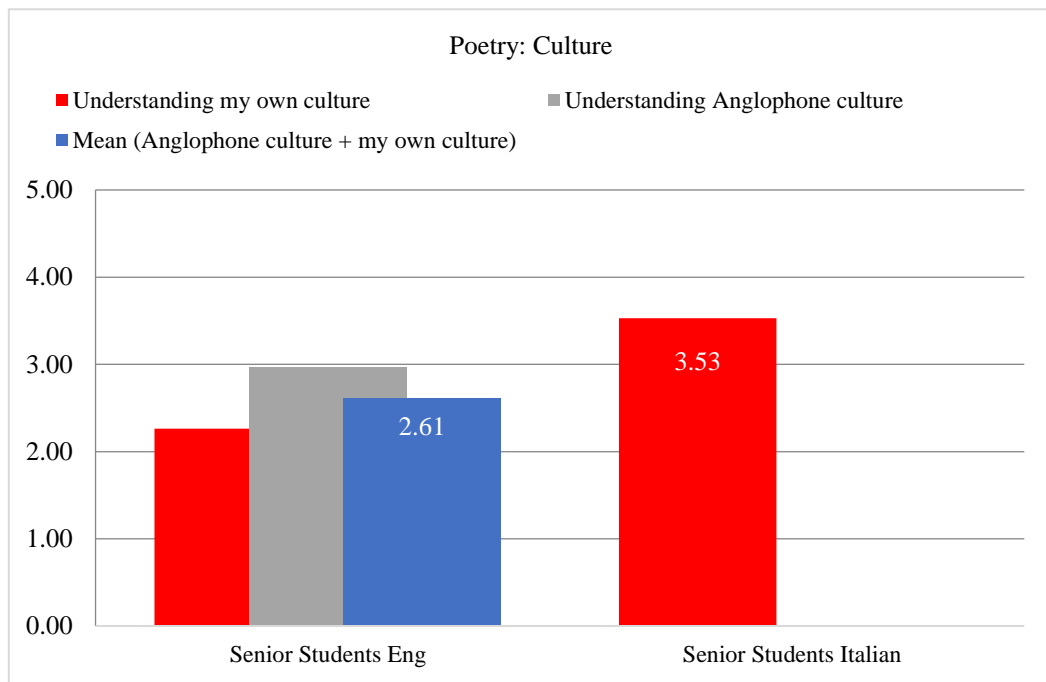
Means for the perceived usefulness of the motivational dimension of poetry in English and Italian



The cultural dimension received a neutral consideration, too. Students did not consider English poems to be a particularly useful tool for learning the Anglophone culture (English: $M=2.96$, $SD=.88$; $t = -5.22$, $p = .00$, $d = .36$). Reading them to learn about their own culture was considered even less advantageous (English: $M=2.26$, $SD=.91$; Italian: $M=3.56$, $SD=1.02$; $t = -5.22$, $p = .00$, $d = .36$), with a statistically significant difference between the two items. Regarding Italian literary texts, students considered poems as acceptable tools to know about their own culture, as displayed in Graph 76.

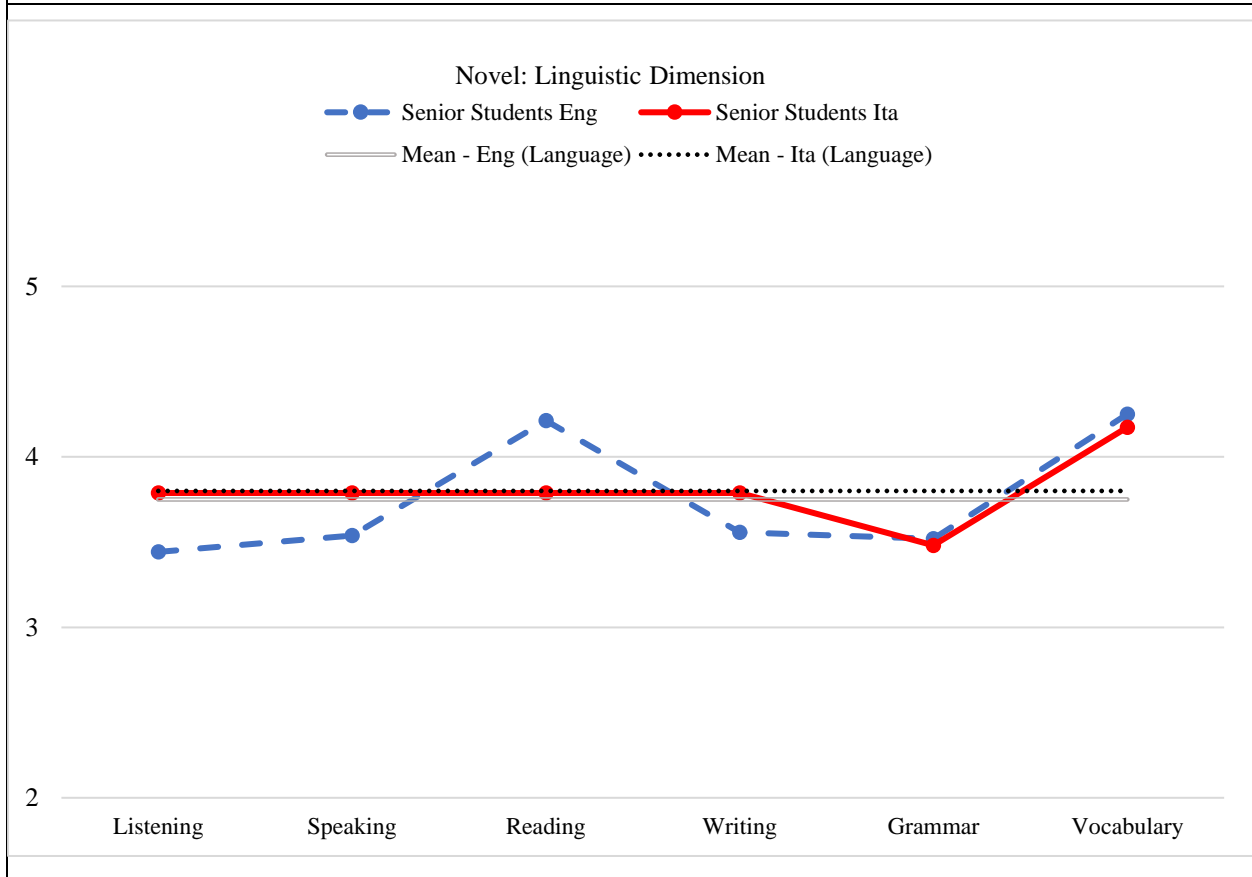
Graph 76

Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of poetry in English and Italian



Results for the perceived usefulness of novels

As shown in Graph 77, students considered the possibility of improving their linguistic skills through novels in a neutral way both in their mother-tongue and in the foreign language. In fact, the general mean referred to the linguistic dimension was close to the neutral choice for both English and Italian (English: $M=3.19$, $SD=.76$; Italian: $M=3.31$, $SD=.79$; $t = .04$, $p = .49$, $d = .00$). The linguistic skills that students considered that they had developed the most through the use of novels were the expansion of vocabulary, both in L1 and in L2 (English: $M=3.75$, $SD=.88$; Italian: $M=3.29$, $SD=.94$; $t = -.63$, $p = .53$, $d = .04$) and the reading skills in the foreign language (English: $M=3.69$, $SD=.96$). As for the listening (English: $M=2.92$, $SD=1.03$; Italian: $M=3.29$, $SD=.94$; $t = -.63$, $p = .53$, $d = .04$), speaking (English: $M=3.06$, $SD=1.02$; Italian: $M=3.29$, $SD=.94$; $t = -.63$, $p = .53$, $d = .04$), writing skills (English: $M=3.08$, $SD=.84$; Italian: $M=3.29$, $SD=.94$; $t = -.63$, $p = .53$, $d = .04$) and the grammar functions (English: $M=3.02$, $SD=.83$; Italian: $M=3.67$, $SD=.86$; $t = .11$, $p = .92$, $d = .25$), instead, they did not feel that they had received a considerable benefit from the study of texts in prose.

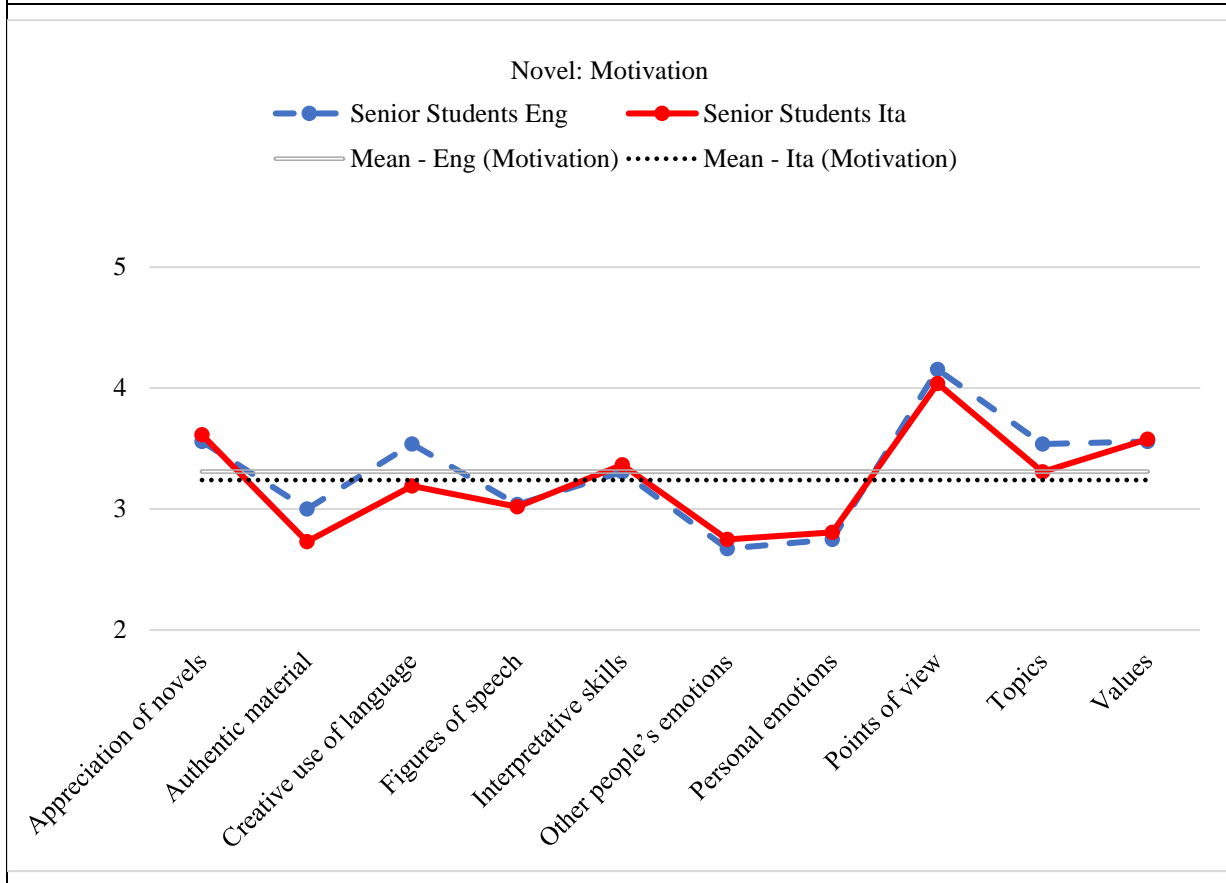
Graph 77*Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of novels in English and Italian*

As happened with students attending the first year of high school, the overall mean related to motivation (English: $M=2.81$, $SD=.58$; Italian $M=2.74$, $SD=.61$), displayed in Graph 78, was lower than the one related to the development of the linguistic skills (English: $M=3.19$, $SD=.76$; Italian: $M=3.31$, $SD=.79$; $t = .04$, $p = .49$, $d = .00$), both in Italian and English. About the use of novels to learn the foreign language and improve learners' L1, the element that seemed to motivate seniors the most was the presence of different points of view (English: $M=3.65$, $SD=1.03$; Italian: $M=3.54$, $SD=1.15$; $t = .60$, $p = .55$, $d = -.04$). Furthermore, they did not deem novels useful enough to learn figures of speech (English: $M=2.54$, $SD=1.04$; Italian: $M=2.52$, $SD=1.08$; $t = .10$, $p = .92$, $d = -.01$) and they did not consider them a source of motivation because novels could concretely represent authentic material (English: $M=2.50$, $SD=.94$; Italian: $M=2.23$, $SD=1.08$; $t = 1.30$, $p = .20$, $d = -.16$) and because novels can be a tool to better

understand students' personal emotions (English: $M=2.25$, $SD=1.01$; Italian $M=2.31$, $SD=1.16$; $t = -.26$, $p = .80$, $d = .03$) and other people's emotions (English: $M=2.17$, $SD=1.08$; Italian: $M=2.25$, $SD=1.19$; $t = -.36$, $p = .72$, $d = .04$).

Graph 78

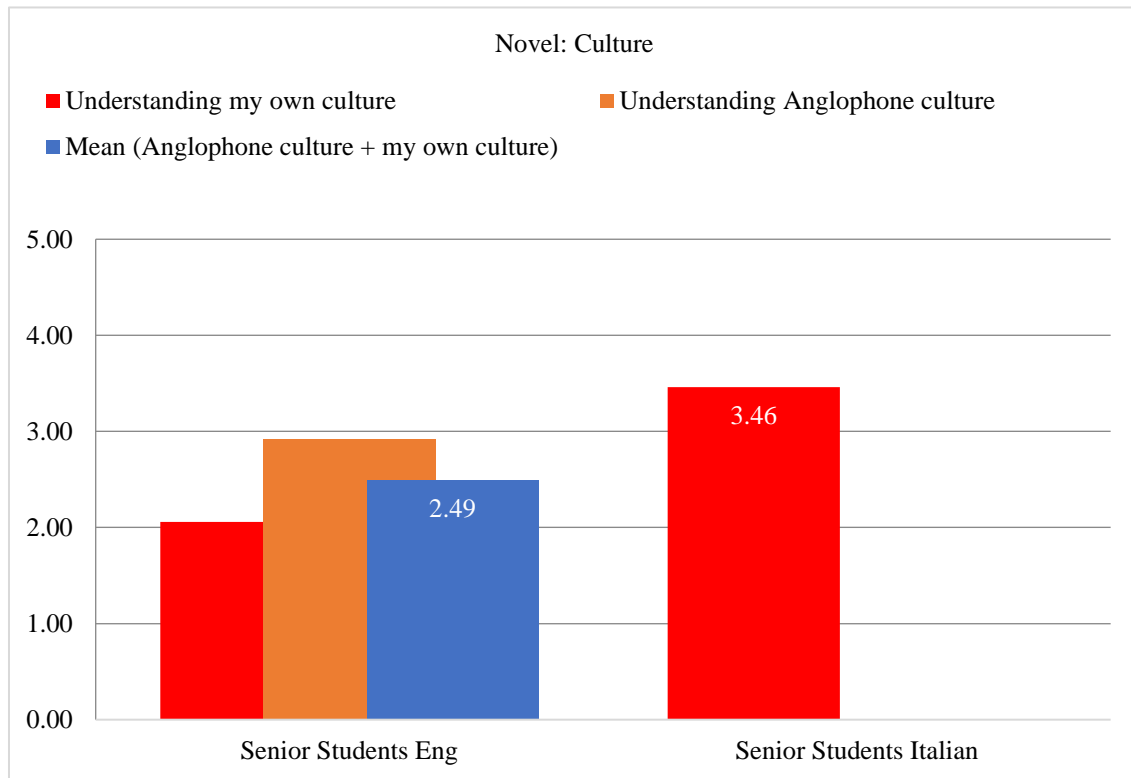
Means for the perceived usefulness of the motivational dimension of novels in English and Italian



As for the cultural dimension, as shown in Graph 79, students considered that novels were not a useful tool to increase their cultural awareness (English: $M=2.49$, $SD=.76$; Italian: $M=3.46$, $SD=1.11$; $t = -5.31$, $p = .00$, $d = .38$). The lowest values can be detected in the possibility of improving the knowledge of students' own culture through novels (English: $M=2.06$, $SD=.78$; Italian: $M=3.46$, $SD=1.11$; $t = -5.31$, $p = .00$, $d = .38$). The values related to the knowledge of Anglophone countries through English novels were neutral, too ($M=2.92$, $SD=.99$).

Graph 79

Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of novels in English and Italian

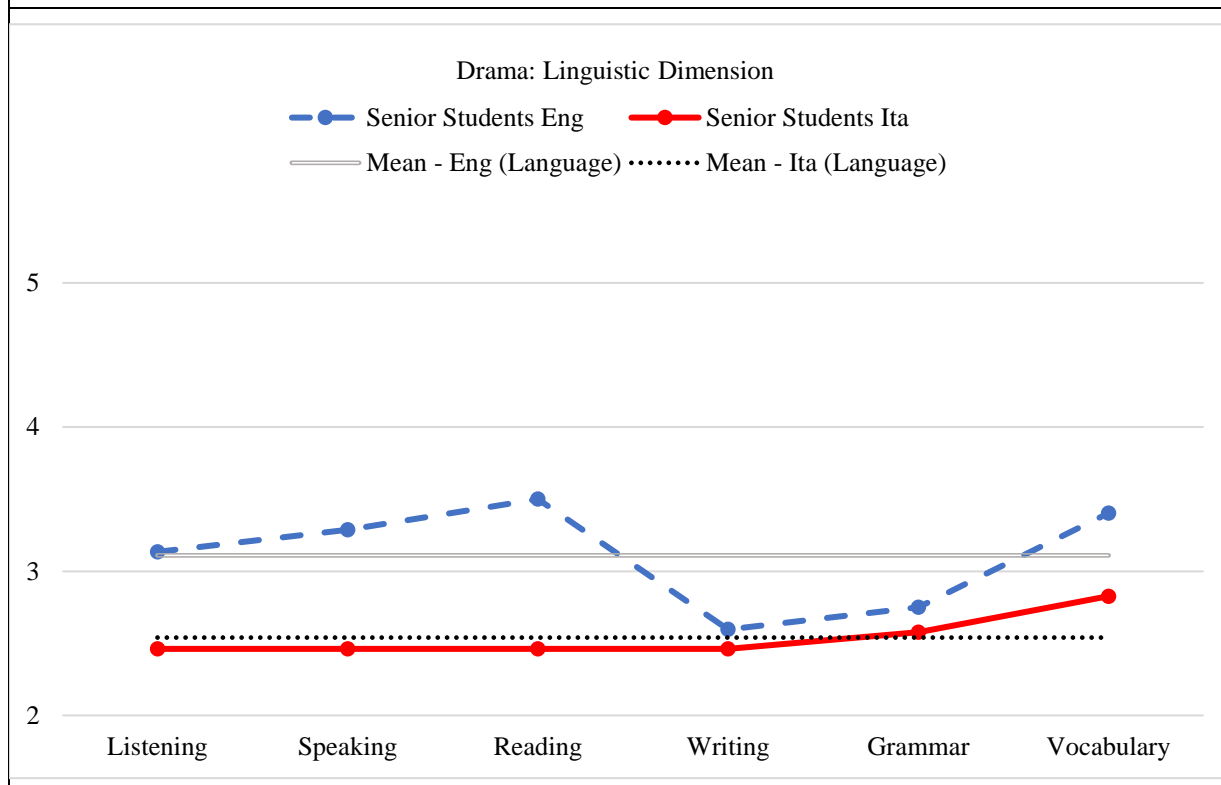


Results for the perceived usefulness of drama

A completely different attitude was detected regarding drama. Learners thought that drama was not beneficial for developing their linguistic skills (English: $M=2.63$, $SD=.69$; Italian: $M=2.12$, $SD=.86$; $t = 3.43$, $p = .00$, $d = -.29$). Only the possibility of improving their reading skills in English (English: $M=3.00$, $SD=.93$; Italian: $M=1.96$, $SD=.82$; $t = 4.97$, $p = .00$, $d = -.45$) and enriching their vocabulary (English: $M=2.90$, $SD=1.03$; Italian: $M=2.33$, $SD=1.12$; $t = 2.93$, $p = .01$, $d = -.32$) through plays was given some credit, as displayed in Graph 80. Other elements, like writing (English: $M=2.10$, $SD=.87$) and grammar (English: $M=2.25$, $SD=.90$; Italian: $M=2.08$, $SD=.90$; $t = 1.09$, $p = .28$, $d = -.11$), received very low scores. Moreover, students' consideration of drama in Italian was lower than the estimation about drama in English, as we can see from the general mean related to this genre (English: $M=2.62$, $SD=.10$; Italian: $M=2.22$, $SD=.12$).

Graph 80

Means for the perceived usefulness of the linguistic dimension of drama in English and Italian

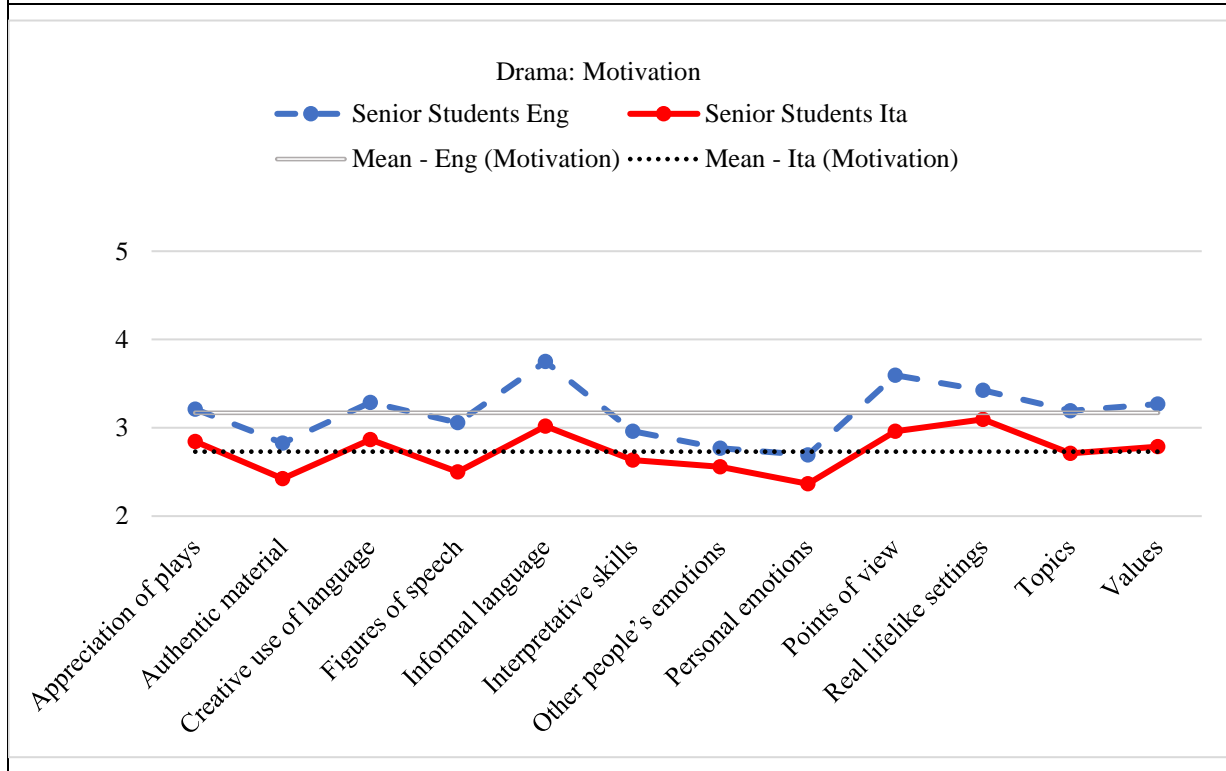


Motivation-related items obtained less than neutral results too (English: $M=2.76$, $SD=.66$; Italian: $M=2.28$, $SD=.77$; $t = 3.55$, $p = .00$, $d = -.28$), as displayed in Graph 81. The most appreciated aspects were those specific to the genre, such as the use of informal language (English: $M=3.25$, $SD=1.01$; Italian: $M=2.52$, $SD=1.18$; $t = 3.69$, $p = .00$, $d = -.38$) and the different points of view in plays (English: $M=3.10$, $SD=.98$; Italian= 2.46 , $SD=1.16$; $t = 3.17$, $p = .00$, $d = -.33$), along with the presence of real-life settings (English: $M=2.92$, $SD=1.15$; Italian: $M=2.60$, $SD=1.19$; $t = 1.52$, $p = .14$, $d = -.16$). The authenticity of plays (English: $M=2.33$, $SD=1.06$; Italian: $M=1.92$, $SD=1.01$; $t = 2.05$, $p = .05$, $d = -.27$) was not considered a useful source of motivation by students, and not even drama was considered a suitable tool to increase motivation in students because through plays it is possible to understand students' personal

emotions better (English: $M=2.19$, $SD=1.03$; Italian: $M=1.87$, $SD=.86$; $t = 1.87$, $p = .07$, $d = -.23$).

Graph 81

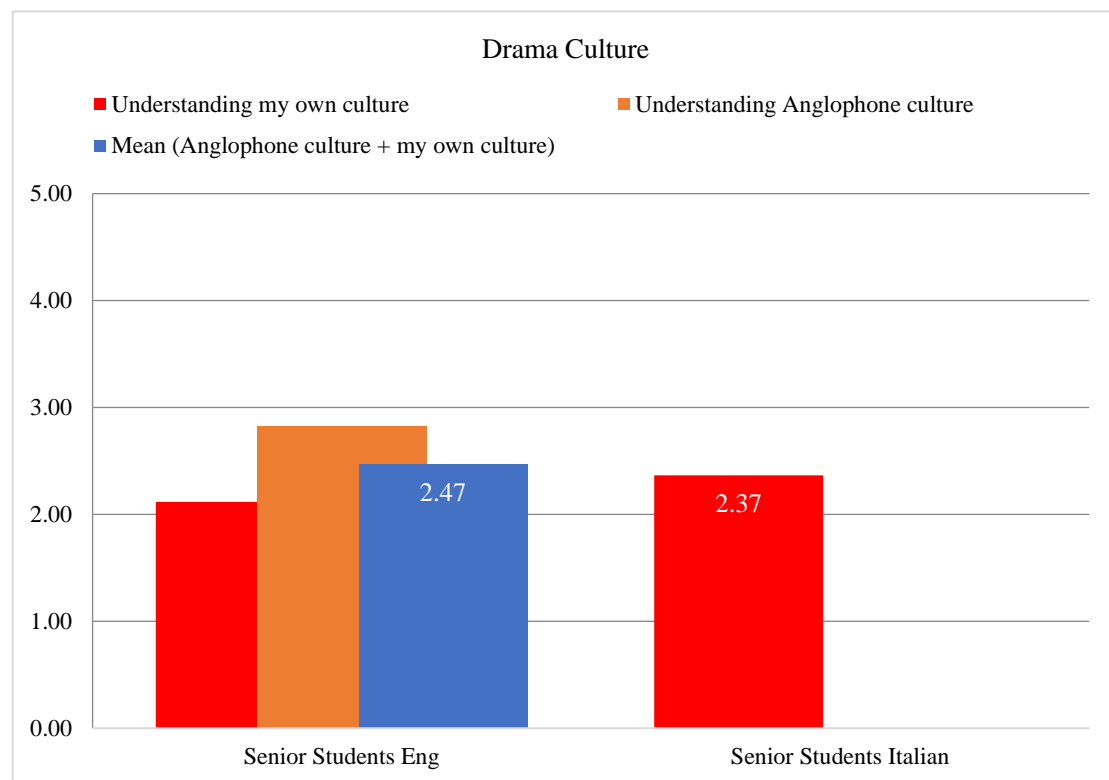
Means for the perceived usefulness of the motivational dimension of drama in English and Italian



As for the cultural dimension, as shown in Graph 82, from students' values, it is apparent that drama was not deemed as a valid source to develop the cultural awareness of their own country (English: $M=2.12$, $SD=.83$; Italian: $M=2.37$, $SD=1.10$; $t = .60$, $p = .27$, $d = -.06$). The lowest values can be detected in the possibility of improving the knowledge of students' own culture through English plays. The values related to the knowledge of Anglophone countries through English novels were neutral too ($M=2.83$, $SD=1.04$).

Graph 82

Means for the perceived usefulness of the cultural dimension of drama in English and Italian



In the light of the results provided above, we can affirm that we have answered the third research question which was about senior students' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in ELT and in their Italian literature classes and about which genre and which dimension (linguistic, sociocultural or motivational) students perceived to contribute most to their learning.

Students considered English literary texts sufficiently useful to develop their linguistic skills through novels, while all the other dimensions were underestimated and were rated below the neutral choice (3). The linguistic dimension in novels was also valued by learners as an element that contributed to the development of the competence in their mother-tongue. Furthermore, the cultural dimension in Italian poems and novels was valued as the most relevant component

among all the proposed dimensions. Concerning drama, students did not deem this genre to be beneficial for the development of their linguistic abilities either in Italian or in English.

Moreover, as displayed in Graph 83 and in Table 37, students considered that the most beneficial genre to improve the knowledge of both their mother tongue and the foreign language was the novel, while the least advantageous was drama, especially in Italian.

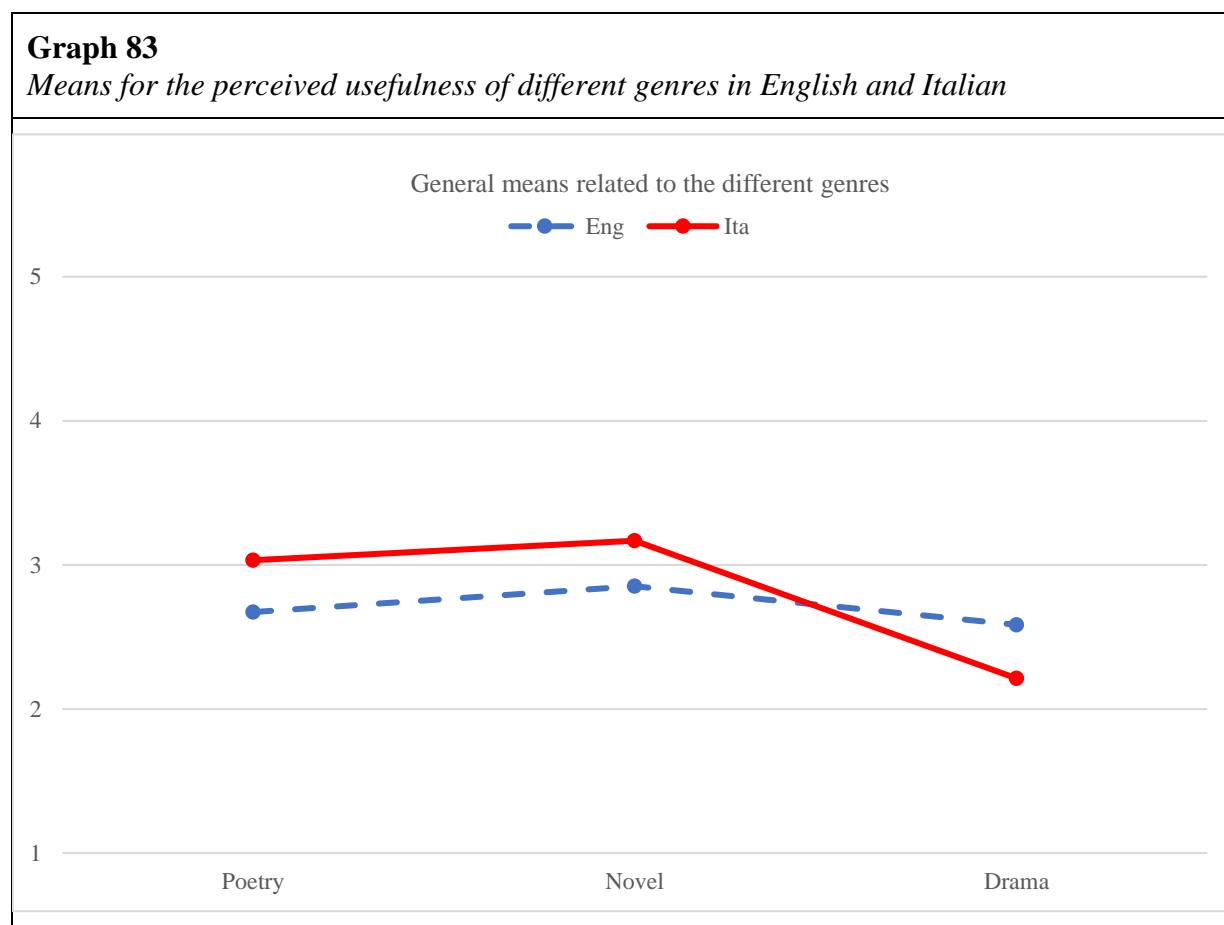


Table 37*Means and standard deviations related to each genre*

	English		Italian	
	M	SD	M	SD
Poetry	2.68	.41	2.81	.38
Novel	2.92	.49	2.98	.46
Drama	2.63	.34	2.18	.23

9.2.2. *Qualitative results*

Students were asked to provide comments to justify the scores they had given in the questionnaires about their views on the use of literary texts in their language classes both in their L1 and in the FL. Subsequently, students were asked two more questions. Firstly, we enquired whether their teachers had ever used both English and Italian literature with the explicit intention of developing students' linguistic skills and, secondly, we questioned whether they would have liked it if their teachers had used English and Italian literature to teach linguistic skills.

Italian literature: linguistic dimension

Poetry

In their comments, students generally confirmed the views expressed in the questionnaires. Related to the possibility of improving their linguistic skills through poems (listening, speaking, reading and writing), students stressed the difference between the language used in the poems they studied in class and the language they used in their everyday life.

“I don't think that it helped with my writing or speaking because the poems we read in class were usually written in ancient Italian.”

“We didn't use Italian poems to improve our linguistic skills.”

“Poetry differs from the prose, and I don't usually speak or write in rhyme.”²⁵

Although some students recognized the importance of poems in improving and developing their language skills (35%), the majority of comments highlighted the lack of a specific linguistic study and analysis, which could have improved their productive skills. For them, these skills were not systematically pursued through texts and through an in-depth study, which could have

²⁵ Students generally wrote their comments in Italian and English. The researcher limited himself to translating into English and correcting the syntax and the spelling of unclear sentences.

led to a better understanding of literature and to an improvement of their linguistic skills (65% of comments).

“We didn’t work as much as we should have done. We just read the poems and nothing else.”

“My classmates and I do not read in class a lot, neither we write.”

“I don’t use the words I read in the poems when I write a text or when I speak to others. It can improve my general knowledge, but it doesn’t have a practical use.”

“Poems haven’t improved my skills.”

However, from the point of view of vocabulary, students’ perception of poems was different. The trend for this element was in contrast with the previous values. In fact, the majority of the participants (67%) admitted that poems improved their vocabulary.

“You can learn new vocabulary and expressions.”

“I can learn some words I’ve never heard before, and so I can enrich my vocabulary.”

“Many words are new or are unusual, so I have to search for them, and this gives me the chance to look for synonyms.”

“I could learn new words.”

“It is useful to know new words, and so I improved my linguistic skills.”

“Poems use complex constructions and words, and then I can learn some new synonyms and use them in my everyday language.”

“I can learn some new words through poems.”

“I learnt new words, ancient and modern ones.”

Concerning grammar, students’ views confirmed their idea that poems are not useful to acquire a better knowledge of the structures of their native language, with a preponderant number of students (70%) who deemed it as useless to improve their grammar and a minority of learners stating its significance in poems (30%).

“In poems, grammar is not important.”

“Most of the times, poems are written in an archaic form or with archaic words, so the Italian grammar is not respected.”

Novels

Students were favourably in favour of using novels to improve their linguistic skills. In fact, their positive feedback was very high (79%).

“When you read, you learn more about Italian structures and techniques.”

“You become familiar with linguistic structures.”

“The most famous authors usually use the best linguistic forms in Italian, and this helps me improve my skills.”

“It is useful to read and study novels to improve linguistic skills. It is a great exercise for writing and reading.”

Few students expressed negative feedback (21%), linked more to the teaching techniques used in class than to the usefulness of novels as a means to improve linguistic skills.

“We study literature, but we don’t apply it to our daily life.”

“Training is the best way to improve. For the most part, the teacher reads for us. I would have liked to have more conversations.”

Regarding the possibility of enriching their vocabulary through novels, students gave very positive comments about this element (89%).

“You can learn new words and so improve your vocabulary.”

“Authors use different words.”

“I enlarged my vocabulary with new terms.”

“In novels, a wide variety of terms is used, so this could enrich my vocabulary.”

“You can’t always repeat the same word.”

“It taught me new words, from the past and from modern times.”

However, some students (11%) underlined the need for a different kind of approach to literary texts.

“We just read short excerpts; we only focus on the content.”

The grammatical component in novels did not collect shared and unanimous opinions. Some students considered novels a useful means to improve their knowledge of grammar (60%):

“I think that reading novels can help me improve my grammar.”

“You can see the right application of grammar rules.”

“I can understand the syntax and apply that again in my texts.”

Other students had an opposite view of grammar (40%). These students contradicted previous students' statements, stating that, through novels, it is not possible to learn grammar because, in literary texts, authors do not offer correct examples related to the modern standard language:

“Grammar in novels doesn't correspond with today's grammar.”

“It might help, but you need to practise grammar doing a lot of exercise in your early school stages.”

“I think that my knowledge of grammar has not changed that much.”

“We do not pay attention to grammar.”

“It's not the key point we focused on.”

“Sometimes authors don't respect grammar rules.”

“Grammar in novels is different from our grammar.”

“I have not noticed any important improvements in grammar thanks to Italian novels.”

“The language in novels is not modern.”

“When I read a novel, I am not interested in grammar.”

Drama

While for poetry and novels students' comments were varied and diverse, with some components receiving mainly positive and other negative feedback, for drama, students provided mainly negative feedback (79%), confirming the positions assumed in the quantitative analysis.

However, if we consider students' reservations about the possibility of developing the four linguistic skills through plays, they assumed mainly two positions about this genre. The first one

is linked to the idea that plays use an archaic language, too far from contemporary language. The second idea is linked to the fact that students reported that they did not read plays in class and, even when they had read them, their teachers did not focus on the language, but rather on the themes and the historicity of the literary texts.

“We never read Italian plays in class.”

“We only read without doing exercises.”

“We didn’t read plays, so they didn’t help my Italian.”

“We have never dealt with plays.”

“Tragedies are full of ancient words.”

“Plays use a language too far from us.”

Students reiterated the same ideas for the possibility of improving the knowledge of grammar through plays. They deemed that the method used by their teacher was not based on the improvement of grammar and that the plays studied in class belonged to an ancient, distant era and therefore were written with an archaic language.

“We read and study the themes, not grammar.”

“I think that this type of text can’t really give you some tips on grammar.”

“They are not modern Italian, so they didn’t help me with my knowledge of grammar.”

“They are not written in modern Italian.”

“We don’t work on grammar.”

“Italian grammar is not respected in plays.”

“We never read them.”

“Plays use a language too far from ours.”

“We’ve never done such deep work.”

“Plays are very complex, and this is a limit in learning.”

English literature: linguistic dimension

Poetry

Students were positively in favour of using poems to develop their vocabulary (64%), their listening (46%) and reading skills (57%). They recognized that reading literary texts could improve the knowledge of the foreign language, helping them come across new words placed in a real context. Nonetheless, they did not provide a compelling reason why reading poems could help their listening skill.

“Reading is always a good exercise.”

“In poems, there are a lot of new words.”

“Reading English texts is a good way to memorise new words.”

“Listening to poems allowed me to understand more words.”

On the other hand, the trend showed for the other items in the quantitative analysis was confirmed by students’ comments. In fact, speaking (46% of negative comments), writing (62% of negative comments) and grammar (64% of negative comments) were not considered skills that they had improved through the use of poems in the EFL classes.

“I didn’t speak a lot in class because I’m shy.”

“Reading poems helped me only with vocabulary.”

“My English has not improved.”

“We don’t write after reading poems.”

“Writing skills could be developed mostly with written exercises.”

“We didn’t focus on that aspect [*writing*] when we were studying poems.”

“I think that my writing skills were developed with a lot of exercises, not through reading and studying English poems.”

“I think that writing skills can be improved with a lot of exercises.”

“Grammar in poems is sometimes different from the ordinary speech.”

“You learn grammar only if you do some grammar exercises.”

“Poetry has a different grammar.”

“The study of English poems did little to develop my knowledge of English grammar. The study focused on the content of the poem and not on the form.”

“Reading is not enough. A study of English grammar is necessary.”

Novels

In their feedback, as they had done in the quantitative section, students confirmed that novels could be beneficial to them to learn the FL. They highlighted that novels could help them develop their vocabulary particularly (94% of positive comments), and also their reading (75% of positive comments) and writing skills (75% of positive comments).

“English novels contain many new words.”

“Reading English novels has allowed me to enrich my vocabulary, even though those words are not used anymore today.”

“Reading helps a lot to enrich personal vocabulary.”

“Reading is important and necessary to learn a language.”

“Reading is always a good exercise.”

“I think that reading out loud is an important exercise to improve reading skills.”

“Reading is the best way to improve my reading skills.”

Speaking (63% of negative comments) and grammar (50% of negative comments) resulted to be skills that students did not develop through novels.

“Speaking skills are improved with reading and studying a lot.”

“My speaking skills are very poor.”

“In my class, we use to read and complete some exercises or write something about what we read. We don’t speak that much.”

“My speaking skills are not good.”

“We don’t speak after reading.”

“We are never required to speak about what we read.”

Drama

Concerning plays, students' comments were positive for all the skills, except for writing (36% of negative comments) and grammar (89% of negative comments), confirming the answers provided in the previous tests. However, the reasons offered about the linguistic usefulness of plays were generic and mainly made reference to the only occasion in which students were supposed to speak in English about literature, i.e. during their oral tests, where they were required to refer about the literature they had studied.

“For oral tests, we have to talk about what we study at home in our textbook.”

“Reading helps you in general.”

“In class, we read and translate.”

“I think that grammar in plays is different from today's English grammar.”

“English grammar in the study of English literature was never addressed by my teacher.”

“English grammar in the study of English literature was never one of my teacher's aims.”

“We don't focus on grammar.”

“The plays we read don't teach us grammar.”

Italian literature: motivation

Understanding and sharing personal and other people's emotions and feelings

Students' feedback about the power that poems have to motivate them was not unanimous, especially regarding the statement that, through poems, it is possible to understand and share personal emotions better. Some students affirmed that poems could convey emotions that could be shared in class (49%), while others did not agree (51%) and stated that poems were not used in class with this teaching aim.

“We did not study poems in a reflective way, so we were not stimulated to think and reflect about them.”

“I didn’t analyse my feelings through poems.”

“I did not share my emotions through poems.”

“In class, we have no time to think about the sentimental aspects of poems.”

The chance of understanding other people’s emotions through poems did not obtain a unified evaluation either. Students mainly recognized the possibility of becoming acquainted with the poets’ emotions.

“When you read a poem, you have to understand it and understand the emotions of the author.”

“If I read poems, I find it very difficult to understand other people’s emotions.”

Students’ feedback about the possibility of understanding and sharing personal and other people’s emotions through novels received a lower consideration. The preponderant part of participants (61%) affirmed that reading novels in class was not an occasion to understand and share personal feelings and emotions.

“They don’t help me understand and share my personal emotions very much.”

“Not really, they often speak about themes that do not concern my life.”

“I didn’t share my emotions.”

“It could be interesting to understand what other people think about the same topic, but in class, it isn’t always possible.”

“We never dedicated time in class to share our feelings or ideas.”

“We’ve never talked about our personal emotions and feelings.”

Only a minority (39%) admitted that novels could be engaging because of the chance of knowing personal and other people’s emotions and feelings.

“You can learn a simple way through which you can express your emotions.”

“You learn to express your feelings in different ways.”

“It motivated me to write my own considerations.”

“You learn to see the perspective of other people.”

“They can make the understanding of other people’s emotions easier.”

“It helped my empathy.”

“Getting into someone else’s mind is awesome, think of *Zeno’s Conscience*.”

“By knowing other people’s feelings, I can find new ways to express mine.”

Participants’ views about emotions and feelings through plays received a shallow consideration instead. Only a few students considered plays a way of understanding and sharing personal and other people’s emotions (22%), the majority stated that plays do not stir their emotions and that they had never performed these kinds of activities in class (78%).

“We never read Italian plays in class.”

“I can’t be influenced by a play at all.”

“I don’t find myself in the plays I read.”

“We haven’t talked about our emotions.”

“We usually don’t do this type of activity.”

“We didn’t study them analysing our feelings.”

Figures of speech and sound and creative use of language

Students agreed about the possibility of learning the figures of speech and sound and of discovering a creative use of language through poems.

“A poem is full of figures of speech and sound.”

“I think that in poems there are a lot of figures of speech, so reading them made me familiar with metaphors, similes and alliterations.”

Conversely, there was disagreement among students about learning the figures of speech and the creative use of language in novels. Half of the students stated that they had learned these rhetorical devices mostly through poems than through novels. For some of the students, figures of speech even lacked in novels.

“There aren’t so many figures of speech in novels; poetry is better to learn them.”

“There are not many figures of speech and sound in novels.”

“In prose, I don’t see many figures of speech in novels such as in poetry.”

However, students deemed that plays did not help them learn the figures of speech (77%) and that this genre did not contain examples of creative use of language (67%).

“In Italian plays, there aren’t many figures of speech.”

“I have never noticed an evocative use of language in plays.”

Interpretative skills

The question about the development of students’ interpretative skills through poems gave rise to some statements about the difficulty of interpreting literary texts and the usual teachers’ attitudes towards the teaching of this skill:

“When we read a poem in class, the teacher asks for our own interpretations, but it seems that they are always wrong.”

“We study the teacher’s interpretations.”

However, students recognized the importance of this feature also in novels, but not in plays.

“The teacher explains the meaning of the novels so, most of the time, I don’t make my personal interpretation.”

“With the teacher’s comment, it’s easy to find hidden meanings.”

“We do not analyse texts by ourselves; it is the teacher who usually does that for us.”

Values and topics

Participants were mainly aware of the importance of the values and of the topics expressed in the poems. In their comments, they underlined the presence of relevant and remarkable topics and values which, in their opinion, are expressed in a refined and sumptuous style in poems.

“In some poems, there is always a moral which makes me think.”

“I like understanding other people’s values. People who lived during another time.”

“We have studied Leopardi who talks about the meaning of happiness, life, love and nature in a very peculiar way, so I really liked him.”

“It’s interesting how different poets interpreted the same themes.”

The majority of students found topics and values expressed in novels exciting and engaging (positive feedback about topics in novels = 58%, negative feedback about topics in novels = 42%; positive feedback about values in novels = 74%, negative feedback about values in novels = 26%).

“If novels contain interesting topics, reading them in class motivates me.”

“Sometimes, in novels, there are very interesting and current topics.”

“Values described in novels motivate me.”

“Novels deal with great values, and they teach something.”

“Topics in novels are not always so interesting; they are often outdated.”

Instead, for plays, participants were less unanimous (positive feedback about topics in plays = 42%, negative feedback about topics in plays = 58%; positive feedback about values in plays = 50%, negative feedback about values in plays = 50%).

“Some plays have a beautiful, final moral.”

“Plays usually talk about very important and original themes.”

“Plays deal with important values for all of us.”

“We never read Italian plays in class.”

“Plays contain interesting themes, but they don’t motivate me.”

“We never read them.”

“Plays don’t motivate me.”

“I don’t really know what the main topics in plays are.”

Authentic material

The authenticity was not considered a motivating characteristic of literary texts. Some students considered the use of poems as authentic material a motivating feature (37%), while a more significant part (63%) considered this characteristic not engaging.

“The fact that they are authentic material doesn’t motivate me.”

“I don’t care about it.”

Novels and plays were not definitely considered genres which could motivate students because of their intrinsic authenticity (negative feedback about the motivation that comes from the authenticity of novels = 76%, negative feedback about the motivation that comes from the authenticity of plays = 95%).

“Even if they are authentic, this is not a reason for considering them interesting.”

Conciseness of poems

The conciseness that can characterise poems was not seen as a source of motivation for students either. Almost the totality of participants stated that this feature was not relevant for them, mostly because, in their views, the poems studied in class were all very long.

“All the poems are very long.”

“Few of them are concise.”

“Up to now we have only read too long poems, and they are boring because when you finish reading them, you don’t remember what you have read at the beginning.”

Point of view

Students were unanimous in considering the study of Italian novels as a means to understand different points of view because, in novels, the reality is often seen from several perspectives.

“I think that the several perspectives of the characters can help me understand different points of view.”

“Through a different perspective, I can easily understand another point of view.”

Concerning plays, only half of the students recognised the presence of different points of view, while the other part of the participants reiterated the argument that they had not dealt with plays in class. This position was repeated with another item, i.e. the motivation that came from the presence of real lifelike settings in plays.

“We do not have debates about plays.”

“We haven’t read several plays.”

“Often the plots of the plays are plausible, not fully realistic.”

Appreciation of poems, novels and plays

Notwithstanding all the reluctance towards poetry, some participants (42%) considered reading poems an enjoyable experience, even though the majority considered it unattractive (58%).

“I think that poems can make students develop new ways of thinking, but it depends on the type of poem.”

“Reading and studying Italian poems in class could be an enjoyable experience because, generally, Italian poems are characterised by musicality, and listening to them can relax me a lot.”

“Italian poems are interesting, and our poetry is so rich.”

In their negative comments, students mainly took it out on their teacher who, in their opinion, did not design engaging lessons about literature.

“It would have been an enjoyable experience if the teacher had been more engaging.”

“The lessons are boring.”

“Poems are very deep but, very often, they speak about themes that I don’t mind.”

“I am not interested in Italian literature; probably it is because of the way our teacher teaches them.”

“We didn’t examine poems in-depth, so it’s like eating a pizza without enjoying it.”

“The enjoyment depended on the author and on the teacher’s mood.”

Some students considered reading novels at school an enjoyable experience, while a lot of them considered this class activity humdrum.

“They make me feel in another world.”

“I hate when someone is breathing down on my neck, and I am under pressure all the time while I’m reading.”

“I like the stories, but we read in class old novels. I prefer the modern ones.”

Concerning plays, students reiterated their point that they had not dealt with this genre extensively in class, so they could not really appreciate them.

“If we had read them in class, it would have been interesting.”

“It could have been entertaining and different from the other things that we usually do in class.”

“I’m not familiar with plays, so I can’t say much.”

“We didn’t deal with plays, but I think it could be great, it should be an interesting experience.”

English literature: motivation

Understanding and sharing personal and other people’s emotions and feelings

Students’ feedback about the power that poems have to motivate them, with reference to the statement that through poems it is possible to understand and share personal and other people’s emotions better, was not unanimous. Some students affirmed that poems could definitely stir

their personal emotions (42%), while a consistent part of them stated that poems were not used in class with this teaching aim, even though it could be a source of motivation. Although, some students asserted that, through poems, they could understand other people's emotions and share their emotions with the other schoolmates (44%).

"I think that reading and studying English poems helped me to understand my emotions and my feelings."

"I think that English poems convey feelings that engage the reader."

"During the English literature lessons, there is little debate. No personal emotions and feelings are shared about the poems."

"I am really shy, and it is not so easy to speak in front of other people."

Concerning the possibility of understanding and sharing personal and other people's emotions through novels, students' feedback proved to be a little different from what was shown in the quantitative tests. In fact, the understanding of other people's emotions received a higher consideration by students (positive comments=56%, negative comments=31%), while the understanding of students' own personal emotions received lower regard (negative comments=56%, positive comments=31%).

"I'm a very empathetic person."

"There is the involvement of the reader in the psychology of the characters. It's an exercise to develop empathy."

"The characters show their feelings with their stories."

"Reading English novels, you can discover new emotions and feelings, but in class, we did not share our emotions."

"Our teacher has never done this kind of activities."

"I am not used to share my personal emotions and feelings after reading English novels. In class, the focus is on the content and the structure."

"Orwell's novel made me reflect on situations that still exist. But there is no sharing of emotions in class."

Participants' views about understanding and sharing personal emotions and feelings through plays received a shallow consideration. Only a few students considered plays a way of understanding and sharing personal and other people's emotions (22%), the majority stated that plays did not stir their emotions and that they had never performed these kinds of activities in class (44%).

"The teacher did not focus her lessons on sharing the feelings that the plays could boost."

"In my class, we've never shared our emotions."

Figures of speech and sound and creative use of language

Students agreed about the possibility of learning the figures of speech and sound and of discovering a creative use of language through poems, even though they underlined how this aspect was learned and developed more in their L1.

"Text analysis is the best useful way to know figures of speech and sound."

"We did it more with Italian poetry."

"With the help of the teacher, we analyse a poem. We also give the author's interpretation."

In some comments, students showed a compartmentalised view of knowledge, affirming that figures of speech are different according to the different languages and not universally defined.

"Figures of speech are totally different from Italian's figures of speech."

"Yes, but English poems use them in a different way compared to today's English."

Conversely, there was disagreement among students about learning the figures of speech and the creative use of language in novels. Almost half of the students stated that they had learned

these rhetorical devices mostly through poems than through novels. For some of the students, figures of speech even lacked in novels.

“The study of English novels did not include the study of particular figures of sound or speech.”

“I’ve always found it difficult to understand the figures of speech and sound even in my mother tongue.”

“In novels, there are no figures of speech.”

However, students deemed that plays did not help them learn the figures of speech (44%) and that this genre did not contain examples of creative use of language (56%).

“We did not look for figures of speech in plays.”

“I think that reading and studying English plays aren’t creative activities.”

“The study of English plays did not include the study of particular figures of sounds or speech.”

“The language used in English plays is refined, elevated. It has never been used at this level in the classroom.”

Interpretative skills

The question about the development of students’ interpretative skills through poems gave rise to some statements about the difficulty of interpreting literary texts and the teachers’ attitude towards the teaching of this skill:

“Yes, but the teacher’s help is always necessary.”

“The teacher support is necessary for me.”

“Studying English poems wasn’t a creative activity. My interpretative skills haven’t developed.”

“I find it a bit difficult because you have to know the historical and literary context to do it properly.”

Students recognized the importance of this feature also in novels, but detrimentally reiterated the difficulty of carrying out this activity without the help of the teacher.

“I think that creative skills haven’t improved. It isn’t a creative activity, because our teacher wants only one answer: his.”

“In class, we are supposed to translate and not to create.”

“I do never have the possibility to develop my own ideas. Everything is defined by the teacher.”

For plays, students gave negative feedback without justifying their answers in a specific way. One student underlined that she was used to reading plays at home, not in class, while another one only emphasised the difficulty of this task.

“I read them at home.”

“This was more difficult.”

Values and topics

Participants were mainly aware of the importance of the values and of the topics expressed in the poems. In their comments, they underlined their relevance.

“I think that [*poems*] could be a source of inspiration.”

“It’s difficult to find them [*values*] in other texts.”

The majority of students found topics and values expressed in novels exciting and engaging because, for them, they have formative and educational significance.

“English novels motivated me to find and discover some important values.”

“In stories, there are always values that we can imitate.”

“The stories are always full of interesting ideas.”

“Many English novels have attracted my interest, especially if they deal with topics such as love, social injustice, war or the figure of women.”

“The topics dealt with in novels are never trivial. I believe that some themes should be re-proposed today.”

Instead, for plays, students were less unanimous (positive feedback about topics in plays = 32%, negative feedback about topics in plays = 58%, neutral answers = 10%; positive feedback about values in plays = 62%, negative feedback about values in plays = 25%, neutral answers = 13%). The reasons students gave were referred to the presence of archaic values and language in plays and to the fact that these topics did not raise students' interest and motivation.

“Reading plays is an important way to discover the values of the past.

“Plays are difficult.”

Authentic material

Poems and novels were definitely considered genres which could motivate students because of their intrinsic authenticity (positive feedback = 58%)

“Poems are authentic material and reading them is a way to know them and discover our history.”

The authenticity was not considered a motivating characteristic of plays. Students feedback showed that the use of plays as authentic material was a feature that did not engage them (negative feedback = 56%).

“Plays are authentic material. But they don't motivate me.

“I am not motivated to read plays.”

Conciseness of poems

The conciseness that can characterise poems was not seen as a source of motivation. Almost the totality of participants stated that this feature was not relevant, mostly because, according to them, the drive to read poetry does not come from its length.

“The length of the poems isn't important.”

“Not so much. It motivates me because I like poetry.”

“I think that sometimes the more concise they are, the harder it is to interpret them.”

“I prefer long and passionate stories rather than short, concise poems.”

“I partially agree. I struggled to understand the meaning of some poems I read.”

Point of view

Students were unanimous in considering the study of English novels and plays a useful tool to understand different points of view because, in them, the reality is often seen from several perspectives. We do not know if this was an internalised concept or if students agreed because they had heard their teachers reiterating this idea.

“That’s what my teacher keeps saying.”

“I think so. Each character has a personal point of view. The reader can try to understand them.”

“Reading novels certainly helps me understand different points of view.”

Appreciation of poems, novels and plays

Notwithstanding, in many items students gave positive feedback, the majority of participants considered reading poems in class an unattractive experience (negative feedback = 50%, positive feedback = 33%, neutral feedback = 17%).

“We only read poems, nothing more.”

“Reading and studying English poems is often boring.”

“With my teachers, the lessons are not interesting.”

“I prefer novels.”

“In my experience, reading English poems isn’t a good experience, because the poets use a difficult language.”

Conversely, students considered reading novels and plays at school an enjoyable experience, even though they did not provide any reasons to justify their feedback about plays. Some of them even considered this class activity humdrum.

“I especially loved Jane Austen’s novels.”

“I am used reading English novels in class, and I find it really interesting because I can learn a lot of new words and different topics.”

“Reading and studying English novels at school is an enjoyable experience.”

“It is an enjoyable experience because some novels were very interesting in describing the characters.”

“Yes, I liked it. It was interesting.”

“No. It was boring. We only read the novels and translate them.”

“It is not an easy activity.”

“No, it isn’t. My teacher is horrible and dreadful. We have to study everything by heart, especially the theory written in the textbook. We never read a whole original text.”

Italian literature: sociocultural dimension

There was a lot of positive feedback from students about the possibility they had to widen the knowledge of their own country through literary texts. Students agreed with the possibility of better understanding their own culture through poems and novels. Even plays were seen as bearers of cultural values for the majority of pupils (positive feedback = 60%).

“We understand old facts that can explain modern behaviour.”

“Poems are a very important part of Italian culture and history.”

“Novels teach our history and describe it.”

“In plays, there are often represented the customs and traditions of a country.”

English literature: sociocultural dimension

Concerning poetry, students recognised that through poems, they could better understand English culture (positive feedback = 77%). This trend was not confirmed for the possibility of

understanding their own country (negative feedback = 43%, positive feedback = 43%, neutral feedback = 14%). They mainly mentioned the possibility of widening the cultural aspects belonging to past ages.

“I like studying cultures and cultural aspects.”

“They [*literary texts*] are like documents that can show us the mentality of people in a certain period: how they lived, the problems they had.”

“Poems deal with English culture. Especially ancient culture.”

“I think that reading English poems can help me understand the culture of the author, not my own culture.”

Concerning English novels, the majority of students confirmed the cultural value of novels. In their feedback, they mainly underlined the presence of ancient cultural aspects of the Anglophone countries in novels. For the development of the awareness of students' own country, students linked this competence to the difference between the culture they came across in novels and Italian culture. Nevertheless, some students did not find any reference or connection to Italy in reading English novels in class.

“Reading novels is a way to know the literature of that population in the past.”

“Reading English novels allows me to know many aspects of the culture of this nation, but especially in the past.

“I have often made comparisons between Italian and English culture, sometimes finding differences, but also similarities.”

“We are used to studying the historical context.

“We do not work about the differences between what we study and our own culture.”

As for plays, students' feedback showed that plays could help them develop their cultural competence, but they persistently mentioned the presence of ancient cultural aspects in plays, not current ones, while they did not find any reference to the culture of their own country in English plays.

“They [*plays*] represent the past.”

“I don’t remember particular aspects of anglophone countries studied in plays.”

“*[In plays]* There is no reference to my culture.”

Differences

If we compare students’ comments about the use of English and Italian literature in class, we can observe that the majority of comments highlighted the lack of a specific study and analysis of the linguistic dimension that could have improved students’ communicative skills, such as the speaking skills or grammar. For students, these aspects were not systematically pursued through texts and through an in-depth study based on literary texts. However, students recognised the development of their reading skills and the improvement of their vocabulary through the proposed literary texts, even though they complained about the presence of expressions that are no more used in contemporary English and Italian, i.e. of words that belong to an ancient, distant era and therefore are far from effective learning of the modern language. Students also reported that, if they read passages from plays in class, it only happened in English and without focusing on the language, but instead on the themes and the historicity of the literary texts.

Concerning motivation, students affirmed that in both languages, literary texts could stir their emotions, but in class they had never shared their emotions with other schoolmates. Moreover, in both languages, students agreed with the possibility of learning the figures of speech and sound through poems. Only this genre seemed to be used by teachers to explain these rhetorical devices. Students shared the idea that poems and novels could contain non-trivial topics and outstanding values. However, they were not unanimous in recognising a source of motivation in this respect.

Concerning the cultural dimension, there was a great deal of positive feedback from students about the possibility they had to widen the knowledge of their own country through Italian literary texts. Even plays were seen as bearers of cultural values for the majority of students,

even though they persistently mentioned the presence of ancient cultural aspects in literature, not current ones. At the same time, they did not find any reference to the culture of their own country in English texts, apart from a comparison that they could have implicitly done.

Further comments about the learning of Italian and English through literature

We asked students to answer the following question and to provide comments about their answers.

Have your teachers, in their language courses, ever used English literature with the explicit intention of developing your linguistic skills in English?

The majority of students answered that their English teachers sometimes (44%) used literature to teach linguistic skills. While 28% provided a negative answer, and 28% a positive one. In their comments, they pointed out which aspects their teachers mainly emphasised when using literature in class. The preponderant part of students indicated that their teachers used literature to develop their reading skills (41%) and their vocabulary (20%). Other mentioned elements were referred to the development of their speaking (15%) and listening skills (8%), to the general analysis of the texts (13%) and to the knowledge of English culture (3%).

Then we asked senior students a question about their mother-tongue:

Have your teachers ever used Italian literature with the explicit intention of developing your linguistic skills in Italian?

The majority of students (56%) answered that their Italian teachers did not use literature to teach linguistic skills. While 18% of participants admitted that their teachers did it sometimes, while 26% provided a positive answer. In their comments, they pointed out that their teachers mainly used literature to develop their reading skills and the knowledge of figures of speech.

When asked if they would have liked if their English teachers had used English literature to improve their linguistic skills, students declared that they ‘strongly agreed’ about it (24%), ‘slightly agreed’ (30%), ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’ (30%), ‘slightly disagreed’ (12%), ‘strongly disagreed’ (4%).

The reasons provided were linked to the linguistic component and the motivational dimension.

“We could study literature to improve our linguistic skills.”

“Because, this way, I can do literature and at the same time improve my linguistic skills.”

“Because the lessons could be less boring.”

When asked the same question about Italian classes, that is, ‘would you have liked it if your teachers had used Italian literature to improve your linguistic skills in Italian?’, students answered that they ‘strongly agreed’ about it (26%), ‘slightly agreed’ (42%), ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’ (22%), ‘slightly disagreed’ (8%), ‘strongly disagreed’ (2%).

The comments that students provided about this evaluation were based on the motivation that this kind of activities could have enhanced and on the possibility of improving students’ linguistic competence.

“It could be an authentic and productive method. Literature would not be useless rote learning.”

“I think it can be fun and a more participative way to learn and to improve my Italian.”

“I would have liked it better.”

“It would have been a different activity, different from the normal ones we do every day in the same way.”

“Italian writers were great models of language, so teachers can use them as models to improve our linguistic skills.”

If we compare the difference between students’ answers, we can recognise that students declared that their teachers had a similar attitude towards the use of literature in the L1 and in the FL. Almost the same percentage (a quarter of them) declared that their teachers made explicit

use of literature to teach linguistic skills both in the FL and in the L1. Conversely, the percentage of those who asserted the contrary is decisively higher for the L1. In fact, over half of the students asserted that their teachers did not use literary texts with this aim, while a quarter denied this use for the FL.

However, students showed that the tendency to use literary tests to improve students' linguistic competences is generally used more in the teaching of the FL (as displayed in Table 38).

Table 38 <i>Comparison between students' perceptions about the use of literature both in their L1 and in the FL</i>			
Have your teachers, in their language courses, ever used English literature with the explicit intention of developing your linguistic skills in English?		Have your teachers ever used Italian literature with the explicit intention of developing your linguistic skills in Italian?	
Yes	28%	Yes	26%
No	28%	No	56%
Sometimes	44%	Sometimes	18%

Concerning the possibility that students could have liked lessons where teachers used literature to improve students' linguistic competence, students showed that they would have liked this kind of lessons, especially in their L1. In fact, summing the positive answers (strongly agree and slightly agree), the percentage for Italian is 70%, while for English is 54%. As also declared by students in their comments about this question, they would have appreciated this kind of didactics because it could have given them further motivation to study literature.

Table 39

Comparison between students' preferences about the use of literature to improve both their L1 and the FL

Would you have liked it if your teachers had used English literature to improve your linguistic skills in English?		Would you have liked it if your teachers had used Italian literature to improve your linguistic skills in Italian?	
strongly agree	24%	strongly agree	26%
slightly agree	30%	slightly agree	42%
neither agree nor disagree	30%	neither agree nor disagree	22%
slightly disagree	12%	slightly disagree	8%
strongly disagree	4%	strongly disagree	2%

9.3. Discussion

Through the third research question, we analysed students' views about how literature had been used in both Italian and English classes. The results obtained from the questionnaire data showed that Italian literature was rarely used in class with the specific and explicit aim of improving students' linguistic competence, while English literature was sometimes used with this aim. Regrettably, data showed that literature did not represent a valid source of motivation for students in either language. Moreover, it was apparent that students had only dealt with poetry and excerpts from novels and rarely with plays in class.

9.3.1. Linguistic dimension

The analysis of data showed that students had a neutral attitude toward the use of literature in learning linguistic abilities both in the foreign language and in the mother-tongue. The only exception concerned the development of the reading skills and the expansion of vocabulary. Students considered that their writing skills and the improvement of their grammar were the elements that could have been less affected and developed by the use of literature in their language classes.

Drama was considered notably worthless to develop learners' linguistic skills. Students' reaction towards literary texts seemed to be characterised by a sort of rejection. This reaction probably originated from the general prejudice against literature, with the charge of difficulty and obscurity associated with it. This bias is in contrast with the need learners have to be reassured by what they feel as comprehensible and close to their experience, as stressed by Di Martino & Di Sabato (2014, p. 65).

As we have already pointed out, just a minority of participants affirmed that their teachers used literature with the explicit intention of developing linguistic skills both in English and in Italian. It seems crystal clear that teachers preferred a context-based and a text-based approach rather than a language-based approach to literature. The context-based approach is based on knowing about the mindset of writers, on biographical information and on the historical, cultural, and social context. In contrast, the text-based approach is based on literary terminology, on the study of figures of speech, on plots and themes, on the meanings behind stories, on setting (role of time and place) and on characters (Bloemert et al., 2019, p. 9). Teachers' preference for a context-based approach was confirmed by the investigation carried out by Bloemert et al. (2016, p. 15) on teachers' approaches to literature. The authors found out that participants to their investigation preferred a text-based approach ($M=4.54$, $SD=1.35$) and a context-based approach ($M=4.07$, $SD=1.52$).

Besides, at the end of our questionnaire, when students were asked if they would have liked if their teachers had used English or Italian literature to improve their linguistic skills, the majority of students agreed with this assertion (54% for English, 68% for Italian). Bloemert et al. (2019, p. 9) confirmed this point of view too. In fact, in their study about students' preferred approaches to literature, they pointed out that students were mostly in favour of a language-approach to literature (28% of preferences). These results are in line with a wealth of studies about this topic. In Férrez et al., (2020, p. 79), the majority of participants declared to appreciate the linguistic approach to literature proposed by the researchers (53.1%). Di Martino & Di Sabato (2014, p. 7) asserted that literature could be taught to increase competence in language learning, while Lazar (2009) affirmed that literature expands "students' knowledge and awareness of the language in general" (p. 31).

9.3.2. Motivational dimension

Authentic material

The senior students who took part in our project asserted that authenticity was not essential to them as long as this aspect would not prevent them from enjoying their lessons. Concerning authenticity, theorists have recommended the use of authentic material in class. Khatib et al. (2011, p. 215) and Aghagolzadeh & Tajabadi (2012, p. 206) pointed out that authenticity in literary texts is a fundamental criterion because they are not written for pedagogic purposes and reflect the real-life advocated by the communicative approach. This aspect was not considered significant by the students, probably because they did not regard it as linked to practical use in their daily reality. The literary texts they had used in class were related to past eras and contexts that were too distant in time from them. Moreover, the language used was not considered contemporary by students, and therefore, authenticity was not regarded as a source of motivation, because the texts were too distant from their interests. Probably, students would have preferred “authentic” examples of the language they used in their daily contexts, such as video clips, YouTube videos, advertisements, online articles. However, both educational stakeholders should understand each other’s concerns. Students should learn to be acquainted with less ephemeral artistic samples of the linguistic models to follow, and teachers should keep in mind that the shape of a language changes continuously and relentlessly.

Creativity and figures of speech

The creative use of language received by students a neutral stance, maybe because of the lack of practice in class in this regard, while the figures of speech were considered a crucial point in poems. In fact, students considered that poems were the best tools to understand and improve the knowledge of figures of speech. The possibility of learning figures of speech through poems

to improve learners' reactions to literary texts and to foster their interpretation abilities was underlined by Babae & Yahya (2014, p. 82). However, students did not consider studying novels and plays beneficial to the improvement of their knowledge of rhetorical devices. This was due to the fact that they were used to studying them through poems in class, and not through novels or plays. Therefore, they were probably led to think that novels and plays did not contain them at all.

Interpretative skills

Concerning the chance of developing their interpretative skills, participants gave neutral feedback for poetry and novels and low feedback for plays, especially in Italian. When asked to give reasons for their answers, they underlined how they were linked and dependent on their teachers' help to provide meaningful interpretations of the texts and this aspect also led them to frustration because it seemed to them that they were not able to find out any interpretations without the support of the teacher. Several studies have shown that motivation is enhanced when teachers support autonomy, curiosity and engagement in students (Smit et al., 2014, p. 697)

The need for less teacher-centred classes was stressed by Timucin (2001, p. 283), who asserted that students are usually asked to memorise what the teacher or the textbook propose about a given literary work. Students' complaints about the method used by their teachers can be read as a request for more meaningful and engaging learning.

The teaching attitude modelled on a robust teacher-regulated form of instruction can occur when students do not master a particular learning activity and teaching often "leads to isolated and inert knowledge" (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999, p. 258). Therefore, even if students acquire knowledge, they may not acquire a useful competence and the necessary skills to apply the knowledge to solve problems in practice. When students perceive that the teaching is profitless

and that the gap between teaching and learning is unbridgeable, destructive frictions may also occur (Hattie & Yates, 2014, p. 136).

Understanding of personal and other people's feelings and the different points of view

The approach to the literature chosen by teachers also led to a lack of emotional involvement towards the proposed literary texts. In fact, students' feedback about the possibility of understanding personal and other people's emotions was low. Some students asserted that they did not like to discuss personal feelings in class because they were not used to. This risk was also emphasised by Lazar (2009), who required teachers to be careful of the danger of making some students self-conscious in class because they could find it unpleasant to talk over their personal feelings or beliefs (p. 25). A similar reluctance was shown by some participants who took part in the survey carried out by Férrez et al. (2020). The authors referred that some students displayed a sort of unwillingness to talk about their private matters. In reference to speaking, the authors reported that some students had remarked that they had not felt comfortable talking in class about private feelings and emotions (p. 67). Moreover, they added that, for some participants, poems were "too distant from their own life experiences" (p. 67).

This reluctance contrasts with the plethora of theoretical articles on the topic. In fact, as we have previously pointed out, manifold authors have underlined the power that literature has to develop students' empathy, tolerance for diversity, and emotional intelligence (Amer, 2003, p. 63; Ghosn, 2002, p. 176). However, the students who took part in our study did not claim that literary texts could not stir their personal emotions, they asserted that activities aimed at understanding other people's emotions in their class had not been carried out. Maybe

intentionally planning this kind of activities could lead them to develop life-skill based educational competences.²⁶

Conversely, the point of view in novels received a high consideration by students, especially for English literature. Students recognised that through novels and, to a certain extent, through plays, a story can be narrated from the point of view of the different characters. This is in line with other authors, such as Aghagolzadeh & Tajabadi (2012), who stated that this element could develop students' interpretative abilities and educate the whole person (2012, p. 206), and Van (2009), who stressed the importance of interpreting complex texts that could help students analyse and make comments that could take into account the variety of the different points of view (p. 5). Moreover, Khatib et al. (2011) asserted that the different points of view in literary texts could enrich the learners and help them “discover their own solutions, thus boosting the skills and insights they are in need of while dealing with conflicts” (p. 215).

Values and topics

Even though students recognised the presence of values and relevant topics in literary texts, learners did not consider these a steadfast source of motivation because they felt that this kind of topics and values were far from their life and experience. Theorists have indeed focused their attention on topics in literature and evaluated them as genuinely remarkable and motivating when correctly chosen (Di Martino & Di Sabato, 2014, p. 18). Choosing the appropriate literary texts can give the student enough motivation to learn the target language (Babae & Yahya, 2014, p. 83) and to improve the mother tongue. The importance of selecting the right texts, i.e. those which could be motivating and involving for learners, has also been emphasised by Lazar (2009,

²⁶ Life-skill based education is advocated by the UNICEF that published the report Global Evaluation of Life Skills Education Programmes, retrieved here: https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/UNICEF_GLS_Web.pdf

p. 128). Nevertheless, teachers tend to use texts belonging to the traditional canon, made up of famous, classic literary works that often contain language that is difficult for students to comprehend and deal with topics that are far from their reality (Van 2009, p. 3).

9.3.3. Sociocultural dimension

The questions about sociocultural competence were linked to the possibility students had to become acquainted with the culture of Anglophone countries and to understand their own culture better while working with literary texts in English. As for the Italian literature, students were obviously only asked if, by reading poems, novels and plays in their Italian classes, they could better understand their own culture.

Concerning English literature, students showed a neutral attitude towards the use of poems and novels to understand the culture of Anglophone countries better, while, as for plays, their consideration turned out to be even lower than the one shown in the previous genres. For the chance of understanding their own culture through the study of English literature, students asserted that they considered this point totally undeveloped. In fact, the values they gave were low. This stance probably comes from the typical compartmentalisation that separates the different subjects in schools, as emphasised by the European report on the quality of school education.²⁷ The integral, holistic, inter- and cross-curricular character of any educational intervention should become, in this perspective, an inescapable fact. An education and teaching practice based on different subjects which are separated, partial, analytically cumulative and merely disconnected has so far been theorized and applied only by a pedagogy of cultural objects, and not of the human person. As Bertagna (2006, p. 72) asserted, regrettably, in today's education, there are independent and distinct means for the different disciplines of study, for the

²⁷ <http://aei.pitt.edu/42406/1/A6503.pdf> (p. 9).

lessons of disciplinary teaching, for the training modules, that are added like bricks in a wall. Specialised teachers are called, in their own specificity, to realize that they have always to confront the wholeness of the “human person” they are addressing. Also, they should realize that, as teachers, their work makes sense only if inexhaustibly animated by the inspiration to connect it to a unity which they must not forget they are part of. The consequence of all this situation is that students do not realize that it is crucial to apply a divergent and broad-minded perspective to understand their relationship to ‘the other’ and to critically engage with their own background to better comprehend themselves. In fact, learners need to develop their cultural awareness and “reflect on their own social identities and their own cultures in order to better understand those of other people” (Wandel, 2003, p. 79).

Concerning the possibility to better understand their own culture through Italian poems and novels, students showed that they had utterly internalised the idea that literary texts are the expression of the whole culture. This aspect is in line with the already mentioned theorists and with the empirical study carried out by Korkmaz (1991), who administered a questionnaire to 75 students attending the Faculty of Education at the University of Uludağ, in Turkey. In this survey, 68% of participants agreed with the assertion that literature helped them develop their cultural awareness (p. 4).

Concerning their L1, students did not recognise the possibility of promoting their cultural awareness through Italian plays. In fact, they asserted that they did not find them a useful means to better understand their own culture. This bias towards plays probably derived from the lack of an in-depth study of this genre, as they admitted in the provided comments, which highlighted the half-heartedly way in which students welcomed their teachers’ educational proposal. This resulted in a low level of students’ participation in class which led to the idea of the ineffectiveness of plays, which were not considered a real, authentic task.

We deem that students and teachers, this way, are losing an opportunity. As stated by Rothwell (2012), through plays, people can understand the “culture in which the language sits” (p. 55). Moreover, as stated by Farmer (2011), drama gives students “opportunities to explore, discuss and deal with difficult issues and to express their emotions in a supportive environment. It enables them to explore their own cultural values and those of others, past and present” (p. 9).

Text formats, linguistic choices, gestures can vary according to the different cultures and people through time and places. Without the recognition that both our first and foreign languages are connected to cultural beliefs, behaviours and histories, language remains sterile.

Chapter 10.

Conclusions

Courage. Kindness. Friendship. Character.
These are the qualities that define us as human beings,
and propel us, on occasion, to greatness.
R.J. Palacio, *Wonder*

10.1. Conclusions

With this thesis, we analysed the advantages of the use of literature in language education and tried to respond to the need for empirical studies which could validate the theoretical positions in this regard. Theorists have stated the benefits of using literature to learn a foreign language and to improve the L1 but, as we have seen, the potential of this collection of studies has been underdeveloped because of the call for more empirical research. As far as we know, we have expanded the existing research attempting to:

- compare three different literary genres (a poem, a novel and a theatre play) connected to three different dimensions (linguistic competence, motivation and sociocultural awareness);
- apply a sound methodology by comparing students' beliefs, opinions and perceptions, before and after carrying out three lesson plans based on three literary genres through pre-tests and post-tests;
- analyse and compare high school students' views about the FL and the L1;

- compare teachers' views with students' views about the use of literature to learn a FL.

After designing three lesson plans based on three literary genres, inspired by the advantages stated by theorists, we analysed students' views before and after experiencing the teaching of these lessons. Then, we tried to understand which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, motivational or sociocultural, students perceived to contribute most to their learning. With the second inquiry, we examined teachers' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in FL classes before and after observing lesson plans based on three literary genres, to understand which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, teachers perceived to contribute most to their students' learning. After that, we compared teachers' and students' views to grasp similarities and differences.

Our third objective was to unearth senior students' views regarding the use of poetry, novels and drama in their foreign language and native language classes to detect which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural or motivational, students perceived to contribute most to their learning, in their mother tongue and in their EFL classes. In the following paragraphs, we are going to explore the conclusions with respect to the various participants who took part in our survey.

First-year students' views on the use of literature as a tool for learning EFL

It was statistically demonstrated that the means in the post-tests were higher than those in the pre-tests. Consequently, we can state that our intervention effectively and favourably changed students' views on the use of literature in class and that pupils started to consider literary texts as a valid tool to learn the foreign language, to enhance motivation and to develop cultural awareness. Through the data we analysed, we observed that literature can have a positive impact

on students' linguistic competence, especially through novels and plays, but also on their motivation to learn the foreign language and on the development of their cultural competence.

Through our quantitative and qualitative study, we found out that students acknowledged that literary texts supported them in the development of rich lexical representations and could promote creative speaking, reading and writing skills in EFL. Literary texts were also considered as a source of motivation by students. Besides, studying literature proved to be valuable in its own right, as well as educationally beneficial: it opened windows into other worlds, gave aesthetic pleasure and stimulated critical thinking, essential skills in an increasingly frenetic and globalized world.

By analysing students' feedback after the teaching of our lesson plans, we showed that, from several points of view, students were favourable towards the use of literature to learn EFL. Their beliefs were positively expressed, especially concerning the novelty of the project. They recognized an improvement in their linguistic skills, especially in their speaking skills and the expansion of vocabulary. Moreover, students found out that plays can be an astonishing source of motivation because they represented a new discovery for them, and a new learning tool. Drama enhanced the value of their personal stories because students lived some key events of the stories contained in the literary texts by taking on roles and interacting with each other through them.

Among the motives for the students' favourable change of attitude towards literature, we underlined their enthusiasm linked to the novelty of an approach to language learning based on literary texts which prompted their motivation and boosted their positive feedback. In particular, literary texts appealed to students' feelings as much as to their thoughts in such a way that they recognized that literature could contribute to their own personal growth. Students worked collectively to make sense of the literary texts, and the process of working together allowed them to see how everyone thought in similar or different ways. The images created in drama unlocked

the meaning and the heart of the stories and turned them into parts of the students' cognitive framework. The journey of exploring stories was intended to motivate students to use the target language to argue, to persuade, to plead, and to negotiate. After this experience, it is likely that they will become eager to read more texts because we wish that their multisensory engagement with the stories paved the way for further reading.

Moreover, as stressed by Bloemert et al. (2019, p. 1), teachers, educators and researchers are used to debating about the best methods and procedures without asking students their points of view. Notwithstanding the increasing interest of researchers to actively engage learners in class through student-centred teaching approaches, students are usually excluded as objects of study (Bloemert et al., 2020, p. 1). Therefore, we tried to find out whether literature could be a valuable tool, including the voice of those who use to experience the curriculum first-hand, because attitudes and personality factors, as also stressed in the CEFR,²⁸ affect learners' roles in communicative acts, as well as their ability to learn.

According to our teaching aims, the acquisition of the foreign language comprised the acquisition of intercultural and civic competences, and the projection towards how these competences can frame otherness (Carter, 2007, p. 7). In a highly globalised era such as ours, there is a growing concern for universally shared needs rather than individual needs. As stated by Lazar (2009, p. 207), since literature deals with universal concepts that are common to all languages and cultures, such as love, hatred, and nature, there is an urge to take advantage of literature as an input source of motivation for a significant linguistic competence. As a consequence, similarities and even differences between cultures and languages can increase our understanding of the world.

²⁸ CEFR, p. 106.

Literary texts offered our students a means of experiencing language passionately and sympathetically, thus developing their literacy, motivation and cultural understanding. Students could, while reading literary texts in the foreign language, interact with the culture of the target language by means of personal experience. Such experience in foreign-language learning allowed them to inhabit different identities and to be involved emotionally in other lives and places.

Teachers' views on the use of literature as a tool for learning the FL

By comparing teachers' pre-tests and post-tests, it was statistically demonstrated that teachers favourably changed their minds about the use of literature as a tool for learning a foreign language. They considered that novels, in particular, could broaden students' vocabulary and improve their reading skills. We also have to mention the considerable difference between pre-tests and post-tests regarding the use of plays to develop students' linguistic skills. The change in teachers' views was due to the bias that sometimes teachers have about the possibility of learning the FL through literary texts because they deem that these are too difficult for students. Teachers often consider literature inappropriate to the language classroom because, in literary texts, students can find deviations from the conventions and from grammatical rules that are common in the standard language. Especially through the pre-tests, we found out that teachers were tightly tradition-bound and considered literature only in relation to the canon of great works of the past. The 'literature' we used, instead, was extended beyond the traditional canon of 'great works' (Hanauer 2001, p. 297) and was presented, somewhat controversially,²⁹ as a resource to be exploited, rather than as a dogmatic text to be analysed in its own right and for its own sake.

²⁹ As we have seen, a teacher did not consider appropriate for students the poem we had chosen, because in her opinion, it was not lyrical enough. She did not appreciate the novel either, asserting that the language contained in it was too colloquial and linked to youth language.

Therefore, we tried to remove the intimidating mysticism that surrounds literature, considering literary texts with a small 'l', thus taking them down from its pedestal (Rezanejad et al., 2014).

After considering the potentiality of literature in a language class, most of the teachers realised that literary texts could represent models which students may follow in their future use of the language and could foster motivation through interactive activities. We could perceive that, after observing our lesson plans, teachers saw a way to develop students' linguistic competences by promoting interest, critical thinking and expertise at the same time, which are ingredients for a promising future for responsible citizens.

As we compared students' and teachers' views, we observed that both teachers and students considered novels as the best genre to be used in class to develop language skills and to instil motivation. This is due to the idea that novels can be more useful because of their linguistic approachability related to their syntax and vocabulary that do not hinder immediate understanding, and because of the literary accessibility linked to its narrative and descriptive features.

A crucial difference was instead based on the fact that students appreciated the use of drama to develop their communicative competence, while teachers did not recognize this genre as particularly useful for this purpose. The difference was due to the personal and emotional involvement that students had while performing the speaking activities inspired by the play proposed in class. Maybe, if teachers had been present during the lessons and had accepted to take part in the activities carried out in class, they would have appreciated and understood the potentialities linked to the development of the linguistic competences this genre can offer.

Senior students' views on the use of literature as a tool for learning EFL and the mother tongue

Through the last cluster of questionnaires, we analysed senior students' opinions. Seniors did not report an emotional involvement towards the literary texts that they had studied in class with their teachers, both in the L1 and the FL. In fact, in their feedback, they claimed that, in class, literary texts were not used to understand personal and other people's emotions. Some students asserted that they did not like to discuss personal feelings in class, but they also provided a reason adding that they were not used to doing that kind of activities. This reluctance contrasts with the plethora of theoretical articles on the topic. In fact, as we have previously pointed out, manifold authors have underlined the power that literature has to develop students' empathy, tolerance for diversity, and emotional intelligence (Amer, 2003, p. 63; Ghosn, 2002, p. 176).

In their comments, students affirmed that they would have liked lessons where teachers had used literature to improve their linguistic competence, especially in their L1. Students would have mainly appreciated a new kind of didactics which could have enhanced their motivation to study literature. Moreover, even though they recognised the cultural value of literary texts, they still found these values too far from their reality because belonging to a distant past. We do not intend to deny the importance of past values. We endorse Bernard of Chartres' aphorism that we are *nanos gigantum humeris insidentes* (dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants), and we are aware that understanding our past allows us to understand our present, and that those who forget their past are condemned to live it again. Yet, students should be accompanied in the process of understanding their history and helped to connect their past to their present.

Through senior students' feedback, we also found out that drama remains an unwelcome guest in our classes, both in L1 and in FL. Students reported that they did not use plays in class as a tool either to learn the FL or the L1. As a matter of fact, some teachers participating in our inquiry

argued that plays only exist in performance. However, as it is apparent, they also exist as words on a page or a text (Lazar, 2009, p. 137). Of course, neither of these views are mutually exclusive, but teachers' lack of interest in this genre was mirrored in senior students' negligence towards drama. The consequence of this alienation is a missed opportunity for both students and teachers. As suggested by Chang (2012, p. 12), learners should practice the broader aspects of communication through drama. Among these are gestures and gesticulation, facial expression, eye contact, posture, proxemics and prosody which may assist them in becoming better communicators in additional languages as well as in their mother tongue.

This study showed that taking into account students' feedback should be the starting point of every course based on literature. Senior students complained about how they were dependent on their teachers' help to provide meaningful interpretations of the literary texts studied in class. They underlined how this aspect led them to frustration because it seemed to them that they were not able to find out any interpretations without the support of the teacher. The need for less teacher-centred classes was stressed by Timucin (2001, p. 283), who asserted that students are usually asked to memorise what the teacher or the textbook propose about a given literary work. If, according to the Italian Educational Guidelines issued in 2010, at the end of their schooling, students are supposed to understand the intrinsic value of literary texts as a source of comparison with other people and a broadening experience of the world, the entire educational path cannot be compromised by an undue and abstract insistence on interpretive grids and methodological aspects. As we have seen, if little chance for personal interpretation is left, literature can become very mechanical and demotivating (Lazar, 2009, p. 25), and the taste for reading can remain underdeveloped.

The analyses and the comparisons carried out participatory empirical research that allowed us to probe the common and relational ground between two different stakeholders of the educational agreement: teachers and students. This led us to understand similarities and differences and, if

through research it is possible to comprehend the meaning of what we perceive and if our perceptions operate only on differences, then, allowing the emergence of differences, is the condition for knowledge to be produced, and therefore introducing differences in a real context can help us to understand reality better. There are apparent ethical and pragmatic fallouts in showing, not declaring, a difference that, however present, until a moment before was simply not visible. Our research, therefore, wanted to reactivate differences present but not communicated, dormant, which can be tremendously illuminating for our language classes and make suggestions that could get teachers to identify some issues, problems or questions which they would like to follow up.

10.2. Pedagogical implications

To an observational research concept based on the survey about people, we preferred research with people. We chose to give students and teachers the right of speech, the right not only to speak of themselves, of the contexts of learning, but also of their points of view and of their interpretations. This way, the observation, not only uncovered objective data but constructed *sufficiently good* interpretations of reality, whose strength lies fundamentally in their ability to be discussed, tested and accepted on the basis of a process-shared negotiation.

The lesson plans we designed, along with the information and the tools mentioned in this study, represented a means to help create exciting, engaging and effective activities for learners, which can be achieved by learning about, implementing and redesigning our learning units. Our aim was to enrich the syllabus in the areas of creativity and innovation, collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving and communication.

We examined senior students' feedback to understand how literature had been used and taught to them and which formative effects it had had on their language education. In order to counterbalance their assumptions that literature was irrelevant to improve their linguistic needs of the mother-tongue, and to try to bridge the gap that they emphasised between real life and what they had studied at school, both in FL and L1 classes, students should be made aware that using literary texts could be a means to acquire linguistic competences and that it could be integrated within the skills-based classes. Some authors have asserted that literature is beneficial to develop these skills because students can write about and discuss a text before and after reading it. For instance, Bobkina & Stefanova (2016, p. 692) examined how working with literary texts in the English classroom can contribute both to learning a language better and to inspiring critical thinking through critical reading. Moreover, Gajdusek (1988) underlined that the teachers' goal should be to involve students communicatively in the classroom, to enable

them to discover what is significant instead of just providing them with easy, effortless solutions. Thus, if the students can identify the relevance of literature to their needs as language learners, especially in acquiring communicative competences, they are inclined to relate more easily to literature as a means to promote and boost their motivation. In short, the students need to understand the potential relevance of literature in learning the language.

We have found out that motivation or levels of performance will not necessarily increase if the pedagogy remains stubbornly traditional and rooted in textbooks learning. If we can manage to make students feel emotionally energised in the service of the target language, they are far more likely to try to use the language and dig deeply into the linguistic resources they possess in order to communicate through them. According to our experience, teachers seem to rely too much on textbooks, and on the “authority” that both teachers and students ascribe to these (Skela, 2014, p. 122). Textbooks generally provide the curriculum that is used in foreign language education courses. These are developed by privately owned publishers who often manage the market of the language certificates. Therefore, textbooks follow the same structure and propose the same frameworks of language tests. The teaching of the foreign language has been directed by the imposition of abstract standards, and the “evaluation tied to external standardized tests” (Hanauer, 2012, p. 105). Teachers seem to be bound to the requirements of specific textbooks that promote the methodology linked to the First Certificate.³⁰ Effective language classes should have the potential to build linguistic competences based on solid skills and knowledge that could instil a love for learning through engaging and motivating texts.

Students did not claim that, in their experience, literary texts could not stir their personal emotions. Instead, they asserted that activities aimed at understanding other people’s emotions

³⁰ First Certificate in English (FCE), is an English language examination provided by the Cambridge Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge, which offers English language courses for a charge.

in their classes had not been carried out. Maybe intentionally planning this kind of activities could lead them to develop life-skill based education competences.³¹

The findings also indicated that literature-based lessons allowed the conduction of creative, communicative activities that teachers and students appreciated and considered as useful to develop communicative competences. Moreover, students emphasised how problem-solving tasks, creative poem-writing activities and role-plays were engaging activities for them.

Besides, this study revealed that teachers' perceptions towards literature and its application in language education were characterised by bias. As a matter of fact, literature was considered a too austere argument to be dealt with by teachers who did not consider students learned enough to understand and appreciate its value. This reflection leads to reconsider the choice of literary texts used in class to avoid unreasonable exclusions. If we take into account the benefits of using storytelling activities with early learners in primary schools, we can appreciate more the positive impact of literature on learners of all ages (Traverso, 2013, p. 198).

Most of the senior students assumed that literary texts were different from everyday Italian and English language and were too far from modern themes. This assumption recalls and reiterates one of the most urgent pedagogical needs in our schools, that is the lack of relevance for students' needs as language learners of a traditional syllabus, and the urge to find authentic materials, as emphasised by Hall (2005, p. 139), but also the challenges teachers must face regarding the selection of suitable literary texts for the students. Teachers should be extremely cautious while choosing the texts that they want to deal with in the classroom because the "needs of the students, their motivation, interest, and cultural background should be taken into consideration while selecting a literary work for the classroom teaching" (Abraham, 2010, p.

³¹ Life-skill based education is advocated by the UNICEF that published the report Global Evaluation of Life Skills Education Programmes, retrieved here: https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/UNICEF_GLS_Web.pdf

80). The importance of choosing the right literary texts to motivate learners and to encourage them to learn through active participation has also been emphasised by Lazar (2009, p. 138).

Furthermore, if students find that literature deals with topics that are connected to their own experience in life, they can show lower anxiety levels, and learning can take place effectively. As pointed out by Sell (2005, p. 92), if students are provided with topics which are taken from authentic materials, lessons can have a chance of engaging them. Literary texts, carefully chosen according to learners' social and cultural environment, level of psychological development interests, concerns and aspirations, can be useful tools for stimulating and achieving language learning and equipping learners with relevant linguistic and sociocultural competences. We believe that the very act of exploring different values can help students and teachers understand each other, and therefore enable people to begin developing a community that shares and cares in responsible and respectful ways (Ruggiano Schmidt & Watts Pailliotet, 2001, p. 2).

Another essential point is linked to the teaching of values. Rather than answering a crucial key question about what values are the accepted norms of society, some teachers and educators simply began to ignore the study of values in class. Teachers who maintained a neutral stance or neglected the study of values were leaving students' learning to chance (Ruggiano Schmidt, & Watts Pailliotet, 2001, p. 3). Students should have opportunities to explore values through reading, writing, listening, speaking, and reasoning. Students should learn about compassion, human decency, caring, sharing, cooperation, respect, responsibility, and an appreciation for cultural differences. We believe these are values that can be explored and learned through literature. Literary texts can facilitate the building of classroom and school communities that connect home and school for literacy learning (Ruggiano Schmidt, & Watts Pailliotet, 2001, p. 4).

Another pedagogical implication inspired by literary texts that we could infer from students' comments is connected with how to engage effectively with creative activities in class, which

could also entail errors in language production. It is essential to make sure that everyone realises that errors are a natural part of the learning process and should not be harshly blamed. We could not agree more with Sloan (1984), who asserted that “production, not perfection is the rule” (p. 176). Production, in fact, should always be encouraged, both in L1 and FL. To continually criticise students’ language use and interpretations is to make them feel inadequate as human beings. Active, productive skills, such as speaking and writing, are particularly challenging and a little daunting for many students. More than training, they require encouragement to create and communicate through language. Imagination should not be halted, and shared beliefs and actions should take shape around the social vision constructed by personal entrepreneurship.

Moreover, we argued that teachers need to be aware of ‘how’ literature can be approached and presented to suit the lessons. Teachers should find out new ways to develop and take advantage of literature through activities that may offer students the experience to discover engaging values in texts. Teachers should also choose topics that can improve students’ communication skills through literary discussions based on literary scaffolding while offering minimal assistance to learners. In fact, some students affirmed that they became used to accepting ready-made interpretations from their teachers, rather than developing their own skills of interpretation and perceptions through reading. To address this issue, Katz (2001, p. 168) suggested that students should interact more actively with the text and discover its many layers of meaning through such interactions. This way, students can discover meanings independently and contribute to the development of class activities. Students’ dependence on teachers’ interpretations, typical of a traditional teacher-centred language teaching approach, has also been criticised by Kramsch & Kramsch (2000, p. 558).

As Galda (1998) pointed out, however, literature should not be only used to teach language. Even though students can learn to read, write, listen, and speak through the studied narrative forms, using texts only as linguistic examples can represent the “worst manifestation” of the use

of literature (p. 5). Therefore, teachers should not analyse a text exhaustively with little or no attention to the pleasure and power of the story. As stressed by Galda (1998): “When we use books this way, they become the means for learning whatever skill is being studied, and the books themselves get lost in the service of the curriculum” (p. 5). An alternative suggested by the author is using literature to develop literary knowledge through intertextuality, connections across life and literature as well as developing understandings about how literature works.

Considering the impact that students’ perspective has on how they learn, these findings have significant implications for the further implementation and development of integrated EFL and L1 literature curricula. If teachers want to foster and promote meaningful learning, they should reap productive gains in students’ learning which can be achieved through learners’ participation in lessons specifically intended to teach strategic processing. Including students’ point of view in designing syllabuses can have a positive impact on the didactics (Bloemert et al., 2020, p. 2) because students’ perception of their learning environment can influence the way they approach learning and hence the quality of the effective learning outcomes.

Some of the teachers revealed that they were against the idea of using literature simply because there is a lack of time allocated for teaching, so precious lessons could not be wasted on materials like novels or plays, which require too much time for reading. Accordingly, literature becomes a luxury that teachers cannot invest time on, as they have to work through their tight time work schedule. Notwithstanding, as stated by Hanauer (2012, p. 106), learning a language is an experience that involves the whole human being, beyond purely intellectual faculties. Experiences and emotions intrinsic in the process of learning a language cannot be removed during language classes by taking into account only the communicative and systemic aims of language usage. The recent trend in language teaching, also influenced by the stress given to pre-set level tests, seems to be to avoid any emphasis on the human being to emphasise the learning and assessing phases in a decontextualized backdrop. We tried to convey the idea that, including

exciting topics and themes through literary texts, could be a way to humanise language classes both in the FL and in the L1.

10.3. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

Time constraints represented a massive limitation to this study. As we have already pointed out, to carry out the first part of the project, i.e. the teaching of three lesson plans to students attending the first class of a high school, the board of teachers only granted the researcher four periods for each lesson plan in each of the three classes. This time limitation prevented the researcher from developing all the implications of the lesson plans in-depth. Some theorists have drawn their attention to the threats represented by the timetable and the syllabus restrictions (Gilroy, 1995, p. 8), factors that can jeopardise the endeavour to integrate literature in EFL teaching. Moreover, one lesson could not be taught due to force majeure. Because of the cancellation of an international flight,³² the researcher had to skip a class, and the curricular teacher did not allow him to arrange a make-up lesson. Of course, this attitude risked undermining the final outputs.

Another issue derived from the fact that the three teachers who at the beginning accepted to host the researcher during their English classes, changed their minds after the lesson plan based on poetry and started to complain about the number of lessons they had to grant for the project, even though the number of hours had been clearly stated in the application submitted to the headmaster and was presented to the boards of teachers to obtain an official authorization. In order to avoid troubles and controversies, the researcher had to draw up a new calendar in which he was hosted by teachers who taught other disciplines and not during English teachers' classes. This prevented English teachers from witnessing and experiencing the lessons based on literature and students' reactions and behaviours during the lessons first-hand. If they had been present in class, they could have had a more accurate and comprehensive view of the didactic implications that the lesson plans based on the three literary genres had had on students.

³² The researcher was in Murcia in May 2018 to take part in the Jornadas Doctorales.

We have analysed students' and teachers' views about the use of literature in language classes. A further fascinating inquiry could be how much using literature to learn a language could make a difference in class. An intriguing way in which this question can be answered could be, having time and resources, through empirical research which could compare an experimental group that uses literary texts with a control group that does not use them and then compare the linguistic competence, motivation and cultural awareness at the beginning and at the end of the school year in these two contexts. As stated by Duncan & Paran (2017, p. 89), such studies are complex to set up, and it could be almost unattainable to create isolated variables. However, we believe that a number of comparative studies looking at the use of literary texts could be arranged taking into account that the research should be carried out by the same teacher in classes using a literary text and in classes using other texts to avoid that different approaches could be adopted by different teachers.

10.4. Closing remarks

The choice to carry out an observation-action methodology through empirical research was derived from the desire to not passively limit our investigation to theorise and report an existing educational reality detected by others, but we preferred to observe and analyse the opinions and beliefs of the actors of the educational reality.

Considering that the teachers' occupational hazard is often the formulation of unsolicited answers, the opportunity for observation based on the production of questions has inspired an observational approach towards teaching that led to the discovery of perspectives ordinarily invisible in the educational activity.

The intent of this research and its application methodology depended on the desire to bring the actors of the educational process to question the quality of the educational offer, in relation not to the educational content, but above all to the horizons of meaning, in order to move their educational action towards all students.

At the end of the investigation, the research led us to discover and better understand the various teaching approaches towards literature and, through students' feedback, their actual application in the classroom. This way, through the narratives produced by those directly involved, we were able to grasp "another" point of view, to stop a solipsistic perspective typical of certain self-referential teaching and to welcome the perspective of other educational agents. In fact, teachers often only want to teach and are not ready to listen to students, this way they do not consider that the etymology of pedagogy is *paidos*, child, and *agein*, to lead by accompanying or be brought (Bertagna, 2006, p. 28). Therefore, teachers are not ready to be educated by learners, by their humanity, thereby blocking the *agein* that is at the basis of pedagogy.

Of course, the centrifugal thrust towards innovation in education must have an epicentre in the teachers who have to put into practice a competent action, a cogent, constant and creative participation and an innovative drive required by increasingly demanding learners.

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Appendix 1

Excerpts from the novel “Wonder”.

From: Palacio, R. J., (2012). *Wonder*. A. Knopf ed.

[Explanatory footnotes not in the original text]

Ordinary

I know I’m not an ordinary ten-year-old kid. I mean, sure, I do ordinary things. I eat ice cream. I ride my bike. I play ball. I have an XBox. Stuff like that makes me ordinary. I guess. And I feel ordinary. Inside. But I know ordinary kids don’t make other ordinary kids run away screaming in playgrounds. I know ordinary kids don’t get stared at wherever they go.

If I found a magic lamp and I could have one wish, I would wish that I had a normal face that no one ever noticed at all. I would wish that I could walk down the street without people seeing me and then doing that look-away thing. Here’s what I think: the only reason I’m not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way.

But I’m kind of used to how I look by now. I know how to pretend I don’t see the faces people make. We’ve all gotten pretty good at that sort of thing: me, Mom and Dad, Via. Actually, I take that back: Via’s not so good at it. She can get really annoyed when people do something rude. Like, for instance, one time in the playground some older kids made some noises. I don’t even know what the noises were exactly because I didn’t hear them myself, but Via heard and she just started yelling at the kids. That’s the way she is. I’m not that way.

Via doesn’t see me as ordinary. She says she does, but if I were ordinary, she wouldn’t feel like she needs to protect me as much. And Mom and Dad don’t see me as ordinary, either. They see me as extraordinary. I think the only person in the world who realizes how ordinary I am is me.

My name is August, by the way. I won’t describe what I look like. Whatever you’re thinking, it’s probably worse.

Locks

[On my first day at school] I went straight to room 301 on the third floor. [...] I noticed that some kids were definitely staring at me now. I did my thing of pretending not to notice.

I went inside the classroom, and the teacher was writing on the chalkboard while all the kids started sitting at different desks. The desks were in a half circle facing the chalkboard, so I chose the desk in the middle toward the back, which I thought would make it harder for anyone to stare at me. I still kept my head way down, just looking up enough from under my bangs to see everyone’s feet. As the desks started to fill up, I did notice that no one sat down next to me. A couple of times someone was about to sit next to me, then changed his or her mind at the last minute and sat somewhere else.

“Hey, August.” It was Charlotte, giving me her little wave as she sat down at a desk in the front of the class. Why anyone would ever choose to sit way up front in a class, I don’t know.

“Hey,” I said, nodding hello. Then I noticed Julian was sitting a few seats away from her, talking to some other kids. I know he saw me, but he didn’t say hello.

Suddenly someone was sitting down next to me. It was Jack Will. Jack.

“What’s up,” he said, nodding at me.

“Hey, Jack,” I answered, waving my hand, which I immediately wished I hadn’t done because it felt kind of uncool.

“Okay, kids, okay, everybody! Settle down,” said the teacher, now facing us. She had written her name, Ms. Petosa, on the chalkboard. “Everybody find a seat, please. Come in,” she said to a couple of kids who had just walked in the room. “There’s a seat there, and right there.”

She hadn’t noticed me yet.

“Now, the first thing I want everyone to do is stop talking and . . .”

She noticed me. “. . . put your backpacks down and quiet down.”

She had only hesitated for a millionth of a second, but I could tell the moment she saw me. Like I said: I’m used to it by now.

“I’m going to take attendance and do the seating chart³³,” she continued, sitting on the edge of her desk. Next to her were three neat rows of accordion folders. “When I call your name, come up and I’ll hand you a folder with your name on it. It contains your class schedule and your combination lock³⁴, which you should not try to open until I tell you to. Your locker number is written on the class schedule. Be forewarned that some lockers are not right outside this class but down the hall, and before anyone even thinks of asking: no, you cannot switch lockers and you can’t switch locks. Then if there’s time at the end of this period, we’re all going to get to know each other a little better, okay? Okay”.

She picked up the clipboard on her desk and started reading the names out loud.

“Okay, so, Julian Albans?” she said, looking up.

Julian raised his hand and said “Here” at the same time.

“Hi, Julian,” she said, making a note on her seating chart. She picked up the very first folder and held it out toward him. “Come pick it up,” she said, kind of no-nonsense³⁵. He got up and took it from her. “Ximena Chin?”

She handed a folder to each kid as she read off³⁶ the names. As she went down the list, I noticed that the seat next to me was the only one still empty, even though there were two kids sitting at one desk just a few seats away. When she called the name of one of them, a big kid named Henry Joplin who already looked like a teenager, she said: “Henry, there’s an empty desk right over there. Why don’t you take that seat, okay?”

She handed him his folder and pointed to the desk next to mine. Although I didn’t look at him directly, I could tell Henry did not want to move next to me, just by the way he dragged his backpack on the floor as he came over, like he was moving in slow motion. Then he plopped³⁷ his backpack up really high on the right side of the desk so it was kind of like a wall between his desk and mine.

“Maya Markowitz?” Ms. Petosa was saying.

“Here,” said a girl about four desks down from me.

“Miles Noury?”

“Here,” said the kid that had been sitting with Henry Joplin. As he walked back to his desk, I saw him shoot Henry a “poor you” look.

“August Pullman?” said Ms. Petosa. “Here,” I said quietly, raising my hand a bit. “Hi, August,” she said, smiling at me very nicely when I went up to get my folder. I kind of felt everyone’s eyes

³³ A chart is a diagram, picture, or graph which is intended to make information easier to understand.

³⁴ A device fitted to a gate, door, drawer, etc, to keep it firmly closed and often to prevent access by unauthorized persons.

³⁵ Practical and serious.

³⁶ Read aloud.

³⁷ Dropped.

burning into my back for the few seconds I stood in the front of the class, and everybody looked down when I walked back to my desk. I resisted spinning the combination when I sat down, even though everyone else was doing it, because she had specifically told us not to. I was already pretty good at opening locks, anyway, because I've used them on my bike. Henry kept trying to open his lock but couldn't do it. He was getting frustrated and kind of cursing under his breath.

Ms. Petosa called out the next few names. The last name was Jack Will. After she handed Jack his folder, she said: "Okay, so, everybody, write your combinations down somewhere safe that you won't forget, okay? But if you do forget, which happens at least three point two times per semester, Mrs. Garcia has a list of all the combination numbers. Now go ahead, take your locks out of your folders and spend a couple of minutes practicing how to open them, though I know some of you went ahead and did that anyway". She was looking at Henry when she said that. "And in the meanwhile, I'll tell you guys a little something about myself. And then you guys can tell me a little about yourselves and we'll, um, get to know each other. Sound good? Good".

She smiled at everyone, though I felt like she was smiling at me the most. It wasn't a shiny smile, like Mrs. Garcia's smile, but a normal smile, like she meant it. She looked very different from what I thought teachers were going to look like. I guess I thought she'd look like Miss Fowl from Jimmy Neutron: an old lady with a big bun³⁸ on top of her head. But, in fact, she looked exactly like Mon Mothma from Star Wars Episode IV: haircut kind of like a boy's, and a big white shirt kind of like a tunic.

She turned around and started writing on the chalkboard. Henry still couldn't get his lock to open, and he was getting more and more frustrated every time someone else popped³⁹ one open. He got really annoyed when I was able to open mine on the first try.

The funny thing is, if he hadn't put the backpack between us, I most definitely would have offered to help him.

Around the Room

Ms. Petosa told us a little about who she was. It was boring stuff about where she originally came from, and how she always wanted to teach, and she left her job on Wall Street about six years ago to pursue her "dream" and teach kids. She ended by asking if anyone had any questions, and Julian raised his hand.

"Yes . . ." She had to look at the list to remember his name.

"Julian."

"That's cool about how you're pursuing your dream," he said.

"Thank you!" "You're welcome!" He smiled proudly.

"Okay, so why don't you tell us a little about yourself, Julian? Actually, here's what I want everyone to do. Think of two things you want other people to know about you. Actually, wait a minute: how many of you came from the Beecher lower school?" About half the kids raised their hands. "Okay, so a few of you already know each other. But the rest of you, I guess, are new to the school, right? Okay, so everyone think of two things you want other people to know about you—and if you know some of the other kids, try to think of things they don't already know about you. Okay? Okay. So let's start with Julian and we'll go around the room."

Julian scrunched up⁴⁰ his face and started tapping⁴¹ his forehead like he was thinking really hard.

"Okay, whenever you're ready," Ms. Petosa said.

"Okay, so number one is that—"

³⁸ If a woman has her hair in a bun, she has fastened it tightly on top of her head or at the back of her head in the shape of a ball.

³⁹ If something pops, it makes a short sharp sound.

⁴⁰ To make your face, or part of it, into a tight shape in order to show an emotion.

⁴¹ To hit something gently, and often repeatedly, especially making short, sharp noises (Rap).

“Do me a favor and start with your names, okay?” Ms. Petosa interrupted. “It’ll help me remember everyone.”

“Oh, okay. So my name is Julian. And the number one thing I’d like to tell everyone about myself is that... I just got Battleground Mystic for my Wii and it’s totally awesome. And the number two thing is that we got a Ping-Pong table this summer.”

“Very nice, I love Ping-Pong,” said Ms. Petosa. “Does anyone have any questions for Julian?”

“Is Battleground Mystic multiplayer or one player?” said the kid named Miles.

“Not those kinds of questions, guys,” said Ms. Petosa.

“Okay, so how about you ...” She pointed to Charlotte, probably because her desk was closest to the front.

“Oh, sure.” Charlotte didn’t hesitate for even a second, like she knew exactly what she wanted to say. “My name is Charlotte. I have two sisters, and we just got a new puppy named Suki in July. We got her from an animal shelter⁴² and she’s so, so cute!”

“That’s great, Charlotte, thank you,” said Ms. Petosa. “Okay, then, who’s next?”

*Lamb to the Slaughter*⁴³

“Like a lamb to the slaughter”: Something that you say about someone who goes somewhere calmly, not knowing that something unpleasant is going to happen to them.

I Googled it last night. That’s what I was thinking when Ms. Petosa called my name and suddenly it was my turn to talk.

“My name is August,” I said, and yeah, I kind of mumbled⁴⁴ it.

“What?” said someone.

“Can you speak up, honey?” said Ms. Petosa.

“My name is August,” I said louder, forcing myself to look up. “I, um . . . have a sister named Via and a dog named Daisy. And, um . . . that’s it.”

“Wonderful,” said Ms. Petosa. “Anyone have questions for August?”

No one said anything.

“Okay, you’re next,” said Ms. Petosa to Jack.

“Wait, I have a question for August,” said Julian, raising his hand. “Why do you have that tiny⁴⁵ braid⁴⁶ in the back of your hair? Is that like a Padawan thing?”

“Yeah.” I shrug⁴⁷-nodded.

“What’s a Padawan thing?” said Ms. Petosa, smiling at me. “

It’s from Star Wars,” answered Julian. “A Padawan is a Jedi apprentice.”

“Oh, interesting,” answered Ms. Petosa, looking at me. “So, are you into⁴⁸ Star Wars, August?”

“I guess.” I nodded, not looking up because what I really wanted was to just slide under the desk.

“Who’s your favorite character?” Julian asked. I started thinking maybe he wasn’t so bad.

“Jango Fett.”

“What about Darth Sidious?” he said. “Do you like him?”

“Okay, guys, you can talk about Star Wars stuff at recess,” said Ms. Petosa cheerfully. “But let’s keep going. We haven’t heard from you yet,” she said to Jack.

Now it was Jack’s turn to talk, but I admit I didn’t hear a word he said. Maybe no one got the Darth Sidious thing, and maybe Julian didn’t mean anything at all. But in Star Wars Episode III: Revenge

⁴² Home for unwanted pets.

⁴³ The killing of animals (or of a human being) in a brutal manner.

⁴⁴ If you mumble, you speak very quietly and not clearly at all.

⁴⁵ Extremely small.

⁴⁶ Woven hairstyle.

⁴⁷ Shoulder gesture.

⁴⁸ To be interested in or enthusiastic about something.

of the Sith, Darth Sidious's face gets burned by Sith lightning and becomes totally deformed. His skin gets all shriveled up⁴⁹ and his whole face just kind of melts. I peeked at⁵⁰ Julian and he was looking at me. Yeah, he knew what he was saying.

The Cheese Touch

I noticed not too long ago that even though people were getting used to me, no one would actually touch me. I didn't realize this at first because it's not like kids go around touching each other that much in middle school anyway. But last Thursday in dance class, which is, like, my least favorite class, Mrs. Atanabi, the teacher, tried to make Ximena Chin be my dance partner. Now, I've never actually seen someone have a "panic attack" before, but I have heard about it, and I'm pretty sure Ximena had a panic attack at that second. She got really nervous and turned pale and literally broke into a sweat⁵¹ within a minute, and then she came up with⁵² some lame⁵³ excuse about really having to go to the bathroom. Anyway, Mrs. Atanabi let her off the hook⁵⁴, because she ended up not making anyone dance together.

Then yesterday in my science elective⁵⁵, we were doing this cool mystery-powder investigation where we had to classify a substance as an acid or a base. Everyone had to heat their mystery powders on a heating plate and make observations, so we were all huddled around⁵⁶ the powders with our notebooks. Now, there are eight kids in the elective, and seven of them were squished⁵⁷ together on one side of the plate while one of them—me—had loads⁵⁸ of room on the other side. So of course I noticed this, but I was hoping Ms. Rubin wouldn't notice this, because I didn't want her to say something. But of course she did notice this, and of course she said something.

"Guys, there's plenty of room on that side. Tristan, Nino, go over there," she said, so Tristan and Nino scooted over⁵⁹ to my side. Tristan and Nino have always been okay-nice to me. I want to go on record⁶⁰ as saying that. Not super-nice, like they go out of their way to hang out with me⁶¹, but okaynice, like they say hello to me and talk to me like normal. And they didn't even make a face when Ms. Rubin told them to come on my side, which a lot of kids do when they think I'm not looking. Anyway, everything was going fine until Tristan's mystery powder started melting. He moved his foil⁶² off the plate just as my powder began to melt, too, which is why I went to move mine off the plate, and then my hand accidentally bumped his hand for a fraction of a second. Tristan jerked⁶³ his hand away so fast he dropped his foil on the floor while also knocking everyone else's foil off the heating plate.

"Tristan!" yelled Ms. Rubin, but Tristan didn't even care about the spilled powder on the floor or that he ruined the experiment. What he was most concerned about was getting to the lab sink to wash his hands as fast as possible. That's when I knew for sure that there was this thing about touching me at Beecher Prep.

⁴⁹ Dry and shrink.

⁵⁰ Look briefly, furtively.

⁵¹ To start sweating. To become very nervous or frightened.

⁵² Invent.

⁵³ Feeble, weak.

⁵⁴ To allow someone or help someone to get out of a difficult situation.

⁵⁵ Optional course.

⁵⁶ Closely crowded.

⁵⁷ Squeezed, compressed.

⁵⁸ Great quantity.

⁵⁹ Come quickly.

⁶⁰ To state one's opinions publicly or officially.

⁶¹ To frequent the company of someone.

⁶² Sheet of metal as thin as paper used to wrap food in.

⁶³ Pull quickly.

I think it's like the Cheese Touch in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. The kids in that story were afraid they'd catch the cooties⁶⁴ if they touched the old moldy⁶⁵ cheese on the basketball court. At Beecher Prep, I'm the old moldy cheese.

The Auggie Doll

For a while, the "war" was all we talked about. February was when it was really at its worst. That's when practically nobody was talking to us, and Julian had started leaving notes in our lockers. The notes to Jack were stupid, like: You stink, big cheese! and Nobody likes you anymore!

I got notes like: Freak⁶⁶! And another that said: Get out of our school, orc!

Summer⁶⁷ thought we should report the notes to Ms. Rubin, who was the middle-school dean⁶⁸, or even Mr. Tushman, but we thought that would be like snitching⁶⁹. Anyway, it's not like we didn't leave notes, too, though ours weren't really mean. They were kind of funny and sarcastic.

One was: You're so pretty, Julian! I love you. Will you marry me? Love, Beulah

Another was: Love your hair! XOX Beulah

Another was: You're a babe⁷⁰. Tickle my feet. XO Beulah

Beulah was a made-up person that me and Jack came up with. She had really gross habits, like eating the green stuff in between her toes and sucking on her knuckles⁷¹. And we figured someone like that would have a real crush on Julian [...].

There were also a couple of times in February when Julian, Miles, and Henry played tricks on Jack. They didn't play tricks on me, I think, because they knew that if they got caught "bullying" me, it would be big-time trouble for them. Jack, they figured, was an easier target. So one time they stole his gym shorts and played *Monkey in the Middle* with them in the locker room. Another time Miles, who sat next to Jack in homeroom⁷², swiped⁷³ Jack's worksheet off his desk, crumpled it in a ball, and tossed it to Julian across the room. [...] Jack was good about this stuff. He never let them see he was upset, though I think sometimes he was.

The other kids in the grade knew about the war. Except for Savanna's group, the girls were neutral at first. But by March they were getting sick of it. And so were some of the boys. Like another time when Julian was dumping some pencil sharpener shavings⁷⁴ into Jack's backpack, Amos, who was usually tight with them, grabbed the backpack out of Julian's hands and returned it to Jack. It was starting to feel like the majority of boys weren't buying into⁷⁵ Julian anymore [...].

I'm pretty sure everyone's stopped playing the Plague game behind my back, too. No one really cringes if I bump into them anymore, and people borrow my pencils without acting like the pencil has cooties.

People even joke around with me now sometimes. Like the other day I saw Maya writing a note to Ellie on a piece of Uglydoll stationery, and I don't know why, but I just kind of randomly said: "Did you know the guy who created the Uglydolls based them on me?"

⁶⁴ Louse (pl. Lice): parasitic insect.

⁶⁵ Gone off

⁶⁶ If you refer to someone as a freak, you mean that they are physically abnormal in some way. This use could cause offence.

⁶⁷ Summer is a friend of August's.

⁶⁸ The dean of a group is the most important member of that group.

⁶⁹ Be an informer.

⁷⁰ Term of affection for a partner.

⁷¹ Where your fingers join your hands, where your fingers bend.

⁷² The class where students in the same grade meet to get general information and be checked for attendance.

⁷³ Steal.

⁷⁴ Shavings are small very thin pieces of wood or other material which have been cut from a larger piece.

⁷⁵ To agree with or accept as valid.

Maya looked at me with her eyes wide open like she totally believed me. Then, when she realized I was only kidding, she thought it was the funniest thing in the world.

“You are so funny, August!” she said, and then she told Ellie and some of the other girls what I had just said, and they all thought it was funny, too. Like at first they were shocked, but then when they saw I was laughing about it, they knew it was okay to laugh about it, too. And the next day I found a little Uglydoll key chain sitting on my chair with a nice little note from Maya that said: For the nicest Auggie Doll in the world! XO Maya.

Six months ago stuff like that would never have happened, but now it happens more and more.

Appendix 2

Excerpts from the play “The Shape of a Girl”.

From: MacLeod, J., (2002). *The Shape of a Girl*. Talonbooks.

[Explanatory footnotes not in the original text]

Excerpt 1

And then one day, one normal un-special day Adrienne comes to school and announces that it's penalty day. We don't know what penalty day is. Adrienne explains that on penalty day one girl is chosen and everyone is mean to that one girl for the whole day. Why? Adrienne doesn't know. It's just a part of school.

Adrienne offers to go first. We get to be mean to her first. I want to go first too.

At first penalty day is hard to figure out.

There are a lot of rules. The person we have to be mean to has fleas of course. Everyone has to write FP for flea proof on their hand.

BRAIDIE, as a teenager again.

You know something Trevor⁷⁶? By the end of grade four penalty day had become as complex as World War Two. But who the enemy was had become entirely simple. Now all the girls had FP written on their hands, all the girls but one. I don't know why it was Sofie. It just was.

Excerpt 2

In today's papers there are no pictures of those young offenders. I tell you - it's almost a relief. You remember when the girl was killed Trevor, you were still living here. How she was beat up by a group of girls and this guy and then finished off a few minutes later by that boy and this one girl who went back for more.

⁷⁶ Trevor is Braidie's absent brother.

The ones that watched the girl get beat up, they aren't accused of anything. To be accused you have to have gotten in there, down and dirty⁷⁷. I suppose that to be a teenager, even to be a little kid, is to often see very hideous behaviour from your peers.

If you reported everyone you would certainly have to watch your back at all times and look no one in the face, ever. You would have to go through your entire life using only your peripheral vision.

The girls who beat her up, the girls who are on trial for assault, they used to hang out at Walmart⁷⁸. [...]

The human body is what? Eighty percent water? That kills me. We're like these melons with arms and legs. Well eighty percent of the female brain is pure crap. We're constantly checking each other out, deciding who goes where, who's at the bottom.

When I look at her picture, when I look at the picture of the dead girl in the paper, part of me gets it. And I hate it that I do; I hate to be even partly composed of that sort of information.

But right now, if you put me in a room filled with girls, girls my age that I've never seen before in my life - I could divide them all up. I could decide who goes where and just where I fit in without anyone even opening their mouth. They could be from this island, they could be from Taiwan. It doesn't matter.

Nobody would have to say a word. You know something Trevor? I could have divided up a room like that when I was in grade two. Grade fucking two.

Excerpt 3

When the lights come up BRAIDIE is ten years old, being Adrienne, perhaps standing up the bank, up high.

No one is to have contact of any kind with IT from first period until lunch. If you have to address IT do so during homeroom. On the school bus IT has to sit on the fourth seat on the left. If IT talks to any boys it will be dealt with by me. IT's lunch

⁷⁷ Unvarnished, unscrupulous.

⁷⁸ Famous department store

today will be divided between Amber, Braidie and Jackie. Case closed. IT will make no comments and will not be allowed to look at me anymore [...]

*A girl in the shape of a monster
A monster in the shape of a girl*

That, Trevor, is poetry. It is also a riddle that gets played out in Victoria. Because that's how they treat her - like a monster. Only they're the monsters, get it? Because they phoned her up. *Guess what we're doing? Wanna come?* It's like wolves pretending to be some animal that's hurt, maybe a little calf or a goat. This wasn't a case of someone in the wrong place at the wrong time. This was planned, organized. And the girl, she knows they're one scary bunch but she goes. Maybe she is pleased that someone phoned, someone wanted her to do something. *Let's meet here ...* She even brings her pyjamas. Her pyjamas and diary and Charlie perfume are buckled into her backpack.

BRAIDIE goes back in time, she is twelve years old.

Sofie walks like a cripple, little quarters of blood on her heel. Soaking into her white socks. Sofie wears her runners too small because her feet are too big. She is accused of watching the girls get undressed in gym. But I watch too. I want to see who else has hair under their arms or who has thighs as big as mine. I talked to her after volleyball. I told her, I did the best I could.

- *Sofie don't go on the field trip.* See - I said it: in plain English.

- *Why?*

- *Just don't.*

- *But we have to write an essay.*

This is pure Sofie, putting homework ahead Of life or death. I tell you - she's an extremely exasperating person. We are all going to see *Hamlet* for the field trip, at a theatre in town. It's not the real Hamlet; it's a phony version for kids.

FOR EMERGENCY ONLY- SORTIE DU SECOURS.

I have studied that sign ever since I can remember. It is written over top of some windows in the bus. I sit three rows down from Sofie. Jackie and Adrienne are behind me. Sofie is sitting with Lorna. Lorna's dad owns

the store on our island; sometimes she works there. We don't know Lorna. We don't even think of Lorna as an actual person.

The ocean shrinks and glitters as we head over the Lions Gate. You can see where we live, lying out there in the strait, all wrapped up in mist. It looks uninhabited, prehistoric.

Adrienne and Lorna have switched places.

Adrienne is whispering something to Sofie.

Sofie is looking dead ahead. Adrienne leans into Sofie so that Sofie is squished up against the side. Sofie's face turns grey.

FOR EMERGENCY ONLY.

Sofie pushes the window on the bus.

It fans out unnaturally from the bottom.

Sofie hoists⁷⁹ herself up, her head is out.

Sofie is going to jump out the window.

The ocean is hundreds of feet below.

I shut my eyes. And Sofie is falling, cannon balling over the side of the bridge, her clothes parachute around her, a gigantic flower. I open my eyes. Sofie hasn't gone over the side of anything. Her bum is stuck in the window of the bus.

Amber and Adrienne and me and Jackie - we laugh so hard we nearly puke. Sofie is all weird and breathing heavy. Then she pushes out a sound that is hardly human. *Ha-ha*.

The bus driver is grabbing Sofie by the sweater. He pulls her in. *What the hell do you think you're doing?* Adrienne watches Sofie. *Nothing*, Sofie says. *Fooling around*.

Sofie isn't allowed to see the play. We watch Ophelia load herself up with flowers and sail off to meet her maker. We make burp noises except when Hamlet's around. Hamlet's cute. When Hamlet gets going on one of his long speeches we go *oh oh oh oh* like we are Hamlet's own girlfriend. Then this lady usher comes and tells us we have to be quiet. She's a total bitch.

Excerpt 4

I look at the girl, the picture of the girl who did it. The one in Victoria who held her head underwater until all was quiet. The one who held a smoke in one hand and held the girl

⁷⁹ Raise, lift, get.

under with the other, her foot on her back. She bragged⁸⁰ about it. Maybe she made the telling of it into a joke because she doesn't know how else to try it out. *Did you hear the one about.* Maybe she just snapped. I do that. I look at the picture again: she's a regular girl.

And she's hanging out on a Friday night in November, 1997- the moon is full, the air is clear. Usually the stars get lost in winter here. But on this night the stars are out, everyone is out, *under cover*, passing a joint, drinking vodka and sprite mixed in a can. Some are watching the sky and waiting because a Russian satellite is going to break through the earth's atmosphere tonight, right over Victoria. It will explode, light up all that black.

But this girl, this regular girl and one other girl are waiting for something else; they are waiting to teach someone a lesson. They've already phoned her up, they've called her out. Because she is big, because she likes *that* boy. Because she is brown and she lost their book because she doesn't fit and she lies. Because they can.

The girl they're going to get is miserable, that much is clear. [...] So, it starts.

The ones who watched, maybe they thought it wasn't real. Maybe as they yelled out or laughed they were actually frozen. Maybe they were so glad to not be that girl- whose hair is being held up to a lighter now - that they don't even know how to imagine shouting *stop*. Maybe they think that silence is the ticket, the only way to never end up like the girl.

Even the ones who didn't watch, who just heard about what happened, they carry the silence too - a dark present, passed hand to hand. When they get home maybe they will dream about being blind. Because they can't stand the replays anymore - how the girl looked up and begged for help.

Or maybe it's that boy in Burnaby last winter, how he wrote his goodbye note and climbed the rails on the *Putallo Bridge*.

Or maybe it's Sofie. Because just when you think it was all ancient history it starts again.

Trevor - remember how I went through the first five years of life hiding behind mum's

⁸⁰ Boast.

bum whenever we were out in public? That's the trouble with staying silent. I can't move, even when I want to. And I start thinking Adrienne acts for me.

Appendix 3

*Pre-test and post-test for students about poetry.*⁸¹

This questionnaire aims to explore your views about the use of literature in learning the English language. Please read the following items carefully and indicate your degree of agreement by checking one of five response categories:

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Strongly agree</i>
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------------

*There are no right and wrong answers. Please be honest in your answers.
Responses and information will be collected anonymously and treated as confidential.*

- 1 - Employing poems as a means of learning English is an enjoyable experience.
- 2 - Employing poems as a means of learning English can improve my listening skills.
- 3 - Employing poems as a means of learning English can enhance my speaking skills.
- 4 - Employing poems as a means of learning English can develop my reading skills.
- 5 - Employing poems as a means of learning English can strengthen my writing skills.
- 6 - Employing poems as a means of learning English can enrich my vocabulary.
- 7 - Looking over some structures employed in poems can ameliorate my understanding of grammar.
- 8 - Employing poems as a means of learning English can motivate me because they help me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings.
- 9 - Employing poems as a means of learning English can motivate me because they help me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings.
- 10 - Employing poems as a means of learning English can develop my interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make my own interpretations).
- 11 - Employing poems as a means of learning English can make me familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.).
- 12 - Employing poems as a means of learning English can reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language.

⁸¹ Adapted from F  rez et al. (2020).

13 - Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates me because poems normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.

14 - Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates me because poems deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics.

15 - Reading poems in my English class can motivate me because they are authentic material.

16 - By reading poems in my English class, I can be acquainted with the culture of Anglophone countries.

17 - By reading poems in my English class, I can better understand my own culture.

18 - Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates me because poems are usually concise.

Pre-test and post-test for students about novels

This questionnaire aims to explore your views about the use of literature in learning the English language. Please read the following items carefully and indicate your degree of agreement by checking one of five response categories:

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Strongly agree</i>
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------------

*There are no right and wrong answers. Please be honest in your answers.
Responses and information will be collected anonymously and treated as confidential.*

- 1 - Employing novels as a means of learning English is an enjoyable experience.
- 2 - Employing novels as a means of learning English can improve my listening skills.
- 3 - Employing novels as a means of learning English can enhance my speaking skills.
- 4 - Employing novels as a means of learning English can develop my reading skills.
- 5 - Employing novels as a means of learning English can strengthen my writing skills.
- 6 - Employing novels as a means of learning English can enrich my vocabulary.
- 7 - Looking over some structures employed in novels can ameliorate my understanding of grammar.
- 8 - Employing novels as a means of learning English can motivate me because they help me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings.
- 9 - Employing novels as a means of learning English can motivate me because they help me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings.
- 10 - Employing novels as a means of learning English can develop my interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make my own interpretation of texts).
- 11 - Employing novels as a means of learning English can make me familiar with figures of speech (metaphor, simile, etc.).
- 12 - Employing novels as a means of learning English can reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language.
- 13 - Employing novels as a means of learning English motivates me because novels normally include values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.
- 14 - Employing novels as a means of learning English motivates me because novels deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics.
- 15 - Reading novels in my English class can motivate me because they are authentic material.

16 - By reading novels in my English class, I can be acquainted with the culture of Anglophone countries.

17 - By reading novels in my English class, I can better understand my own culture.

18 - Reading novels in my English class can help me understand different points of view because in novels reality is often seen from several perspectives (those of the various characters).

Pre-test and post-test for students about drama

This questionnaire aims to explore your views about the use of literature in learning the English language. Please read the following items carefully and indicate your degree of agreement by checking one of five response categories:

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Strongly agree</i>
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*There are no right and wrong answers. Please be honest in your answers.
Responses and information will be collected anonymously and treated as confidential.*

- 1 - Employing plays as a means of learning English is an enjoyable experience.
- 2 - Employing plays as a means of learning English can improve my listening skills.
- 3 - Employing plays as a means of learning English can enhance my speaking skills.
- 4 - Employing plays as a means of learning English can develop my reading skills.
- 5 - Employing plays as a means of learning English can strengthen my writing skills.
- 6 - Employing plays as a means of learning English can enrich my vocabulary.
- 7 - Looking over some structures employed in plays can ameliorate my understanding of grammar.
- 8 - Employing plays as a means of learning English can motivate me because they help me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings.
- 9 - Employing plays as a means of learning English can motivate me because they help me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings.
- 10 - Employing plays as a means of learning English can develop my interpretative and thinking skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make my own interpretations of texts).
- 11 - Employing plays as a means of learning English can make me familiar with figures of speech (metaphor, simile, etc.).
- 12 - Employing plays as a means of learning English can reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language.
- 13 - Employing plays as a means of learning English motivates me because plays normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.
- 14 - Employing plays as a means of learning English motivates me because plays deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics.
- 15 - Reading plays in my English class can motivate me because they are authentic material.

16 - Reading plays in my English class can motivate me because I can get an insight into social, political and cultural aspects of Anglophone countries.

17 - By reading plays in my English class, I can better understand my own culture.

18 - Employing plays as a means of learning English motivates me because plays usually offer real lifelike settings.

19 - Reading plays in my English class can help me understand different points of view because in plays reality is often seen from several perspectives (those of the various characters).

20 - Reading plays in my English class can motivate me because I can find examples of colloquial and informal language.

Appendix 4

First-year students' interviews and written feedback

Interviews

Interview Student 1

Interviewer: You know this interview is being recorded. Do you agree to the recording?

Student: Yes, I agree.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity (of which you have of course only had a short essay) can improve your “listening” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: I think so. Listening to poems helps me in learning the language. I’m not used to listening to English, because in English we do three hours a week, but I’m not used to listening to English. So, listening to poems helps improve listening to different sounds as well.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “speaking” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: I’ve often asked you to interact, haven’t I?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “reading” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because poetry comes out of the usual patterns of reading in English. In class, we study very formal English with simple sentences. But in poetry, there are much more articulated phrases.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “writing” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because even there, you cannot write a subject, verb, complement, but you have to articulate to find more complicated structures.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can enrich your vocabulary? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because in the poems, there are millions of nuances of meaning, words with exact shades of meaning.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can help you learn English grammar? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because complex grammatical structures are often used in poems

Interviewer: Do you remember what grammatical structure in the poem we delved into?

Student: Yes, verbs followed by a preposition, such as fond of.

Interviewer: As for the linguistic aspect has your attitude towards poetry changed? In particular, as far as teaching English through poetry, now that the poetry project is over, has your idea changed?

Student: Even at first, I thought this project of teaching the language through poetry might be useful.

Interviewer: But I remember you on the first day you told me you never speak English because you don’t know him, remember? So, do you think this kind of project is more motivating because it’s more engaging?

Student: Yes, you can say it can be more useful. For example, knowing that there is assonance in that poem, and you don't know how to pronounce the beginning of a word knowing that there is assonance, you know how to pronounce it.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can be motivating since you can deepen the culture of English-speaking countries? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because English culture is very different from ours, even if you think about the ways of saying it.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because you can better understand your own culture? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because you can see the differences and peculiarities of your culture.

Interviewer: We addressed a universal theme...

Student: Racism.

Interviewer: In fact, the topic you think can help you better understand the culture of your country?

Student: Yes, because even in Italy, for example, there was Fascism. And even today there is racism.

Interviewer: Do you want to add anything else?

Student: No, it's okay.

Interview Student 2

Interviewer: You know this interview is being recorded. Do you agree to the recording?

Student: Yes, I agree.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity (of which you have of course only had a short essay) can improve your "listening" skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because I read and listened to others reading too. Listening to each other, we learnt more. This project is a step forward to develop our listening skills. Compared to before, I expected these issues to be dealt with, but I expected we read more poems, not only one. Especially the most famous.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your "speaking" skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, although it is more difficult with poems to develop this skill because without a grammatical basis or vocabulary, we cannot make articulate speeches.

Interviewer: What about reading?

Student: Obviously, yes, because poetry is a written text, so it develops this skill. In fact, it is one of the skills that can be improved the most with poetry.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your "writing" skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, we also had the task of writing a poem.

Interviewer: What about the vocabulary? The terms learned.

Student: I learned words I didn't know before. Words present in poetry, but also in exercises. My vocabulary has been enriched.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can help you learn English grammar? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, even if different grammatical rules are not respected in poems. Perhaps it is better to study grammar in a more traditional way.

Interviewer: Were there any grammatical forms in our poem that were not respected?

Student: No, they weren't there.

Interviewer: In any case, would you prefer to study grammar in a traditional way?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can be motivating since you can deepen the culture of English-speaking countries? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because you see poetry from the writer's point of view, which comes from other countries, like England.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because you can better understand your own culture? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, I can compare English culture with mine. Although I think that a poem written in my language can represent more my culture.

Interviewer: What are your considerations about the project?

Student: I wouldn't change anything, that's okay.

Interview Student 3

Interviewer: You know this interview is being recorded. Do you agree to the recording?

Student: Yes, I agree.

Interviewer: In your questionnaire, you wrote that you think this kind of poetry-based language learning activity has not strengthened your writing skills. How come?

Student: I think poetry is very useful for speaking and reading. Through poetry, you can improve your speaking. Poetry can increase the lexicon but not so much the writing skills in everyday life because poetry has a style of its own.

Interviewer: There were so many exercises where you were asked to write.

Student: If we study poems and then do these activities, it's useful. But just reading the poem and analysing it is not helpful.

Interviewer: apart from analysing the poem, we did a lot of exercises, did not we?

Student: Yes, it's true.

Interviewer: As for emotions, do you think this kind of activity is not motivating because you don't share your own and others' emotions?

Student: Even in the best poets, such as Leopardi, I don't catch all these emotions. So, it's not very useful to me. I'm not excited about reading poetry.

Interviewer: As for the issues we've covered, such as social justice, empathy, don't these issues matter to you? Don't you care?

Student: No, I'm too young.

Interviewer: Do you think this type of activity can help you develop your interpretive skills (understanding symbolic or hidden meanings and formulating interpretations)? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, the fact of revealing hidden meanings is perhaps the most interesting thing about poetry. However, studying poetry and together grammar is beautiful because it is not like what we

always do, like studying grammar by heart, but it is an interesting thing and also shows us the Anglo-Saxon culture.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can be useful for learning rhetorical figures (metaphors, similarities, alliterations)? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Studying metaphors is interesting, indeed almost fun to discover, like what we did with “Tyger Tyger Burning Bright”. But it’s also a long and heavy job, so it’s not easy to do it at home alone.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of the language? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: No doubt, because poetry does not resort to the ordinary use of the language.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because it requires understanding and sharing your emotions? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting on the project?

Student: Yes, and no. We’re a little shy when we have to share emotions in class in front of everyone. If you do your homework and then you give it to the teacher, you know that your classmates are not going to judge you. Yes, because when you start writing, you feel like writing more.

Interviewer: You told me that the theme of this poem didn’t interest you, that you don’t care about social justice issues. What are the topics that interest you, that you would like to deal with in the classroom?

Student: I think it’s more interesting to deal with pollution.

Interviewer: Pollution is also a social justice issue. Can the fact that poetry is authentic material be a motivating factor?

Student: Yes, this may excite you more, because you say, “Damn, I can read a poem in English!” However, this is an outstanding initiative.

The thinker: Thank you. Compared to before starting the project, has your idea about using authentic texts changed?

Student: I always thought that reading authentic texts was more interesting than reading an invented text in a textbook, and the project confirmed my idea.

Interviewer: What did you like most and least?

Student: I liked the creative writing of poetry. I liked the grammar a little less.

Interview Student 4

Interviewer: You know this interview is being recorded. Do you agree to the recording?

Student: Yes, I agree.

Interviewer: Do you think this type of activity can help you develop your interpretive skills (understanding symbolic or hidden meanings and formulating interpretations)? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because poetry, in its form, hides meanings that I hope I have grasped, and I think it is an excellent form of teaching.

Interviewer: Did you expect that there were hidden meanings in poems? Did this activity motivate you?

Student: Not at first. Because even in Italian, I’m not very passionate about it. But then knowing the meaning becomes very useful.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can be useful for learning rhetorical figures (metaphors, similarities, alliterations)? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: I tried to work on rhetorical figures in English, although in Italian I do not remember them. I think it's a useful activity.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity (of which you have of course only had a short essay) can reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of the language? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: I don't know. I don't like poetry, and I don't like to write

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of the language? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes. Talking about it in class, I realized that through poetry, however, a lot can be done. Also knowing the meanings of new words. Then poetry can also deal with difficult issues, such as racism.

Interviewer: And your opinion on this point has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, I didn't expect that. I thought we talked about the technique of poetry.

Interviewer: As for other people's emotions, how can others feel, can this activity be motivating because you empathise with others?

Student: Yes. Simple phrases can touch a weak person who feels he/she is part of a minority.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating since poems usually deal with values such as love, respect, empathy and social justice? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, you can understand these emotions through simple lines. And that changed the way I saw poetry. You wanted to teach us the language through a poem, a poem that instilled thoughts about social justice. This type of activity was engaging, and I didn't expect that.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can be motivating since you have used "authentic material"? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because you read texts written by the English for English speakers. I still expected us to use adapted materials.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating since poems are usually more concise and shorter than other texts? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: I prefer poems a little longer because shorter ones have many more meanings, and I can better understand the longer ones. The short ones have hidden meanings.

Interviewer: Do you want to add anything else?

Student: I liked it, and I would like to continue it next year with new topics and continue on this path.

Interviewer: What did you like most/least?

Student: I liked the text a lot. I didn't like the lesson on rhetorical figures.

Interview Student 5

Interviewer: You know this interview is being recorded. Do you agree to the recording?

Student: Yes, I agree.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity (of which you have of course only had a short essay) can improve your “listening” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because, thanks to this activity, we read and listen more. And we have a new kind of text, poetry, that is not dealt with in the first two years of high school. My knowledge of the words and also my pronunciation have improved. But my idea has changed from before I started. I thought we were dealing with classical poems.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “speaking” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, we have used words never seen before, which no one had ever explained to us, as the adjectives referring to cats and dogs.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “writing” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, even though, if we continued with this project, we could write more, we did not have much time.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can help you learn English grammar? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes. It was very interesting to deal with the use of the verbs plus prepositions. Actually, this is a subject that I never understood very well. So, for me, this project was also useful for grammar.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because we’ve used an authentic text that could help us better understand the culture of English-speaking countries? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because poetry still reflects the way of thinking of the time in which the texts were written and of the place where the author lived. I like Italian poetry, I’ve never read English poetry, and I’ve seen the cultural differences that are a feature of poetry.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because you can better understand your own culture? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project? I chose a universal theme...

Student: Yes, racism. It’s helpful to see people’s reaction to this poem. Some people don’t understand the hidden meaning.

Interviewer: What are your considerations about the project?

Student: I liked everything, especially the fact that we learned new vocabulary and grammar. I liked reading the poem, also because I have never read a poem in English, so it was also interesting for that.

Interviewer: Has your attitude to poetry changed at the end of the project?

Student: I’ve always liked poetry. I had never read it in English, but I found that I also like it in English.

Interview Student 6

Interviewer: You know this interview is being recorded. Do you agree to the recording?

Student: Yes, I agree.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity (of which you have of course only had a short essay) can improve your “listening” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes. Because there are words that the teacher pronounces differently from the way I would. So, it’s better for me. Compared to before, I didn’t think it helped me so much in pronunciation.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “speaking” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, I didn’t think it would help me so much.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “reading” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes. He helped me with that, too.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “writing” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, the same, it helped me a lot.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can enrich your vocabulary? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, especially in the first lessons, there were many new words.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can help you learn English grammar? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because we’ve used an authentic text that could help us better understand the culture of English-speaking countries? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, but it depends on the person. It’s useful because you discover and learn about new things about this culture.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because you can better understand your own culture? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: What are your considerations about the project?

Student: I didn’t expect this poem, I expected a poem by some more famous author.

Interviewer: And what about the topic? Is there anything you want to say about it? We talked about racism.

Student: In fact, what’s in the poem is quite right. Definitely, some people think horrible things about other people just because they are from different cultures. And I see myself in this situation.

Interviewer: Was the debate we sparked off in the classroom about racism motivating?

Student: Yes. You have to remind people of these things, you did well to deal with this topic in class.

Interview Student 7

Interviewer: You know this interview is being recorded. Do you agree to the recording?

Student: Yes, I agree.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity (of which you have of course only had a short essay) can improve your “listening” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because we listened to poetry and improved our pronunciation, but in particular, we improved our reading skills. Compared to before, my positive idea hasn’t changed.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “speaking” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, we have dealt with uncommon words, and we have also improved pronunciation and intonation.

Interviewer: We’ve already talked about “reading”, and you said that’s one of the most important aspects.

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “writing” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes. We have now started to study poetry with our class teacher. Although we did not do any creative writing with her. I really liked the activity with you because there is no constraint, as there is at school, where they ask you to describe, in a given number of lines, a topic that they decide. Instead, you can deal with the theme that you really like and express yourself as you like.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can enrich your vocabulary? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, it helped me a lot because we use a compartmentalized vocabulary. In poetry, you have to use different words, synonyms.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can help you learn English grammar? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes. Perhaps more useful than listening and writing, because poetry must be grammatically correct. If it has to reach an audience, it must have clear and direct structures. You meet these structures in poetry.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because we’ve used an authentic text that could help us better understand the culture of English-speaking countries? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, there was a good part of this too, because the author is English, and therefore it is clear that the society of his time is reflected in what he wrote in this poem.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because you can better understand your own culture? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because the themes covered in poems are universally shared in the history of different countries, not just one.

Interviewer: What are your considerations about the project?

Student: I found this course light, in the sense that, even though we always had to meet during the last period, it wasn’t heavy or dull. We dealt with the language, but we didn’t talk about strictly grammatical topics. We did a lot of exercises, but it wasn’t heavy.

Interview Student 8

Interviewer: You know this interview is being recorded. Do you agree to the recording?

Student: Yes, I agree.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity (of which you have of course only had a short essay) can improve your “listening” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because I have to strive to understand a person who speaks a language different from mine. Therefore, mentally, I also have to do the translation to understand. In the classroom, we don't do so many listening activities, so it's useful.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “speaking” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, I do. Personally, I am a bit stuck, and if you attend a lesson, like yours, where the teacher speaks only English and asks questions in English, the pupils must strive to speak.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “reading” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because you asked us to read, and we had to read in front of everyone.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “writing” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, we wrote a lot.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can enrich your vocabulary? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, it was useful to improve our vocabulary, because it gave us so many new words to learn, and we worked on those.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can help you learn English grammar? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes. Although the day you dealt with grammar, I was absent.

Interviewer: As for the linguistic aspect (listening, speaking, reading, writing) has your attitude towards poetry changed? In particular, concerning teaching English through poetry, now that the poetry project is over, has your idea changed?

Student: I expected us to do this kind of activity. I wasn't expecting a frontal lesson with the teacher sitting at her desk just explaining. We interacted, and I hoped that it was this way.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because we've used an authentic text that could help us better understand the culture of English-speaking countries? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, it's motivating. But it also depends a little on the tastes of the pupils. Each pupil prefers a type of text.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because you can better understand your own culture? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because we also talked about racism.

Interview Student 9

Interviewer: You know this interview is being recorded. Do you agree to the recording?

Student: Yes, I agree.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity (of which you have of course only had a short essay) can improve your “listening” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, I think it can improve them. For example, reading poems in class, I read them in class with other students, so we can improve our skills by listening to each other.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “speaking” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes. I think the vocabulary gets a lot richer. New words and ways of saying are learned, and therefore the possibilities of expressing oneself are also widened.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “reading” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “writing” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, especially the part about creative poetry, when we had to write the poems. I think that the part that I’ve enriched the most is vocabulary.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can help you learn English grammar? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, I knew that some verbs required specific prepositions, but I discovered new things that I didn’t expect.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because we’ve used an authentic text that could help us better understand the culture of English-speaking countries? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because if I read something in a textbook, I’m aware that someone has already revisited the text, or wrote it on purpose to make me understand something. Instead, here a foreign author can write a poem to express his ideas or thoughts about something. So, I can figure out what he means without any intermediary.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because you can better understand your own culture? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project? I chose a universal theme...

Student: Yes, I can compare my culture with that of those who wrote the poem

Interviewer: I chose a universal theme, can this help you understand your culture?

Student: Yes, we talked about racism, and I can tell if I am also part of this group of people without being aware of it.

Interviewer: What did you like most/least?

Student: I liked putting together different ideas, for example when we got together between students to understand the hidden meaning of poetry, not everyone thought it was about racism, and so we realised that there could be different reading keys. The hardest thing is that there were so many words to remember, and it’s hard to assimilate them in a short time. But, in general, I liked everything.

Interview Student 10

Interviewer: You know this interview is being recorded. Do you agree to the recording?

Student: Yes, I agree.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity (of which you have of course only had a short essay) can improve your “listening” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because listening to a text read by the teacher improves the pronunciation. And my idea has changed because now I like poetry a little more.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “speaking” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: I’ve often asked you to join the conversations, haven’t I?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “reading” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, reading a book always helps your reading ability.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your “writing” skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity (of which you’ve obviously only had a short essay) can enrich your vocabulary? Because? On this, has your idea changed from before embarking on the project?

Student: Yes, the adjectives that describe dogs and cats I did not know them and thanks to this project now, my vocabulary has improved.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can enrich your vocabulary? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, with this project grammar can improve, but I think this project develops listening and reading more. But, of course, it also teaches grammar.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because we’ve used an authentic text that could help us better understand the culture of English-speaking countries? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: I don’t think so, because poetry doesn’t allow you to know different cultures, poetry is something else for me.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Student: Poetry is about other themes, not about culture.

Interviewer: But what do you think culture is?

Student: It’s about the way of doing things.

Interviewer: Do you mean, the way people behave. Don’t you think that in our poem there was a description of the ways people can behave, live?

Student: Yes, there was something.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because you can better understand your own culture? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project? I chose a universal theme...

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: About the poem we read, what behaviours did it describe? What kind of culture did he describe or denounce?

Student: The way cats do it.

Interviewer: But did the author just describe the behaviour of cats? Or was he talking about something else? Do you remember that we talked about racism?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: So cats represented the victims of racism. Remember?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: Isn't this a theme that can be about the culture of a people?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you want to add anything else?

Student: I liked the project. However, in my opinion, we should devote to the project more hours.

Interview Student 11

Interviewer: You know this interview is being recorded. Do you agree to the recording?

Student: Yes, I agree.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity (of which you have of course only had a short essay) can improve your "listening" skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: I think so, because anyway I immediately think of a question that was in a questionnaire, that is, that the poems are authentic material anyway and, by authentic, I mean that it is not the material that is studied every day. You can train your ear to spoken English in the way it is used in poems, i.e. aulic, not very simple. From this point of view, it can definitely help develop my listening skills.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your 'speaking' skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Definitely, yes. Listening and knowing how to speak is a direct consequence. The more words and forms you memorize, the more clarity in exposing you acquire in speaking. One thing that has changed regards the proposed exercises. Open questions offer more awareness, you have to think about what you know and how to write it.

Interviewer: So, has your writing ability improved?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can improve your "reading" skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: With the knowledge, you have learned, you can read and interpret and translate, but not as prevalently as the other things I have said before.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can enrich your vocabulary? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Definitely, there has also been an improvement in vocabulary. In fact, in the poem we have read, by Peter Porter, with the different figures with which the author expresses himself, we have seen different words, and this enriches our vocabulary.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can help you learn English grammar? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: For the way I am, it is better to study grammar in a more traditional way.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because we've used an authentic text that could help us better understand the culture of English-speaking countries? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: It depends on poetry, although not so prevalent. The poetry we've seen can give us information about how people think, perhaps in the time the author lived, or when he wrote the poem. However, cultural elements were contained in the poem, so we could understand the culture of that country.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because you can better understand your own culture? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project? I chose a universal theme...

Student: From this point of view, I'm not so sure there are matches.

Interviewer: What did you like most/least?

Student: The only thing I want to say, sincerely, is that this project is useful.

Interview Student 12

Interviewer: You know this interview is being recorded. Do you agree to the recording?

Student: Yes, I agree.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity (of which you have of course only had a short essay) can improve your "listening" skills? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: For me, these lessons are more motivating. I want to know what's behind the poem, I want to understand what it means, so it's useful for that too. And I didn't expect there were meanings hidden in poems that I considered simple, I didn't expect there to be such a deep meaning behind a poem about cats and dogs.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can be useful for learning rhetorical figures (metaphors, similarities, alliterations)? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, it's useful to me. With poems I see the example of the application of rhetorical figures, so I understand how they are expressed, and I know how to apply them.

Interviewer: Do you remember a rhetorical figure that you remember?

Student: The anaphora and the simile.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity (of which you have of course only had a short essay) can reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of the language? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because we wrote a poem and I could write my ideas.

Interviewer: Did you like the activity of creative writing?

Student: Yes, I loved it. I didn't expect that. Also, because no one does that.

Interviewer: Thank you. Do you think that this type of activity can be motivating since it requires you to understand and share your emotions? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, it helps me to understand my emotions, because I put myself in the shoes of those who suffer or those who accuse other people. Or even the emotions of others. Because the poetry

about dogs and cats could be a metaphor for racism and I can understand how black people feel living here in Italy. Even writing my own poetry, I had to describe my emotions.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating since poems usually deal with values such as love, respect, empathy and social justice? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, it's useful to me because we also talked about current issues, about things that happen, using rhetorical figures, but the point was that anyway. And so it was useful to me.

Interviewer: Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, for the better. I mean, I used to think we were talking about abstract things, but we were real.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because we've used an authentic text that could help us better understand the culture of English-speaking countries? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, because we read something authentic, written for people who speak that language and therefore it is also more useful. Because, if I read things that have been rewritten, maybe by an Italian who knows English, he writes in a way that facilitates me. But through authentic materials, I get used to it, and I can pick up the language as if I went to England.

Interviewer: But was poetry difficult?

Student: Some things were. But I don't know English very well. But in the end, we understood it.

Interviewer: In class, we only spoke in English, you were able to understand the poem without resorting to Italian, so it was an excellent achievement.

Student: Yes, it's true. Before we started, I didn't think that we were going to speak only in English, so I also had put my mind to it to understand more.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating since poems are usually more concise and shorter than other texts? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Although poetry is difficult, since it is shorter, it becomes more accessible, because on a page you have everything, and you don't have so much to understand.

Interviewer: What did you like most/least?

Student: When we wrote, I loved it. I don't like grammar.

Interview Student 13

Interviewer: You know this interview is being recorded. Do you agree to the recording?

Student: Yes, I agree.

Interviewer: Do you think this type of activity can help you develop your interpretive skills (understanding symbolic or hidden meanings and formulating interpretations)? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, now I think it's much more useful than before I started this project, because seeing symbolic meanings in another language helps you compare them with those of your language. An interpretive capacity can be developed for analogies and differences. It may be different the way of writing and thinking or the style, but the themes are the same, that is, love, life, discrimination, personal opinions. Everyone deals in their own way with what others deal with.

Interviewer: I mean, poetry is about universal themes...

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: I remember that at first some of you had trouble understanding the hidden meaning of poetry, can this activity be motivating because it helps you know how to understand hidden meanings in poems?

Student: Yes, but I think it can be more motivating if someone has done something in their original language. Because, in doing so, I compare the hidden meaning in the poems in the my language and in the foreign language, this way I discover that a part of what I learned to get the interpretation is right, but part of it can be completely different. That's the beauty of getting involved and finding out that there's something different and more attractive.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity can be useful for learning rhetorical figures (metaphors, similarities, alliterations)? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: I've always been good at recognizing them in Italian. However, my idea hasn't changed from before it started.

Interviewer: Do you think that this type of activity (of which you have of course only had a short essay) can reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of the language? Why? Has your idea changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: In poems, there is nothing reworked, fake, there are rules regarding the metric of the poem, but it is also a free composition.

Interviewer: Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating because it requires understanding and sharing your emotions? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: Yes, it's motivating. Then it depends on how you approach it. You can avoid taking it seriously and think of this as something that at first seems uninteresting. But it could be useful later, in life. You try to move forward and you understand that by interpreting, reading, looking through your emotions you can, for example, try and understand what the writer thought while writing and this can help me know more about what he wanted to convey.

Interviewer: As for the theme, related to social justice, do you think that studying the language through these topics can motivate students?

Student: I think so, also because the poetry you chose at the beginning seems maybe a humorous, funny poem, about cats and their flaws. But you pay attention, it's not funny. It is propaganda, some people can make it look like something funny, but you're actually saying something much more significant that can hurt people too. And that's interesting but also dangerous. You can also see it in the current propaganda. Politicians can make jokes about something, which is actually a much bigger and complicated issue to understand and cannot be reduced to a simple joke and, very often, it is even discriminatory.

Interviewer: Congratulations, it's a very deep thought. Do you think this kind of activity can be motivating since poems usually deal with values such as love, respect, empathy and social justice? Can you please give reasons and indicate if and why, on that topic, your idea has changed compared to before starting the project?

Student: As I said before, it depends on how you approach it. If you don't get involved, you can't figure out what's behind it.

Interviewer: Congratulations, you're brilliant. Do you have anything else to add?

Student: Yes, at first, I thought that this type of activity was not useful to understand one's own culture, but then I realized that it could be useful to compare one's culture with the Anglo-Saxon culture. But I wanted to deal with more poems, deal with more content and themes to make comparisons.

First-year students' comments to the items contained in the questionnaires

Post-test questions

These questions aim to explore your views about the use of literature in learning English language. There are no right and wrong answers. Please be honest in your answers. Responses and information will be collected anonymously and treated as confidential.

[Each statement represents a comment provided by each student, according to each question, that we sequentially attach below].

Did you like the idea of using a poem to learn English? Why?

Yes, because it's an original idea.

Yes, because it's a way to draw your attention.

Yes, I find it an alternative and funny thing.

Yes, because it allows you to learn English in a less frontal and boring way.

Yes, because it's a more interactive method.

Yes, because it's an unusual but effective method.

Yes, because it was very interesting to combine poetry with the study of the English language.

Yes, I did, because I think it was useful and interesting.

Yes, because it is a beautiful idea.

Yes, I have. It has been exciting reading a part of "Wonder" to learn grammar rules and to improve our vocabulary.

Yes, because I had never done it before.

Yes, I did. I liked reading the novel because it helped me to discuss with the class in English.

Yes, I really liked this experience because it improved my English skills.

Yes, because I think it is an alternative way to have a lesson.

Yes, it was really cool.

Yes, I did, I liked the novel "Wonder" a lot, I had never read it before, but I think it has been interesting.

Yes, I have. I think it's a great way of learning English since it's different from the usual way of learning it.

Of course, it is a brilliant way of studying other languages.

Yes, very much. It was an idea both interesting and intriguing, in fact, it allowed me to know a beautiful novel, and through the interventions of Mr Sirico, I could understand the meaning of it, thus succeeding in having fun learning English. We learned while having fun.

Yes, I did. Because it was interesting and fun.

Yes, because it is an original idea to learn English.

Yes, because it's a funny method to learn English.

Yes, because we dealt with interesting topics.

Yes, because it can improve many skills, especially listening, reading and our interpretative skills and it was also very interesting because students are motivated to express themselves and read with emphasis (roleplay).

Yes, I did. It was really cool.

Yes, because it was interesting to see how my classmates have acted out.

Yes, I did because it helped me to improve my speaking skills.

Yes, because we talked about some important issues.

Yes, I did. I think it was interesting and exciting.

Compared to your initial expectations, what has changed now?

At first, I thought it would be an uninteresting experience, but then I realised that it is a more creative and fun way to learn English.

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

I learned a lot more vocabulary, and I found that I like reading poems in English.

Initially, I thought that it would not involve me much, but in the end, I changed my mind.

I didn't expect it was such an interesting and fun experience.

I thought it was an activity as boring as other activities, but it wasn't.

Using the poems was less tedious than I thought before, it was fun and very engaging.

Initially, I expected to understand nothing of poetry, then gradually, I began to understand, also thanks to the help of the teacher who kept students engaged.

It has changed my way of approaching the poems. I thought they were boring.

I have understood that it is an extraordinary method to improve my English, and it is a method to know my classmates better.

Actually, I have learned something, 90% more than what I use to do with my teachers.

I changed my opinion about disabled people.

I didn't expect the project to be so interesting, but it was. Luckily this year we had more hours available. I wanted to thank Mr Sirico, who dedicated his time to help us learn a language that is not easy at all, and that many people are teaching superficially and intimidating the pupils (any reference is not coincidental). Thank you, Mr Sirico, for your willingness. I'd love to have you as our teacher!

I didn't think that you could understand other people's culture and I didn't expect that writing together was fun.

I changed my opinion about plays.

I didn't expect plays were interesting, but I had to change my mind. The roleplay was my favourite part!

Now, I believe more in my abilities.

I realised that drama is more interesting than I thought.

Definitely, I did not expect that this experience could enrich me in so many fields.

I know more words and I'm more confident in talking in English now.

Yes. You have to remind people of these things, you did well to deal with these topics in the classroom.

I liked everything, especially the fact that we learned new vocabulary and grammar. I enjoyed reading the poem you chose, also because I had never read a poem in English, so it was also interesting for that. I am waiting with curiosity to see even the other themes, the novel and the theatre. The narrative is my favourite in Italian. I'm curious to see it in English. I always liked poetry. In English, I had never read it, but I found that I also like English.

What have you enjoyed most? Why?

The fact of expressing one's opinion freely.

I liked the activity of creative poetry.

I liked to understand the profound meaning of poetry, which apparently seem trivial.

The hidden meaning of the poems because it leads to thinking and discussions.

The teacher, because he was very engaging.

I really liked how a simple poem contains many meanings.
Expressing my personal considerations, because everyone interprets a poem in a personal way, so everyone had a consideration to report.
The fact of speaking and interacting with the class.
The creative part, where I could put at stake my knowledge of English and what I learned about poetry during the project.
Mr Sirico, because he knows how to engage students.
Mr Sirico because he's nice and good.
I liked it very much when we walked in character's shoes.
I loved it when we discussed the problems of the disabled.
I could always express my idea without problems.
I liked it when we talked about the disability, and I think this topic is significant in schools, to educate teenagers who are the adults of the future.
I understand that in the world there are people who are different from us, but we must not discriminate against them for this reason.
I liked the role play because I saw the story from a different point of view.
The thing that I liked the most was discussing these issues, like diversity, starting from the novel.
The acted part was an engaging moment.
When we wrote together, it was interesting to see everyone's ideas and put them together.
The part when we acted out.
The thing that I liked the most was speaking about bullying.

What have you found more difficult? Why?

To understand the meaning of some words and to write the required texts.
The fact of always speaking in English.
Finding the figures of speech in the poem.
Understanding, because we always ran too fast.
The figures of speech.
Answering some questions by exposing our thoughts.
The most complicated part, in my opinion, was to create a poem as it included everything we did during the lessons.
The most challenging aspects were the figures of speech.
The most difficult part of the lessons was speaking English.
When we have to "act."
Acting because I'm shy.
The most complicated thing was to express my opinion in English.

Employing poems as a means of learning English can improve your listening skills?

I think so because anyway listening to poems helps me in a language I'm not used to listening to.
Because in English we do three hours a week, but I'm not used to listening in English.
Yes, because I read a lot and listened to others reading, too.
Usually, in class, we do not do many activities of listening, so it's useful.
Yes, because we had to always speak in English.
Personally, I'm a little stuck, and if you have a lesson where the teacher speaks only English and makes questions in English, the pupils must strive to speak.
Yes, because we always talked in English.

Yes, because we used the audiobook to listen to the novel.
Yes, because the novel is read in English and we speak about it always in English.
Yes, I do. Listening to the teacher speaking English can improve my listening a lot.
Yes, because we have listened to the play and this helps for the pronunciation.
Yes, because we listened to authentic material.

Employing poems as a means of learning English can enhance your speaking skills?

Yes. I think my vocabulary is a lot richer. We learned new words and sayings.
Yes, I do because we spoke a lot.
Yes, because I had to speak a lot to tell my opinion.
Yes, because there were English conversations in the class.
Yes, because, after we read the novel, we spoke about the book with the classmates.
Yes, because in the classroom I could say my opinion.
We spoke a lot in English.
Yes, I do because we spoke a lot when we walked into the characters' shoes.
Yes, because I had to explain my opinion.
Yes, because we commented on the story together in English many times.

Employing poems as a means of learning English can develop your reading skills?

Yes, because the teacher gave us a lot to read and we had to read in front of all.
Yes, I do because we read a lot.
Yes, they can. Mr Sirico gave the class some homework where we were supposed to read a lot.
Yes, because we read a lot during these lessons.
Yes, I do. Because we read a lot and we learnt many new words.
Yes, because we had to read the play.

Employing poems as a means of learning English can strengthen your writing skills?

Yes, especially the part of creative poetry, when we had to create poems
Yes, we've written a lot.
I liked this type of lesson, which helped me a lot with my writing ability.
Yes, because we had to write in English.
Yes, because, after we read the novel, we had to do some exercises.
Yes, I do. I think it's very important to read if you want to write well.
Yes, because there were a lot of written exercises.
Yes, because we have done a lot of exercises to improve our writing skills.

Employing poems as a means of learning English can enrich your vocabulary?

Yes, I think that's the part I've improved the most.
Yes, absolutely. You learn a lot of new words, synonyms and opposites.
Yes, I do, because we learnt many new English words.
Yes, because in the novel there are a lot of words that before I didn't know.
Yes, because I understood more words.

Looking over some structures employed in poems can improve your understanding of grammar?

Yes. It was very interesting to deal with the use of the verb plus preposition. Actually, this is a topic that I had never understood. So, for me, this project was also useful for grammar.

Yes, because poems are very rich in grammar. In the beginning, I thought it helped me less about this.

Yes, because we used only English.

Yes, but not a lot.

Yes, because in the novel there were some grammar rules I didn't know.

Yes, I do. But we should have done more grammar.

Yes, because there were exercises about grammar.

Yes, but we didn't deal with many grammar topics.

Yes, I do because we learnt many new grammar structures.

Yes, because I have learnt some new verbal tenses like conditionals.

Yes, because we learnt new grammar structures.

Yes, because we have learnt some grammar rules.

Employing poems as a means of learning English can motivate you because they help you understand and share your personal emotions and feelings?

It is because so often, it is difficult to express Emotions. With this course, I was provided with a tool to express myself.

I thought this course in this area could not be useful; instead, it proved very useful.

No, because I did not consider it necessary to share my emotions.

I think it might be useful because it's easier to express your feelings through a poem rather than in a direct way.

Yes, although I think most of us don't like sharing their emotions.

This activity has been very motivating because it helped me to expose my ideas, my emotions and my thoughts.

I don't usually express my emotions so, for me, it didn't work, but it could work for the others.

Yes, I find it very difficult to express my emotions, so I think it helped me.

Yes, indeed, because we have also experienced writing a poem. That was one of the most helpful things.

Yes, I do. Because we walked in Auggie's shoes ... and we tried to understand the emotions felt.

Yes, because after we read the novel, I could express my thoughts with my classmates.

Yes, because it is important to try to express our emotions.

Yes, because you share opinions with your classmates.

Yes, because I could always express my ideas.

Yes, because the story touched everyone differently, so we had to understand our own feelings and then share them with others and listen to others' feelings.

Yes, we opened up our minds and our hearts.

Yes, because the characters were like us.

Yes, I think that this activity helped me and my classmates to talk about our feelings.

Yes, because you have to share your opinions with others.

Yes, because you feel emotionally involved with a play, and it makes you willing to express your feelings.

Yes, because we gave our point of view and opinions about bullying.

Yes, because you have the opportunity to express what you think.

Employing poems as a means of learning English can motivate you because they help you understand and share other people's emotions and feelings?

From this point of view, I think that the project is very useful because you have to walk in other people's shoes to better understand their emotions.

No, because I don't think there's been a great sharing of views.

Yes, because I saw some mates expressing their emotions during this course, and I managed to understand and share my emotions.

Yes, listening to your friends can be comforting.

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

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

Yes, because the classmates gave their opinion.

Yes, because I had to try to understand everyone's feelings that were not always like mine.

Yes, because everybody reacts to this activity in different ways and we can see their point of view.

Yes, because you also have to listen to the opinions of your classmates.

Yes, because we spoke about "delicate" topics and we had to express our emotions.

Yes, because you can see different points of view of the story.

Yes, because also my classmates gave their opinions about the topics that we read in class.

Yes, I think so since we tried to walk in other people's shoes.

Employing poems as a means of learning English can develop your interpretative skills?

To understand the real implicit message, you have to think deeply about the details.

I believe that with more hours available, this activity can increase my ability.

Yes, because we expressed our thoughts and interpretations many times.

Employing poems as a means of learning English can make you familiar with figures of speech and sound?

Of course, many messages that poetry wants to express are in the form of metaphors, allegory...

Yes, because English figures of speech are more difficult to use and understand, however, this work has helped us so much.

I think that this activity can help me understand the figures of speech since, at first, I barely knew what they were.

Yes, because we analysed them together.

Yes, because there are a lot of figures of speech in that novel.

Yes, because the book is full of figures of speech.

Yes, I do. We saw some figures of sound and speech, especially metaphors and similes.

I think poems are more useful, but I've seen that also plays and novels contain similes, metaphors, etc. And plays can help improve your skills at finding them because in them figures of speech are less evident than in poems.

Yes, because there were many figures of speech and we tried to find some of them in the play.

Employing poems as a means of learning English can reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language?

Yes, you might get passionate about poetry and even start writing poems.

Yes, especially the creative part.

Yes, I didn't expect that so many different ways of expressing an idea existed.

Yes, because this project can bring out the creative side of each of us.

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

Yes, because we must understand the emotions of the protagonist.

Yes, because it was a story full of emotional parts that sometimes were hidden behind ordinary moments.

Yes, because we tried to use English in a new creative way.

Yes, because it is different from the English that we learn at school.

Employing poems as a means of learning English can motivate you, considering that poems normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.?

I think some of the issues we've faced are too "big" for us.

In my opinion, it was very motivating because the teacher asked each of us to stop and reflect on specific values.

Now I think that even an unknown and apparently trivial poem can teach something. Thanks to the project, I also realised that racism may seem 'trivial'.

Yes, because especially in these times I think we are losing some values.

Yes, because the poem dealt with a very important topic, and this allows us a great internal reflection.

I think so, also because the poem we read at the beginning seemed humorous, funny. But as we can look at this thing and consider them amusing, so this humourism can be taken by someone like a sort of propaganda, consider it as something fun, but in fact, you are saying something offensive that can hurt people too, and this is interesting but also dangerous. You also see in the propaganda of politics, if you laugh at something, which is actually much bigger and harder to understand, you can subtly discriminate.

Yes, because they are very interesting values to discuss.

Yes, I do. Because these topics are really interesting and useful and many people today don't know what is respect for other people.

Yes, because they are very important and sometimes, we forget them.

Yes, novels are often boring, but this one was really interesting.

Yes, of course, because in today's society everybody minds their own business and don't care about people that need help.

Yes, because this novel spoke about diversity and being accepted that are different themes than the usual that are treated in class.

Yes, because I care about these themes and talking about them can help young people to understand better, which are the true values in life.

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

Yes, because we also spoke about bullying.

Yes, because in the world people have forgotten these values and think only about themselves.

Yes, because it's about bullying, a broad topic these days, and it helped me to understand better this sad phenomenon.

Yes, we learned new things by acting.
Yes, the play made me think a lot.

Employing poems as a means of learning English can motivate you because usually, poems deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics?

Yes, it's certainly more interesting to deal with "big" themes (as racism...) rather than childish, futile themes.

I didn't expect that we dealt with those topics. Also, because we don't have this kind of lesson at school, no one does that. Before I thought we were talking about abstract things, but we talked about concrete topics.

Yes, because poems make you think.

Yes, because interesting topics make the activity less boring for students.

The story we read makes you think.

Yes, because these themes aren't boring.

Yes, because not boring topics are obviously more interesting to students who feel more motivated to study.

Yes, because it can teach important values for life.

Before, I thought we were talking about things a little abstract, instead we have been concrete.

Reading poems in your English class can motivate you because they are authentic material?

Yes, because vocabulary is more refined and less trivial than textbooks.

Yes, this is exciting, because you say: "Gosh, I read a poem in English!". Anyway, this is really a good initiative.

Yes, because it's harder but more interesting.

Yes, because in this way we can learn the "true" English.

Yes, because the fact that the material is authentic helps to make people think.

Yes, in this way we can learn "true" English.

Employing poems as a means of learning English can motivate you because poems are usually concise?

I like poems because they are short, but I often prefer longer texts.

Even if they're short, in few lines there are very strong and stimulating messages.

Yes, because long texts many times can be boring.

Reading novels and plays in your English class can motivate you because they can help you understand different points of view?

Yes, because no one realises that the points of view can change everything.

Yes, because everyone has a different point of view.

Yes, it can help us to understand other people's feelings.

Yes, because by having different points of view you have a better chance to understand what's going on.

Yes, of course, because the topic of this year was exciting and essential for our society and it helped us to understand what is happening around us.

Yes, because everyone has different viewpoints.

Yes, because we shared our opinions.

Reading plays in your English class can motivate you because they usually offer real lifelike settings?

Yes, because the play that we have studied was settled in a school and the characters were some students as young as we are.

Yes, I do. Because they usually talk about our society.

Yes, because these things happen in real life.

Yes, because if you consider that the story is real, this makes people think.

Reading plays in your English class can motivate you because they contain examples of colloquial and informal language?

Yes, because I can improve my speaking skills.

Yes, this kind of language isn't always included in textbooks and is useful for everyday life.

Yes, this way you can learn real English.

This way you learn a more informal and spoken English

I found this activity very interesting, and Mr Sirico is very good.

By reading poems in your English class, can you be acquainted with the culture of Anglophone countries?

Yes, because poetry reflects in some way the thinking of the time in which they are written and the place where the author lives. I like Italian poetry, I had never read them in English.

No, because the English-speaking culture was not well examined.

But we haven't done it yet.

Yes. Poetry is an essential element in culture.

No, I don't. I believe that we didn't deal with topics like these.

We have hardly ever spoken of the customs of the English people.

No, because we didn't speak about culture during the lessons.

Yes, because we can learn something about the thoughts of these people.

Reading something that comes from a foreign country could be useful to understand better its culture.

Yes, because we talked about American culture.

Yes, because the play was set in an Anglophone country.

Yes, I do, in fact, this play was set in America.

Yes, it is interesting to know about the cultures of other countries.

Yes, because plays show the background of the characters, their traditions, their past, their culture.

Yes, because we can see the differences between our culture and English culture.

Yes, we talked about American and Canadian culture.

Yes, I do. We analysed many aspects of English culture.

Yes, I do because thanks to this reading, I can understand how people from other countries think.

Yes, we talked about social problems, which are problems affecting everyone.

By reading poems in your English class, can you better understand your own culture?

Yes, because you can see the differences and particularities of your culture.

Yes, I can compare my culture with that of those who wrote the poem.

Yes, we talked about racism, and I can see if I'm a part of this group of people without being aware of it.

From this point of view, I am not so sure that there are any correspondences.

No, because I do not think that through this activity, we can better understand the culture.

No, we almost never spoke of culture but of society.

Yes, because you can compare your own culture to a different culture.

Yes, because you can make a comparison between your culture and Anglophone culture.

Yes, because you can see the differences between the cultures.

We understood the daily life that a "different" teenager must face every day.

Yes, because we can compare different cultures.

Yes, because dealing with another culture, you can understand yours better.

Yes, because you can compare what you find in the play with your culture.

I agree since we talked about bullying in Italy.

Yes, talking about social problems, like discrimination, is talking about culture!

Yes, because we can see the differences between our culture and the English culture.

Appendix 5

*Pre-test and post-test for teachers about poetry*⁸²

This questionnaire aims to explore your views about the use of literature in teaching the FL. Please read the following items carefully and answer considering that the students this questionnaire refers to are those attending the first year of high school. Please, indicate your degree of agreement by checking one of five response categories:

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Strongly agree</i>
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There are no right and wrong answers. Please be honest in your answers. Responses and information will be collected anonymously and treated as confidential.

- 1 - Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching the FL, can be an enjoyable experience for students.
- 2 - Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching the FL, can improve students' listening skills.
- 3 - Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching the FL, can enhance students' speaking skills.
- 4 - Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching the FL, can develop students' reading skills.
- 5 - Employing poems as a means of learning the FL can strengthen students' writing skills.
- 6 - Employing poems as a means of learning the FL can enrich students' vocabulary.
- 7 - Looking over some structures employed in poems can ameliorate students' understanding of grammar.
- 8 - Employing poems as a means of learning the FL motivates students because they can help them understand and share their personal emotions and feelings.
- 9 - Employing poems as a means of learning the FL motivates students because they can help them understand and share other people's emotions and feelings.
- 10 - Employing poems as a means of learning the FL can develop students' interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make their own interpretations).

⁸² Adapted from Férez et al. (2020).

11 - Employing poems as a means of learning the FL can make students familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.).

12 - Employing poems as a means of learning the FL can disclose to students a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language.

13 - Employing poems as a means of learning the FL motivates students because poems normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.

14 - Employing poems as a means of learning the FL motivates students because poems deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics.

15 - Employing poems as a means of learning the FL can motivate students because poems are authentic material.

16 - Employing poems as a means of learning the FL can make students aware of the culture of Anglophone countries.

17 - Employing poems as a means of learning the FL can make students more aware of their own culture.

18 - Employing poems as a means of learning the FL motivates students because poems are usually concise.

The following questions were contained only in the pre-test:

19 – How often do you use literary texts in this class?

Hardly ever	Once a year	Once a month	Once a week	Twice a month
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20 - My students like reading poems

No	Very few of them	Some	Most of them	Yes	I don't know
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Pre-test and post-test for teachers about novels

This questionnaire aims to explore your views about the use of literature in teaching the FL. Please read the following items carefully and answer considering that the students this questionnaire refers to are those attending the first year of high school. Please, indicate your degree of agreement by checking one of five response categories:

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Strongly agree</i>
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------------

*There are no right and wrong answers. Please be honest in your answers.
Responses and information will be collected anonymously and treated as confidential.*

1 - Employing novels in class, as a means of teaching the FL, can be an enjoyable experience for students.

2 - Employing novels in class, as a means of teaching the FL, can improve students' listening skills.

3 - Employing novels in class, as a means of teaching the FL, can enhance students' speaking skills.

4 - Employing novels in class, as a means of teaching the FL, can develop students' reading skills.

5 - Employing novels as a means of learning the FL can strengthen students' writing skills.

6 - Employing novels as a means of learning the FL can enrich students' vocabulary.

7 - Looking over some structures employed in novels can ameliorate students' understanding of grammar.

8 - Employing novels as a means of learning the FL motivates students because they can help them understand and share their personal emotions and feelings.

9 - Employing novels as a means of learning the FL motivates students because they can help them understand and share other people's emotions and feelings.

10 - Employing novels as a means of learning the FL can develop students' interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make their own interpretation of texts).

11 - Employing novels as a means of learning the FL can make students familiar with figures of speech (metaphor, simile, etc.).

12 - Employing novels as a means of learning the FL can disclose to students a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language.

13 - Employing novels as a means of learning the FL motivates students because novels normally include values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.

14 - Employing novels as a means of learning the FL motivates students because novels deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics.

15 - Employing novels as a means of learning the FL can motivate students because novels are authentic material.

16 - Employing novels as a means of learning the FL can make students aware of the culture of Anglophone countries.

17 - Employing novels as a means of learning the FL can make students more aware of their own culture.

18 - Employing novels as a means of learning the FL can help students understand different points of view because in novels reality is often seen from several perspectives (those of the various characters).

The following question was contained only in the pre-test:

19 - My students like reading novels

No	Very few of them	Some	Most of them	Yes	I don't know
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Pre-test and post-test for teachers about drama

This questionnaire aims to explore your views about the use of literature in teaching the FL. Please read the following items carefully and answer considering that the students this questionnaire refers to are those attending the first year of high school. Please, indicate your degree of agreement by checking one of five response categories:

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Strongly agree</i>
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------------

There are no right and wrong answers. Please be honest in your answers.

Responses and information will be collected anonymously and treated as confidential.

1 - Employing plays in class, as a means of teaching the FL, can be an enjoyable experience for students.

2 - Employing plays in class, as a means of teaching the FL, can improve students' listening skills.

3 - Employing plays in class, as a means of teaching the FL, can enhance students' speaking skills.

4 - Employing plays in class, as a means of teaching the FL, can develop students' reading skills.

5 - Employing plays as a means of learning the FL can strengthen students' writing skills.

6 - Employing plays as a means of learning the FL can enrich students' vocabulary.

7 - Looking over some structures employed in plays can ameliorate students' understanding of grammar.

8 - Employing plays motivates students because they help understand and share their personal emotions and feelings.

9 - Employing plays motivates students because they help understand and share other people's emotions and feelings.

10 - Employing plays as a means of learning the FL can develop students' interpretative skills.

11 - Employing plays as a means of learning the FL can make students familiar with figures of speech (metaphor, simile, etc.).

12 - Employing plays as a means of learning the FL can disclose to students a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language.

13 - Employing plays as a means of learning the FL motivates students because plays normally include values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.

14 - Employing plays as a means of learning the FL motivates students because plays deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics.

15 - Employing plays as a means of learning the FL can motivate students because plays are authentic material.

16 - Employing plays as a means of learning the FL can make students aware of the culture of Anglophone countries.

17 - Employing plays as a means of learning the FL can make students more aware of their own culture.

18 - Employing plays as a means of learning the FL motivates students because plays usually offer real lifelike settings.

19 - Employing plays as a means of learning the FL can help students understand different points of view.

20 - Reading plays in class can motivate students because they can find examples of colloquial and informal language.

The following question was contained only in the pre-test:

21 - My students like reading plays

No	Very few of them	Some	Most of them	Yes	I don't know
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The following question was contained only in the post-test:

21 - Now that you've observed the lesson plans, how often would you like to use literary texts in this class?

Hardly ever	Once a year	Once a month	Once a week	Twice a month
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Appendix 6

Teachers' interviews and written feedback

Interviews

Teacher 1

Interviewer: I want to remind you that I am recording our interview. Do you agree with it?

Teacher: Yes, I do.

Interviewer: I've got here your pre-test and your post-test. I noticed some differences between the two tests. There are different kinds of answers you gave me, for example, this question (Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching English, can be an enjoyable experience for students), in the pre-test you put a three, while in the post-test you put a four. So, do you think that this experience was enjoyable for students?

Teacher: Yes, I think that it has been a beautiful experience for students because they made contact with a new way of learning the language. They read a poem and didn't have the traditional lesson, this way it was more innovative.

Interviewer: thank you, you are very kind. As for the second question (Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching English, can improve students' listening skills), you improved your mark from a 3 to 4, would you like to explain this improvement?

Teacher: I made the change because you taught all the lessons in English, so I think this is included in the listening skills, so this is the reason why I put four in the post-tests.

Interviewer: As for this question (Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching English, can enhance students' speaking skills), you lowered from 4 to 3. Can you explain this?

Teacher: The main reason why I changed this is because I think that my students deserve a three. In my opinion, they didn't accept the challenge, I mean, they had to talk, and they were observing you, so at the beginning, they were a little bit shy. I think they didn't exploit [*take advantage of*] this opportunity a lot.

Interviewer: What about this question (Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching English, can develop students' reading skills), you put the same mark...

Teacher: I think that the way you explained to them literature was useful also for the reading skills. So, I confirmed a four.

Interviewer: As for the writing skills, you lowered your mark from four, in the pre-test, to three, in the post-test.

Teacher: That's for the same reason I told you before. In my opinion, they have been shyer than I thought. They didn't really exploit the opportunity to write, maybe they don't have enough skills to do this project.

Interviewer: I want to remind you that I couldn't teach my last lesson. And it was a writing activity. Then there were so many exercises where I asked them to write.

Teacher: So, many of them did their homework, as you asked them, many didn't.

Interviewer: As for this question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can enrich students' vocabulary), you confirmed your four.

Teacher: Yes, in my opinion, it was advantageous. Maybe some terms were difficult and not very frequent in their use.

Interviewer: Like?

Teacher: I don't know, some adjectives connected to dogs and cats... I don't remember them. But I noticed that students were very attentive to your explanations.

Interviewer: Do you know that a lot of students in their questionnaires told me that the most exciting part of the project was the improvement of their vocabulary?

Teacher: Ok... This is good.

Interviewer: As for grammar, you confirmed your view about the projects in the pre and post-test.

Teacher: I think it was ok. I expected... We did almost the same things because I did the review of the future tenses. The grammar lessons were ok.

Interviewer: As for this question about sharing their feelings in class (Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates students because they can help them understand and share their personal emotions and feelings), you confirmed your mark, that is three.

Teacher: Some students were really shy, and it surprised me. So, perhaps they are more confident with me, and even if they make mistakes, they know my reaction. Maybe they were sometimes afraid of your response. They didn't talk a lot and didn't share their personal view and their emotions.

Interviewer: Do you think that I looked like a strict teacher during the lessons?

Teacher: They were like studying you and the way you do your lesson. So, they were just observing you.

Interviewer: In this question (Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates students because they can help them understand and share other people's emotions and feelings), you gave a better mark, that is four, compared to the pre-test...

Teacher: I think that you have given them some means to show their personal feelings. They didn't show, but now they know how they can do it. So, probably that's the reason why I put four here. So, now they have the skills to do it if they want.

Interviewer: As for this question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can develop students' interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make their own interpretations), why have you lowered your mark from 4 to 3?

Teacher: That is the same. Now they have the means, but they didn't do it. Probably they found it difficult to grasp everything, and they found it difficult to find their own interpretations. They were shy, they didn't talk a lot. But now they know how to do it.

Interviewer: I didn't get it. You're saying that before they didn't have the skill while now they learned that skill, and you lowered your mark from 4 to 3?

Teacher: Yes, that's because I thought they would have been better. And this fact made me think about three instead of four. Maybe they were studying the way you teach. I do not know, but in my opinion, I had to downgrade them to 3.

Interviewer: As you wish. But students told me that they didn't know anything about grasping a hidden meaning in a text, but now, after going through and examining practically a poem, they have started considering it.

Teacher: That was my impression.

Interviewer: As for the following question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can make students familiar with figures of speech and so, and (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.), You lowered from 4 to 3. Why?

Teacher: Maybe because they found it difficult to understand the text. Probably they were afraid of asking you the meaning of some words. That is the reason why I put three.

Interviewer: As for this question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can disclose to students a creative, unexpected, and evocative use of language), you confirmed four. Any comments?

Teacher: No.

Interviewer: Do you think that choosing a poem that could raise a reflection about universal values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, could motivate students? You didn't change your mind in the post-test, you confirmed a four. Any comments?

Teacher: No, I confirm it.

Interviewer: You lowered your mark in this question (Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates students because poems deal with non-trivial topics). Any comments or reasons?

Teacher: I do not know, I thought it was four. Maybe here I'm wrong.

Interviewer: Let's go to the next question. Employing poems as a means of learning English can motivate students because poems are authentic material. Here you confirmed your previous mark: four.

Teacher: As I know my students, I thought that authentic material could discourage them because it seems too difficult for them, and sometimes I have this impression. But then, during your lessons, they understood what they had to do, little by little, they understood what they had to do.

Interviewer: They had handouts with the poem and worksheets with all the exercises written on them.

[*The interviewer shows the teacher the structure of the lesson plan in all its phases*].

Teacher: I wanted to say that students were learning how to work with you. In the beginning, they were really shy, even with me, but then they were more talkative. So, they were so shy because they didn't know you. So, the reason why I gave a three it's because they were shy.

Interviewer: As for this question, you confirmed your four (Employing poems as a means of learning English can make students aware of the culture of Anglophone countries). While, as for the other question about culture (Employing poems as a means of learning English can make students more aware of their own culture), you lowered from 4 to 3. Why?

Teacher: They are in their first year, so they don't have such a broad view of the word or historical background. So, in my opinion, they are not aware of their own culture.

Interviewer: But I wanted them to improve, to be aware of it. And I explained all the social and historical backgrounds.

Teacher: I'm not so sure that they have understood their own culture. Probably they have understood only how to work with you, so they can exploit new skills in the future.

Interviewer: As for the last question (Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates students because poems are usually concise), you lowered from 4 to 3. Why?

Teacher: Even if the poem was concise, I didn't see the students motivated because of it. Sometimes I had the impression that the poem was too long for them. But it wasn't. But it was my impression. Some of them are very intelligent and make some interesting comments. But this time I found that they were not interested. They could not reply to you in the right way. It seemed to me that they didn't know what to do. Perhaps because some implications were too high, too elevated for them.

Interviewer: Are you saying that my requests were too difficult for them?

Teacher: I think yes. Perhaps they didn't understand each word you used. Maybe they were tired for other reasons.

Interviewer: Perhaps they were tired because I met them always during the last period of their school day.

Teacher: Yes, that's true.

Interviewer: In your post-test questionnaire, you mentioned something about the *rhythm* of the lesson, can you explain it, please?

Teacher: I didn't get the fact that you were using bridges to connect the warm-up phase with the second section...

Interviewer: What do you mean by "rhythm"? Maybe you mean "pace"?

Teacher: Yes. Sometimes you, as a teacher, you need to be faster. Otherwise, students start to think about summer, about something else. And I saw their reactions, and probably you should go a little bit faster with them. Without asking questions, like: “Do you know this? - Do you understand that?” If they don’t answer you, you can go on, in my opinion.

Interviewer: But I wanted to give them time, room, space to express freely. Sometimes teachers keep for granted that students understand and go on.

Teacher: I see your position...

Interviewer: I don’t want to justify myself. Sometimes teachers have a kind of *horror vacui*; they are afraid of students’ silence. Students know that if they don’t speak, teachers will fill that gap with their voice. And I wanted to give them time to think about what we were doing. I didn’t want to provide them with all the answers, I wanted them to think about solutions.

Teacher: It’s true, but sometimes the implications were too high. They didn’t have the skills to understand that you were talking about Jews and Nazis. You did an excellent job giving them time and space to talk. But at the same time, you were talking about very delicate subjects, so they didn’t have the knowledge.

Teacher 2

Interviewer: I want to remind you that I am recording our interview. Do you agree with it?

Teacher: Yes. I do.

Interviewer: I’ve got your pre-test and your post-test here. I noticed some equalities and some differences between the two tests. There are different kinds of answers you gave me, and I want to talk to you about this. For example, in the first question (Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching English, it can be an enjoyable experience for students), in the pre-test and in the post-test you gave the same answer, that is four. So do you think that this experience was enjoyable for students?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: As for the second question (Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching English, can improve students’ listening skills), you lowered your mark from 4 to 3, would you like to explain this change?

Teacher: Yes, because we listened to the poem only once. And the listening skills were more concentrated on the conversations you had with students, not on poems in general.

Interviewer: As for this question (Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching English, can enhance students’ speaking skills), you lowered from 4 to 3. Can you explain this?

Teacher: Yes, because not all of them spoke, because of many different reasons. Because they are shy because they didn’t want to show their weakness. Most of them exercised [*sic*] and spoke and improved their abilities. Others didn’t. Not because of the plan of the lesson, but because of other kinds of reasons that are related to their personality, or maybe time.

Interviewer: What about this question (Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching English, can develop students’ reading skills), you lowered from 4 to 3. Can you explain this?

Teacher: For the same reason, because we just read only one poem. Probably they didn’t read so accurately the task you asked them.

Interviewer: I agree with you. In only three periods, you can't effectively teach them a lot of things. I merely wanted to give teachers and students a glimpse, a flash of this kind of activity; students could only have a glance at the possibilities that teaching English through literature could offer. And, as for reading, I have to tell you that to accomplish my tasks, students were required to read the poem a lot of times, in class and at home...

Teacher: ... and I think they didn't read it so many times. They only read it to do their homework.

Interviewer: Ok. As for the question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can strengthen students' writing skills), you put a two in the pre-test, while in the post-test, you improved your mark and gave a three.

Teacher: I didn't expect that there were so many exercises. I read some of the students' exercises, and they are very good. I didn't expect them to be so good at writing. Maybe they concentrated on the task. Maybe I didn't know I had such good students.

Interviewer: As for this question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can enrich students' vocabulary), you lowered from 5 to 4.

Teacher: Yes, because I tested them on new vocabulary, and even in this case, many of them memorised them. But I am not sure that they will be able to use them in the future. But these are related to their motivation. Maybe some of them were not motivated ...

Interviewer: Why?

Teacher: Because they have prejudices about poetry in general. I asked them about poetry, and a lot of them didn't like it. I asked them what they did at Scuola Media [*middle school*], and their memories were very confused. And most of them hadn't appreciated what they have done at the *Scuola Media*. And moreover, they didn't even realise that this year they had to study poetry with their Italian teacher. Because, for them, epic poetry is not poetry.

Interviewer: Yes, but you are telling me that their vocabulary was enriched, aren't you?

Teacher: The fact that I lowered from 5 to 4 is because I was thinking of the expected future: "Will they be able to remember and use it?"

Interviewer: Who knows the future? Anyway, as for the question linked to grammar (Looking over some structures employed in poems can improve students' understanding of grammar), you lowered your mark from 4 to 2. Any comments?

Teacher: Yes, because actually there was nothing new for them. They already knew how to use the forms of the future, of the past and of the present.

Interviewer: Yes, but the focus of my lesson about grammar was the use of verb-plus-preposition form.

Teacher: You mean phrasal verbs? But, I don't consider phrasal verbs grammar. They are only vocabulary.

Interviewer: Actually, I have found this structure in almost all the grammar books I have read. And I consider vocabulary the explanation or definition of words, while grammar is how words are put together.

Teacher: Maybe I've got a traditional view of grammar.

Interviewer: And I dealt with this topic for a whole period, so I don't understand why you lowered from 4 to 2.

Teacher: My fault.

Interviewer: As for this question about sharing their feelings in class (Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates students because they can help them understand and share their personal emotions and feelings), you lowered your mark from 5 to 2. Why?

Teacher: I was thinking from a general point of view, I was not thinking of that class. I don't think that they can understand or share their emotions through that poem. I think that through poetry they can understand personal feelings. If you ask me again, from a general point of view, I will give five again. But not with that poem.

Interviewer: I have to tell you that in my career as a teacher, I have always had foreign students in my class. And there is a girl from Morocco in your class too. The problem of welcoming foreigners and immigrants is a very actual topic. In the poem, there were some references to the idea that property values fall down because of the presence of immigrants, or “the other”, the person different from us. Furthermore, the poet wonders why these “others” (immigrants, Jews) insist on their own language and culture. That is, these are racist comments, which can foster their critical thinking, and can entail a discussion in which students can share their feelings. They could have talked about the unexpected “other”.

Teacher: You know what, in this class students are so good that they are not racist and they don't see their schoolmate as a foreigner.

Interviewer: But I'm talking general. And when I asked the girl from Morocco, who is in your class, if she liked the poem, she told me that she really appreciated it because people don't know how racist they are.

Teacher: Yes, but they didn't get that the poem was about racism.

Interviewer: Really?

Teacher: Yes, you suggested it to them. They told you what you wanted them to tell you.

Interviewer: As for this question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can develop students' interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make their own interpretations), why have you lowered your mark from 5 to 3?

Teacher: It was quite difficult for them. They understood that, but with some hints from you.

Interviewer: They told me that this is the first time that they understood that there was a hidden meaning beyond a text, which seemed so simple. It's a starting point.

Teacher: Next time you have to interview the students I tell you.

Interviewer: They came to me voluntarily.

Interviewer: As for the following question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can make students familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.), you lowered your mark from 5 to 4. Why?

Teacher: More or less for the same reason. Some of them understood, some didn't. They can't discriminate between figures of speech related to the meaning, to the message, and those related to the sound. That's why you found me in class explaining the difference between rhyme, alliteration, etcetera.

Interviewer: As for this question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can disclose to students a creative, unexpected, and evocative use of language), you lowered from 5 to 2 your mark. Any comments?

Teacher: Because they can't use it, they are too young to understand it, they are not so disclosed to the evocative language of poetry. I had great expectations about teaching poetry, and what I saw was not what I expected. For many different reasons. You had not time to show them how they can appreciate poetry.

Interviewer: I want to remind you that I only had three periods and that I could not teach my last lesson, which was about to write a poem using the figures of speech they had studied with me. But, let's go on. Do you think that choosing a poem that could raise a reflection about universal values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, could motivate students? You lowered it from 5 to 3. Any comments?

Teacher: I know that the poem was about empathy, social justice, but once again, is it true for all the poems? Will they read poems on this topic?

Interviewer: Sorry, the question was: “Can a poem be motivating because it deals with this topic?”

Teacher: I mean too short time, only one poem...

Interviewer: Let's go to the next question. You lowered your mark in this question from 4 to 3 (Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates students because poems deal with non-trivial topics). Any comments or reasons?

Teacher: They did not understand at the beginning that it was not a trivial topic.

Interviewer: Yes, but they understood in the end. Can, the lack of triviality in the poem motivate them?

Teacher: No, because they are too young.

Interviewer: Another question. Employing poems as a means of learning English can motivate students because poems are authentic material. Here you lowered your mark from 3 to 2.

Teacher: They didn't understand that it was authentic material. It can be the product of personal experience.

Interviewer: Ok. As for this question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can make students aware of the culture of Anglophone countries), you lowered from 3 to 2.

Teacher: What did they understand of English-speaking countries from that poem?

Interviewer: That's your point of view. While, as for the other question about culture (Employing poems as a means of learning English can make students more aware of their own culture), you lowered from 3 to 2. Why?

Teacher: Because this poem is not speaking about their culture.

Interviewer: Is there no racism in Italy?

Teacher: It can be their attitude towards something, not culture.

Interviewer: Ok... As for the last question (Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates students because poems are usually concise), you increased it from 1 to 2. Why?

Teacher: This was related to poetry in general, because poems are not usually concise, not all of them. In this case, it was quite short, and they could read it in one session.

Teacher 3

Interviewer: I want to remind you that I am recording our interview. Do you agree with it?

Teacher: Yes, of course, I do.

Interviewer: First of all, I want to thank you for taking part in this project. I've got here your pre-test and your post-test. I noticed some equalities and some differences between the two tests. There are different kinds of answers you gave me, and I want to have with you a lively banter about this.

Teacher: [*Making an angry face*] Be worried, I hate banter.

Interviewer: Let's have a lively, friendly chat. Is it ok? Ok. For example, in the first question (Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching English, can be an enjoyable experience for students) in the pre-test, and in the post-test, you lowered your mark, your grade reduced from 5 to 4. So, don't you think that this experience was enjoyable for students?

Teacher: I have to say that the pre-test was theoretical, while the post-test was about what was done. And I think that it was a little less enjoyable because for the students it was confusing. But then it improved, from the second lesson [*on*]. Then, they enjoyed it a lot, especially when they had to create a poem together.

Interviewer: [*showing the design of the lesson plan*] Apart from the fact that students had the worksheets with the activities from the very beginning, as you can see here, during the first lesson there was a warm-up phase about vocabulary related to cats and dogs, to introduce and explain the words used in the poem. Then, there was a bridge to link their likes and dislikes about pets with the poem. After that, there was the presentation of the poem, we read it, we did the analysis of the

vocabulary, and I explained to them all the words contained in the poem. After that, there were some exercises about reading comprehension, exercises which could allow them to grasp the hidden meaning of the poem, because, analysing it, students understood that the poem was about arousing their critical thinking. So, we went deeper and deeper gradually into the comprehension of the poem.

Teacher: The point is that you cannot know in advance how it works when you don't know the class, or when it's the first time you do something.

Interviewer: Ok. As for the second question (Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching English, can improve students' listening skills), you gave the same mark, that is 4? Any comments?

Teacher: No comments.

Interviewer: As for this question (Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching English, can enhance students' speaking skills), you lowered from 4 to 3. Can you explain this?

Teacher: Maybe I should have given three the first time as well because it depends on what you do with it. You don't necessarily speak. The speaking doesn't necessarily have to do with the fact that you use poetry. And if you are concentrating on the poem, as a poem, you don't do much speaking. So, it depends.

Interviewer: But, don't you think that students spoke enough?

Teacher: The problem is that the time for speaking is always difficult to get. And, as far as my experience is, they are lucky because they are only 20 [*the number of students in the class*]. You have to choose something very simple and make them speak from the beginning. Doing something and make them speak, doesn't work. Because they don't have the time... "Ok, I'm going to say this". So, it doesn't work very well...

Interviewer: Ok. What about this question (Employing poems in class, as a means of teaching English, can develop students' reading skills), you gave five as well. While, as for the question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can strengthen students' writing skills), you put three in the pre-test, and in the post-test, you improved your mark and chose four.

Teacher: Yes, they improved their writing. You made them write more than I expected.

Interviewer: As for this question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can enrich students' vocabulary), you confirmed your 5.

Teacher: Yes. One thing that I have learnt is that, if you want them to enjoy poetry as poetry, the moment you relate with the text is to be that and only that. So, work on vocabulary with the idea of using it as vocabulary, not as poetry activity, must be done before and not after you read the poem. Otherwise, it takes away the emotion from the poetry, which is essential.

Interviewer: Ok. Thanks for your suggestions. As for the question linked to grammar (Looking over some structures employed in poems can improve students' understanding of grammar), you confirmed your three. Any comments?

Teacher: Yes, it's even wrong to think of using poetry to teach grammar. It's not the point. Teaching grammar is to be accurate when you speak. Poetry is something completely different and should be rid of burdens [*of grammatical rules*].

Interviewer: We dealt with grammar lingering over the structures the poet used.

Teacher: But anyway, it cannot be really something you can do with poetry. It happens. That's different.

Interviewer: Ok. But did you like the way we dealt with grammar?

Teacher: I have to tell you very frankly, the one thing I didn't like was the poem. Starting with something that looks so little like what one expects as poetry, must be confusing for them. If you use something with a more definite rhythm, wit, rhymes, they get into the mechanism, they can move on to things that are more fluid like that. For someone who has never studied poetry before, like them, it sounded more like prose. I think. But it's not my project.

Interviewer: *Mort Aux Chats* is worldwide considered a poem, and Peter Porter received a lot of awards in his career as a poet. But there's no accounting for taste. As for this question about sharing

their feelings in class (Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates students because they can help them understand and share their personal emotions and feelings) you lowered your mark from 3 to 2...

Teacher: ... the most important is that they got separated. Emotion is something personal, and in a group, not all students express themselves, because it's something that makes them shy. And that poem was many things, and it wasn't much with emotions.

Interviewer: Ok, I have to remind you that I wanted to motivate students, teaching the language and developing their critical thinking. I chose a poem which could have been useful in these three ways...

Teacher: ... the point is, if you choose something so ideological, you're moving away from emotions.

Interviewer: I have also to remind you that the poem dealt with racism, sexism, immigrants, the unexpected "other".

Teacher: Again, a type of text so ironical...

Interviewer: ... and provocative...

Teacher: ... if you want to stir emotions, you could have used other poems that work on emotions. If you choose something so ironical, you're moving away from emotions. You asked for my opinion, and it's my opinion. It's not easy to get emotions out of students at the beginning of an activity, unless you already know them. It works only in the *triennio* [*the last three years of high school*]. They trust you, they know who you are. They are not going to be laughed at. I think it's to expect too much to think that emotions would be expressed in the situation at the beginning of an activity with someone they have never seen before.

Interviewer: As for this question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can develop students' interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make their own interpretations), you confirmed your four...

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: As for the following question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can make students familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.), you confirmed your five...

Teacher: Yes, it works.

Interviewer: As for this question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can disclose to students a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language), you lowered from 5 to 4 your mark. Any comments? There were some creative activities.

Teacher: Yes, I like that, and they liked it a lot, the fact that they could invent it together, they didn't expect it. The perception of evocative language in 14 years old students in the first year, the first time they do poetry in another language, I think it's expecting too much. But, creativity worked. I think that the point of creativity worked.

Interviewer: So, do you want to improve the mark?

Teacher: No.

Interviewer: Let's go on to the next question. You lowered your mark in this question from 3 to 2 (Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates students because poems deal with non-trivial topics). Any comments or reasons?

Teacher: Poetry can deal with everything, but the specificity of poetry is not that. So, for students who know very little about poetry, you cannot start from that. It didn't seem poetry to me.

Interviewer: I got it. You didn't like the poem. The question was, the fact that the poem dealt with not trivial, interesting topics, can motivate them?

Teacher: It's not true. Poetry can deal with anything. So, interesting is very subjective.

Interviewer: Let's go on to the next question. Employing poems as a means of learning English can motivate students because poems are authentic material. Here you improved from 4 to 5.

Teacher: Yes, I think that students are very excited when they realise that something is real because in their minds school is not real, school is not the world.

Interviewer: Sometimes I agree with them. As for this question (Employing poems as a means of learning English can make students aware of the culture of Anglophone countries), you confirmed five.

Teacher: I totally agree, in general, out of my experience. Then, for a short series of lessons in a group of very young students, maybe this is a little bit optimistic, but, as a general fact, yes.

Interviewer: As for the other question about culture (Employing poems as a means of learning English can make students more aware of their own culture), you confirmed three.

Teacher: The point is, it depends on the poem you are reading.

Interviewer: Did you get my point about choosing a poem dealing with racism...

Teacher: ... Yes, but the point is that... This kind of situation can happen anywhere in the world, so, it's not specific to our culture. But, with these questions, you are going away from what we have done.

Interviewer: Why?

Teacher: Because if you are talking about our culture and other cultures, racism is not a matter of culture, it's really just a gut feeling, it's like a kind of primitive reaction to what it's different. And our culture didn't come into play at all.

Interviewer: It's your point of view. Even though I believe that there are cultural biases.

Interviewer: As for the last question (Employing poems as a means of learning English motivates students because poems are usually concise), you lowered from 3 to 2. Comments?

Teacher: It's simply not true, because a lot of poems are very long. The poem you chose was not concise. What is concise? Define concise, 10 lines 20 lines?

Interviewer: Would you like to add anything else?

Teacher: I liked the fact that you stirred curiosity. Next time your warm-up activity should be shorter.

Interviewer: The warm-up phase was a little bit longer because I have to remind you that on the very first day, I introduced myself, I asked them to introduce themselves...

Teacher: ... and you should have done only that.

Teachers' answers to the questions contained in the questionnaires

Questions contained in the post-test:

[Each statement represents a comment provided by each teacher, according to each question, that we sequentially attached below].

In your opinion, what could be more pleasant for students? Why?

A funnier and more stimulating approach to reading.

A real context to study the language.

Acting out (6 references).

Acting different roles in class and creating new scripts.

The acting parts of the play in the classroom.

Attending and taking part in a different (not ordinary) lesson because they are not used.

Attending and taking part in a lesson which is not ordinary.

Authentic texts are stimulating.

Creating together in class.

Creating word games and trying to get the real meaning of the poem.

I think they liked the way literature was taught to them. The lessons were more active than traditional ones.

I think they should make peace with the fact that some novels are compulsory to read and study to understand the culture of the author.

I think, being very young, they'd enjoy humorous poetry.

Interesting topics out (2 references).

It could be interesting to gather knowledge first on how a poem may be built; then make them experiment with language. However never in a first-year class, when they still lack a basic understanding of structures and vocabulary.

It could be pleasant for students to create poetry.

It could be pleasant to write something together in class.

Personal opinions.

Personalisation.

Playing different roles in class.

Poems that involve interesting characters/stories and that are not too long. Perhaps with some repetition of sounds.

Reading about teenagers' problems.

Reading aloud in class.

The different meanings of words, because they can "play" with them.

The motivation of working together and doing something different, new.

The use of an ironic poem, different from the classical poems.

They can improve their speaking skills and get immediate feedback.

They enjoyed making up a collective poem.

To deal with grammar in a funnier and more intuitive way.

To deal with new topics and the possibility to express their thoughts.

To discover new themes and new ways of expressing ideas and feelings, because it can help their communication.

To play with the different meanings of words.

To prove themselves.

To re-write poems.

To re-write the play and act it out.

Topics.

Try to find something pertinent, interesting for them.

Trying to analyse the different characters and discovering the development of the plot step by step.

Trying to get in someone else shoes/imagining to be a different person/expressing their own feelings with no fear of being judged.

Using language through acting.

Writing their poems.

In your opinion, what could be more difficult for students? Why?

A play is meant to be seen and heard, not read.

Acting in front of their peers.

Students at this age are usually shy, and theatre is not made for shy people. The risk is just losing hours of "real" work.

Acting in front of their peers out (6 references).

Acting in front of their peers.

Acting in front of their peers.

Some students could find role play/acting embarrassing (2 references).

A different point of view.

Figures of speech (5 references).

Grasping and imagining the situation.

Hidden meanings.

Hidden meanings.

I think that a more gradual approach would be preferable, by means of graded readings, which take into account the students' level and the linguistic structures they are familiar with. If the text is too difficult for the students to understand and make sense of, they may be put off by the experience. This is truer if we keep into account that the general level of students in a first-year class is A2 -B1.

Interpretation of the text.

Homework.

It could be difficult for students to do all that homework.

Concentration.

Keeping concentration for long.

Language (13 references).

Grammar (7 references).

Vocabulary.

Long lessons.

Long text with unknown words.

Poems could be difficult to understand.

Reading a play may be boring.

Reading too long texts.

Students don't have enough knowledge of the language.

Students in the first and second year of high school are not ready to talk about specific topics in English.

The prejudice they have about reading because usually reading is something considering old fashion by them.

The use of symbolic language.

The warming up is too long.

They never have the time to read longer texts for pleasure.

To get them to read at home. Students are not willing to read unless obliged.

To read a play: they are not used to it.

Appendix 7

Pre-test and post-test for senior students⁸³

English poetry

This questionnaire aims to explore your views about the use of literature in learning English. Please read the following items carefully and indicate your degree of agreement by checking one of five response categories:

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Strongly agree</i>
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There are no right and wrong answers. Please be honest in your answers. Responses and information will be collected anonymously and treated as confidential.

- 1 - Reading and studying English poems in class is an enjoyable experience.
- 2 - Reading and studying English poems in class improved my listening skills.
- 3 - Reading and studying English poems in class enhanced my speaking skills.
- 4 - Reading and studying English poems in class developed my reading skills.
- 5 - Reading and studying English poems in class strengthened my writing skills.
- 6 - Reading and studying English poems in class enriched my vocabulary.
- 7 - Reading and studying English poems in class ameliorated my understanding of English grammar.
- 8 - Reading and studying English poems in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings.
- 9 - Reading and studying English poems in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings.
- 10 - Reading and studying English poems in class developed my interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make my own interpretations).
- 11 - Reading and studying English poems in class made me familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.).

⁸³ Adapted from F  rez et al. (2020).

12 - Reading and studying English poems in class could reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language.

13 - Reading and studying English poems in class motivated me because poems normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.

14 - Reading and studying English poems in class motivated me because poems deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics.

15 - Reading poems in my English class motivated me because they are authentic material.

16 - By reading poems in my English class, I could be acquainted with the culture of Anglophone countries.

17 - By reading poems in my English class, I could better understand my own culture.

18 - Reading and studying English poems in class motivated me because poems are usually concise.

Pre-test and post-test for senior students

English novels

This questionnaire aims to explore your views about the use of literature in learning English. Please read the following items carefully and indicate your degree of agreement by checking one of five response categories:

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Strongly agree</i>
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------------

There are no right and wrong answers. Please be honest in your answers. Responses and information will be collected anonymously and treated as confidential.

- 1 - Reading and studying English novels in class is an enjoyable experience.
- 2 - Reading and studying English novels in class improved my listening skills.
- 3 - Reading and studying English novels in class enhanced my speaking skills.
- 4 - Reading and studying English novels in class developed my reading skills.
- 5 - Reading and studying English novels in class strengthened my writing skills.
- 6 - Reading and studying English novels in class enriched my vocabulary.
- 7 - Reading and studying English novels in class ameliorated my understanding of English grammar.
- 8 - Reading and studying English novels in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings.
- 9 - Reading and studying English novels in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings.
- 10 - Reading and studying English novels in class developed my interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make my own interpretations).
- 11 - Reading and studying English novels in class made me familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.).
- 12 - Reading and studying English novels in class could reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language.
- 13 - Reading and studying English novels in class motivated me because novels normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.
- 14 - Reading and studying English novels in class motivated me because novels deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics.

15 - Reading novels in my English class motivated me because they are authentic material.

16 - By reading novels in my English class, I could be acquainted with the culture of Anglophone countries.

17 - By reading novels in my English class, I could better understand my own culture.

18 - Reading novels in my English class could help me understand different points of view because in novels reality is often seen from several perspectives (those of the various characters).

Pre-test and post-test for senior students

English plays

This questionnaire aims to explore your views about the use of literature in learning English. Please read the following items carefully and indicate your degree of agreement by checking one of five response categories:

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Strongly agree</i>
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------------

There are no right and wrong answers. Please be honest in your answers. Responses and information will be collected anonymously and treated as confidential.

- 1 - Reading and studying English plays in class is an enjoyable experience.
- 2 - Reading and studying English plays in class improved my listening skills.
- 3 - Reading and studying English plays in class enhanced my speaking skills.
- 4 - Reading and studying English plays in class developed my reading skills.
- 5 - Reading and studying English plays in class strengthened my writing skills.
- 6 - Reading and studying English plays in class enriched my vocabulary.
- 7 - Reading and studying English plays in class ameliorated my understanding of English grammar.
- 8 - Reading and studying English plays in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings.
- 9 - Reading and studying English plays in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings.
- 10 - Reading and studying English plays in class developed my interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make my own interpretations).
- 11 - Reading and studying English plays in class made me familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.).
- 12 - Reading and studying English plays in class could reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language.
- 13 - Reading and studying English plays in class motivated me because plays normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.
- 14 - Reading and studying English plays in class motivated me because plays deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics.

15 - Reading plays in my English class motivated me because they are authentic material.

16 - Reading plays in my English class motivated me because I got an insight into social, political and cultural aspects of Anglophone countries.

17 - By reading plays in my English class, I could better understand my own culture.

18 - Employing plays as a means of learning English motivated me because plays usually offer real lifelike settings.

19 - Reading plays in my English class helped me understand different points of view because in plays reality is often seen from several perspectives (those of the various characters).

20 - Reading plays in my English class motivated me because I could find examples of colloquial and informal language.

Pre-test and post-test for senior students about Italian poetry

This questionnaire aims to explore your views about the use of literature in learning Italian. Please read the following items carefully and indicate your degree of agreement by checking one of five response categories:

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Strongly agree</i>
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------------

Try to explain your responses providing motivations.

There are no right and wrong answers. Please be honest in your answers.

Responses and information will be collected anonymously and treated as confidential.

- 1 - Reading and studying Italian poems in class is an enjoyable experience. Why/Why not?
- 2 - Reading and studying Italian poems in class improved my linguistic skills (listening/speaking/reading/writing)? Why/Why not? How?
- 3 - Reading and studying Italian poems in class improved my linguistic skills (Italian grammar)? Why/Why not? How?
- 4 - Reading and studying Italian poems in class improved my linguistic skills (vocabulary)? Why/Why not? How?
- 5 - Reading and studying Italian poems in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings. Why/Why not? How?
- 6 - Reading and studying Italian poems in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings. Why/Why not? How?
- 7 - Reading and studying Italian poems in class developed my interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make my own interpretations). Why/Why not? How?
- 8 - Reading and studying Italian poems in class made me familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.). Why/Why not? How?
- 9 - Reading and studying Italian poems in class could reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language. Why/Why not? How?
- 10 - Reading and studying Italian poems in class motivated me because poems normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc. Why/Why not? How?
- 11 - Reading and studying Italian poems in class motivated me because poems deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics. Why/Why not? How?
- 12 - Reading poems in my Italian class motivated me because they are authentic material. Why/Why not? How?

13 - By reading poems in my Italian class, I could better understand my own culture. Why/Why not? How?

14 - Reading and studying Italian poems in class motivated me because poems are usually concise. Why/Why not? How?

Pre-test and post-test for senior students about Italian novels

This questionnaire aims to explore your views about the use of literature in learning Italian. Please read the following items carefully and indicate your degree of agreement by checking one of five response categories:

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Strongly agree</i>
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------------

Try to explain your responses providing motivations.

There are no right and wrong answers. Please be honest in your answers.

Responses and information will be collected anonymously and treated as confidential.

- 1 - Reading and studying Italian novels in class is an enjoyable experience. Why/Why not?
- 2 - Reading and studying Italian novels in class improved my linguistic skills (listening/speaking/reading/writing)? Why/Why not? How?
- 3 - Reading and studying Italian novels in class improved my linguistic skills (Italian grammar)? Why/Why not? How?
- 4 - Reading and studying Italian novels in class improved my linguistic skills (vocabulary)? Why/Why not? How?
- 5 - Reading and studying Italian novels in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings. Why/Why not? How?
- 6 - Reading and studying Italian novels in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings. Why/Why not? How?
- 7 - Reading and studying Italian novels in class developed my interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make my own interpretations). Why/Why not? How?
- 8 - Reading and studying Italian novels in class made me familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.). Why/Why not? How?
- 9 - Reading and studying Italian novels in class could reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language. Why/Why not? How?
- 10 - Reading and studying Italian novels in class motivated me because novels normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc. Why/Why not? How?
- 11 - Reading and studying Italian novels in class motivated me because novels deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics. Why/Why not? How?
- 12 - Reading novels in my Italian class motivated me because they are authentic material. Why/Why not? How?

13 - By reading novels in my Italian class, I could better understand my own culture. Why/Why not? How?

14 - Reading and studying Italian novels in class could help me understand different points of view because in novels reality is often seen from several perspectives (those of the various characters). Why/Why not? How?

Pre-test and post-test for senior students about Italian plays

This questionnaire aims to explore your views about the use of literature in learning Italian. Please read the following items carefully and indicate your degree of agreement by checking one of five response categories:

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Strongly agree</i>
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------------

Try to explain your responses providing motivations.

There are no right and wrong answers. Please be honest in your answers.

Responses and information will be collected anonymously and treated as confidential.

- 1 - Reading and studying Italian plays in class is an enjoyable experience. Why/Why not?
- 2 - Reading and studying Italian plays in class improved my linguistic skills (listening/speaking/reading/writing)? Why/Why not? How?
- 3 - Reading and studying Italian plays in class improved my linguistic skills (Italian grammar)? Why/Why not? How?
- 4 - Reading and studying Italian plays in class improved my linguistic skills (vocabulary)? Why/Why not? How?
- 5 - Reading and studying Italian plays in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings. Why/Why not? How?
- 6 - Reading and studying Italian plays in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings. Why/Why not? How?
- 7 - Reading and studying Italian plays in class developed my interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make my own interpretations). Why/Why not? How?
- 8 - Reading and studying Italian plays in class made me familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.). Why/Why not? How?
- 9 - Reading and studying Italian plays in class could reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language. Why/Why not? How?
- 10 - Reading and studying Italian plays in class motivated me because plays normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc. Why/Why not? How?
- 11 - Reading and studying Italian plays in class motivated me because plays deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics. Why/Why not? How?
- 12 - Reading plays in my Italian class motivated me because they are authentic material. Why/Why not? How?
- 13 - By reading plays in my Italian class, I could better understand my own culture. Why/Why not? How?

14 - Reading and studying Italian plays in class motivated me because plays usually offer real lifelike settings. Why/Why not? How?

15 - Reading Italian plays in my class helped me understand different points of view because in plays reality is often seen from several perspectives (those of the various characters). Why/Why not? How?

16 - Reading Italian plays in my class motivated me because I could find examples of colloquial and informal language. Why/Why not? How?

Appendix 8

Senior students' written comments

[Each statement represents a comment provided by each student, according to each question, that we sequentially attached below].

Italian

Reading and studying literary texts in Italian in class improved my linguistic skills (listening/speaking/reading/writing)?

Poems

You can learn new words and expressions that you can use to express yourself.

It helps me with some new words and with some expressions.

It is a great exercise.

I can learn new words or expressions.

I think that studying and reading Italian poems could improve my linguistic skills because I have to pay attention to the teacher that is talking, so this could improve my listening skills, I also have to explain the main concepts through my own words helping my speaking capability.

It definitely improved my speaking and writing skills.

It's a good example of good language to be used in lots of situations.

Even if there are some difficulties in a poem, I can understand some new metaphors or allegories.

I learned new words.

I learned new terms.

Some Italian poems engaged me so much and they are an inspiration for my literary texts.

Literary texts can improve my reading skills because we read them.

I think that poems are too elaborated to be used in speaking or writings.

It could improve my reading and listening skills, but not my speaking and writing ones. Indeed, during the last years, my writing skills got worse.

We didn't work as much as we should have done. We just read the poems and nothing else. For this reason, during the oral test, many of us can't explain the poem.

Authors use difficult words and grammar and it's difficult to understand and use every new word or grammatical constructions.

Authors use uncommon words.

I don't think that it helped with my writing or speaking because the poems we read in class were usually written in ancient Italian.

We don't use Italian poems to improve our linguistic skills.

Poetry differs from the prose and I don't usually speak or write in rhyme.

They changed so little of my linguistic skills that it can be negligible.

My classmates and I do not read in class a lot, neither we write.

The method we used isn't the right one.

We never studied Italian literature well and the improvement I made in my linguistic skills derived (almost) all from my personal readings and studies.
I think it can't help because poems were written in old Italian.
I don't use the words I read in the poems when I write a text or when I speak to others. It can improve my knowledge, but it doesn't have a practical use.
I don't like the way we study poems.
Poems didn't improve my skills.
Poets use a very free language.
Maybe reading, but not listening and writing.
The language is too outdated.
Unfortunately, we didn't analyse poems in such a deep way.
I think they are not so useful to learn my language.
I don't find the poetic language very similar to modern Italian.

Novels

I think that reading frequently can be useful to improve linguistic skills.
Novels improved my speaking skills.
When you read you learn more about Italian schemes and techniques.
You become familiar with linguistic structures.
There are new words.
It is a way of practising the language.
I improved my reading.
Most popular authors usually use the best Italian and this helps me in improving my skills.
It is useful to read and study to improve linguistic skills. It is a great exercise for writing and reading.
I can do exercises in reading comprehension.
The authors use different words, constructions, and styles.
I learn something new.
It helped with my writing.
Studying novels improve my reading skills and writing.
It's beneficial to read because you know new words.
Writing for sure since I can see an example.
They improve my vocabulary and grammar skills.
I learnt how to read fluently and rapidly.
It can improve my linguistic skills only if I read out aloud.
To understand the novel, I have to pay attention to the teacher that is reading.
If I read the novel on my own, I have to concentrate on understanding all the words and their meaning.
That's why everyone needs to read.
I can learn new things.
The teacher can explain in detail all word meanings, so I can memorize that.
They teach me an alternative way to express my feelings.
Some use unknown words or phrases.
Some important authors improved my linguistic skills, especially writing.
Improved reading and listening.
Thanks to reading and studying Italian novels in class I write better than a few years ago.
They help you with language.
Listening to new terms made me learn them.
They improved my writing and speaking skills.

Novels are not written in a complex style so you can acquire a good knowledge of linguistic skills.

It is not simple to write what I learned during the reading.

I only hear but not participate in the lesson.

Training is the best way to improve. We read at high voice but for the most part, the teacher reads for us. I would like to have more conversations.

Usually, it's our teacher that read parts of novels and we rarely write an essay or anything to comment on them.

We've never done it at high school.

We didn't study it deeply.

Maybe reading, but not writing.

Unfortunately, we've never done a serious analysis of novels.

We read literature, but we don't apply it to our daily life.

Plays

It is an exercise and I can learn from it.

It is an exercise useful only for reading.

It is like reading novels or poems.

The author uses different speech patterns.

I developed my knowledge and skills.

It helped me to improve my linguistic skills.

I practice reading.

We never read Italian plays in class.

We only read without doing exercises.

We didn't read plays, so they didn't help my Italian.

We have never treated about plays.

Italian plays couldn't improve my language skills.

We never read them.

To me, the way we read, and study plays don't improve my linguistic skills.

We don't do that here.

We read them very rarely.

Only reading, unfortunately, because only the teacher reads the plays.

We never really studied plays in class.

We haven't read several texts.

We have never read anything.

Plays involve a language too far from us.

We don't do that.

We studied plays very few times, not enough times to improve anything.

Tragedies are full of ancient words.

We don't read them.

We have not studied them.

I do not notice any type of improvement by the few plays we read in class.

We had read a few plays.

I learned the terms used by past writers.

We've never read them.

We never read them.

Plays are very complex, and this is a limit in learning.

Reading and studying literary texts in Italian in class improved my linguistic skills (Italian grammar)?

Poems

The use of conjunctions.
You can see practically how to use different grammar forms.
Reading a text helps me comprehend my errors.
It is useful to improve my linguistic skills; because I'm not so good in Italian.
They help me to enrich my vocabulary.
The authors use different constructions.
I learnt new grammar constructs.
I started to get familiar with some grammatic rules.
It helped me to improve my linguistic skills.
Thanks to it, now I write well, and I express myself better than a few years ago.
I can learn my grammar mistakes by reading poems.
They help with the compositions of a text.
I learned new terms and new ways of writing.
Some texts give me some hints for my grammar.
I think that poems use a language that is not used in common Italian grammar.
In poems, grammar is not important.
Most of the times poems are written in archaic form or with archaic words, so the Italian grammar is not respected.
Most of the times, poems don't respect the correct syntactic order or the rules of the Italian grammar.
Grammar in poetry is different from speaking or prose grammar, so it didn't help so much.
Poems are written in archaic Italian.
Sometimes grammar is not correct, because the poet uses archaic forms.
Archaic grammar sometimes doesn't correspond with current grammar.
I already know Italian grammar.
I didn't find new grammatical constructs.
They are written in an old language that doesn't help me to improve my linguistic skills.
Grammar in poems is a bit different from speaking or modern writing. I don't think I will ever write a poem.
I think my Italian grammar is the same as before attending high school.
I made the same error I used to do five years ago.
Most of the time, the language is far from the language used today.
In Italian poems, there are often archaic or unusual forms that are not typical of modern Italian.
Grammar in poetry is different.
I think I already knew most of the grammar before studying literature.
My improvement is due to my personal studies.
Our grammar is very different from the one that was used in the past centuries.
Not always the poems respect Italian grammar rules.
The poetic use of grammar is always different from the conventional one, I think it rarely helps an individual to improve his grammar skills.
Understanding a poem is very difficult and some words are incomprehensible.
The language is very old, so some terms are outdated.

I have not felt any type of difference in grammar.
I only revise what I already know.
The grammar used by the poet studied in class is different from today's grammar.
Our grammar is so different compared to the grammar of poems.
It doesn't help me because sometimes poets don't respect grammar
Our classwork is not enough.
Grammar in poems is very different from Italian grammar.

Novels

I think that reading novels can help me improve my grammar.
I become familiar with the lexical structure.
You can see the right application of grammar rules.
You become familiar with grammar structures.
They can always be useful to take inspiration and to verify Italian grammar.
They improved my writing.
Most popular authors usually use the best Italian and this helps me in improving my skills.
It is an important exercise to improve my skills in Italian grammar.
I learnt something new.
It helped because we encountered new grammatical constructs.
I learnt new grammar constructs.
I can understand the syntaxis and apply that again in my texts.
I think that reading can help you making fewer grammar errors because the more you read, the more you are familiar with grammar and, therefore, you make fewer mistakes.
I get examples of how to write words that I did not know.
It works like a regular training.
I use them every day.
Some authors use words or phrases unknown to me before.
I pay more attention to the vocabulary and verbs and how I write.
They're often written very well.
I can see the grammar rules applied.
I increased my rhetorical skills.
They help me in Italian grammar.
It is not important.
Reading is not so helpful with grammar rules.
Sometimes the language is too difficult because it is archaic.
Old grammar doesn't correspond with today's grammar.
It might help but you need to practise grammar doing a lot of exercise in your early school stages.
I think it has not changed that much in these 5 years.
We do not pay attention to grammar.
It's not the key point we focused on.
Sometimes the author doesn't respect grammar rules.
We just read short fragments, so we focus on the content.
Grammar in novels is different from ours.
I have not noticed any important improvement in grammar thanks to Italian novels.
I revise what I already know.
It depends on the novel.
The language is not modern.
When I read a novel, I am not interested in grammar.

Plays

I can learn new words and expressions.
The author uses different constructions.
They are written in correct Italian.
Grammar is always important.
The direct speech offered me the chance to improve informal language.
It helped me to write better.
We never read Italian plays in class.
We read and study the theme, not the grammar.
The register is low and so the text is full of sayings and ungrammatical phrases.
I think that this type of text can't really give you some tips on grammar, they are more suitable in giving emotions.
They are not modern Italian, so it didn't help me.
It's better a novel if I have to improve my linguistic skills.
Only if it is written in modern Italian.
We have never dealt with plays.
We don't work on grammar aspects.
Italian grammar is not respected.
I learnt a few new things.
We never read them.
Usually, they are written in dialect.
I don't think it would.
We don't do that here.
It doesn't help with the type of text we read.
It depends on how old they are.
It didn't help.
We haven't read several texts.
We have never read anything.
Plays involve a language too far from ours.
We don't do that.
Sometimes the author doesn't respect grammar rules.
We studied plays very few times, not enough times to improve anything.
We never read plays.
We don't read them.
We have not studied them.
I revise rules that I already know.
I don't know because we read a few plays.
We have done it just one time.
It didn't improve that much.
We don't, but I think it could be.
We've never done such profound work.
We never read them.
Plays are very complex, and this is a limit in learning.
It depends on the time in which they are written.

Reading and studying Italian literary texts in class improved my linguistic skills (vocabulary)?

Poems

I know new interesting words.
If I read more, I can know more words.
Some poems are written with a higher tone and refined words.
You can learn new vocabulary and expressions.
I can learn some word I've never heard before, and so I can integrate my vocabulary.
Many words are new or are unusual terms, so I have to search for them, and this gives me the chance to explore synonyms.
I could learn new vocabulary.
It is useful to know a new word, and so I improved my linguistic skills.
They use complex constructions and words, and then I can learn some new synonyms and use them in my everyday language.
I can learn some new words through poems.
I learnt new words.
I learnt new words, ancient and modern ones.
It improved my vocabulary.
My personal vocabulary became wide.
I can learn some new words.
It usually provides me with new vocabularies belonging to the refined and sophisticated style.
In a poem, there are a lot of new words.
They taught me terms that I didn't know before.
Poets used complicated words that I didn't hear before.
I found some words that I didn't know.
Everything is useful for improving my vocabulary.
The author uses a different language from mine so I can add terms in my vocabulary.
I learn new words.
I learned new terms.
There are always new terms or expressions.
Leopardi's vocabulary is full of the world I have never seen before.
I learn new words.
Reading Italian poems help me know a lot of new words.
Reading authors such as Manzoni improves my vocabulary.
There are some unknown words.
I think that there are lots of archaic forms that are rarely used in modern language.
In this type of text, poets usually use archaic forms or a high vocabulary that hardly can be used in common days.
I learned some new words, but I don't use them in real life.
Poems are rich in aulic words, different from those we use today.
The authors use uncommon words.
I learnt more reading prose text.
The main part of the poems I have read was made of archaic words I would have never used.
I learn more from prose texts.
Many times, the words used are old.
Terms are unusual and not typical of the common language.
I learn words that I don't use when I speak.
Not that much, the greatest improvement derived from my personal studies.
My vocabulary has improved.

Vocabulary used in poems is not used in normal life.
Words are too old and not used in everyday life.

Novels

It helps me find new words.
Sometimes I learn new words.
You discover new words and you have to find their meaning and so you learn them.
You become familiar with lexical structures.
Novels usually have common vocabulary but there can also be some new terms.
There are new words.
I can learn new words that I never heard.
Many words are new, so I have to search for them, and this gives me the chance to search for synonyms.
Studying Dante helped me in using original words.
You can learn new words and so improve your vocabulary.
The authors use different words.
I learn some new words.
It did because I learnt new words that can be useful in texts.
I enhanced my vocabulary.
I think so just for contemporary novels.
It happens to find some words I've never heard before but not that often.
It depends on the novel because if it is too old, some terms do not exist today, while others that are more actual can help to improve my linguistic skills.
I enlarged my vocabulary with new terms.
I can find new words.
In novels, a wide variety of terms is used, so this could enrich my vocabulary.
You can't always repeat the same word.
I know new words.
It taught me new words from the past and from modern times.
My vocabulary became wide.
I try to enrich my vocabulary by using words read in texts.
I always learn new words.
I always learn new vocabulary.
I learned new specific words.
I found some vocabulary that I didn't know.
I search the meaning of the terms which I don't understand, and I add these in my vocabulary.
The language is modern.
They are full of words.
I learn new words.
Listening and reading new terms made me learn them.
A lot of linguistic skills are learned through Italian readings.
With them, I can learn a lot of new words.
It's easier to acquire a useful vocabulary reading novels.
I learned some new words, but they are difficult to apply.
Sometimes there is some archaic form that I cannot understand.
We don't read novels in class.
We just read short fragments, so we focus on the content.
We've never done serious work on this.

Plays

I learn different words with plays.
I can increase my knowledge.
I can learn new words and expressions.
The author uses different speech patterns and different words.
I learn something that I didn't know.
You can learn new words every time you open a text.
Sometimes, with courtly or peasant's language.
I could enrich my vocabulary because there could be new terms and expressions.
You must search for different synonyms.
My vocabulary increased.
Reading unknown things always brings us new terms and knowing.
I learn new words.
You can learn new words.
Maybe there can be some new words that I don't know, but I don't think they're very frequent but when there are some, it can be easy to know the meaning thanks to the context.
We never read Italian plays in class.
I learned some new words, but it didn't help my Italian.
The vocabulary used in plays is easy.
I learn new words.
We have never treated about plays.
We don't examine vocabulary during the lessons.
Usually, plays are easy.
We never read them.
I think that it depends on the kind of plays.
We don't do that here.
It depends on how old they are.
We haven't read several texts.
We have never read anything.
Plays involve a language too far from us.
We don't do that.
I think I can learn new words every time I read something literary.
We studied plays very few times, not enough time to improve anything.
We never read an entire play.
We have not studied it yet.
As the language is informal, I haven't had any type of improvement in vocabulary.
Words used belong to another time.
The language used by the author is different from mine.
We have done it just one time.
The language is often simple.
I learned ancient terms; anyhow, I think I'll use them rarely.
We never read them.
Plays are very complex, and this is a limit in learning.

Reading and studying Italian literary texts in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings.

Poems

I can face with the author's opinions.

Yes, the authors have their own techniques to share their emotions in an original way.

During the analysis and discussion of the text, you can express what you think about the poem.

Poems are a good and helpful way to know myself and writing my thoughts is a good thing, I think.

They also talk about feelings and emotions.

They can't help me in comprehend a person.

It is important to be able to share our emotions and reading Italian poems help us in a different way.

They involve me, and I can be able to walk in the author's shoes.

When I study some authors, I share their thoughts, feelings, and emotions, so this could help me to understand my interiority better.

Sometimes poems transmit emotions that you don't forget.

I often identify with this kind of people, even though they had never met me before.

I'm a reserved person and I usually don't share my feelings with others, though. Obviously, they made me analyse deeper my feelings.

I feel a few emotions when I read them.

I very often agree with the author's point of view and so I express my personal feelings and convictions.

Sometimes I can find a part of me in the message of the poem.

Sometimes I share the internal feeling of the poet.

They inspired me to try to express my feeling in other ways.

Many times, I identify myself with the conditions of the author.

I can express my feelings and emotions, say what I think about the poem and share them with my classmates.

Sometimes yes, but it depends on the poem examined.

I like romantic poems because of it.

Only poems with a theme that I like.

I found myself in some poems, from the romantic period.

Poems don't help me sharing my feelings.

I find it difficult to identify with the subject and so to comprehend his feelings.

I'm an introverted girl and I do not share my feelings.

We never made parallelisms between the poet and his thoughts and our personal feelings and emotions, so, of course, I think that some point of view of some authors can represent my own approach with life, but it doesn't depend on what we do in class.

When I'm reading in class I don't think about my personal emotions, but I think about the author's emotions.

Usually, I'm not involved in poems.

I usually don't get emotionally invested in poems.

They express the emotions of the poet.

We don't share emotions and feelings during Italian lessons.

Even if they inspire my emotions, I don't share them.

I am a little shy. Thus, I do not usually express what I think about a topic. Nevertheless, sometimes it is interesting to have a debate.

I don't get emotionally invested in poems.

I'm not an emotional person.
We don't study poems in a thoughtful way, so we are not stimulated to think and reflect on them.
We don't share it in class.
My teacher doesn't arouse my emotions the way she teaches.
I didn't analyse my feelings.
I do not share my emotions through poems.
In class, I have no time to think about the sentimental aspects of poems.
I think they helped me a little, not that much.
We don't do that work.
By now studying is scholastic, cause of the graduate.
I don't recognise me in those poems.
I understand the poet's feelings but not my feelings.
I don't like poems.

Novels

You learn a simple way through which to declare your emotions.
You learn to express your feelings in different ways.
It motivated me to write my own reflection.
They improved my feelings.
Many times, I can discover some aspects of my feelings.
I think that it depends on the novel. In some stories, I see myself in a character.
Sometimes we do a debate where I can express my personal thought.
Maybe I can turn into the protagonist or one of the characters of the novel.
You understand what you think, comparing yourself with a character.
It's like an occasion to know yourself in a whole new while.
The novels produced emotions in me.
They talk about everyday situations that everyone runs into.
It depends on the topic.
Sometimes I feel the same sensations of the author.
I love writing novels and short stories. I can express my feelings through that.
I can understand myself and share my emotions without the help of novels.
They helped me to express my feelings and emotions.
I can study myself.
Sometimes I enter the novel.
Sometimes I understand my feelings with them.
They don't help me understand and share my personal emotions very much.
Not very well.
I don't think so.
Not really, they often deal with themes that do not concern my life.
I didn't share my emotions.
I'm very shy and I can't share my emotions in a very simple way.
It could be possible but sometimes it's difficult to share your own feeling with other people and so I don't reveal them very easily.
Sometimes they helped me to understand my feelings but not to share it.
During class, when we read, I don't think about myself.
It didn't happen.
I usually don't get emotionally invested.
I'm not really interested in my feelings when I'm reading.
I don't share emotions and feelings in class.

It speaks of the author, not of me.
It didn't.
Novels are not essential to understand emotions and feelings.
We do not have time to discuss and reflect on these things.
I'm a reserved one and, even if we dedicated some time in class to share our ideas and feelings about something, I wouldn't open up with my classmates.
We don't do that in class.
We didn't make introspective analyses.
I did not share.
I usually do not reflect myself on the characters of novels.
I'm not always interested in what we read in class.
I'm not interested.
It didn't help me at all.
We've never talked about our personal emotions and feelings.
I don't enjoy it.
I'm not interested in this type of book, and I don't share my emotions with the class.
I don't like sharing my personal emotions.

Plays

Sometimes they can be really touching because they can talk about different themes that can also regard my feelings and my life.
Reading and listening stories opens my mind.
When we read in class, I think about the emotions of the characters.
Depends on the types of plays.
Plays involve the authenticity of feelings.
It depends on the topic.
Sometimes tragedies reflect my feelings.
I can understand the feeling that the play gives me at the end.
Maybe some characters are interesting feelings.
Sometimes I remember situations of daily life.
We never read Italian plays in class.
I see them as entertainment.
I can't be influenced by a play at all.
I don't find myself in the plays I read.
I didn't share my emotions.
We have never treated about plays.
I don't share my personal feelings.
Share my personal feelings is so difficult.
It isn't true because we usually read comedies and they don't contain emotional topics.
It didn't happen.
We never read them.
They usually don't help me.
As it's not one of my favourite literary genres, it doesn't involve my emotions.
We don't do that here.
We haven't discussed our emotions, so no.
Many of them do not captivate me.
It didn't.
I haven't read plays in Italian, but it might help.

We haven't read several texts.
We have never read anything.
I don't feel emotions reading it.
We don't do that.
Only when we go to the theatre with the school after studying the author (twice).
We have not done that.
We usually don't do this type of activity.
We didn't study them analysing our feelings.
It depends on the play, but I have not got any experience with this.
I can express my feelings and emotions but not openly.
We have done it just one time.
It didn't help me. I do not like reading plays.
We haven't done that, but I think it could be.
We've never talked about our feelings or emotions.
I don't share my emotions with the class.
We never read them.
I am not able to share my emotions.
It doesn't take me so much.

Reading and studying Italian literary texts in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings.

Poems

When you read a poem, you have to understand it and understand the emotions of the author and so you learn to understand the other ones.
It can help me understand how a type of feeling can be expressed by other people that are not me.
They help me to be more emphatic.
They helped me understand other people and their feelings.
Most of the time the writer uses this way to express his emotions.
I like to understand what the authors feel.
When they expressed their thought, they are also telling their emotions.
I can compare my point of view with others.
By reading poems, I can understand other people's psychology, so this can help me to be more sensitive to other people.
With the poem, you can understand the feeling of the poet.
It's nice to realize other people's points of view.
I understand the feelings of the authors.
I'm becoming more emphatic and more open-minded with respect to others' inner reflections and argumentations.
I can understand some behaviors of someone I know.
Poets are persons too, so they can feel a different emotion.
By reading them, I can understand what people of other age felt.
I can understand the emotions of some of my classmates.
Sometimes yes, but it depends on the poem examined.
Sometimes I share my personal comment with another classmate.
Reading poems sometimes helps me understand what others feel, but not always.
If I read poems, I find it very difficult to understand other people's emotions.

I don't know.
I don't think so because each one has his own opinions.
Other people usually don't like literary lessons.
I'm not able to connect the poem with the context and the feeling of other people.
Every person is different, and I can't comprehend his emotional state only through a poem.
I disagree with the answer because I think that reading Italian poems help me to understand my feelings but not to share other people's emotions.
The writer tells us his emotion.
I don't mind other people's feelings.
They don't touch me in my soul and in my feelings.
I usually can understand what feelings or emotions the Autor is trying to convey, but I don't necessarily share them.
I'm not very good at understanding feelings different from mine even if I would've read a lot of poems.
It shares the author's emotions, not mine or others.
I don't share other people's feelings.
We don't study poems in a thoughtful way, so we are not stimulated to think and reflect about them.
In class, we never read poems going that through their meaning.
We focus only on the main characters' feelings and it's not so useful.
It is always difficult to share personal feelings and emotions in this contemporary society, even more in a class where not everyone is a close friend of yours.
They helped me rarely.
Other people don't express themselves.
Rarely the teacher shares her feeling for a poem.
Sometimes they helped me understand my feelings and emotions but not other's people feelings.
Not really.
I don't care about it.
I'm focused on me and not on other people.
Rarely.
I think they didn't help me at all.
We don't do that work.
I can't understand other people's emotions and feelings.
I don't know.

Novels

You learn to see the other perspective.
They can make it easier to understand other people's emotions.
It helped my empathy.
They open my mind.
The writer, most of the time, use this way to express his emotion and feelings.
It opens your perspective and improves your point of view.
I like to understand what the authors feel in the relation of the in which they lived.
I tend to express only my opinion during a debate.
I can compare my point of view with others.
Novels are more focused on the story and the actions than on feelings.
In a novel, there are different opinions.
Getting into someone's mind is awesome, think of Zeno's Consciousness.
Reading novels, I can understand and identify the point of view of the narrator.

It depends on the topic.
Reading other sensations that make me curious about how other people think.
By knowing other people's feelings, I can find new ways to express mine.
Sometimes I make a comparison between the characters of a novel and my friends/relatives.
By understanding other people's emotions, I can express my feelings differently.
I can study the feelings of other people.
I can understand more what another feels.
If I read novels, I find it difficult to understand other people's feelings.
Not much.
Each student and each reader have his own mind and thought.
It's difficult to face topics that are not current.
Other people don't share their emotions because they fear that they wouldn't be accepted.
I disagree because this not help me.
It could be interesting to understand what other people think about the same topic but in class, it isn't always possible.
It didn't happen.
It didn't.
It doesn't help me to share other people's emotions.
It didn't.
We do not have time to discuss and reflect on these things.
We never dedicated time in class to share our feelings or ideas.
I don't understand their emotions.
We don't do that in class.
No one ever expresses himself in class.
I can often understand others and share their emotions without the help of novels.
We didn't make an introspective analysis.
We didn't share.
I think in books there isn't the real emotion of the author who is writing.
I don't care about the feelings of other people and they don't share these with other classmates.
Rarely.
Understanding people's emotions and feeling don't fit literature, in my opinion.
We've never talked about our personal emotions and feelings.
We've never shared emotions in class.
Understanding other's people's emotions is not my favourite activity.

Plays

Sometimes they can be really touching because they can talk about different themes that can also regard other people's feelings and life.
I have to listen to different points of view.
It is a way of expressing the writer's emotions and feelings.
I find it interesting to understand what the characters feel.
You can understand why a person does an action.
Tragedies show different emotions of different characters.
By understanding the other's feeling, I can express myself in a different way.
I can know the feeling of the character.
It's the only aspect that I like about plays.
I like to read about emotions.
We never read Italian plays in class.
We don't speak about our feelings.

Each person has a different personality.
The perspective of the characters I read can't be real and actual in the present.
We have never treated about plays.
We don't work on emotional state during lessons.
I disagree because I don't think so.
It didn't happen.
We never read them.
They don't help me to share other people's emotions.
We don't do that here.
I usually express only my emotions, not the others' one.
It didn't.
I don't know because I haven't read plays in Italian, but it might help.
We haven't read several texts.
We have never read anything.
I don't understand these emotions.
I focus on the protagonist and its actions.
We don't do that.
It depends on the topic.
We studied plays very few times and not even deeply.
We have not studied it.
We usually don't do this type of activity.
We didn't study them analysing our feelings.
We have done it just one time.
Rarely.
Understanding people's emotions is something that you develop on your own.
We don't do this.
We've never talked about our feelings or emotions.
I don't share my emotions with the class.
We never read them.
I have difficulties in understanding emotions.

Reading and studying Italian literary texts in class developed my interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make my own interpretations).

Poems

When we read in class a poem, the teacher asks us our own interpretation, but it seems that it's always wrong.
The teacher explains the meaning of the poems.
Looking beneath the surface leads you to the real core of what you're reading.
We study the teacher's interpretations that usually doesn't go further from what the book already said.
They helped me make my own interpretation of what I read.
I learn to give my own interpretation without brainwashing.
These are very difficult to understand even if I practise on them.
You have to interpret the text and you have to give your own meaning to the text.
You can interpret in a different way what the narrator is saying.
Grasp symbolic, hidden meanings are widespread in poetry and that can make recognize them more easily.

It helps imagination.
They are full of symbolic and hidden meanings.
I don't like them, so I undertake this homework.
They help me comprehend a concept.
It is useful to know new grasp symbolic and to improve my interpretative skills.
Sometimes it is difficult to understand hidden meanings.
Reading many poems, I can learn to find double meanings or symbolic ones, but usually, I need the help of the teacher.
I learn something that I didn't know but not important things.
Reading poems has developed my interpretative skills because we encountered a lot of symbolic and allegorical images.
They help me to develop my interpretative skills, but not always.
I don't really follow the paraphrase so I can't find any hidden meaning by myself.
I compare by myself my interpretation and the teacher's one.
If I can find them in some rare occasion.
Sometimes the text is too much complex and long.
I learnt how to decode a difficult poem and understand it.
I can understand the syntaxis and apply it in my themes.
I think that my interpretative skills could improve because sometimes the teacher tells me to try to explain some concepts and I have to find the secret meaning of the words.
I don't like them.
When you have to comprehend or make a summary, you need to be able to look over the simple test.
More or less, I have to thank more the analysis of the book than what the teacher told us.
Thanks to the reading of more and more Italian poems, I'm able to extrapolate the meaning of a text, even though it is hidden between the lines.
Interpretation is asked by teachers in class, but they don't check what we do.
It can be considered training.
Usually.
I focus on different symbolic meanings.
They help me to go deeper inside a man's mind.
They do it because I had to do it.
I'm always more interested in finding hidden messages in the texts I analyse.
Poems are full of hidden meanings.
In the poem, there are more hidden meanings than in the prose.
I'm curious to find the hidden message of a poem and I try to make my own interpretation.
It helps me to be critical and have my own opinions.
Poems are too difficult, and the teacher is not able to make us learn how to do this.
Year after year I became very skilled with the interpretations of a poem.
Sometimes I make my interpretations.
I can't learn them.
Fortunately, reading poems increases my awareness, especially by detecting some details together.
Cause I don't study.
The more I read, the more I learn.
Yes, with the help of the teacher, now I can interpret different types of poems.
In particular, it helps me to make my own interpretations.
Poems must be interpreted.

Novels

There are more in poetry.

The teacher explains the meaning of the novels, so most of the time, I don't make my personal interpretation.

With the teacher's comment, it's easy to find hidden meanings.

We do not do a lot of self-analysis, because the teacher usually does that.

In many novels, there are hidden meanings.

It helps me to make my own interpretation.

With the training, we learn.

I face with different lexical structures.

To understand a novel, you have to put yourself in it and try to give your view of the topic.

You have to understand also hidden meanings that are much deeper.

Not really, there are not so many symbolic meanings even if there can be some hidden meanings.

I try to identify in the character's mind.

It is too difficult to understand because most of the time, there is archaic form.

Usually, I will not be focused on searching the hidden meaning.

We don't do tests that test our skills.

It is true, reading improved my interpretative skills, the more you read the more you understand.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand hidden meanings.

It didn't happen.

It helped because we analysed every text for hidden meanings.

Yes, in some novels, there are hidden meanings.

You improve these skills with a lot of practice.

Only if I'm doing alone, confronting my interpretation with what's written in the textbook.

Just by reading them, and usually, my interpretations are different from the teacher one.

It really helped me to analyse a text and interpret it.

No, I am more concentrated on the meaning and not on the style.

There are rarely hidden meanings and symbols.

You need to have interpretative skills to be able to comprehend a novel because it is needed to understand things that are not always shown.

The Divine Comedy is filled with this kind of things.

Well, with when our teacher lessons usually consist of her repeating the same three things for a long, long time and then she is reading the extract from the novel and then the analysis made by the book.

I think it's easier to understand hidden meanings in our mother tongue because we often use them in our talks.

We don't do that in class.

There are many points of view.

Referred to the author's opinion or what he/she would think in some situations.

After the teacher's explanation, I can make my novel's interpretation.

They help me to think.

Some poets use literary skills unknown to me before.

I often search for hidden meanings by myself as soon as I read a new text.

We didn't interpret what we read.

I like to find the hidden meaning and then reflect on it and make my own interpretations.

Yes.

Sorry, but I don't know.

There aren't many interpretations.

The teacher helps us to do this.

Rarely.
I obviously developed new ways of writing.
Yes, it increases my mental criticism.
Undoubtedly, studying different authors this is the primary goal.
I'm not interested in this type of books.
After I read a novel, I can express my opinion.
Novels give me the capacity to interpret some topics better.

Plays

It's the teacher who tells us the meaning of the plays.
Not too much because there isn't a lot to interpret.
In plays, there are more everyday sayings.
We have never treated about plays.
We never read them.
Plays are usually quite clear, so interpretation skills are not necessary.
We never read Italian plays in class.
No, it is not required for me.
Even if these elements are difficult to learn and catch.
There weren't so many hidden meanings.
The dialogues with the description of the setting and the action can make simpler the comprehension of the story and of hidden meanings.
We don't improve our skills with tests.
Might be.
I learn something, I didn't know.
Sometimes reading and studying Italian plays can help me to develop hidden meanings.
I'd never been good at interpreting, so I think my skills remained very lousy.
We don't do that here.
In the ones we have done, there aren't too many hidden meanings.
I developed this skill at home.
It didn't.
I don't know.
I was not there.
We haven't read several texts.
We have never read anything.
Plays are rich in hidden meanings and misunderstandings.
We don't do that.
Sometimes.
Only when we go to the theatre with the school because it's an opportunity to see after reading.
Same motivation.
We have not studied it yet.
In the plays, there are often some hidden meanings that I like to find.
They are full of them.
I like to try to find hidden meanings.
Sorry, but I don't know.
We have done it just one time.
I don't spend attention when we are studying a play.
Sometimes I try to imagine how the facts will go on.
I like finding hidden meanings.
We don't, but I think it could be.

Thinking about new content improves our mental capacities.
I practice in making my own interpretations of books.
We never read them.
The complexity of plays is a limit.
You have not to interpret them.

Reading and studying Italian literary texts in class made me familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.).

Poems

A poem is full of figures of speech and sound.
I think that in poems there are a lot of figures of speech, so reading them made me familiar with metaphors, similes, alliteration.
I don't give it importance.
The more I practise on it, the better I get.
You learn to find them.
they're very frequent and they can be excellent examples.
I learned to recognise them.
They are full of figures of speech.
I can identify different figures of speech, but the hidden meanings are very hidden for me.
The analysis of a poem always requires an ability to discovering rhetorical figures.
In all the texts, there are different themes and different vocabulary, and it is important to know how to use metaphors and the other figures of speech.
It is simpler to understand figures of speech with real examples.
If we read lots of poems, I can find figures of speech by myself and even if I read poems at home, I can understand them easily.
Usually, the author uses the same figures of speech.
In some texts, I found a lot of figures of speech and sound that I didn't know.
It helped because we encountered a lot of figures of speech and sound and we analysed them.
Italian poems sometimes help me to find figures of speech more easily.
I don't really follow the paraphrase, so I can't find any figure of speech by myself.
The analysis of poems teaches me different figures, but I don't really use them much.
I still can't find and recognise the figures of speech and sound.
There is a huge amount of them in the texts.
I learnt how to identify and distinguish various figures of speech.
Reading texts can introduce me to new rhetoric figures.
These figures of speech are very common in Italian poems, so I can become more familiar with these.
With the teacher, we analysed every figure and the meaning of the words.
Analysing poems, you get in contact with a lot of figures and you learn how to recognize them with time.
I think that my teacher failed at teaching me how to recognise this kind of tools.
Same as before, let's say thank you to the author of the book.
I'm able to underline them, and I'm starting to use them also in my written texts.
This is what our teachers let us discover.
Poems are full of figures.
I like to understand the different meanings of different sentences that mean something else.

They enrich my way of communicating.
They are often used.
I learned new figures of speech.
They are rich in figures of speech.
In class, we studied figures of speech from poems.
Our teacher usually underlines figures of speech and sound in a poem and she teaches us the meaning.
Studying Italian, Latin and English poems helps me understand the figures of speech well and now I usually use them when I speak and write.
Help me to understand the meaning and the use of figures of speech.
These are frequent.
If there is the teacher, I became familiar with every figure of speech.
It helps me to recognize figures of speech.
I can't but learning them at school, not in everyday life.
We've never done a serious analysis of figures of speech.
Cause I don't study.
I understand figures of speech and sound with examples in the poems.
Now I can recognize different figures of speech.
I'm not able to recognize these figures of speech because I must study them before analysing a poem.
You can see them written and you can study them.

Novels

There aren't so many figures of speech in novels, poetry is better to learn them.
There are not so many figures of speech in novels.
There are not many figures of speech and sound.
In prose, I don't see many figures of speech, such as in poetry.
There are more in poetry.
We don't consider figures of speech and sound in novels.
They're more frequent in poetical texts.
We do that all the time.
If I practise, I can recognise these figures of speech and sound better.
When we read, we must search for them and sometimes I don't find them.
I can learn the real use of it.
We don't focus on it.
We can identify lots of rhetorical figures.
In Italian novels, there are a lot of figures of speech and it is important to understand them.
Is better to understand figures of speech with real examples.
Through the teacher's comments, it's easy to find figures of speech.
The authors usually use the same figures of speech and sound.
I learn some new speech of sound.
It helped me because we analysed a lot of rhetorical figures.
Usually, in novels, there aren't many figures of speech.
Our teacher often underlines them.
I don't find them here.
We do not do a lot of self-analysis, because the teacher usually does that.
I learnt them thanks to poetry.
I don't care about them while reading a novel.
Figures of speech are not so frequent in novels.

The teacher is not clear while she is explaining to us.
My teacher failed at teaching us this kind of stuff.
Not at all, I think that if it wasn't for my Italian teacher of middle school and our English teacher, I still wouldn't know any rhetorical figure.
THE more I read, the more I can recognize the figures of speech.
It is the only thing we do.
Sometimes there are many figures.
We don't look for them in novels.
Metaphors have many meanings.
In Italian, it's more difficult to understand the rhetorical figures.
Some poets use figures of speech unknown to me before.
In class, we dedicate a lot of time for the figures of speech.
They are rich in figures of speech.
We studied more figures of speech with poems.
Our teacher underlines figures of speech and sound and she explains the meaning.
Yes.
I don't think so because I find figures of speech in poems.
There aren't figures of speech.
In novels, these are not so evident.
It helps me recognize figures of speech.
I learned new rhetorical figures.
We've never done serious work on this.
I'm not interested in this type of books.
I can discern these figures of speech.
In class, we don't usually analyse figures of speech.

Plays

There weren't so many figures of speech and sound.
In plays, figures of speech are rare.
Not too much because there aren't a lot of figures of speech.
In Italian plays, there aren't many figures of speech.
We never read Italian plays in class.
I don't recognized them.
I practise more, and I get better.
There are not many figures of speech in plays.
Making exercise help me to understand.
We have never treated about plays.
We concentrate our attention on rhetorical figures sometimes during lessons.
It might be because reading improved my skills.
The author uses the same figures of speech.
Because I learn new speech and sound from the Italian plays.
We never read them.
Yes, it's the skill that matters more for our teacher.
We don't do that here.
I can't find them in plays.
Teachers tell us where they are, thus I only know what they mean, but I do not do any type of exercise.
It didn't.
In plays, there aren't figures of speech.

Not so much in a play.
I was not there.
We haven't read several texts.
We have never read anything.
The language of plays is simple and direct.
We don't do that.
We don't study that with plays.
We have not studied it yet, but I think it could help.
In class, we only analyse figures of speech.
We studied figures of speech in poems.
The teacher underlines the figures of speech and sound.
I don't think so.
We have done it just one time.
There aren't figures of speech in plays.
I'm interested in dialogues and not in figures of speech.
We rarely analyse plays; it means that metaphors, or stuff like that, are not studied, in plays.
We don't, but I think it could be.
We've never done this type of works.
I learn new figures of speech.
We never read them.
The complexity of plays is a limit.
There aren't many figures of speech.

Reading and studying Italian literary texts in class could reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language.

Poems

They can be an example for us.
They make me open-minded and creative.
Italian lessons are not based on students' abilities.
The language that the poet use can help us to be more creative.
I am not interested in it.
The poems are so creative and so they influenced you.
There are authors that use an original way of writing and you can learn some models.
The Italian language is often used in a creative way.
I'm not able to write.
But it doesn't depend on the fact that we are reading the poem in class, it's just the poem that shows us how impressive the language can be.
Studying Italian poems in class is not always useful to reveal my creative use of language.
Sometimes poems give the expiration.
I usually don't like the style of the authors we treat in class and then I'm not interested in them.
I like learning new words and constructions.
I don't think it happened.
I learnt how to use my creative skills in a text.
They don't help me to write in a creative way.
It's only about old words I wouldn't use.

Usually, poems have a hidden meaning, even in just one word.
Sometimes it can; on some occasions, it inspires me a stupid idea for a poem that you will find in the school poetry contest.
It makes me think.
Every poem has its own unique style.
It is not an occasion to improve the creativity of the language.
Words and phrases are often used in a curious way.
In poems, you don't use ordinary language.
I do not like writing. I prefer listening or speaking.
It's one of the similarities between literature and my favourite music genre: rap music.
Could, if explained in the proper way.
I don't like them.
I'm fascinated by the different meanings a word can have, and its relative uses.
It's a new situation where we need to develop our own language; studying the authors' style, we understand the main characteristics of their language.
Poems have many particular words and meanings.
It should, and it does, but only a few times we analysed a poem in a more profound way.
Sometimes I write short poems.
The language of poems is very original, and it is not used in everyday life.
I get familiar with the way poets write.
Many times, the teacher helped us in defining the specific meaning of a word.
I don't know.
I agree with creative, but not with unexpected and evocative.
I like creativity, but sometimes the language is ambiguous.
Yes, it can help with it, but I am not very good in the composition of a text.
Not always.
It depends on the content of the reading.
Knowing more and more authors and terms certainly permit us to acquire more awareness of language.
Somehow it helps me. It's a good way to improve your speech.
Sometimes in poems is used archaic language.
Sometimes yes, because it increases my vocabulary.
It's advantageous to read some texts of Leopardi and Manzoni. Their style impressed me so much.
I can't use the same creative language I find in of poems.

Novels

We only read them.
You can learn different styles of writing and use them in the future.
They can be creative and innovative, even if this can make them more difficult to read.
Novels teach us something, but they don't influence my writing skills.
Sometimes language use in novels can be very creative.
I don't think so.
The author uses creative hidden images, so when you read it, you have to use your fantasy.
They make my Italian better.
I've never received an inspiration.
In the speech of the characters.
Reading a novel can't change my language; it could improve it.
I agree with the answer because you can learn a new type of use of language.

They can give inspiration.
It could be true if we treat some interesting and modern authors, but with the eldest, it is not true.
I like learning new words.
It didn't happen.
It could.
Yes, it could reveal a creative language.
They're inspiring.
The use of the language doesn't surprise that much.
It could, but you must be good at doing it.
We do not usually expose our homework or something like that, thus, apart from the interrogation, we do not have this opportunity.
Every novel has a different use of language.
The language used in the novels can inspire my speaking.
Sometimes in novels, the author uses the language in a particular way.
Not so much.
I think the way of teaching is not the right one.
It's like your chance to observe the evolution of the language.
Of course, it could if correctly done.
I read many different types of styles.
Novels are often written in a direct and straightforward language.
It's what our teachers ask us; this is the crucial point of our lessons.
I can take inspiration from the novels.
The language is different from one author to another, so it's a good point to evocate a meaning or a personal evocation.
I don't write long texts very well.
I like the creativity Novels are full of that.
Some artists are creative.
We do not often dedicate time to the new language adopted by a specific author.
I didn't think about myself.
It's possible.
I like creativity but sometimes the language is quite difficult.
I don't think so.
Sorry, but I don't know.
You can learn from books.
After reading a novel in class we use to analyse the language and its function.
Never.
Maybe, anyhow it depends on the arguments you're facing.
Yes, if analysed properly.
Yes, studying them wright, but the differences between teachers are enormous.
I'm not interested in this type of books.
They enrich my vocabulary.
Reading in class, I can slowly learn to write better.

Plays

In plays, you can find a new type of writing that isn't used by students.
We've never written plays.
We haven't read plays.
I think that reading it in class could reveal a very creative use of language.
It uses a different language with studied words.

I don't think so.
There could be some original monologues.
There can be rounds of words and some other original uses of the language.
They are colloquial speeches.
Most of the time the languages are not current and the way to write is new.
We have never treated about plays.
Plays' characters use a very particular tone in some cases.
Yes, it might be it is important.
I don't know because I usually read funny and sometimes stupid plays.
I disagree with this sentence.
We never read them.
I think that novels can help more than plays to write and use a creative language.
I don't think so.
We don't do that here.
It could.
We do not do a lot of exercises in class.
It didn't.
Language could be used in an innovative way.
It depends if the protagonist is a common person with a simple language or is an important person.
I was not there.
It could, though we have never read anything.
It's an interesting idea.
We don't do that.
Sometimes there is a particular use of language.
We studied plays very few times, not enough time to reveal anything.
We have not studied it yet, but I think it could help.
I have never noticed an evocative use of language.
I don't know.
Probably.
I like creativity.
Sorry, but I don't know.
We have done it just one time.
It is emphasized the speech.
Plays let you imagine the scene so you can imagine the tone given to the sentence.
We don't, but I think it could be.
If done in a useful way it could.
I practice the language.
We never read them.
It's a different type of use of language.
In plays, there is a different use of language.

Reading and studying Italian literary texts in class motivated me because poems normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.

Poems

They deal with peace and justice.
In some poems, there is always a moral which makes me think.
I don't feel motivated.
Reading Italian poems is not useful to motivate me.
They don't motivate me.
I prefer actual topics.
We do not stop reflecting on what we read. I would like to have more time to appreciate literature.
Poems contain values of the time in which they were written.
Some poems make me feel empathy with the emotions expressed in it.
Most of the poems deal with these values, and so you learn to discuss them.
You can learn a different way to express your feelings and emotions.
They're important themes.
It is important and it can show us a new point of view.
They make me open-minded.
Not all authors are happy and easy to comprehend.
These are interesting themes.
I like understanding other people's values who lived during another time.
I found it interesting to understand what the author thinks about those topics.
It motivated me because the topics were interesting.
I like the themes, but I'm not completely involved in them.
They help in understanding different themes, but I don't find them that innovative as others do.
It didn't motivate me.
They are concerned with the actual problems.
It didn't.
Sometimes I felt understood by the poets and I share their ideas.
The values expressed in the poems are typical of every-day life and they could help me to become a better person.
There are important themes.
I've always found these kinds of values in everything we read.
I get lost in my thoughts, ignoring what the teacher is repeating for the fourth time.
I think about these themes.
I think that if you want to find the description of authentic values, you can discover it only in poems because our society has deleted them.
It's not a real motivation but a point of reflection that is useful to make them my own values.
It depends on the context.
I don't feel motivated very often because I tend to learn poems and their content by heart, without in-depth interpretations and discussion about the main themes.
I like different kinds of arguments.
I like reading them because I love to know what other people think.
I usually disagree with the opinion poets have on these values.
It's interesting how different poets interpreted the same themes.
Sometimes because most of the time, they deal with politics or religion.
In my opinion, reflecting on the important values of a society is interesting and relevant.

For example, this year we have studied Leopardi who talks about the meaning of happiness, life, love, and Nature in a very peculiar way, so I really liked him.
I share some values or I can change my own idea.
Poems express topics in a too difficult way.
I like poems, especially for the values.
It makes me reflect on these values today.
Sometimes, that's quite rare.
They are important values still for us and so is important.
Yes, it does. Doing a rigorous study on the text, they prove to be important.
I don't recognise me in those values.
Reading poems help me to understand what values really are.
I like reading poems that deal with values like these.

Novels

Sometimes these values written in novels motivate me.
Novels make me think.
Novels treat great values and they teach something.
They didn't really motivate me.
They give me the right emotion.
In class, I am not motivated.
I'm interested in reading how values are expressed in different cultures.
They are important themes that should be part of everyone's life.
It involves me a lot and it helped me to develop my own thoughts.
They make me think about values.
I don't need this motivation.
I like reading and studying Italian novels because normally they deal with values, like love and empathy.
It is funny to read stories about kings or queens or loves, but those that deal with political topics are usually boring.
I like to know what the authors think about those topics.
It didn't happen.
Yes, most of the time, they motivated me for the theme.
In fact, it's important to read historical documents, too.
It doesn't feel motivated but entertained.
Some are quite interesting topics. Others are a punch on the nose.
They are interesting and complex to understand.
It didn't motivate me.
I feel attracted by those values.
In some novels, I identify myself with some characters and so I try to apply some values in my real life.
I reflect by myself, but we cannot do it in class.
Stories have to teach you something.
I enjoyed going through the authors personally, but I can't say we did such a work in class.
The novel transmits these themes.
I can discover the real value of such ideals by reading them from another point of view.
Our teacher asks us to do our homework, but she never checks it.
It depends on the topic.
It happened a few times when short fragments of novels focused on something that happened in my life.

Those are values that all people must know.
I prefer novels that talk about man's felling.
I don't agree with the majority of the poets' values.
I prefer elaborating on these themes when I am alone at home.
The deal with important values.
I can know the author's values and compare them with my values.
I think that reflecting on the values of our society is very important to understand them.
I can understand if my ideas are shared or not.
They make you think about some themes.
I think that this is the target of a novel.
I think about these values today.
Such important values are still present for us.
Yes.
I'm not interested in this type of books.
They can help me to understand these values.
Some topics in novels interested me.

Plays

They are attractive, and the characters often fight against the power that is very interesting.
We have never read Italian plays in class.
I only read comedies without values.
These elements make me think.
They usually talk about very important themes.
We didn't read many of them.
Every story wants to teach something, so when I read plays, I think about values.
I don't know.
We have never read plays.
Plays are very important for expressing your feelings.
I like to read about love and empathy.
Plays are a good way to teach important themes.
I don't know because I usually read funny and sometimes stupid plays.
I find these topics interesting and it's interesting to understand the vision of the author.
It didn't happen.
We never read them.
Love plays motivated me more than the others, but I prefer musicals.
I'm really involved in these themes.
We don't do that here.
I prefer the one satiric or comedies.
They are interesting topics.
It didn't.
Play allows everyone to identify themselves in every-day life.
Yes.
I was not there.
We haven't read several texts.
We have never read anything.
There are many times these times.
Characters are more real and next to us.
We don't do that.
It depends on the topic.

Only when we went to the theatre with the school.
We have not studied it yet, but I think it could help.
They deal with classic themes but in an entirely different way compared to other genres.
They spoke about important values for all of us.
They did not motivate me.
It's important.
I can change my own ideas of values.
We have done it just one time.
It's rare that we can find this aspect in a play.
I think about these values.
We usually faced satirical plays, so ideals were not deeply studied.
We don't, but I think it could be.
Yes, they are important values, even for us.
I don't deal with these values.
We never read them.
These values interested me sometimes.
Sometimes they are full of values.

Reading and studying Italian literary texts in class motivated me because poems deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics.

Poems

There are poems that deal with interesting topics, but I think that they are only a few.
A lot of poems deal with religious topics.
They usually deal with serious topics.
Sometimes I am not interested in the topics in the poem.
Usually, poets write about their personal interest that does not interest me.
Depends on the topic when they deal with themes near me, I am more engaged with the poem.
Most of the poems deal with the same topics.
They increase my culture.
They are interesting.
I don't feel motivated.
Not all are non-trivial.
I think that the poems we read in class deal with interesting topics, even if I don't really like poems about love.
I found it interesting to understand what the author thinks.
They don't motivate me.
They motivated me only if they are interesting from my point of view.
Just some of them are non-trivial, in my opinion.
Topics are interesting but always the same.
Sometimes I see myself into the poet.
I think that the topics are instead very interesting.
It depends on what kind of poems we are reading.
It's good to deal with unconventional topics, to think outside the box.
As I said before, only when I continued the analysis by myself, cause the teacher would never have made us discuss such topics.
Sometimes the topics are more interesting than the classics.
I personally feel that lyrical poems deal with the interiority are the most interesting.

The main theme sometimes seems to be similar, losing its interesting characteristics.
It depends on the context.
I don't know.
Nothing that is internal is non-trivial.
They are very original.
We used to read poems with always the same topics.
Only when dealing with important values.
Sometimes there are interesting topics.
Poems offer different and interesting topics I can think about my country and my society in a different way.
I never think about it.
Sorry, but I don't know.
They are similar.
Not all the poems interest me.
It depends on the content of the writing.
It depends on the author and his way of explaining ideas.
Often, not always.
I found those topics very interesting.
It depends on the type of poems.
I appreciate only poems that deal with interesting and real topics.
I don't like the topics of many poems.

Novels

If the novel contains interesting topics reading it in class motivates me.
Sometimes in these novels, there are very interesting topics about current events for example.
They make them more interesting and enjoyable to read.
They inspired some reflections.
The motivation that derives from the novels depends on the novels themselves.
If they are interesting, students can better understand.
Topics are usually interesting; if we read about something boring, I don't listen to the lesson.
I like to know what the authors think about those topics.
The topics were interesting.
They don't motivate me if the topic isn't interesting.
They are interesting but common.
But only sometimes.
Sometimes I think these topics are current.
The topics are usually very appealing.
They deal with interesting topics, but our teacher doesn't share with us the right passion for them.
There are many texts about unconventional topics.
I am personally interested in literature, so I was already motivated, I think that if the motivation should have come from our teacher, I would never get interested in literature.
Many novels are very interesting.
Variety and complexity of topics in novels can be motivating.
It depends on the topic.
A lot of novels are very interesting.
Some novel's stories are amazing and very interesting.
I am more interested when the novels we read are about new interesting topics and not about classic themes like love, nature.

I like the topics of novels.
Some novels reflect my own idea, so I would say partially.
Usually yes, because I am really interested in novels.
I like good topics.
The authors we studied in class were not attractive.
Sometimes they are not interesting to me.
Not always.
Not always.
It didn't happen.
Not always because some of the main themes refer to other periods.
They make me sleep.
It didn't motivate me.
A lot of novels are similar.
A lot of time, they deal with politics or religious themes.
We don't do that.
Usually not.
I found a few of them interesting.
Sometimes the novels had interesting topics.
I like their topics because they are interesting.
Yes, it does.
Topics are not always so interesting; they are outdated.
Rarely.
It depends on the novels.
Not always.

Plays

In the plays, there are everyday topics.
The plays I read have a beautiful final moral.
They usually talk about very important and original themes.
Reading plays makes me think about various topics.
It is interesting and catches attention.
For me, the plays are interesting and fun.
They are the funniest.
It's interesting to understand the vision of the author.
They must be interesting.
It depends on how they captivate me.
The topics of the play are often very interesting because they are close to real life.
Some yes, some no.
It depends on the topic.
When they deal with new themes like daily life, for example, I feel more attracted.
Sometimes, when spoke about real life and situation.
Yes, it's interesting.
It depends.
We never read Italian plays in class.
I don't like dialogues.
There are interesting themes, but they don't motivate me.
We have never treated about plays.
I'm not involved in this type of text.
We never read them.

They don't motivate me.
I don't really know the main topics in plays.
We don't do that here.
It didn't.
We haven't read several texts.
We have never read anything.
Not always are interesting.
We don't do that.
We did not study plays.
We have not studied it yet, but I think some of them may be interesting.
They did not motivate me.
We have done it just one time.
There are trivial to me.
Not always.
I think that the only genre I would read if I were obliged is comedy, which is not particularly known for its deep meanings.
We don't, but I think it could be.
I don't like this type of books too much.
We never read them.
There are not many new topics.

Reading literary texts in my Italian class motivated me because they are authentic material.

Poems

Authentic materials make me more interested.
They're important to know more about the historical backgrounds of the time.
Studying an old authentic poem has always attracted me.
They fascinate me.
I can learn about my culture.
They are authentic and innovative material, so this makes me curious.
I think that I'm reading what the poet was thinking.
It's interesting to understand the real point of view of past characters.
Being real it gives us a real point of view.
I like reading poems as they were written, without any type of interpretation by any other author.
They are interesting because everything that an author explains in his poem is different from others.
I love the fact that they are authentic material because I can read texts about hundreds of years ago and share the authors' thoughts even nowadays.
Yes.
They are often very famous and important poets.
The fact that they are authentic material doesn't motivate me.
I don't think about it.
I don't care about it.
I'm not interested in it.
My teacher makes the poem feel like a duty that makes us waste time, so we never read poems in class but always at home for homework.
Not all the time is interesting.
They don't motivate me.

Even though they were authentic, they didn't motivate me.
They aren't always.
I find poems being products of imagination than authenticity.
To me, it doesn't change if they are famous or not.
Not always.
Even though they are authentic material, I still don't like them.
Most of the time, we deal with ancient writers.
Not at all.
I don't like it.
I don't give much importance to this.
They are authentic material, but I am not motivated by them.
I don't know.
I don't know.
Not so much because I think that it doesn't matter so much.
I don't care about this.
I'm interested only in the theme and not on the author.
It doesn't depend on the originality of the poem.
This did not influence me at all.
It doesn't motivate me.

Novels

I like reading Italian novels because I can understand what reality is like.
I really like old authors and their styles.
Sometimes, read novels motivated me but not always.
It is fascinating to read about something real that belonged to another time.
I can understand and learn more things about my culture and history.
I prefer reading them if the material is authentic.
Novels are interesting.
I think that novels are authentic because they deal with every-day issues and everyone could identify themselves in the characters and in every-day situations.
That's why we study novels; being authentic can give us important content also related to our society.
The fact that they are authentic material doesn't motivate me.
I don't care about it.
I prefer fantasy topics.
They are seldom true stories.
I don't know.
I'm not interested in it.
Even if they are authentic, this is not a reason to consider them interesting.
It is rare that we use novels as a material for the lesson.
The fact that they are authentic material doesn't motivate me.
It didn't happen.
They didn't motivate me.
They did not motivate me.
It does not matter.
It didn't motivate me.
They do not fascinate me.
I don't care at all.
I think that nothing explained by our teacher of Italian could ever be interesting to students.

I don't give importance to this.
We don't do that.
I don't care about who writes the novels, I just care about the stories.
It does not make me interested.
I don't know.
I don't know.
Yes, it does.
It depends.
I can't care about this aspect.
Not always.
This doesn't affect me at all.
I don't think so.
If it is authentic or not, it does not motivate me.

Plays

We never read Italian plays in class.
For me, it is not important.
I don't care about it.
They didn't deal with authentic material, or at least for me, they didn't.
Some of them represent exaggerated sceneries.
They didn't motivate me, but they are something real.
I don't care about it.
Even if it is authentic, it doesn't mean that it is interesting.
We have never treated about plays.
Old authors help me to learn old traditions.
To me, it is not important.
They don't motivate me.
We never read them.
Most of the time, they aren't authentic material I think that plays that deal with current reality can be more interesting.
We don't do that here.
It doesn't change the final product.
It does not matter.
It didn't.
I think that some plays are very original.
No.
We haven't read several texts.
We have never read anything.
They're the direct outcome of their author and his impressions.
We don't do that.
I don't give importance to this.
We did not study plays.
I have not read Italian plays.
I don't know.
It's possible.
We have done it just one time.
I'm not interested in this aspect.
I don't know.
This didn't affect me.

We don't, but I think it could be.
I don't think so.
I don't like these types of books too much.
We never read them.
I don't care if the text is authentic.

Reading and studying literary texts in class is an enjoyable experience.

Poems

I think that poems can make students develop new ways of thinking, but it depends on the poem.
I enjoy reading Italian poems when they deal with current events.
I like reading about actual topics, and I'm really interested in international dynamics.
Some of them are funny, but most of them are dealing with political themes or existential problems.
They could improve my capacity to speak Italian.
They help me to understand my culture and my origins; it's also interesting to learn about social problems or to comprehend the historical context.
I can understand what the authors feel and his vision of life, society, politics and culture.
They are usually well written and create a lovely atmosphere.
You can compare your ideas with your school mates.
Reading and studying Italian poems in class could be an enjoyable experience because generally Italian poems are characterised by musicality and listening to these relax me a lot.
It's that kind of enrichment for your person, your soul.
We're able to learn the Italian culture.
I can understand the ancient mentality.
They talk about our country and the famous Italian people.
They are short so more interesting.
I love their topic and message.
I love their topic.
It depends on the topics of the poem.
I like these types of book and they are very interesting.
I like to understand the poet feelings, even if sometimes it is difficult to understand.
Italian poems are so interesting and Italian poetry is rich.
It would be if the teacher were more engaging.
Sometimes the lesson is boring.
They're very deep but, very often, they deal with themes that I don't mind.
They helped me understand my emotions and feelings.
The teacher doesn't involve us.
I don't feel involved. I can't appreciate the poems because it's difficult for me to understand the real meaning without the help of my teacher.
Sometimes, our teacher is boring and doesn't involve me.
I find it boring.
I don't like poems.
I think it is important to study Italian poems for personal culture but it's not always an enjoyable experience.
I don't enjoy reading Italian poems at all, mainly because I don't like the archaic language which is typical of early Italian poetry.
Classes could easily be less boring and so more enjoyable.

I just can't make me like reading and understanding poetry.
I don't find them interesting.
I prefer novel and prose texts.
I do not feel interested in Italian literature; probably it is because of the way our teacher teaches it.
If explained well, they can be extremely beautiful and interesting.
I don't like the form and the style.
I think following the reading if the teacher does it is very hard.
Not always I'm interested in what the author writes.
We don't examine in-depth poems, so it's like eating pizza and don't taste anything.
Usually, they annoyed me.
I prefer reading it when I'm at home because I can understand better the meaning of the text.
Sometimes, it is more difficult to understand the meaning of the author during the first reading.
It depends on the literary genre examined.
The teacher can't read in an engaging way.
I cannot totally understand them.
It depends on the author and on the mood of the teacher.
When we do it properly.
It should be more interesting if my teacher would be more interesting by now it's a boring experience.
I don't like reading poems very much.

Novels

It can be very interesting.
I can share my ideas with my classmates.
I like changing point of view.
They are interesting.
I really like Italian novels and I'm fascinated by their style.
Reading and studying Italian novels is an enjoyable experience because I like improved my linguistic skills and see different points of view.
I can understand more things about my culture and Italian history.
I like reading novels.
I like reading Italian novels.
I've really liked reading novels since I was little.
They are more authentic and less boring.
It could be an occasion to share different opinions on the story with my schoolmates.
I live the story if I like it.
Studying literary texts is always interesting and fun; whatever the language may be, considering that our mother tongue is Italian is clear that we can get all the shades of it (same for poems).
Only if the novel is interesting.
They deal with aspects of my everyday life sometimes.
It depends on the topic.
It's interesting.
Help us to understand the difference between ancient and modern novels.
They make me feel in another world.
It depends on the argument.
Novels can be very involving if read in the correct way.
I am really interested in them.

It's one of the few activities that involve me very much at school, cause of the topics and the style.

I don't like the novel that we study in class.

Usually, we read parts of novels, not the entire book.

I don't really think so because most of the time there is not enough time to read them and so it can be difficult to really comprehend the story even if they're enjoyable to read.

It is not so enjoyable because in class we don't read all the novel.

Our teacher is boring, and she doesn't engage me.

No, we don't read or study novels in class, the teacher tells us to read novels at home, but she never controls that we do our homework. So I read everything that she gives us because I love reading. It is an enjoyable experience, but her lessons are boring and it's hard not to fall asleep. They are boring because they are too long.

I can understand with the teacher something I couldn't find if I read at home, but it is boring because reading with other people isn't as fast as reading on your own.

For me, it's only a boring thing to do.

I don't like the Italian class.

Only when I read them by myself.

I hate when someone is breathing on my neck all the time while I'm reading.

It makes me sleep.

It is nothing special because we just read.

It's hard even to read an entire chapter of a novel in class, due to the lack of time.

We don't read novels, but we make reflections.

We don't do that.

I like the stories, but we read in class old novels I prefer the new one.

Lessons of literature make me tired.

Many times, the analysis gets me bored.

They are boring.

I prefer to read novels alone.

They are too long to be studied in class.

It should be if I should have a more interesting teacher.

I don't like novels.

Plays

I like reading plays.

If I had read them in class, it would have been interesting.

They are not as interesting as poems.

I am not interested in these types of writings.

I don't like plays, for their structure. I prefer novels or poems.

It can be entertaining and different from the other things that we usually study.

It is not interesting at all. But reading them with my classmates is fun.

We did not read plays.

We have never deal with plays.

I love Italian plays.

In class, I have not read plays.

We read 3 or 4 parts of a play, so I don't remember them so much. Moreover, I don't really like reading plays, so I just found them boring.

I don't like it.

We never read them.
We rarely read plays in class.
I've never experienced it so I can't give an opinion about that.
We don't do that here.
It's soporific with our teacher.
It makes me sleep sometimes.
I don't like plays.
I'm not familiar with plays, so I can't say much.
It can be fun if everyone reads and act out the dialogue.
I was not there.
We haven't read several texts I'm waiting for Pirandello.
If we did it, it would be fun to act out some scenes or going to see a play.
It is boring.
We don't do that.
It depends on the topic.
It's fun and not boring at all.
We have read tragedies, but I don't remember very well.
Of course, it is but not for me.
We have not studied it yet.
We usually do not read them in class, but I like reading it at home.
It could be funny to act out.
It depends on the way in which a play is read.
Yes, it's interesting.
They help us know the traditions of ancient times.
We have done it just one time.
They are boring from my point of view.
It depends on the type of play.
I do not like plays at all.
We don't, but I think it could be great, it should be an interesting experience surely it should be more impressive and easier to remember.
If read in the correct way, it could be pleasant.
Plays aren't my favourite type of books.
We never read them.
We don't do this activity very often.

Reading and studying Italian poems in class motivated me because poems are usually concise.

I also like long poems.
I like their conciseness.
They express emotion with few words.
I love them because they can be deep and concise at the same time.
If they are short, I am less bored.
In some cases, they say lots of things in a short way.
They are too concise.
Not at all, all the poems are very long.
Sometimes poems are not so short.
A lot of poems are long.
They're concise but also complicated.

They are too long sometimes, but they can teach us something the same.
Few of them are concise.
Most of the time, they are too long.
How can it motivate if it is concise?
Some poems are so long and boring.
They are not usually concise.
They are too long.
Up to now, we always read too long poems and they are boring because when you finish reading, you don't remember what you read at the beginning.
The poems we have read were long.
Usually, the poems that we've read are long.
Most of the time, they aren't concise.
Dante's Comedy is not concise!
The length of poems varies a lot, so I can't really say that it is a fact I consider.
They aren't concise; they are quite long.
I prefer the topics, not the length.
Poems are too long and complicated in the language and in the meaning.
They are not concise.
I used to prefer longer kind of writing.
They're not that concise.
Not always they are concise.
A lot of poems are not so concise.
Their message is not concise at all; so that the number of lines can be not so important.
there are also long poems.
I am not motivated by them.
Most of the poems we read are very long.
Not all Italian poems are concise.
Sometimes poems are too concise.
I don't think that the fact that they're concise affects me; the only thing that matters is the meaning and what it wants to communicate.
It depends on the poem examined.
Even if they are short, they are difficult.
I like both long and concise poems.
Poems are not always concise.
It depends on the writing.
Poems aren't always concise.
It's not a prerogative I stress on.
They are very long.
Not much because I understand better its message with a long poem.
I prefer long poems.

Reading and studying Italian novels and plays in class could help me understand different points of view because, in them, the reality is often seen from several perspectives (those of the various characters).

Novels

I think that the several perspectives of the characters can help me understand different points of view.

There are different social classes.

I can face different opinions and perspectives which I can agree with or not.

There are many characters in a novel.

I'm interested in knowing different points of view.

Through several perspectives, I can understand another point of view.

It is important to see different points of view.

Some authors are able to describe lots of different points of view.

After reading, we can make a conversation in class with our different opinions and it could be interesting.

It didn't happen.

You can see the world from the characters' point of view.

They can sometimes help understand different points of view.

You can see every character's point of view and they are often completely different.

It can help see a different perspective.

I like evaluating different points of view.

I could share opinions with my schoolmates. This can help me to see reality from different points of view.

We do not analyse them.

It could if appropriately done, though we, as I repeated up to now, our study of literature was general and basically passive.

This can open our minds.

This is a precious point in favour of novels, which deals with different matters from different points of view.

We don't do that.

Every character has a different point of view.

Starting from the author's one.

The variety of characters in novels is very important.

Sometimes yes.

Sometimes when I read a novel, I change my opinion about a specific topic.

To understand them, I have to understand different points of view.

I agree with the sentence.

By different perspectives of the various characters, I can understand my different point of view about reality.

Yes, it does.

Sorry, but I don't know.

I can compare my ideas with others.

Some novels do not allow you to get into another perspective.

It's important to detect facts from different points of view.

I'm not interested in this type of books.

They can bring out different points of view according to the person who is speaking.

Plays

There are different characters that come from different social classes.
You can learn the perspective and difference between social classes.
It can be difficult sometimes to walk in other people's shoes and to understand better their situation but having several perspectives can help.
Reading makes you open-minded.
I think that it depends on the theme of the play.
In plays, there are different characters with different points of view.
There are people with different views.
I understand more things.
The direct speech between different characters helps me to understand different points of view.
I like the evolution of the behaviour of some characters.
I must understand all the characters to understand the story.
I partially agree.
Different perspectives help me to see the reality in other ways.
It helps me to see things from different points of view.
It's important to detect things from different points of view.
In dialogues, you can have different opinions.
We never read them.
We never read Italian plays in class.
We have never treated about plays.
I don't know.
The parts of the plays we read were seen from one perspective.
We never read them.
I don't really understand other perspectives.
We don't do that here.
We do not often do a lot of debate about it.
It didn't.
We haven't read several texts.
We have never read anything.
We don't do that.
We did not study plays.
We have not studied it.
We have done it just one time.
There aren't several perspectives.
We didn't do that.

Reading and studying Italian plays in class motivated me because plays usually offer real lifelike settings.

Real lifelike settings can help to identify yourself with the characters.
Plays usually describe real settings.
It is interesting to see the real lifelike background. It can catch the attention of students.
I find it interesting to know how people used to live in a specific time.
I like the different settings.
Plays are often close to ordinary life.
Sometimes there are common situations.
I like the simple and everyday life setting.

I can understand some behaviours seen from different points of view.
Their reality made me interested.
You can identify yourself with the setting.
It's easier to identify with characters who act in places that I know.
They are often very real.
We never read Italian plays in class.
It doesn't motivate me.
Lifelike settings aren't for me a motivation to read plays.
Not always offer real lifelike settings.
At school, we did not read plays.
I prefer fantastic settings.
Sometimes the characters do unusual things, for example, in the operas of Pirandello.
They are real stories and histories.
I learn new things about real lifelike settings.
Most of the time, it isn't a real setting.
We have never treated about plays.
We never read them.
We don't do that here.
We didn't do it.
We haven't read plays.
We have never read anything.
We don't do that.
I didn't see that.
We have not studied it yet, but I think it could help.
We have done it just one time.
Often the plot of the play is plausible, not fully realistic.
We never read them.

Reading Italian plays in my class motivated me because I could find examples of colloquial and informal language.

They are good examples.
It is a starting point.
I can expand my vocabulary.
In the texts, I sometimes like the colloquial language.
We never read Italian plays in class.
I prefer the colloquial language more than the formal one.
The plays read in class usually have a difficult language and use archaic forms that cannot be used during an informal talk.
I prefer learning the colloquial language.
We have never read plays.
We never read them.
In many Italian plays, authors use dialect forms, rich in informal expressions. But it is a thing that didn't motivate me.
We don't do that here.
This is not my primary necessity.
It didn't.

Some plays deal with vernacular and popular topics.
Yes, it's more interesting if the language is simple.
We haven't read several texts.
We have never read plays.
Yes, if the language is colloquial.
We don't do that.
Sometimes.
It didn't motivate me the few times we read plays.
I can improve my knowledge of the culture.
We have not studied it, but I think it could help.
They are not so far from the real language.
Often plays have a colloquial language.
Sometimes the language is simple.
We have done it just one time.
The language used in plays is not used nowadays.
We didn't deal with plays, but I think it could be useful.
We never read them.
It's very complex to understand this type of colloquial language.

By reading literary texts in my Italian class, I could better understand my own culture.

Poems

I could better understand some historical facts.
We understand the old facts that explain the current behaviours.
These are a piece of Italian story and culture.
The poems reflected the time in which the poems were written.
I understood the history of literature of my country.
You learn the context in which the poem was written.
They contain connections to our culture.
I can learn what the poets of different ages lived.
If I don't read poems in class, I can't understand my own culture.
We usually study old poems.
It is important to understand my own culture.
I can learn better about my culture.
They involve me in their problems and then I can do research to understand better political and social themes of the time.
I think cultural knowledge could be improved by poems but only partially.
These works are an important part of our culture.
Yes, they help to know the works of Italian writers.
They talk about how poets deal with their lives in difficult moments of Italian history.
Only when the topic is the contemporary society of the poet.
They don't share the culture of Italy.
They are a part of it.
Poems are a very important part of Italian culture and history.
I can understand the reasons why many things happened, and I can learn about my past.
It is an important way to know my own country better.
You can understand the thinking in every period of history.
Reading about the past gives me some advice about the present days.

It's the heritage of the fathers of our culture, the founders of our nation.
I could if only we dedicated time to discuss and share our ideas.
Sometimes in the poems is written the origin of the Italian language.
I can discover the truths of the Italian language and the meanings of the words I use every day.
It's history and culture at the same time; studying them means learning my own culture.
Some poems are the basis of our culture.
I should understand it from the past and from the poets' point of you.
Different ages represent different cultures.
They talk about Italy.
Italian culture is based on them.
Sometimes when are reported the culture and society of the author.
I don't know.
In class, we read poems which represent our society and our culture so I can better understand my own culture.
I think that it's one of the best parts of my country's culture if I don't know it, who does?.
It depends on the poem.
It's a piece of Italian culture, but I'm not interested in it.
I can know the past.
Nowadays, having a good cultural background is fundamental.
Yes, it is important to analyse how our country's culture changed through history.
It gives me a 360° view of my culture.
In these poems, Italian culture and traditions are often depicted.
I really like reading about my own culture and roots and lots of Italian poems help me in this way.
It is described by some authors.

Novels

A book can reveal a part of our culture.
We study in a chronological way, so we understand the evolution of thinking.
I think that reading a novel can help us understand our culture.
Sometimes novels tell about a historical period.
It teaches our history and describes it.
They improve my culture.
I can learn what the writers felt.
Yes, novels helped me understand different points of view and so to better understand my own culture.
It is easier to understand history and politics by reading them from a novel than reading them from a history book.
Novels usually reflect social and politic problems and deal with people from different social classes.
I learn something that I didn't know before.
The texts we analysed are a part of the Italian culture.
Novels don't always present a cultural background.
They are part of our heritage.
Novels, especially older ones, are very useful in understanding the cultural background during Italian history.
I don't think they contain traditional elements.

In some novels, traditions and habits of the country are often mentioned.
Sometimes reading about the past is useful for the future.
It's the portrait of our culture.
I understood my origins.
I can go through the way of thinking of the author and its models.
Some novels are fundamental to my culture.
It has always been our principal target.
I can understand the story of my culture.
It depends if the author is Italian.
Italian culture is based on them.
Through novels, I know the roots of my culture.
The author reflects on his culture and so I can understand my own culture.
Books can deal with culture and history.
It's important to know the culture of our country.
I love reading novels on my country and its story.
Italian novels deal with an old social lifestyle.
Some types of novels can, but a lot of them deal with invented stories that not deal with these themes.
I don't think so.
Of course, it could, but it must be done in the proper way, not like we do in class.
Sometimes it deals with it but not always.
We didn't do that.
They didn't deal with our culture.

Plays

I think that reading it in class could be a useful way to understand my own culture.
In plays, there is information about my own culture.
There can be some connections to our culture.
There are some political and social themes that were current for that time.
Some of them are real stories.
Reading opens your mind.
I can learn what the writers lived.
I could better understand my own culture because it is important to have different points of view.
The plays can be set in a specific time or space.
Reading plays could help me understand my culture if there are many references to socials and religious traditions.
They are loyal to reality.
You are comparing the character with you.
In plays are often represented by the customs and traditions of a determinate country.
It's another kind of heritage.
I understand my origins.
I've understood different lifestyles and our past traditions and background.
Some plays are fundamental to our culture.
Goldoni, for example, with his texts, helped me understand a part of Italian culture.
If they are history plays.
Only when the author describes his society.
It depends.
I know the past.

The only reason we read, rarely, plays it was to increase my cultural background.
Yes, Italian authors are important for our culture.
Goldoni's plays help me to understand better some aspects of Italian culture and lifestyle.
They sometimes describe Italian culture.
These are a part of my culture but not so fundamental for me.
We have never treated about plays.
We treat old culture.
It is not true.
We never read them.
Not always.
We don't do that here.
We do not read them. My teacher does it for us.
We have never read anything.
We don't do that.
We did not study plays.
We have not read Italian plays.
We have not studied them, but I think it could help.
We have done it just one time.
I'm not interesting on it, but it's true, in some plays, there are cultural aspects.
We didn't, but I think it could be.
We never read them.

Have your teachers, in their language courses, ever used English literature with the clear intention of developing your linguistic skills in English?

Studying the author's literary career and reading his/her poems.

For me not, but this is my perspective.

I don't think so. Obviously, she tells us the meaning of the words we don't know but just for a better comprehension

I think that teachers use the literature to teach us the ancient themes and facts related to people that discovered something important.

Analysing the texts.

We read some articles or extracts to integrate the explanation, but nothing more than that.

She read some texts.

She read some texts.

Making us questions about the topics, reading us poems or pieces of novels.

We have to read some text for homework.

The teacher speaks about the figures of speech.

Dictating some specific words and saying us to translate them.

I don't know.

Our teacher is focused on the knowledge of literature most of the time, but the improvement of language skills often are left out.

We read a literary text, we try to understand it, we try to speak about it, and we try to answer a question.

Sometimes the teacher uses literary texts in prose to develop reading and comprehension skills and also to enhance the vocabulary.

She tries by improving our vocabulary and grammar skills.

Writing down the most difficult and unusual terms inside poems.

She asked us to speak about literature, but we are a lost cause.

When there is something particular, she explains its function.

Reading and focusing on them.

When we find something new, she tells us what it means.

Analysing the language of poems or novels.

Reading poems.

She makes us read some poems or novels.

I think that reading is always used to learn and improve.

Telling us the meaning of the new words that we find in the text.

She teaches new words.

During English lessons, we usually read a text, and we analyse it.

They wanted us to learn new vocabulary.

By reading a lot and trying to translate new terms.

With the analysis of literary texts.

Reading poems or novels in English, the teacher translates the meaning of the words and the figures of speech and sound (for example).

She used videos and documentaries on English culture and history.

She reads some literary texts.

After reading the texts, she shows us all the figures of speech that the texts contain.

Yes, she used English literature to improve our linguistic skills.

They help with your pronunciation.

Making us read them or making us express our thoughts on them.

She suggests us to reflect on the theme present in literal texts.

Translating words.

We improve our language skills by reading.

Through literature, the teacher wants to increase our culture but also our English skills.

She helped me with pronunciation.

Speaking and writing about a literary topic.

Have your teachers ever used Italian literature with the clear intention of developing your linguistic skills in Italian?

She doesn't do that.

She said to us that reading in Latin and studying Latin literature could improve our Italian.

I don't think so.

I think that teachers use the literature to teach us the ancient themes and facts related to people that discovered something important.

Analysing the texts.

We don't use Italian texts to learn the Italian language

She never does that.

Reading texts.

They read and make us understand the figures of speech and hidden meanings every time we find them.

No.

No.

They never did that.

Yes.

We've always been focused on theories.

Sometimes the teacher uses literary texts to develop writing skills.

There were no clear intentions.

Repeating or studying literature helps your linguistic skills.

When there is something particular, the teacher explains its function.

Reading and focusing on them.

Sometimes we write an essay about what we read.

She only read texts to explain its meaning.

She explains to us rhetorical figures.

We don't do a lot of writing tests, so we don't have the possibility of expanding our vocabulary.

We usually read a literary text in an Italian lesson, and then we analyse it.

I think that they wanted to teach us how to interpret and analyse a text.

The more I read, the more familiar I am with words and expressions.

Analysing literary texts.

Reading poems or novels in Italian, the teacher explains the author's message, finds figures of speech and sound and explains them.

She has never done it.

She explains us the meaning of texts

She just reads and nothing else.

We concentrate our attention on different goals. We must comprehend the authors' style, we are not supposed to focus on our Italian skills.

Yes, she used Italian literature to improve our linguistic skills.

By reading novels and poems.

It's more a matter of studying the history of Italian literature.

They have never tried.

My teacher has never done it (2 references).

Reading opens up your mind.

Maybe in the first and second year, they used them to increase our linguistic skills. But after that, the main target was to increase our culture.

The texts that we write in class are referring to authors that we have studied.

Speaking and writing about literary topics.

Would you have liked it if your teachers had used English literature to improve your linguistic skills in English?

It's a method of learning I don't like because that language is different from the language we usually speak.

It depends on the type of text. They have to hit me or to engage me.

I think it can be fun and a more participative way to learn and to improve my English.

I think that the better way to teach language is the use of grammar rules. After that, maybe it will be interesting to use literature to share values. I don't know if literature can improve our linguistic skills.

It can be useful, but I think that a person should have already studied some grammar to comprehend the texts.

I think this could be a good way to interact with people. I think English will be a requirement for our future life, for all the subjects we have to study.

It can be useful.

Because we can improve our language and our vocabulary using not only simple words and constructions.

Yes, because it is more interesting than grammar rules.

Many times, I feel that my vocabulary is not that specific as the teacher wants. However, we usually do not do activities based on improving our linguistic skills.

I think it was useless.

It would be prosperous and advantageous.

Yes, because they are very interesting and attract me.

Yes, because in this way, I can do literature and, at the same time, improve my linguistic skills.

It could be ok, but not with poetry.

I would prefer to have direct conversations.

I think it could be a good idea.

It's less boring than studying grammar rules without contextualising them.

I like reading in English.

I think this could be very useful.

I think that using English literature can be a good way to improve my English skills.

It's useful (2 references).

Yes, because I'm not good at English and I would improve my English.

Because I recognise the importance of English literature, but I don't like it.

I don't like English literature.

I can learn two things at the same time.

Yes, I would like to learn English better, to write and to speak better.

Because now I still struggle to write texts in English.

Because the lessons could be less boring.

Because it is important to improve my linguistic skills, for my future.

I think nowadays English is so important for your own life and your future job.

I don't think that literature could be a good way to improve my linguistic skills.

I would like it, but not as the primary target.

I need to improve my linguistic skills.

I think that is what an English teacher should do.

Because this activity can also help to memorise or remember literary topics.

Would you have liked it if your teachers had used Italian literature to improve your linguistic skills in Italian?

I can improve my language in future situations.

I think it can be fun and a more participative way to learn and to improve my Italian.

I think that the better way to teach language is the use of grammar rules. After that, maybe it will be interesting to use literature to share values, to improve linguistic, writing, reading skills.

It can be useful but also a waste of time if it is managed in the wrong way.

I think it can be useful.

Because we can improve our language and our vocabulary using not only simple words and constructions.

In my opinion, it is more useful in a foreign language.

It would have been a different activity, different from the normal ones we do every day in the same way.

I would like it.

Yes, it could be an authentic study, which can be useful. A mnemonic study is useless.

Yes, because they are very interesting and attract me.

Yes, I can improve my writing ability.

I don't see how it would be useful.

Yes (2 references).

I think it could be a good idea.

Because we aren't good at writing and reading.

She has never done it.

Because I can improve my skills in Italian.

Because I think this could be very useful.

It can be a good way to improve our linguistic skills.

Because I like learning new contents.

It could help me and make my Italian better.

Because I recognise the importance of literature, but I don't like it.

Maybe I would have liked it better.

I think that is a new way to make me familiar with the language.

It depends on the way of teaching.

Yes, thanks to the new terms which I found in what we read. I expand my vocabulary.

Yes, it is important to develop our mother tongue if we had had the opportunity, I would have loved it.

It would have been better.

No, I think that my language skills are quite good, my intention is to comprehend the art of different authors.

Because it is important to know the Italian language.

We're already really good at speaking, reading and listening Italian as we are mother tongues.

Yes, but she doesn't do that.

Because she does not do that.

Yes, Italian writers were great models of language, so teachers can use them as models to improve our linguistic skills.

Italian is fundamental for our growth and the development of our skills.

I would love it because I have several difficulties with my Italian skills.

I have to improve my linguistic skills in Italian, too.

I think that it is what a teacher should do.

Because this activity can also help memorise or remember literary topics.

English

Senior students' feedback about the use of English literary texts in class

Reading and studying English poems in class improved my listening skills

Yes. I think that listening, writing, reading, and speaking skills are linked.

Yes, it was. Listening to poems allowed me to understand more words.

Yes, because they catch my attention more than other things.

My listening skills have certainly improved.

Yes (2 references).

Reading poems only helped me with vocabulary (2 references).

Yes, but I think that watching a film or TV series in English is better for me.

Maybe (4 references).

Reading and studying English poems in class enhanced my speaking skills

Yes, because it increases my pronunciation and my vocabulary.

Yes, especially my pronunciation.

I think so. During the oral tests, we have to read a part of a poem and then to explain it.

Yes, during oral tests, we have to talk about literary themes.

Yes, we have to explain the poem in English.

Reading poems only helped me with vocabulary.

I am not able to explain it in English.

I didn't speak a lot in class because I'm shy.

Reading poems only helped me with vocabulary.

I can't tell it in English.

Reading poems only helped me with vocabulary.

Maybe.

Reading and studying English poems in class developed my reading skills

Yes, because I think that it is a very useful exercise.

Yes, because I believe that reading English poems is a better way to improve reading skills.

I think so.

Because pronunciation is very important.

Yes.

Yes, I did. Studying English poems improved my reading skills.

Reading is always a good exercise.

It improved the ability to pay attention to the rhythm.

Not too much. I can't understand poems; they are difficult.

No, my English has not improved.

Only with the teacher's help.

Maybe (3 references).

Reading and studying English poems in class strengthened my writing skills

Because I know the correct way to write words.

I think so. Learning new words can be useful to use synonyms in written production.

Yes, because during the explanation, I had to write notes.
Reading English poems at school has improved my writing skills.
No, because we don't write after reading poems.
No. Writing skills could be developed mostly with written exercises.
Less than the previous skills.
Not really, because we didn't focus on that aspect when we were studying poems.
My writing skills have always been bad. The main difficulty was finding suitable topics.
I think that my writing skills were developed with a lot of exercises, not through reading and studying English poems.
No, I don't think so.
I think that writing skills can be improved with a lot of exercises.
I don't know.

Reading and studying English poems in class enriched my vocabulary

Yes (2 references).
Yes, it did. I learned a lot of vocabulary, words concerning feelings, and emotions.
Yes, because in poems, there are a lot of new words.
Reading and studying English poems enriched my vocabulary.
Yes. Reading English texts is a good way to memorise new words.
Reading helps a lot to enrich personal vocabulary.
Sure.
Yes, reading and studying English poems enriched my personal vocabulary.
Some words are too ancient.
I always forget the uncommon words.
Not in particular.
Studying English literature allowed me to learn new words. But, since these are words that nobody uses, I forgot them.
It's possible, but I think that for me it is better to watch films in English.

Reading and studying English poems in class ameliorated my understanding of English grammar

Yes, because I think that all skills are linked.
Yes.
Not at all because grammar in poems is sometimes different from ordinary speech.
No, because you learn grammar only if you do some grammar exercises.
I don't think so.
No, because poetry has a different grammar.
The study of English poems did little to develop my knowledge of English grammar. The study focused on the content of the poem and not on the form.
I still have difficulties with English.
Yes, but reading is not enough. A study of English grammar is necessary.
Maybe.
I don't know.

Reading and studying English poems in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings

Yes, because while we read, we think about our feelings and experiences.

Yes. I loved reading and studying English poems because I discovered emotions and feelings.

Poems allow me to share my emotions and think about my personal experience.

I think that English poems convey feelings that cannot fail to involve the reader.

Yes.

Not so much, but their themes were interesting.

I don't think so.

No.

Not so much, because I am really shy, and it is not so easy to speak in front of other people.

I have never thought about that. Maybe it did.

Maybe.

So-so.

Reading and studying English poems in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings

Yes.

I think that reading and studying English poems helped me to understand my emotions and my feelings.

I liked romantic poems.

Yes, because I like listening to other personal opinions.

Not so much, but their themes were interesting.

I don't think so.

Yes, it was a good exercise to improve my ability to empathise with other people.

During the English literature lessons, there is little debate. No personal emotions and feelings are shared about the poem.

During the English literature lessons, there is little debate. No personal emotions and feelings are shared about the poem.

Not so much.

Yes. I can use the characters or the situation to understand my personal situations.

Sometimes.

Maybe, I don't know (3 references).

So-so.

Reading and studying English poems in class developed my interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make my own interpretations)

Yes, sure.

Certainly. I learned to analyse a text, to recognize symbolic figures that have become part of my cultural background.

I think so. With the help of the teacher, we analyse a poem, also give the author's interpretation.

Yes.

It developed the ability to reason about the deeper meaning of things.

No. Studying English poems wasn't a creative activity. My interpretative skills haven't developed.

I find it a bit difficult because you have to know the historical and literary context to do it properly.

Yes, but the teacher's help is always necessary.

Yes, but the teacher support is necessary for me

More or less (2 references).

Reading and studying English poems in class made me familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.)

Yes, text analysis is the best useful way to know figures of speech and sound.

Yes (3 references).

Yes, but more with the Italian poetry

Yes, but English poems use them in a different way compared to today's English.

The figures of speech and sound are very important.

I think so. With the help of the teacher, we analyse a poem, also give the author's interpretation.

Yes, but more with Italian poetry.

No. It is very difficult to recognise the figures of speech.

Yes, but I don't like analysing poems, so I don't remember anything.

I learned to recognise rhetorical figures, but more through Italian literature.

Yes, but more with the Italian poetry (3 references).

Reading and studying English poems in class could reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language

Yes (5 references).

Yes, but poems use English in a different way compared to today's English.

Yes, but more with Italian poetry.

Yes, especially with figures of speech.

It is very difficult. It is a language that is not used anymore.

I think so, but I never did it.

No, because I do not get on well with foreign languages.

Not so much.

Reading and studying English poems in class motivated me because poems normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.

Yes, and I think that could be a source of inspiration.

Yes (6 references).

Yes, I liked the topics.

Yes, I love poems for their values.

I am interested in poems in which important themes emerged, such as love, social inequality, etc.

Yes, I like the poems of William Wordsworth very much.

It gave me the opportunity to take positions on important issues.

Not in particular.

Reading and studying English poems in class motivated me because poems deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics.

Yes, and it's difficult to find them in other texts.
Yes (2 references).
Yes, I liked the topics.
Yes, it is motivating.
The topics of English poems are usually interesting.
English poems deal with very interesting topics.
Not always.
Reading a poem isn't motivating for me.
Not really.
It depends on the poem.
Sometimes.

Reading poems in my English class motivated me because they are authentic material

Yes. Poems are authentic material and reading them is a way to know them and discover our history.
I like so much working with authentic materials!
Yes.
Yes, because they helped me to understand the author's opinions.
English poems always represent authentic material.
I think that poems are always authentic.
No, because many times we read only extracts and not the whole work.
Some poems are far from modern culture; they do not represent current times,
I don't know,
It is honestly a fact that I have never thought about,
Probably.

By reading poems in my English class, I could be acquainted with the culture of Anglophone countries

Yes, and about their traditions.
Yes. But we also know about other cultures.
Yes, and I liked it. I like studying cultures and cultural aspects.
Yes, because they are like documents that can show us the mentality of people in a certain period: how they lived, the problems they had
Yes (2 references).
Poems deals with English culture. Especially ancient culture.
I think so, especially for the past.
Yes, but not in detail.
Yes. This allowed me to know the culture of Anglophone countries.
Sometimes poems describe the English culture of the past.
Maybe in some descriptions.
Not so much.

By reading poems in my English class, I could better understand my own culture

Yes, making comparisons.

Yes. It is a beautiful way to know my culture and discover it.

Yes, especially the differences.

Yes, making comparisons.

Yes, it was useful for comparing it with Italian history.

Yes.

Not in particular

No (2 references).

I don't think so.

I think that reading English poems can help me understand the culture of the author, not my own culture.

So-so.

Yes, a little bit, maybe comparing the topics.

Reading and studying English poems in class motivated me because poems are usually concise

Sometimes it means that there are fewer things to study

No (2 references).

No. The length of the poems isn't important.

Not so much. It motivates me because I like poetry.

I think that sometimes the more concise they are, the harder it is to interpret them.

Not always

I prefer long and passionate stories rather than short, concise poems.

It depends. I think that the beauty of a poem doesn't depend on its length.

I partially agree. I struggled to understand the meaning of some poems I read.

No, this is not a real important aspect for me.

I don't think so.

So-so.

Reading and studying English poems in class was an enjoyable experience

Yes (2 references).

Yes, it's beautiful. I love poems

My teacher asked us to realise a painting about our idea of yellow daffodils by William Wordsworth

No, because we only read poems, nothing more.

Reading and studying English poems often was boring (2 references).

With my teachers, the lessons are not interesting.

I prefer novels.

In my experience, reading English poems isn't a good experience, because the poets use a difficult language.

Maybe.

It depends on the poem.

Reading and studying English novels in class improved my listening skills

Yes. All skills are linked.

Sometimes we also use to listen to recorded voices that read the passages of the novels.

Teacher support is always important for me.

Yes (3 references).

Sometimes we listen to novels with a CD.

Not at all. Listening skills are improved through a lot of exercises.

It happened only once, when we had a classmate who was from Australia, and the teacher let her read a chapter of Orwell's 1984. I've found it an interesting listening experience.

It develops reading skills more.

I think the best way to improve my listening skills is to listen to someone speaking.

No, it didn't.

Reading and studying English novels in class enhanced my speaking skills

I think so. During the oral test, we use to speak about the novels we have to study (2 references).

Yes.

During the oral tests, we have to speak about literature.

Yes.

Speaking skills are improved with reading and studying a lot.

My speaking skills are very poor.

Reading poems only helped me with my vocabulary (2 references).

Yes, but not so much. In my class, we use to read and complete some exercises or write something about what we read. We don't speak that much.

My speaking skills are not good.

No, we don't speak after reading.

No, because we are never required to speak about what we read.

No, it doesn't. My teacher asks us to read by ourselves and not aloud.

Reading poems only helped me with vocabulary

Reading and studying English novels in class developed my reading skills

Yes (6 references).

Reading is important and necessary to learn a language.

Reading is always a good exercise.

Yes, because reading improved my vocabulary.

I think that reading out loud is an important exercise to improve reading skills.

For sure, reading is the best way to improve my reading skills.

During the lessons, we have to read some parts of some novels.

Only vocabulary.

It depends on the teacher. We have got a teacher who is strict.

My reading skills are better than speaking skills.

It did not. But probably reading a real novel and not only the theory about it, would be better.

Reading and studying English novels in class strengthened my writing skills

Reading novels enabled me to understand the correct way to write words.

Studying English novels helped me develop my writing skills.

Yes, I did. Learning new words can be useful in written production.

Yes (5 references).

Reading English novels at school has improved my writing skills.

Yes, it was an opportunity to strengthen the memorization of words and terms to be able to use them in other contexts.

Yes, we answered questions after reading.

Yes, because we have to answer many questions about reading comprehension.

I think that only writing exercises could develop writing skills.

I often have problems in developing complex texts.

No, they don't.

No, I think it didn't.

Reading and studying English novels in class enriched my vocabulary

Yes (8 references).

Yes. I agree because English novels contain many new words.

Reading English novels has allowed me to enrich my vocabulary, even though those words are not used anymore today.

I think so.

Reading helps a lot to enrich personal vocabulary.

Yes. It's a good exercise to enrich vocabulary.

Yes, it provided me with a way to practice and understand new terms, considering the story told and its meaning.

Yes, because in novels, there were many words that I didn't know before.

Not at all. Many words are not used anymore.

Reading and studying English novels in class ameliorated my understanding of English grammar

Yes (8 references).

I think so.

I think that novels are based on a different English grammar different from the English grammar used today.

English grammar in the study of English literature was not addressed by my teacher. She focused on skills.

You learn the grammar only if you study it.

We didn't focus our attention on grammar.

Grammar is learned if you practice it through exercises.

You need to know the grammar before reading.

We studied grammar through specific texts.

I would say yes, but I'm not so sure, because I learned a lot by heart and so it wasn't a useful understanding of language.

Reading and studying English novels in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings

Yes (4 references).

Reading stories allows me to empathize.

Only when the teacher asks my opinion.

It happens with some novels

Reading English novels, you can discover new emotions and feelings, but in class, we did not share our emotions.

Our teacher has never done this kind of activity (2 references).

I don't think so. I don't use to share my personal emotions and feelings after reading English novels. In class, the focus is on the content and the structure.

I don't think so. I don't use to share my personal emotions and feelings after reading English novels. In class, the focus is on the content and the structure.

Orwell's novel made me reflect on situations that still exist. But there is no sharing in class.

Not at all.

No.

I wish it could be like that!!!

Reading and studying English novels in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings

Yes (4 references).

I'm a very empathetic person.

I think so.

Yes, because there is the involvement of the reader in the psychology of the characters. It's an exercise to develop empathy.

Yes, the characters show their feelings with their stories.

So-so.

It happens with some novels.

The teacher did not focus his lesson on sharing the feelings that the novel had aroused.

Our teacher has never done this kind of job.

Not so much. In my class, we didn't use to share our feelings about English novels.

I never thought about it.

I wish it could be like that!!!

Reading and studying English novels in class developed my interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make my own interpretations)

They stimulate my creativity.

Yes (9 references).

Yes, reading a novel allowed me to understand and give an interpretation.

The practice helps the performance

No. I think that creative skills haven't improved. It isn't a creative activity, because our teacher wants only one answer, his.

In class, we are supposed to translate and not to create.

No.

No, because I never have the possibility to develop my own idea. Everything is defined by the teacher.

Not at all. In a novel, the speech is more common than the speech in a novel.
It is difficult to understand some figures of speech in English.

Reading and studying English novels in class made me familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.)

Yes (5 references).

The practice helps the performance.

Yes, we have to recognise them.

I studied them better in Italian.

No.

The study of English novels did not include the study of particular figures of sounds or speech.

I don't think so. I've always found it difficult to understand the figures of speech and sounds even in my mother tongue.

No, because in novels, there are no figures of speech.

It is quite difficult to find them.

No, I did not learn them.

Reading and studying English novels in class could reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language

Yes (6 references).

I'm not good at writing.

In novels, you find the language used in the past.

Our attention is focused on understanding the language.

The language used in English novels is refined, elevated. It is not a language you use every day.

I think so, but we never did it.

It depends on the teacher.

When I speak, I need a dictionary.

I think that in a novel, the language isn't evocative.

It's possible.

Maybe.

Reading and studying English novels in class motivated me because novels normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.

Yes. English novels motivated me to find and discover some important values.

In stories, there are always values that we can imitate.

Many English novels have attracted my interest, especially if they deal with topics such as love, social injustice, war or the figure of women

Yes (9 references).

Yes, that's why I enjoy reading novels.

You don't find values in all the novels.

Not all novels deal with values like love, respect.

We only read ancient literature. I prefer reading modern literature at home.

Reading and studying English novels in class motivated me because novels deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics

Yes (6 references).

The stories are always full of interesting ideas.

The topics dealt with in novels are never trivial. I believe that some themes should be re-proposed today

I think so. Reading a novel is interesting.

English novels deal with very interesting topics.

Yes. Some topics are interesting because they are still actual

Sometimes it is true; sometimes, it is not true.

Maybe.

That's not always true.

Reading novels in my English class motivated me because they are authentic material

Yes. Novels are a way to rediscover the past and to know authentic materials of history.

Reading authentic materials can stimulate my creativity.

Yes (6 references).

English novels always represent authentic material.

English novels always represent authentic material.

English novels reflect some of the main values of the historical era of the author, but some aspects are very different from today's life.

I don't know the real meaning of authentic material.

Yes.

I have never thought about this aspect."

That's not true.

We don't read novels.

By reading novels in my English class, I could be acquainted with the culture of Anglophone countries

Yes (8 references).

Reading English novels allow me to know many aspects of the culture of this nation, but especially in the past.

Yes. We study the historical context.

it is interesting to discover new cultures.

No, to know English culture, I went to London and Dublin.

It depends on the novel, but it could.

Yes, but they teach you the situation of that ancient period.

Maybe. You still need to study it more in-depth.

In general, yes.

By reading novels in my English class, I could better understand my own culture

Reading novels is a way to know the literature of that population in the past.

I agree.

I have often made comparisons between Italian and English culture, sometimes finding differences, but also similarities.

Maybe making a comparison between the history of that country and my own culture.
It's possible to grasp the difference between one's own culture and that of other people.
Maybe.
Yes, because of the differences.
Yes, comparing English culture with my culture.
Yes.
It depends on the novel, but it could.
So-so.
Maybe (2 references).
Yes, but I read novels at home.
We do not work about the differences between what we study and our own culture.

Reading novels in my English class could help me understand different points of view because in novels reality is often seen from several perspectives (those of the various characters)

Yes (12 references).
I think so. Each character has a personal point of view. The reader can try to understand each one.
Reading novels certainly helps me understand different points of view.
That's true.
Yes, but not only for English novels. This sentence could be applied to every novel.
I don't know.

Reading and studying English novels in class was an enjoyable experience

It's very interesting.
I especially loved Jane Austen's novels
Yes, I used to read English novels in class, and I found it really interesting because I could learn a lot of new words and different topics that usually we don't deal with in class
Yes. Reading and studying English novels at school was an enjoyable experience.
Yes (5 references).
Yes. It is an enjoyable experience because some novels are very interesting in describing the characters.
Yes, I liked it. It was interesting.
No. It was boring. We only read the novels and translate them.
It is not an easy activity
No, it isn't. My teacher is horrible and dreadful. We have to study everything by heart, especially the theory written in the textbook. We never read a whole original text.

Reading and studying English plays in class improved my listening skills

Yes. I think that all skills could be improved through plays.

Yes (7 references).

They are difficult to understand.

Reading and studying English plays in class enhanced my speaking skills

Yes (4 references).

For oral tests, we have to talk about what we study at home in our textbook.

My speaking skills are very poor.

If you only read, you don't develop speaking skills.

I think so. During the oral test, we use to speak about the plays we have to study.

I can't speak English.

Maybe.

Reading and studying English plays in class developed my reading skills

Reading helps you in general.

Yes (4 references).

Reading is always a good exercise.

In class, we read and translate.

It helped me.

If you only read, you don't develop writing skills.

Reading and studying English plays in class strengthened my writing skills

Yes. All skills could be improved.

Yes, I did. Learning new words can be useful in written production.

Reading English plays at school has improved writing skills.

Yes. It was an exercise to memorize words and terms to use them in other texts.

No (3 references).

It did not help me.

Maybe (3 references).

Reading and studying English plays in class enriched my vocabulary

Yes. This is a way to know and learn new vocabulary.

Yes (5 references).

English plays use words that are no more used today.

We have never read plays. Only passages.

Maybe.

Reading and studying English plays in class ameliorated my understanding of English grammar

Yes.

I think that grammar in plays is different from today's English grammar.

English grammar in the study of English literature was never addressed by my teacher.

English grammar in the study of English literature was never one of my teacher's aims.

No (2 references).

We don't focus on grammar.

Not at all.

The plays we read don't teach us grammar.

Reading and studying English plays in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share my personal emotions and feelings

Yes (2 references).

Maybe (2 references).

Sometimes.

We don't share emotions and feelings in class.

In my class, we never worked too much in sharing them.

No.

This was difficult.

Reading and studying English plays in class motivated me because they helped me understand and share other people's emotions and feelings

Yes (2 references).

Maybe (2 references).

Sometimes.

The teacher did not focus his lessons on sharing the feelings that the play had aroused.

Not in particular.

No.

This was difficult.

Reading and studying English plays in class developed my interpretative skills (grasp symbolic, hidden meanings, make my own interpretations)

Yes (3 references).

Maybe.

I read them at home.

This was difficult.

No.

Not at all.

Reading and studying English plays in class made me familiar with figures of speech and sound (metaphor, simile, alliteration, etc.)

Yes (3 references).

No, we did not look for figures of speech.

The study of English plays did not include the study of particular figures of sounds or speech.

This was difficult.

No, absolutely not.

Maybe.

Sometimes.

Reading and studying English plays in class could reveal a creative, unexpected and evocative use of language

Yes.

I like the evocative language.

I think that reading and studying English plays aren't creative activities.

The language used in English plays is refined, elevated. It has never been used at this level within the classroom.

We have never done it.

This was difficult.

It did not help me.

Maybe (2 references).

Reading and studying English plays in class motivated me because plays normally deal with values like love, respect, empathy, social justice, etc.

Reading plays is an important way to discover the values of the past.

Yes (2 references).

Reading plays is an important way to discover the values of the past.

Social justice is the most important value for me.

Maybe.

I don't remember these values.

Plays are difficult.

Reading and studying English plays in class motivated me because plays deal with non-trivial (interesting) topics

Yes (3 references).

I prefer to go to the theatre.

I am not motivated to read plays.

Plays are difficult (2 references).

Not always.

Maybe.

Reading plays in my English class motivated me because they are authentic material

Yes.

Plays are authentic material. But they don't motivate me.

I am not motivated to read plays.

No.

This was difficult.

Plays are not real.

I have never thought about this aspect. but I think so

I have never thought about this aspect. but I suppose so

Maybe.

Reading plays in my English class motivated me because I got an insight into social, political and cultural aspects of Anglophone countries

Yes (2 references).

They represent the past

We study the historical context (3 references).

I don't remember particular aspects of anglophone countries studied in plays.

By reading plays in my English class, I could better understand my own culture

Yes

Yes, through comparisons.

No. There is no reference to my culture.

No.

Maybe (3 references).

Yes, but only about the past.

Employing plays as a means of learning English motivated me because plays usually offer real lifelike settings

Yes. The settings are lifelike, so people could know them through plays.

Yes (3 references).

Maybe (2 references).

No, there are no lifelike settings in plays.

This was difficult.

That's not always true.

Reading plays in my English class helped me understand different points of view because in plays reality is often seen from several perspectives (those of the various characters)

Yes (5 references).

That's what my teacher keeps saying.

This was difficult.

Sometimes.

Maybe.

Reading plays in my English class motivated me because I could find examples of colloquial and informal language

Yes (3 references).

No, it does not motivate me.

Maybe.

No.

I found examples of new structures, but not so many examples of colloquial language.

This was difficult.

Reading and studying English plays in class was an enjoyable experience

Yes (6 references).

I loved Romeo and Juliet

Yes, I like almost everything about English culture.

I only studied Shakespeare's plays.